

Advice provided by the C-NLOPB's Offshore Helicopter Safety Inquiry (OHSI) Implementation Team to the C-NLOPB Board

Advising Document
OHSI Phase I, Recommendation 25
Regarding safety forums



In November 2010, the Honourable Robert Wells, QC, submitted the Report for Phase I of the OHSI to the C-NLOPB, containing 29 recommendations for enhancing the safety of helicopter travel offshore. Each Advising Document contains the text of the recommendation for which the advice is offered.

The Team's advice for Recommendation 25 was accepted in principle by the C-NLOPB Board at their meeting on April 28, 2011. At that time, the C-NLOPB took responsibility for developing its strategy to implement the recommendation.

The OHSI Reports, other Advising Documents, C-NLOPB OHSI Action Plans, and more can be found on the C-NLOPB website: http://www.cnlopb.nl.ca/ohsi_main.shtml

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Recommendation

It is recommended that the Regulator hold Safety Forums at least three times a year. Forums should involve the Regulator, oil operators, helicopter operator(s), supplier(s) of personal protective equipment, weather observers, trainers, worker representatives, and any other appropriate participants. All issues of concern to any of the above should be raised and receive full discussion. Ongoing improvements in helicopter safety should be monitored. The results of Safety Forum deliberations and any recommendations should be made public and should be taken into consideration by the Regulator in setting goals.

Method

A working group of the C-NLOPB's OHSI Implementation Team reviewed the recommendation, identified the system safety deficiency, and developed an implementation plan. The working group subsequently reviewed practices that are employed in other offshore oil jurisdictions and other safety-critical industries for exchanging safety-related information, and for identifying and addressing safety issues. They group drafted terms of reference for the Safety Forum and presented all of its information to the complete OHSI Implementation Team, and this information became the basis for the Team's proposed implementation strategy that will be considered by the C-NLOPB.

System Safety Deficiency (SSD)

There is no formal mechanism in the C-NL Offshore for the broad exchange of information between all stakeholders in the C-NL Offshore Area so that safety issues can be proactively identified and addressed.

Background

The working group focused mainly on the following: "Step Change in Safety" in the UK, the Petroleum Safety Authority (PSA) Safety Forum in Norway, and the Marine Safety Forum in Northern Europe. A summary of each is provided below.

Step Change in Safety

Founded in 1997, Step Change in Safety is an oil and gas industry group made up of Operators and Contractors, trade unions and associations, and the Regulator. It has the goal of making the UK the safest place to work in the worldwide oil and gas industry. Step Change strategies are set by a leadership team with day-to-day operations run by the support team. The Step Change Leadership Team sets the strategy for Step Change and steers the associated development work. They represent the Managing Directors or Chief Executive Officers of the companies and organizations involved in the upstream UK oil and gas industry. Nominations for the Leadership Team are sought annually, with the goal of refreshing the complete team membership over a period of 3 years. Engagement with the industry is sustained by

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a network of: Elected Safety Representatives; Offshore Installation Managers and Supervisors; Safety Professionals; and company Focal Points. Member companies are required to appoint a Step Change Focal Point. They act as the main communication link between their organisation's senior management, its workforce, and Step Change in Safety. In pursuit of its goal, Step Change:

- Listens and responds to health and safety issues and concerns raised either by individuals or organizations
- Helps the industry share safety information so that they can learn from past incidents
- Finds solutions to common industry safety issues and barriers to improve safety performance
- Through the use of workgroups, develops practical solutions that have industry wide application
- Publishes guidance, recommendations and information that will help improve health and safety in the oil and gas industry

