

**HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION
OFFSHORE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
HELICOPTER LIAISON GROUP**

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2005 in the Shakespeare Room,
Rose Court

Present

Chair:	Rae McIntosh	HSE
Members:	Peter Norton	BHAB
	Mike Crabb	HCA
	Kevin Payne	CAA
	Dave Howson	CAA
	John Taylor	TGWU
	Rab Wilson	AMICUS
	Brian Teeder	UKOOA
	Ian Evans	BROA
	Phil Wiggs	IMCA
	John Monks	IADC
	Bill Quinn	HSE
	Mike Lunt	HSE
	Graham Morrison	HSE
Secretary:	Phil Sumner	HSE

Item 1 - Introduction/Apologies

1. The Chairman welcomed John Monks of Global Santa Fe to HLG as IADC's new representative.
2. The Chairman advised members that HLG agendas and agreed minutes are now placed on the HSE website with effect from the meeting held on 21 June 2005 and can be accessed at www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/hsc/iacs/oiachlg.htm.

Item 2 – Identify AOB

3. The following items were tabled for discussion under Item 12 ;
 - REFABS System trial report (Bill Quinn)
 - International Helicopter Safety Symposium (Dave Howson)
 - Helicopter Security (Peter Norton)
 - Helicopter Noise and Vibration Directive (Brian Teeder)

Item 3 – Status of matters arising from minutes of the previous meeting

4. Action Point 1 had been completed, and Points 3, 5 and 6 were included within the agenda.

Action Point 2: Bill Quinn to ensure the Safety Notice on helicopter lifting operations refers to the provision of adequate training for all personnel, and to the LOLER regulations.

Bill Quinn advised that Safety Notice 5/2005 issued in September 2005 addressed the provision of adequate training, but excluded reference to LOLER following policy advice that these regulations were not applicable.

Action Point 4: HSE to arrange a review of the Offshore Helideck Design Guidelines in the last quarter of 2005.

Although no specific user comments had yet been received it was agreed that work to identify the impact on the Guidelines as a result of the reissue of CAP437 (5th Edition) made it important that initial work should proceed.

Action 1: HSE to compile a listing of the issues to be addressed in the review, with CAA assistance.

Item 4 – UKOOA Aviation Safety Technical Group

5. Brian Teeder provided a summary of ASTG's most recent meeting, noting that the Group's agreed minutes are placed on UKOOA's website. He reported that the feeling so far is that ASTG is performing a useful role in providing an industry focus for promoting helicopter safety issues although its visibility within UKOOA needed to be improved.

6. TU members were concerned to learn of the disappointingly low support for the Helicopter Operational Monitoring Programme (HOMP) from oil companies despite the safety benefits which had been demonstrated in trials and earlier industry commitments to its full-scale implementation. Brian Teeder undertook to communicate these concerns to UKOOA.

Item 5 – Helideck inspection programme report

7. Mike Lunt summarised the interim findings from HSE's programme of offshore helideck inspections currently in progress. A final report will be prepared when the remaining offshore visits have been completed by March 2006. A summary report is attached.

8. HLG welcomed the report as providing a positive influence towards improving the safety of helicopter operations at offshore installations.

Action 2: Members to provide any comments on the summary report to Mike Lunt.

Item 6 – Helideck nets and drop tests

9. Bill Quinn outlined details of a serious incident offshore in which an HLO fell through the helideck perimeter netting, and of the follow-up action taken by the duty holder, HSE, HCA and UKOOA to ensure the continued fitness for purpose of helideck netting.

A copy of Joint Industry Guidance published by UKOOA covering the testing of helideck perimeter safety nets, developed by a joint industry working group comprising UKOOA member companies, HSE and HCA is attached.

10. Kevin Payne noted that the report highlighted 2003 as being a particularly bad year for offshore helicopter operations worldwide, with 41 injuries and 52 fatalities from a total of 35 accidents. The OGP website, in a report entitled 2004 safety performance indicators, indicated that the picture had improved in 2004 with only two incidents attributed to air transport accounting for 14 fatalities, whilst so far in 2005 (up to the end of August) OGP reported 4 fatal accidents accounting for eleven fatalities.

