

PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ref. : HQ/COM 928/29 (20)

Minutes of the Pilotage Advisory Committee Meeting

Date : 12 April 2011 (Tuesday)
Place : Conference Room A, 24/F, Harbour Building
Time : 10:00 a.m.

Present

Chairman: Mr. Francis LIU	Deputy Director of Marine
Member: Capt. CHAN Lok-ching	HK Shipowners Association
Mr. CHAN Wo-shing	HK Liner Shipping Association
Ms. Gloria CHOY	Containers Terminal Operators
Mr. LEE Kwok-wai, Patrick	Dockyard Industry
Mr. WU Ka-shun	Tug Operators
Capt. LO Ting-ho	Master Mariner
Mr. John WILSON	Master Mariner
Mr. NG Kin-man	Master Mariner
Mr. CHAN Ming-shun	HK Pilots Association
Mr. SIU Wai-lim	HK Pilots Association
Mr. Raymond CHUNG	AD/PC, MD
Mr. FUNG Kwok-ming	GM/VTS, MD
Mr. CHAN Tim	S(N)EX, MD
Secretary: Ms. Ivy CHAN	EO(C&G), MD

In Attendance

Mr. Eric CHEUNG (on behalf of Mr. CHEN Tao, Roger)	Dry Bulk Cargo Operators
Mr. James CAO (on behalf of Mr. LIU Yun-shu)	Break Bulk Cargo Operators
Mr. CHENG Siu-lun (on behalf of Ms. LOW Oi-lin, Christine)	Oil Terminal Operators
Ms. Yvette CHAN	HK Pilots Association
Mr. FUNG Ka-wai	HK Pilots Association
Mr. HO Wai-man	HK Pilots Association
Mr. LAW Lap-keung	MO/VTC(3), MD
Mr. Andrew NG	MO/Pilotage, MD

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Chairman welcomed all present. He extended his welcome particularly to the following members –
 - (a) Mr. CHAN Wo-shing, Mr. LEE Kwok-wai, Patrick, Mr. WU Ka-shun, Capt. LO Ting-ho, Mr. John WILSON and Mr. CHAN Ming-shun, who were newly appointed PAC members and some of them were attending the meeting for the first time;
 - (b) Mr. FUNG Ka-wai and Mr. HO Wai-man who were new observers of HKPA attending the meeting for the first time;
 - (c) Mr. Eric CHEUNG, who was attending the meeting on behalf of Mr. CHEN Tao, Roger representing the dry bulk cargo operators;
 - (d) Mr. James CAO, who was attending the meeting on behalf of Mr. LIU Yun-shu representing the break bulk cargo operators; and
 - (e) Mr. CHENG Siu-lun, who was attending the meeting on behalf of Ms. LOW Oi-lin, Christine representing the oil terminal operators.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

2. The minutes were sent to members for comments on 9.2.2011. Some proposed amendments had been received and the revised minutes were sent to members for further comments on 31.3.2011. A further minor amendment had been received and the updated version of the minutes was sent to members on 4.4.2011. No further amendments were proposed at the meeting and the minutes of the last meeting were confirmed without further amendments.

II. Interview of Apprentice Pilot

3. The Chairman informed the meeting that the applicant, Mr. WONG Yau-choi who had already passed the necessary medical examination would be

interviewed.

4. The applicant was asked to brief members of his own background. Members had asked and he replied to some relevant questions about his ship handling experience and whether he could adapt to the work pattern of pilots which required shift work.
5. After interview, Mr. John WILSON enquired why Mr. WONG was not successful in applying for a position as an apprentice pilot in 1998. Mr. SIU Wai-lim explained that although Mr. WONG was one of the candidates with the requisite caliber in that round, his application was not successful due to limited vacancies available. Mr. Patrick LEE noted that Mr. WONG had no recent experience in handling ocean-going vessels and he raised his concerns over the training to be provided to Mr. WONG and the assessments to be conducted after the training. Mr. CHAN Ming-shun responded that an intensive six-month training would be given to all apprentice pilots during their apprenticeship. HKPA would also conduct internal practical assessments for every individual apprentice pilot before recommending him for the upgrading examination. In case the performance of the apprentice pilot was not satisfactory or he failed the internal assessments, HKPA would extend his training period.
6. After discussions, members were satisfied with the candidate' s qualifications and experience, and agreed to recommend him to the Pilotage Authority for registration as an apprentice pilot.