PSA Safety Forum

In the Norwegian petroleum industry, the PSA Safety Forum is the "key tripartite HSE [Health, Safety, and Environment] arena." The Safety Forum aims to contribute to increased knowledge and understanding of why and how the Norwegian oil and gas industry should be a pioneer industry in regards to HSE, both on a national and international level. The Safety Forum was established in 2001 to initiate, discuss and follow up on relevant safety, emergency preparedness, and working environment issues in the petroleum industry, both offshore and at land facilities, in a tripartite perspective. The following member organisations are represented in the Safety Forum: Norwegian Oil Industry Association (OLF), the Federation of Norwegian Industries, the Norwegian Shipowners' Association, the Norwegian Union of Energy Workers (SAFE), Lederne, the Norwegian Union of Marine Engineers (DSO), Industry Energy (IE), the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), and the Norwegian United Federation of Trade Unions. The PSA Safety Forum is a 15 member group selected by their respective member organizations who have been delegated responsibility for reviewing safety issues. The forum is led by the Director of Petroleum Safety Authority and the PSA provides secretarial support. This group meets 4 or 5 times a year to discuss ongoing issues, specific projects, and serious incidents. The minutes of its meetings are placed on the PSA website. The group also coordinates an Annual Safety Conference.

Marine Safety Forum

The Northern European oil and gas industry formed the Marine Safety Forum, which actively promotes good practices and initiatives to promote safety within the marine sector. It is managed by a Steering Group of approximately 12 representatives from the membership and a secretary who meet every six weeks. The membership is made up of ship-owning/managing companies, logistics companies, oil companies, marine consultants, and other interested parties (i.e. Port Authorities, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Chamber of Shipping). The work of the Marine Safety Forum is primarily carried out by "workgroups" which concentrate on specific topics. The workgroup reports to the Steering Group with the eventual aim that a "Good Practice" regarding the specific issue is promulgated to the membership. Every six months there is an "All Members" meeting for the whole membership.

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Discussion

The working group decided that the Safety Forum proposed in the OHSI recommendation would best suit the C-NL Offshore if it took the form of periodic meetings for stakeholders to openly discuss helicopter safety issues. The Team reasoned that the C-NL Offshore is a much smaller industry than the UK and Norwegian industries, and processes that work in those areas may not be as effective in the C-NL Offshore Area. For that reason, the working group did not favour a Safety Forum composed of a group of industry representatives (set membership) who have been delegated responsibility for reviewing helicopter safety issues.

One of the main objectives of the Safety Forum is to provide an arena to exchange information among C-NL Offshore stakeholders so that industry safety issues can be proactively identified. It is not meant to address daily, installation-specific issues. There are already processes in place to address installation-specific issues, such as the JOHSC, hazard reporting systems, worker and employer responsibilities, etc.

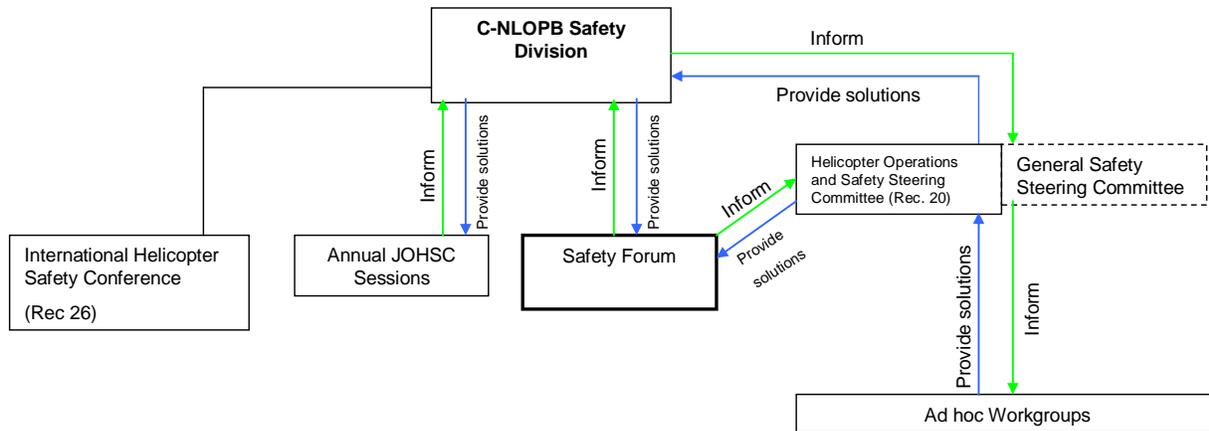
The working group envisaged a process that will allow interested stakeholders to put forward issues and concerns regarding helicopter safety in the C-NL Offshore. The Safety Forum would promote open discussion of pertinent safety issues identified by the Regulator, Operators, helicopter service provider(s), supplier(s) of personal protective equipment, weather observers, trainers, worker representatives, and other participants. These discussions would allow specific concerns and issues to be identified, so that appropriate mitigating action could be developed. Some issues are likely to be mitigated through discussion at the Forum, while others may need activities to be assigned to specific stakeholders. The group decided that an open forum – although useful for identifying issues and addressing minor issues – is not the best mechanism for resolving systemic or complex issues. Therefore, the group thought it best that issues requiring further research and analysis be referred to a particular steering committee, whereby a designated workgroup would propose a solution and mitigation plan. The group envisaged that helicopter safety issues would be referred to the “Helicopter Operations and Safety Steering Committee” proposed in the Advising Document for Recommendation 20.

