

**HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
OFFSHORE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
HELICOPTER LIAISON GROUP (OIAC HLG)**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2009 at the offices of HSE,
Rose Court, London SE1**

Present

Representing

Chair:	Tom McLaren	HSE
Members:	Robert Paterson	Oil & Gas UK
	Mike Crabb	HCA
	Kevin Payne	CAA
	Dave Howson	CAA
	Ian Evans	IADC / BROA
	Philip Wiggs	IMCA
	John Taylor	Unite, TGWU Section
	Capt Tony Ridley	BALPA
	Mike Lunt	HSE
	Steve Haddock	HSE
Secretary:	Phil Sumner	HSE

Guest presenters:

Mike Simms, Associate Director,	DNV
Hamish Holt, Principal Consultant,	DNV

Item 1 – Introduction/Apologies

1. The Chairman welcomed Tony Ridley as a new member of HLG and thanked Ian Evans for taking on representation of the interests of both BROA and IADC following the resignation of John Monks.
2. Apologies had been tendered by Peter Norton (BHA), Mark Robinson (Unite, Amicus Section) and John Monaghan (HCA).

Item 2- Status of matters arising from minutes of previous meeting

3. Members had been previously advised that all actions had been completed or were covered on the agenda.

Item 3 - NUI issues, including fire-fighting provisions and Energy Institute NUI Working Group update

4. Kevin Payne provided an overview of fire-fighting facilities on existing normally unattended installations (NUIs). CAA was concerned at the wide disparity between current arrangements under which platform operators selected minimal rescue and fire-fighting services (RFFS) on the basis of Issue 5 of UKOOA Guidelines for the Management of Offshore Helidecks, compared with the prescriptive requirements for an equivalent manned installation or new build NUI contained in Chapter 5 of CAP 437 (6th edition). It was evident that these arrangements were inadequate to address all likely, and reasonably foreseeable, fire situations that might be encountered during routine offshore helicopter operations to existing NUIs. Furthermore, a review had shown that UK arrangements for fire-fighting media on UKCS NUIs were considerably lower than for other sectors of the North Sea.

5. Noting CAA's concerns, members discussed how best to take matters forward. Steve Haddock felt that aviation, rather than offshore legislation would provide the most suitable legal authority rather than the PFEER Regulations as these would not provide for the prescriptive approach which CAA felt was needed. At the suggestion of Robert Paterson, Kevin Payne undertook to produce a suitable briefing note to be tabled at the next meeting of the Helicopter Task Force Group and as a basis for consultation with industry. **POST MEETING UPDATE:** This note has been circulated to HLG members. CAA will be meeting with HSE to discuss the issue in the context of HSE/SRG Memorandum of Understanding Annex No. 4, Offshore Operations.

6. Mike Lunt briefed members on the current assignment being undertaken by a Working Group led by Energy Institute to provide wide-ranging guidelines on the design and operation of NUIs, including helidecks. DNV was undertaking a commission from EI to produce draft guidance which would be circulated widely for comments in Autumn 2009. DNV representatives had accepted an invitation to provide a presentation to HLG on the scope and progress of their task and this would follow as the next agenda item.

Item 4 – NUI Guidelines: Presentation by DNV

7. A copy of the presentation provided by Mike Simms and Hamish Holt, DNV is attached to these minutes.

Item 5 – Status report on the update of Oil & Gas UK Guidelines for the Management of Offshore Helicopter Operations

8. Robert Paterson advised that work on the update was virtually completed and ready for circulation for comments. The timescale for undertaking this task had inevitably been affected by other current priorities.

Item 6 – Feedback from the last meeting of the Aviation Safety Technical Group (ASTG)

9. Robert Paterson reported that much of ASTG's agenda was taken up by discussion of work in progress within the Helicopter Task Group towards achieving the reintroduction of helicopter passenger personal locator beacons (PLBs). (A summary of the present position is provided under Item 7). He also advised that a number of actions agreed at ASTG were being progressed in order to achieve early implementation of Helicopter Usage Monitoring System (HUMS) advanced anomaly detection techniques. Oil & Gas UK was fully committed to getting AAD introduced into the North Sea helicopter fleet as soon as practicable.

Item 7 – Use of PLBs on offshore helicopter flights

10. Steve Haddock outlined the issues involving use of helicopter passenger PLBs following the Super Puma ditching near the ETAP installation in February 2009. These included the work of the Helicopter Task Group involving CAA, Oil & Gas UK and HSE to resolve the issue of interference of lower power 'non smart' PLBs worn by helicopter passengers with higher power 'smart' beacons on aircraft liferafts. Over the coming weeks it was hoped to complete testing which would allow passenger PLBs to be reintroduced after liferaft beacons have been replaced.