[Post-meeting note: With the approval from the Pilotage Authority, Mr. WONG registered as an apprentice pilot on 15.4.2011.]

III. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes of Meeting

PAC Paper No. 2/2010 – “Acceptance of Licence (Deck Officer) Class I for the Registration of Apprentice Pilots”

7. It was agreed at the last meeting that the need to study on the acceptability of a Class I (Deck Officer) licence would be revisited in future when required. Members agreed that this item could be deleted.

Government Mooring Buoy Mooring Arrangement

8. Mr. Andrew NG reported that another on-site observation and video filming had not yet been arranged so far. He suggested that this item would be temporarily removed. Once the video filming as advised by HKPA was done, the video would be submitted to the Marine Industrial Safety Section for conducting a study. Upon completion of the study, this item would be brought up again for discussion. HKPA agreed to the above arrangement.

PAC Paper No. 5/2010 – “Berthing Guidelines Amendment Procedures”

9. Mr. Andrew NG reported that the proposed revised wordings of paragraph 8 and the proposed deletion of paragraph 9 of Chapter 2 of the Berthing Guidelines were sent to the members of the PAC Working Group (PACWG) for comments. Amongst nine PACWG members, seven endorsed the proposed wordings and two, i.e. Mr. John WILSON and Capt. CHAN Lok-ching, suggested amending the wordings slightly. The wordings suggested by Mr. WILSON and Capt. CHAN were quite similar. After deliberation, the meeting agreed that:
 - (a) paragraph 8 be revised as “In emergency or as the situation warrants, these Guidelines are subject to change at short notice.”;
 - (b) paragraph 9 be deleted; and
 - (c) other minor proposed amendments to Chapter 2 be adopted.

10. Capt. CHAN Lok-ching enquired which party was responsible for kicking off the changes and endorsing the proposed amendments and who would be the responsible party in case the proposed amendments were wrong. Mr. Andrew NG said that normally the proposed amendments would be initiated by HKPA. If possible, a PAC meeting would be arranged for discussing the proposed amendments. However, for emergency situations, it might not be possible to convene a meeting to seek members' endorsement.
11. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that in the event of emergency situations or accidents, some additional requirements might have to be imposed instantly. Under such circumstances, MD would work together with HKPA to disseminate the changes immediately. HKPA would inform the agents during pilot bookings whereas MD would help to inform the affected vessels if necessary.
12. The Chairman added that MD always maintained close communication with HKPA. MD would examine any proposed amendments cautiously and if necessary, fine-tune the proposed changes. For any major amendments, if time allowed, PAC would be consulted before implementation.
13. In response to Mr. John WILSON's enquiry, Mr. Raymond CHUNG briefed members of the background of the proposed amendments to paragraph 8. Due to the "Yao Hai-Neftegaz 67" incident, HKPA announced on 15.1.2010 with immediate effect a temporary suspension of pilotage services for night transit of bulkers and tankers of 198m - 230m in length at Ma Wan. In view of that, there was a need to review the existing paragraph 8 which stated that the Guidelines were subject to change without notice.
14. Mr. SIU Wai-lim said that there was always very good communication between MD and HKPA. HKPA shared the same interest with MD as the objective of HKPA was also to protect the safety of the port and ships calling Hong Kong.
15. Mr. John WILSON said that other chapters of the Guidelines would also be the

focus of the discussion and there was a need to review the entire Guidelines to see if these were comprehensive enough to cover all scenarios.

16. The Chairman said that MD would balance the concerns of all parties in the industry and discuss with them before making certain arrangements. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that the Guidelines were a living document and there were amendments to the Guidelines nearly at every PAC meeting. Apart from MD and HKPA which were the advocates of most of the amendments, members could also propose amendments to the Guidelines. The amendments would then be discussed at a PAC meeting before endorsement. It was believed that all involved parties, with their knowledge and experience, could be able to examine whether the amendments were reasonable or not.