The group came to a consensus that the Safety Forum should initially focus on helicopter safety issues. However, the Safety Forum should eventually be expanded to consider safety issues relating to all aspects of the C-NL Offshore.

The group agreed that the C-NL Offshore industry should consider establishing a General Safety Steering Committee in the future, which would direct the work of ad hoc working groups to proactively identify and address issues in other areas of offshore safety. Additionally, some issues could be referred to existing committees/councils such as the CAPP Training and Qualifications Committee or the Atlantic Marine Safety Council.

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This diagram illustrates the flow of information to and from the Safety Forum:



The working group decided that the C-NLOPB should be accountable to convene a Safety Forum twice a year (spring and fall). To ensure that both offshore rotations would have the opportunity to attend, there should be 6 months and 3 weeks between the spring session and the fall session. Although the Commissioner recommended Safety Forums be held three times a year, the group thought that twice a year would be optimal for a high quality Safety Forum. In coming to this decision, the Team considered that the Helicopter Operations and Safety Steering Committee (Recommendation 20) would meet every two months. Work rotation schedules, training schedules and the work/life balance of offshore workers were also taken into account. The group concluded that once the process of holding Safety Forums was established, the frequency of sessions could be reviewed.

The group considered whether an organizing committee was necessary to plan and prepare for Safety Forums, or whether staff members of the C-NLOPB alone should plan and prepare for Safety Forums. The group decided that an organizing committee was not necessary given that a Safety Forum is a relatively straightforward event to organize. Therefore, they determined that the C-NLOPB should be the organizer, and would be accountable for facilitating the Safety Forum, preparing meeting agendas, recording meeting minutes and decisions, and communicating with the stakeholders. It would be an important step in preparing for each Forum for the C-NLOPB to capture all issues and concerns from the stakeholders before the Forum takes place, sending out an agenda to all stakeholders in advance. It would benefit each offshore and helicopter operator JOHSC to create a standing item on their meeting agenda to capture issues that need to be discussed at the Safety Forum, and vice versa (an agenda item to discuss Safety Forum deliberations at each JOHSC meeting). The C-NLOPB would be responsible for communicating the deliberations of the Safety Forum to the public, as suggested by Commissioner Wells in his recommendation. The group recommended that the C-NLOPB post the Safety Forum meeting agendas, meeting minutes and decision records on the C-NLOPB website.

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Participation is vital to the success of the Safety Forum. Good safety information (incident trends, lessons learned from incidents, safety alerts, safety concerns, etc.) needs to be raised at the Forum so that participants can learn from others, return to their workplace, and share this information in their workplace. As the Commissioner commented in his report, improving and maximizing worker participation in developing and advancing safety is imperative. The Team considered the means by which worker participation can be maximized and decided that this can be best achieved by each installation sending their representation from the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC). Other participants should include representatives from the C-NLOPB, the Operators, helicopter service provider(s), offshore contractors and service providers, and shore-based contractors and service providers.