Item 8 – Article by Jed Hart in APPEA Journal 2005 – ‘Managing helicopter risk’

11. Kevin Payne noted that the article draws on 2003 data and refers to examples of best practice helicopter risk management including HUMS and HOMP. The North Sea safety model is praised, with emphasis on the role of the duty holder and on the importance of their contractual arrangements with the helicopter operator. HLG noted the report as an informative document.

Item 9 – Offshore information leaflet – How offshore helicopter travel is regulated

12. The Chairman advised that the revised leaflet, which had been updated by HSE in consultation with CAA and HLG had now been reprinted and published in both hard copy and on the offshore section of the HSE website. Copies were distributed to members and comments invited on distribution arrangements.

13. Rab Wilson suggested that in addition to distribution at onshore and offshore heliport embarkation points the leaflets should, if possible, be placed in helicopter seat backs in order to achieve added impact. Welcoming the leaflet, HLG endorsed this suggestion.

Item 10 - CAA revision of CAP437

14. Kevin Payne advised that CAP437 5th Edition had been published on Publications section of CAA's website at www.caa.org.uk on 31 August 2005. He

outlined the main features of the document which had been completely revised. Thanking all for their input, he invited comments on the document at any time.

Item 11 – HSRMC proposed research programme for joint funding

15. Dave Howson explained the role and composition of the Helicopter Safety Research Management Committee (HSRMC) and the recent change in its focus towards a programme-based industry driven approach, against a background of funding constraints.

16. Dave Howson went on to summarise the position on helicopter research against each topic listed in his update circulated to members in advance of the meeting (attached to these minutes), drawing attention, in particular, to the difficulties in obtaining adequate external funding to enable the final phase of work on egress from side floating helicopters. There had been insufficient support to allow the contract for the work to be let.

17. TU members expressed strong support for the continuation of the work which they regarded as having a potentially significant safety benefit. They made clear their intention to raise the matter at Ministerial level in DfT.

ITEM 12(a) – AOB

REFABS System trial report

18. Bill Quinn referred to the report of the trial on the BP Hyde platform of the reversible electric fan assisted bird control system (REFABS) designed by Clive Henry. The report, compiled by Captain Henry, concluded that over a twelve month trial period the system had met UKOOA's requirement for a new and innovative method of solving the bird/guano problem on offshore installation by providing a dual system that incorporates both visual and audio deterrents.

International Helicopter Safety Symposium

19. Dave Howson reported on his recent attendance of the International Helicopter Safety Symposium, a high profile event held in Montreal at the initiative of the US Helicopter Industry at which he presented a paper entitled 'Research initiatives for improving the safety of offshore helicopter operations'. A copy of this paper and a summary of the proceedings are attached.

Helicopter Security

20. Peter Norton advised of the current attempts by industry to meet DfT at a senior level as the next step in making strong representations about its proposals to bring offshore helicopter operations into the National Aviation Security Programme, treating offshore installations as airports for security purposes. In its initial response to DfT's consultation exercise, BHAB had emphasised that it considered the offshore environment to be sterile in terms of security risks as a result of heliport checks and that current arrangements are sufficient.

21. Rab Wilson suggested that a joint approach to DfT with the offshore TUs offered the best approach.

Helicopter noise and vibration

22. Brian Teeder enquired whether the proposed EC Noise and Vibration Directive due to come into force in 2006 would be applicable to aviation. Bill Quinn agreed to ascertain the position.

Action 3: Bill Quinn to ascertain the scope of the proposed EC Noise and Vibration Directive.

Item 12(b) – Date of next meeting

23. It was agreed to hold the next meeting in HSE's Aberdeen offices in approximately six months time – the Secretary to consult members on a suitable date. (Secretary's note: It has been agreed to hold the meeting on Tuesday 23 May 2006 at Lord Cullen House, Aberdeen).

24. In conclusion, the Chairman conveyed HLG's thanks to Bill Quinn for his work to improve offshore helicopter safety and its best wishes for his imminent retirement.

Actions agreed at OIAC HLG meeting on 22 November 2005

Action point 1: HSE to compile a listing of the issues to be addressed in the review of the Helideck design Guidelines, with CAA assistance.

Action point 2: Members to provide any comments on the helideck inspection summary report to Mike Lunt.

Action point 3: Bill Quinn to ascertain the scope of the proposed EC Noise and Vibration Directive.