PAC Paper No. 7/2010 – “Retaining the Same Class of Licence for Pilots to Work beyond the Age of 65 Years”

17. Mr. Andrew NG reported that the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) was processing the draft drafting instructions (DDIs) concerning the proposed amendments of the Pilotage Ordinance. MD had urged THB to process the DDIs as early as possible. It was expected that the proposed amendments would be submitted to the Legislative Council in late 2011 or early 2012.
18. Mr. CHAN Ming-shun said that two to three pilots would reach the age of 65 in 2012 and thus HKPA was concerned about the progress of the legislative amendments. The Chairman responded that there were many legislative proposals competing for time slots in each legislative session. Having said that, MD had accorded high priority to this item and had already informed THB of the urgent need for processing these amendments.

Ocean-going tugs transiting north of Lantau

19. Mr. Andrew NG reported that a meeting between MD and HKPA was held in

early February 2011 to discuss the proposed layout of a buoyed channel in north of Lantau and a recommended route between Shekou and Ngan Chau for ocean-going tugs. After the meeting, HKPA submitted a counter-proposal to MD on 17.3.2011 and this was being studied. Once the study was completed, simulations would be conducted together with HKPA.

20. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that the recommended route was being finalized. MD would take a look of the recommended route together with the future realignment of the channels in north of Lantau. Once completed, MD would hold a discussion with tug masters in Shekou and explain to them the recommended route.
21. Mr. John WILSON raised a concern as to how the enforcement to make sure that the tugs would follow the recommended route could be carried out. Mr. Raymond CHUNG responded that the implementation of the recommended route would be monitored by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) and MD's patrol boats would be tasked to regulate the traffic. VTC would step in if they spotted any anomalies.
22. In response to Mr. John WILSON's enquiry on the penalty imposed on those vessels not being in a right place, the Chairman responded that for VTS participating vessels, VTC would advise and instruct the vessels accordingly. Warning letter would be issued if necessary. For serious cases involving breach of legislation, prosecution would be initiated if there was sufficient evidence.

Busy traffic to/from West Shenzhen ports causing delay of vessel arrivals at Urmston Road Pilot Station

23. Mr. CHAN Ming-shun reported that an unofficial meeting with the pilots and terminals' management in Shekou was held on 6.4.2011. HKPA had expressed the liners' concern about the delay of vessel arrivals. Mr. WU

Ka-shun also reported that the liners' concern had been conveyed and discussed at the regular meeting between Hong Kong and Shenzhen tug companies on 11.1.2011.

24. Mr. CHAN Wo-shing said that Shekou pilots had so far not taken any further actions on the imposition of pilot detention fee. He also reported that after the last meeting, the pilot detention in Shekou had been reduced recently.

Air-draft limitation at Tsing Ma Bridge

25. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that the matter had been discussed at the meeting of the Port Operations Committee (POC) in February 2011. POC agreed with the proposal of allowing the passage of vessels with air-drafts slightly exceeding 53m by utilizing the tidal windows and the operational details would be followed up by the PAC. He said that there was currently no apparatus to verify the height as declared by the masters in the pre-arrival notifications and the only instrument to measure the height of tide was the tidal gauge. In view of the importance of the Tsing Ma Bridge which was the only link to the airport and Lantau Island, MD had to work out the implementation details very carefully. Once all the details had been worked out and necessary procedures put in place, MD would seek endorsement from members and also the stakeholders. In response to Capt. CHAN Lok-ching's enquiry on the timeframe, Mr. Raymond CHUNG hoped that the details could be worked out before the next meeting.
26. The Chairman added that as the Bridge also carried railways, the safety of the trains passengers was also paramount. As there was only one tidal gauge near Ma Wan, he said that an additional tidal gauge should be installed in the vicinity of the Tsing Ma Bridge to back up the existing tidal gauge.
27. Capt. CHAN Lok-ching pointed out that the predictions and measurements of tides must be accurate to allow vessels to safely pass the area. In case the

transit period was lapsed, the vessel should proceed to an anchorage to wait for next transit period.