The Team envisions that Safety Forums will initially focus on helicopter safety issues before expanding to consider other safety issues. For that reason, the Team believes that there is benefit in continuing with the C-NLOPB Annual JOHSC Sessions to discuss general safety issues. The Team feels that it would benefit the C-NLOPB to develop a charter for the Annual JOHSC Sessions to clearly lay out the purpose of the sessions. In the future, when the Safety Forum expands, the Team suggests that the C-NLOPB review the benefits of continuing with the annual JOHSC sessions. It is quite possible that the Safety Forum format will cover the intent of the JOHSC sessions and provide an improved mechanism for resolving safety issues.

Conclusion

The OHSI Implementation Team proposes that the C-NLOPB host Safety Forums twice a year for interested stakeholders to bring forth issues of concern regarding helicopter safety in the C-NL Offshore. A proposed Charter for the Safety Forum is attached as Appendix A. It is recommended that the first Safety Forum be held in the fall of 2011 and that the C-NLOPB place deliberations of the Safety Forum on their website.

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Appendix A

Safety Forum Charter

Purpose

- To provide an opportunity to exchange information among C-NL Offshore Stakeholders so that safety issues can be proactively identified and addressed in a forum of interested stakeholders
- To highlight areas of particular concern that require mitigating action to reduce risk of minor issues and major incidents to a level as low as reasonably practicable
- To share safety information and best practices across the whole industry
- To identify possible improvements and to assist the regulator in setting goals

Participants

The participants shall include, but not be limited to:

- C-NLOPB
- Operators' Logistics, Safety, and Aviation representatives
- Representatives of the workforce from each installation
- Helicopter service provider(s) and representatives from their work force
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) providers
- Marine contractors' safety representatives
- Survival and safety training providers
- Service companies
- Shore-based contractors
- Other members of the offshore workforce who express a special interest in attending the Forum
- CAPP

Roles and Responsibilities

The C-NLOPB shall be accountable for convening the Safety Forum twice per year (once in the spring and once in the fall), facilitating the Safety Forum, preparing meeting agendas, recording meeting minutes and decisions, and communicating with the stakeholders. All issues and concerns from the stakeholders shall be captured by the C-NLOPB in the process of forming an agenda to be distributed to all stakeholders in advance of the Safety Forum. The C-NLOPB shall be responsible for publishing the Safety Forum meeting agendas before the Forum, and for posting meeting minutes and decision records after the Forum, on the C-NLOPB website.

The Operator representatives shall be responsible for soliciting issues and concerns from the JOHSC and general workforce and bringing these issues to the Safety Forum.

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The workforce representatives shall be responsible for soliciting issues from the general workforce and bringing these issues forward at the Safety Forum.

Scheduling

To be held twice a year – once in the spring and once in the fall (6 months and 3 weeks apart, to allow participation from both offshore hitches)

Agenda

The agenda items shall include but not be limited to:

- OHSI recommendation status updates
- Update on previous action items (working group progress)
- Presentation of HSE stats for the C-NL Offshore Area
- Review of serious incidents/trends
- Review of local and other jurisdictions' safety alerts
- Review of statistics from other jurisdictions
- Highlighting of any changes to the legislation
- Update on helicopter operations
- Highlight any changes to safety training
- Open forum (new issues/concerns)

Some Safety Forums may include a special topic of interest

Reporting and Record Keeping

- Agenda
- Minutes
- Record of presentations
- Attendance
- Facilitator
- Publish on the C-NLOPB Website
- Provide copies to JOHSCs offshore
- Action Log

Performance Measurement

Metrics should be established for measuring the effectiveness of Safety Forums. Some metrics may include:

- Number of participants
- Number of safety issues raised including # of safety system deficiencies
- Number of successful corrective actions taken to address issues
- Average time taken to develop corrective action

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References

Health and Safety Executive (UK), **“Assessment of the benefits to the offshore industry from new technology and operating practices used in the shipping industry for managing collision risk,”** September 2007: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrpdf/rr592.pdf> (includes details of the Marine Safety Forum)

Petroleum Safety Authority, **“Safety Forum”**: <http://www.ptil.no/safety-forum/category167.html>

Step Change in Safety, **“A guide to Step Change in Safety – what you need to know”**: <http://stepchangeinsafety.net/stepchange/News/StreamContentPart.aspx?ID=4286>