

Minutes of the 42nd POC Meeting

Date: Thursday, 27 March 2003

Time: 1000 hours

Venue: Conference Room A, 24th Floor, Harbour Building, Marine Department

Present	Mr. S Y Tsui	Chairman
	Mr. K M Lee	Member
	Mr. H B Chan	(on behalf of Secretary, PMB)
	Mr. Reuben Chung	Member
	Mr. Sunny Ho	(on behalf of Mr Jeffrey Lam)
	Mr. Terence Tse	Member
	Capt Y K So	(on behalf of Capt K W Pang)
	Mr. Chris Pooley	Member
	Mr. Terence Sit	Member
	Mr. L C Chan	(on behalf of Mr Y S Young)
	Mr. C C Lee	Member
	Mr. Neil Russel	Member
	Mr. David Ho	Member
	Mr. Peter K Y Wong	Secretary
In attendance	Mr. Francis Liu	MD
	Mr. M K Chan	MD
	Mr. K L Lee	MD

Apologies	Mr. Eddy Ma	Member
	Mr. Anthony Loo	Member

1. Open of Meeting

1.1 The **Chairman** welcomed all to the first meeting of Year 2003.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the 41st meeting held on 11 December 2002 were confirmed without amendment.

3. New Items

3.1 POC Paper No. 1/03

Prevention of Atypical Pneumonia Disease

3.1.1 **The Chairman** said that the Government was very concerned with the recent development of Atypical Pneumonia (AP) in Hong Kong and advised the shipping community to take necessary precautions and measures against the disease.

3.1.2 Based on the general recommendations provided by the Department of Health, **The Chairman** said that the POC paper No. 1/03 was issued as a general guidance for the industry. For more information, the industry should consult the Department of Health or visit their website at www.info.gov.hk/dh. In order to reduce the chance of the spread of the infection, **the Chairman** urged members to notify the Department of Health of any AP infection or suspected cases.

3.1.3 **Mr. David HO** said that acting on the guidance provided by the Transport Department they had been carrying out necessary preventive measures against AP in their fleet of ferries such as cleaning and disinfecting passenger cabins on a daily basis.

- 3.1.4 **Mr. K M LEE** urged members to follow the general directions of the Department of Health in drawing up specific guidelines relevant to their own sectors.
- 3.1.5 **Mr. Terence SIT** asked whether there would be sufficient screening of vessels visiting Hong Kong for AP. As a precautionary measure, he said that his boarding staff had already been instructed to stay alert to any shipboard personnel who were found to have symptoms of the disease and to report accordingly.
- 3.1.6 **The Chairman** said that the Port Health Office had a set of procedures in place to handle AP incidents. Besides, he pointed out that the masters of incoming vessels were obliged to report on any suspected cases of AP on board prior to their arrival. In the event of any suspected cases on board, they should be referred to Port Health Office for action. While operating within Hong Kong waters, vessels were advised to take all necessary precautionary measures to reduce the chance of contracting or spreading the disease.
- 3.1.7 **Mr. Y K SO** said that their shipboard crews had been instructed to clean up their pilot boats twice a day, and any crewmember or shore-based staff, who were found to have symptoms of AP, would be granted sick leave at once for isolation purpose. In addition, all pilots were advised to wear a facemask prior to boarding vessels.
- 3.1.8 **Mr. Neil RUSSELL** said that in the light of increasing overseas enquiries from shipping and port operators there was a need to ensure the consistency and accuracy of information being provided by the Government on AP so as to avoid causing any confusion and misunderstanding. **The Chairman** shared Mr. RUSSELL's viewpoint and said that, if members were in doubt, they should consult the Department of Health.

3.2 POC Paper No. 2/03 Maritime and Port Security

- 3.2.1 **Mr. K L LEE** briefed members on the new security requirements adopted by the IMO in the form of amendments to the SOLAS Convention and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) in last December. He said that a softcopy of the ISPS Code had been placed on the website of the Marine Department for downloading.