28. Mr. CHAN Ming-shun said that HKPA also understood the safety concern and would make best endeavours to confirm the correctness of all the relevant figures and times as far as practicable and would advise all pilots to check a vessel's air-draft from the water level before the transiting of a vessel at Ma Wan.
29. Mr. Patrick LEE said that one of the alternatives was to reduce the height of the mast of a ship by a few metres. He suggested the shipping companies should take this into account when building and designing new ships.
30. In response to Mr. John WILSON's enquiry, Mr. CHAN Ming-shun said that pilots would check the air-draft information of vessels after boarding the vessels and they would also report the information to MD. However, currently, not all pilots would record this information. Mr. John WILSON suggested HKPA to introduce written procedures requiring pilots to record vessels' air-draft information so that the relevant statistics of the number of vessels with air-drafts reaching close to 53m transit Ma Wan could be compiled for further study.
31. Mr. CHAN Wo-shing and Mr. James CAO also expressed their concerns over the relaxation of the air-draft limitation and hoped that arrangements would be made to allow vessels slightly exceeding 53m to transit Ma Wan.
32. Mr. Raymond CHUNG thanked members for their suggestions and opinions. He said that MD would work on the procedures and implementation details and would report to PAC in due course.

Length of vessels in Schedules 2 and 3 to the Pilotage Order (Cap. 84C)

33. Mr. Andrew NG tabled the current and past legislation concerning the maximum lengths of vessels handled by different classes of pilots. Since 1996, the maximum length of vessel that a Class IIA pilot could handle was 260m and the maximum length of vessel at that time was about 330m. In 1984, the corresponding maximum length for a Class IIA pilot was 229m and the maximum length of vessel at that time was about 300m. These showed that the difference in the length of vessels between a Class IIA and Class I pilot was not as significant as the existing situation where the maximum length for a Class IIA pilot was 260m but the maximum length of vessel was about 400m. Hence, there was a need to review Schedule 2 of the Pilotage Order. As the matter was quite complicated and there might be a need to add a class in between, he suggested that the matter be discussed further in a PAC Working Group.
34. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that apart from the length of vessels, there was also a need to review Schedule 3 which stipulated the experience required for advancing to the next class. Should there be a need to introduce an additional class, he considered that the training or experience required for different classes of pilots should also be reviewed. He understood that HKPA had certain in-house requirements on experience for Class IIA pilot newly upgraded to Class I and suggested that these should be laid down as part of the requirements.
35. Mr. John WILSON said that there were three simulators in Hong Kong which were now in use. He suggested HKPA to make use of these simulators to train pilots in manoeuvring larger vessels.
36. The Chairman concluded that the matter should be discussed at a PAC Working Group and interested members should be co-opted for discussion.

IV. New Discussion Item

PAC Paper No. 1/2011 - "Proposed Amendments to the Berthing Guidelines"

37. Mr. Andrew NG reported that the paper had been circulated to PACWG members and members' comments had been incorporated. The proposed amendments of the Guidelines were minor in nature, i.e. including new berth, updating information of wharf, terminal, government mooring buoys etc. Members had no further comments on the paper and the paper was endorsed.

V. Any Other Business

Pilotage dues revision proposed by HKPA

38. Mr. CHAN Wo-shing said that they had received HKPA's proposal of increasing of pilotage dues and were discussing with HKPA on the matter. The second meeting with HKPA would be held on 14.4.2011 and he hoped that a consensus could be reached at the meeting. Apart from this, HKPA also advised that they would like to reduce the number of vessel schedules transiting Ma Wan from 16 to 12 for the reasons of safety concern and saving resources.
39. In response to Mr. CHAN Wo-shing's enquiry on why the current arrangement of 16 schedules was not safe, Mr. CHAN Ming-shun said that the traffic was busier nowadays and there was a need to widen the time gap between vessels southbound and northbound to enhance safety. Mr. SIU Wai-lim added that the number of vessels transiting Ma Wan for Shekou had been increased from 1,300 per month in the first half of 2010 to 1,500 per month in the second half of 2010.
40. Mr. CHAN Wo-shing expressed concerns about the effect of the proposed reduction of schedules on shipping lines and the terminals in Hong Kong and Shekou. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that there were two bottlenecks at Ma

Wan and CP3/4 buoys and only one ship could pass through at a time. While efforts would be made to allow more ships to pass through as far as practicable, he hoped the industry could understand the physical limitations and the importance of safety concern. Mr. CHAN Wo-shing said that he had no objection to the proposed reduction if this was required from safety point of view.