Item 8 – Perceptions of BALPA on offshore helicopter issues

11. Tony Ridley explained BALPA's ongoing concerns regarding the adverse weather policy of some duty holders policy and the use of mechanical systems of recovery of helicopter passengers and crew in the event of a helicopter ditching in adverse weather, including the Dacon Scoop. These concerns were the subject of ongoing discussions with Oil & Gas UK and ERRVA. BALPA considered it important to adopt a common adverse weather policy across the industry; he felt this would be assisted by better integration of the working of the various Groups having an interest. These concerns would be summarised in a short brief which he would provide to HLG following the forthcoming meeting of the Helicopter Advisory Committee.

ACTION 1: Tony Ridley to provide a note outlining BALPA's concerns about offshore adverse weather rescue and recovery arrangements.

Item 9 – Analysis of HCA's helideck inspection regime

Carried forward to the next meeting.

Item 10 – Additional guidance relating to the provision of meteorological information from offshore installations

12. Kevin Payne provided a brief overview of some draft additional guidance to supplement the requirements relating to the provision of meteorological information to be provided from offshore installations which was recently incorporated into the 6th Edition of CAP437. This additional information would be incorporated as an Appendix. Members had been provided with the text and were requested to provide any comments to Kevin Payne for transmission to Colin Hord, UK Met Authority, CAA.

Item 11 - International Helicopter Safety Team

13. Dave Howson provided an overview of the role of the European Helicopter Safety Team (EHST) which is the European branch of the International Helicopter Safety Team, an overarching international initiative to improve helicopter safety, which has set itself a target of reducing the rate of helicopter accidents by 80% by 2016. EHEST also forms the helicopter 'pillar' of the European Strategic Safety Initiative led by EASA. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Item 12 – Research update

14. Dave Howson provided a brief summary of progress on projects within the HSRMC programme. A copy of his written update is attached to these minutes. He highlighted the introduction of HUMS as providing a significant improvement in safety. John Taylor asked to see a copy of the final report on an earlier study of the implementation and use of Emergency Breathing Systems (EBS), which led to the current work on the development of a specification. He noted that the offshore workforce felt rebreather devices provided a higher level of confidence in the prospects of escape from a ditched helicopter. **POST MEETING UPDATE:** Dave Howson circulated an electronic copy of CAA Paper 2003/13 on 19 June 2009 and advised HLG members that when complete, the full EBS technical specification being developed by the current research will be published on CAA's website for voluntary uptake by the industry and will be offered to EASA for adoption as a formal aviation standard (ETSO).

Item 13 – AOB

15. Tom McLaren advised that following contact with OCA he proposed to invite Willie Gibson, Safety Advisor, PSN, who was an experienced HLO, to sit on HLG. Members agreed that Mr Gibson's membership would provide a useful practical perspective of offshore helideck operations. The secretary was asked to make the necessary arrangements.

16. Mike Crabb drew attention to a lack of training in the handling of Dangerous Goods which had come to light during inspections, despite the Regulations having been in force for two years. Legal proceedings were being taken in a specific case.

17. John Taylor advised that he had evidence of instances where corners were being cut to save time in the process of weighing passenger baggage for helicopter flights returning to the beach by using the baggage weights for the outward flights rather than the actual weights. Kevin Payne confirmed that this practice was in breach of the Air Navigation Order and that details should be provided to CAA in order that action could be taken.

Item 14 – Date and venue for next meeting

18. Members confirmed their preference to continue to hold HLG meetings in London, whilst noting that there would in future be no suitable facilities in Rose Court. Phil Wiggs advised that it might be possible to offer the use of IMCA's facilities. The Secretary undertook to liaise with him and to consult members on suitable dates with a view to holding a 'back to back' meeting tied in with the date of OIAC's meeting in November 2009.

POST MEETING NOTE: Phil Wiggs has confirmed the availability of IMCA's offices and it is proposed to hold the meeting on Wednesday 18 November 2009. (OIAC's meeting will be held in Aberdeen on 11 November 2009).

ACTION ARISING FROM THE MEETING

ACTION 1: Tony Ridley to provide a note outlining BALPA's concerns about offshore adverse weather rescue and recovery arrangements.