- 3.2.2 On ship security, **Mr. K L LEE** said that the Marine Department had been taking necessary actions for the implementation of the requirements for Hong Kong registered ships. These included the authorization of various Classification Societies as Recognized Security Organizations (RSO) to approve ship security plans and issue security certificates.
- 3.2.3 On the matter of port security, **the Chairman** said that discussion was still ongoing between relevant Policy Bureaux as to which Bureau would take on the role as the Designated Authority for port security. As far as the Marine Department (MD) was concerned, **the Chairman** said that the MD would draw up security plans for anchorages, buoyed areas and fairways under its management and would appoint a security officer to execute such plans.
- 3.2.4 Noting that the ISPS Code was required to be implemented by 1st July 2004, **the Chairman** urged members to take note of the new security requirements and be prepared accordingly.
- 3.2.5 **Mr. C C LEE** asked whether the ISPS Code would be applicable to barge operators. **Mr. K L LEE** said that according to the spirit of the Code, barges would not be regarded as a port facility to which the Code applied. Given the interface between local barges and ships engaged on international voyages, **Mr. K L LEE** envisaged that such barges would be required to implement certain security measures as defined in the security plan covering a particular location. For instance, in the case of mid-stream operation, an anchorage would be classified as a port facility and thus barges working therein would be required to comply with those security measures as defined in the port facility security plan covering that anchorage.
- 3.2.6 **The Chairman** said that barge operators would certainly be involved at some stage in drawing up a coordinated security plan for the port as a whole. In addressing the security interface between international and local shipping, it was inevitable that local shipping would to a certain degree be directly or indirectly affected. Hence, there was a need to ensure the compatibility between local operation procedures and that of international shipping in cognizance of the ISPS Code.

- 3.2.7 **Mr. K M LEE** said that it would be expensive for shipping and port operators to send their staff to attend overseas training courses. If necessary, he said that the Marine Department could render assistance by organizing training courses run in Hong Kong so that personnel responsible for security could receive their training locally. **The Chairman** supplemented that the Classification Societies he had spoken to were interested to send people to Hong Kong to organize security training courses for shipping companies in Hong Kong.
- 3.2.8 **Mr. Terrence SIT** inquired about the track records of the Classification Societies inclined to offer security-training courses. In response, **Mr. K M LEE** said that these Classification Societies would mainly assume the role as a consultant in organizing security training through the employment of security experts from their countries to run such courses.
- 3.2.9 **Mr. L C CHAN** asked whether computer-based training was acceptable under the ISPS Code since it was difficult for them to arrange shipboard personnel to undertake the required training ashore. **Mr. K L LEE** said that there was no firm decision yet as to whether this mode of training would be accepted. However, based on some of the comments provided by Contracting States on the area of training, it is envisaged that distance learning might not be able to cover the full spectrum of training required.
- 3.2.10 Since the Hong Kong Pilots Association's main interaction (or interface) with the international shipping was personnel, **Mr. Y K SO** asked what kind of training was required of pilots. **The Chairman** said that in the context of the ISPS Code such interface (i.e. pilotage service) would not be regarded as a port facility and hence the HKPA was not required to draw up a security plan. However, the HKPA would be welcome to appoint representatives to attend future training courses organized by the Marine Department.
- 3.2.11 In implementing the IMO security measures applicable to ships, **Mr. Terrence SIT** said that the respective roles and responsibilities between the Government and the shipping industry were clear. However, with regard to security of port facilities, there appeared to be a grey area arising from the co-existence of public and private-run facilities. In this regard, he urged the Government to clarify the respective roles and duties between private and public

sectors and advise which Bureau would assume the role as the lead authority in terms of port security. In addition, he requested that the local shipping agents be updated to the progress of implementing the ISPS Code in view of their role in coordinating the ships' activities in port.

- 3.2.12 **The Chairman** said that the members would be kept abreast of future development in taking forward the Code. With the consent and support of members, **the Chairman** asked Mr. H B CHAN to raise the concerns of the industry with his Bureau (i.e. Economic Development and Labour Bureau), which should resolve the matter urgently with the Security Bureau in establishing the Designated Authority (DA) within the Government. In response, **Mr. H B CHAN** said the Government was fully aware of the urgency of the matter and was in the course of establishing the DA to enforce the ISPS Code.

3.3 POC Paper No. 3/03

Consultancy Study on Marine Traffic Risk Assessment for Hong Kong Waters

- 3.3.1 **The Chairman** briefed members on the latest progress of the study, which aimed at enhancing the safety and integrity of the port. Based on the latest programme, the study would be commenced in May 2003.
- 3.3.2 Having received no comments from the members, **the Chairman** said that the Committee would be updated on the progress and findings of the study in due course.

4. Any Other Business

- 4.1 No other business was raised.

5. Date of Next Meeting

- 5.1 The date of the next meeting would be advised in due course.

6. Close of Meeting

6.1 The meeting was closed at 1200 hours.

Confirmed this day of 2003

Chairman

Secretary