41. The Chairman concluded that the proposed pilotage dues revision and the proposed reduction of the schedules for transiting Ma Wan were two different issues and should be discussed separately. Concerning the pilotage dues revision, he hoped that the liners and HKPA could work together to come to a consensus and then put up the proposal to PAC for discussion and endorsement. As for the schedules for transiting Ma Wan, if there was any formal proposal to change the number of the schedules, it would be further discussed at the PAC meeting.

Traffic management of vessels outside Hong Kong waters

42. Capt. CHAN Lok-ching enquired as to how the traffic just outside Hong Kong waters was managed and how MD coordinated with the Mainland authority to ensure safe passage of vessels. Mr. FUNG Kwok-ming said that there was established mechanism for MD to discuss navigation issues with the Mainland authority. This mechanism could be used to discuss the above concern. The Chairman added that MD had regular meetings with Guangdong and Zhuhai authorities.
43. Capt. CHAN Lok-ching enquired whether the above matter should be raised at PAC or through any other channels. Mr. Raymond CHUNG responded that as this was day-to-day operational issue, it was not appropriate to discuss at PAC. If required, a meeting with MD might be arranged to discuss the matter further to see what improvements could be made to alleviate the situation. The Chairman said that if the matter warranted further discussion with the Mainland

authority, MD would consider raising the matter to the Mainland authority.

Health of ships from Japan

44. Concerning ships from Japan which might be contaminated by radioactive material, Mr. CHAN Ming-shun enquired as to how to create a system to protect the safety of all parties concerned such as pilots, liners, terminal workers etc. and the means the related information from Department of Health (DH) or MD was released to the industry.

45. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that a free pratique system was now in place to check the pre-arrival health clearance of incoming vessels. He quoted the case of a vessel from Japan calling Hong Kong in early April 2011 to illustrate the operation of this system. As the measurement submitted by the vessel showed that the radiation level at some locations exceeded the permissible limit, DH withheld the issue of the free pratique. After re-measurement, the report submitted to DH showed that the radioactivity readings were below Hong Kong's intervention level for surface decontamination. The vessel was then anchored in a designated anchorage adjacent to the southern boundary of Hong Kong waters. Port Health officers conducted the screening for radioactivity on board and confirmed that the vessel met the safety standards of Hong Kong. A free pratique was finally issued for that vessel to berth in Hong Kong. Similarly, Customs and Excise Department would conduct radioactivity scanning of the cargoes according to the established procedures to ensure the safety of cargoes.

46. Ms. Gloria CHOY expressed the difficulties of contacting the responsible government officers for the updated information. She suggested that a coordinating officer should be assigned to handle the related enquiries. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that MD was responsible for traffic management of vessels. Health matters and the related enquiries were handled by DH. Having said that, MD would closely liaise with DH to see what their

requirements would be. However, for certain circumstances, MD also had to await DH's decision/response. He added that the contact point of MD to communicate with Port Health was VTC.

47. Ms. Gloria CHOY enquired whether there was an emergency response system in place for all stakeholders in the port to communicate during emergency situations such as tsunami and earthquake. If negative, whether consideration would be made to implement such system to deal with future emergency situations. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that the Terminal Operators Association had written to THB enquiring the above and THB would reply to the Association direct in this regard. The Chairman said that there were contingency arrangements in Hong Kong to deal with emergency situations. However, in view of the recent earthquake in Japan, MD would discuss with relevant bureaux and departments to fine-tune the arrangements to make them more comprehensive so as to be able to deal with similar incidents in future more smoothly.
48. In response to Mr. SIU Wai-lim's concern about the health of ships from Japan on the radiation level, Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that International Maritime Organization, World Health Organization and International Atomic Energy Agency had made announcements that all ships from Japanese ports were safe. Besides, the existing free pratique system could perform the gate keeping function to ensure that all ships coming to Hong Kong were safe and healthy.
49. Capt. CHAN Lok-ching shared that their company had engaged professional surveyors to check the radiation level of ships before departing from Japan. The checking by two surveyors took around four hours.

[Post-meeting note: Capt. CHAN Lok-ching sent information on the measures to be taken by Japan Government in checking the radiation level of ships and containers to members for reference after the meeting.]

VI. Date of Next Meeting

50. The meeting ended at 12:45 p.m. The date of the next meeting would be announced in due course.