

Minutes	Pilot Safety Committee Meeting	Date:
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Committee members present

Capt. Steve Roberts, Chairman
 Dave Connolly
 Capt. Rick Hurt

Committee members absent

John Schneider

Staff present

Allen Garfinkle, Executive Director
 Kelly Dolcini, Staff Services Analyst
 Sigrid Hjelle, Office Technician

Public present

Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA) Vice President Michael Jacob; San Francisco Bar Pilots (SFBP) counsel Ray Paetzold, SFBP Capt. George Livingstone, Port Agent Capt. Pete McIsaac.

1. Call to order and roll call

Chairman Roberts called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Staff Services Analyst Kelly Dolcini called roll and found that a quorum was established.

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2. Review and refine Committee’s mission statement.

Chairman Roberts introduced Committee Member Vice President Connolly, who requested that the Committee convene.

Mr. Connolly thanked members for coming together and expressed his appreciation for the cooperation of the SFBP. He sees the mission of the Committee as being a vehicle to identify risks, and incorporate best practices, wherever possible, to prevent or mitigate those risks. He noted that the maritime industry has been primarily reactive to risk and he believes that there is value to being proactive. He proposed that the Committee focus be primarily on the “human element” of risk mitigation, using existing and emerging behavioral science that is currently being incorporated into aspects of the industry.

3. Review and Consider recent published material concerning “best practices” in piloting safety specifically, and maritime safety more generally.

Mr. Connolly presented several documents on safety to facilitate the discussion of pilot safety, most notably a text titled “The Human Element,” written by Dik Gregory and Paul Shanahan, and published by The Nautical Institute. He stated perfection should not be the standard because it prevents recognition of mistakes. Mr. Connolly mentioned a recent Board of Pilot Commissioners investigation involving a whip antenna making contact with a bridge as an example of a situation where there were no consequences but provides an opportunity for the Committee to examine the process in order to recognize mistakes without the consequences involved in the incident review process.

4. Identify and discuss existing risks and current action to mitigate risks identified.

The Committee embarked on a discussion of the proactive tools at the Board’s disposal for promoting safety in the Board’s jurisdiction. Some of the tools identified are the regulatory process, continuing education, discipline through the incident review process, Harbor Safety Committee and SFBP guidelines, and the Port Agent’s and Executive Director’s authority. Other mitigation tools include the licensing process, training evaluation for both the Combination Course and manned model training, the fitness determination, and the information disseminated through the incident review process (which includes dissemination of the incident report and lessons learned.)

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Capt. Hurt pointed out that the maritime industry needs to incentivize reporting of near-misses in order to learn from potential incidents. Mr. Connolly asked what policies the SFBP has in place regarding near-misses. Capt. Hurt reported that internally, during the Good and Welfare portion of their monthly meetings, the incentivize speaking up about near-misses or recent incidents by offering to have their organization pay their insurance deductible when they speak, rather than the individual pay it. In addition, they meet informally with Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) to discuss issues and suggest changes where appropriate. The SFBP also has an active relationship with the U.S. Coast Guard, through the Harbor Safety Committee Navigation Work Group, regarding navigation in restricted visibility and under-keel clearance, resulting in published “best practices” guidelines.

The discussion moved to continuing education and its use in risk mitigation. Executive Director Garfinkle explained that continuing professional development courses at both Artelia’s Port Revel Facility and California Maritime Academy are good tools for no-consequence performance review, but do not work well for competency review. There was a consensus within the Committee that training offers a forum for experimentation not available in the real world that can be helpful in critical decision making situations and that too much assessment of skills associated with training would chilling effect on the learning environment.

Capt. McIsaac commented that manned model training and computer simulations are helpful tools to push pilots out of their comfort zones with no catastrophic consequences and that these training exercises often result in informative discussions among the pilots.

PMSA Vice President Mike Jacob stated that the issue with the current IRC process is that it does not provide a feedback loop for incidents. He noted that, under current regulation, the Board lacks a process for evaluation of a pilot’s skill set. Mr. Jacob suggested that a solution might be to re-test at certain points as required with a motor vehicle license.

Mr. Connolly turned the discussion to a recent United States Coast Guard Marine Safety Alert wherein the topic was Bridge Resource Management in Pilotage Waters and invited the pilots present to address the subject. Capt. Hurt noted that the term bridge team management is a misnomer, in that the pilot, while sharing some common goals with the ship’s crew, primarily the safe navigation of the vessel, has a mandate as the representative of the state of California, to give the state’s interest in safety and protection of the environment priority over other interests.

Capt. Hurt added that the implication that everyone on the bridge of a ship is a team does a disservice to the job of a pilot. They are outside advisors who are there to do a service. They provide information to the bridge team to help them solidify a passage plan.

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It was noted that the pilot should work to ensure effective communication and collaboration with the bridge team and bring value to that team, but rarely feels part of a team.

The Committee next discussed Personal Piloting Units (PPU). Mr. Garfinkle stated that there is a risk involved in their use, in that they can act to distract a pilot at critical times, and that equipment must be kept current with the latest software to be fully effective. Capt. Hurt responded that there is an SFBP internal committee (the Navigation Technology Committee), which evaluates PPUs and software to suggest improvements and that representatives from the committee and SFBP would attend an electronic navigation conference in November in order to review equipment.

When Mr. Connolly inquired about other identified risks, Mr. Garfinkle expressed his concern about interactions in the Bullshead Channel/Union Pacific Railroad Bridge area. He would like to gather concerned stakeholders such as the State Lands Commission, Office of Spill Prevention and Response, SFBP, Coast Guard, and oil terminals proximate to the channel, to discuss incident prevention strategies, as the consequences of interaction are potentially very significant.

The discussion then turned to Ultra-Large Container Vessels (ULCV), which are coming to Oakland with more frequency. Capt. McIsaac reported that one of the identified risks associated with these vessels is the dynamic under keel clearance (UKC). When these ships are crossing the bar with a deep draft and a heavy swell running there is a risk that they could make contact with the bottom of the channel. Capt. McIsaac reported that pitch tests have been conducted on the Columbia River bar, but that there have not been any studies conducted in San Francisco, so all current procedures are based on experience. Ships have been held up due to tide concerns, and the SFBP is exercising caution.

5. Public comment on matters not on the agenda.

Mr. Connolly would like to see further discussion of the human element in future meetings.

6. Proposals for additions to next Committee meeting agenda.

Capt. Roberts asked that the Committee look more specifically at the IRC process before the Rules and Regulations Committee takes on the subject.

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7. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Prepared by: Kelly Dolcini