

Location: Husky Energy offices, St. John's

Attendees:

Ray Dalton (Suncor – Operator rep)
Ralph Evans (Transocean)
Matthew Hawco (C-NLOPB – support)
Peter McKeage (C-NLOPB)
Justin Meaney (SeaRose FPSO – workforce rep)
Alistair Sim (Chevron)
Clark Stokes (Statoil)
John Whelan (Hibernia – workforce rep)
Mike Whittle (Cougar Helicopters)
Craig Williams (Terra Nova FPSO – workforce rep)
Don Williams (Husky – Operator rep) – Chair

Guests

Segment 2: Greg Harvey and Kerri Ann Evely, Marine Institute Offshore Safety and Survival Centre
Segment 3: Dan Chicoyne, Chief Safety Officer, C-NLOPB

Decisions and Actions are in bold type

1. Safety Moment

Ray Dalton gave a presentation on some recent product recalls, illustrating the importance of staying aware of recall notices in case you are using a potentially harmful product. Service NL posts recalls at <http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/safety/recalls>.

2. Update on Marine Institute's dive mask study

The dive masks provided in the transport helicopters (as well as in the helicopter escape trainer) are currently an optional piece of equipment. The Marine Institute is studying the effects of using these masks so that they can possibly be recommended for use, with a standard for their design. Kerri Ann Evely gave an update on this ongoing study, which is the first of its kind. The objectives of the study are to see whether use of the dive mask reduces the effects the impact of cold water, stress, and breath hold time, as well as whether training on use of the masks improves donning time. Neoprene hoods are used in the study, similar to those found on the helicopter transportation suits.

Phase I of the study has been completed: it was found that the dive masks had no effect on breath hold time in warm water, but were a big help in cold water (0.5°C). The same trend was found regarding thermal comfort. Phase II, which studies the impact of the masks on training, is ongoing.

Future work will include use of the mask with the Helicopter Underwater Emergency Breathing Apparatus (HUEBA) to see if the mask can help the user's HUEBA air supply last longer. Pilot test results indicate that the mask does benefit HUEBA use in cold water.

Greg Harvey pointed out that he really started to see a potential value in the dive masks when the HUEBA was introduced in the industry. John Whelan supported this, saying that it is good to try using the HUEBA without the mask to see how valuable the mask is.

A recent safety awareness bulletin from Cougar Helicopters was distributed. Recently, a smashed dive mask was found on board a helicopter after a flight (no one made Cougar staff aware of it). The bulletin highlighted “the importance of notifying Cougar Ramp/Check-In Staff or Offshore Heli-Admin Representatives of any damaged PPE” or of passenger airsickness. “This safety awareness is necessary to protect Offshore Personnel and Cougar Employees from personal injury.”

Asked whether there was much risk of dive masks breaking in the event of an impact, Mike Whittle said that given use of the four-point harness and stroking seats, the strong glass in the masks is very unlikely to break.

3. Sea state limitations

Following the last meeting (January 9), letters from the C-NLOPB’s Chief Safety Officer, Dan Chicoyne, to the Operators regarding sea state limitations for helicopter transportation were forwarded to committee members in order to clarify the C-NLOPB’s position. Dan came to this meeting on request to discuss further.

First, Peter McKeage gave an update on the status of regulating helicopter travel over high seas. The Transportation Safety Board’s (TSB) report on Cougar Flight 491 (released February 2011) contained a recommendation to “prohibit commercial operation of Category A transport helicopters over water when the sea state will not permit safe ditching and successful evacuation.” The Operators then voluntarily ceased flying to installations where the sea state exceeded the capability of the helicopter’s emergency flotation. In August 2011, Peter and the C-NLOPB Chair and CEO attended a two-day Transport Canada seminar to discuss fast-tracking a regulation on this matter. The regulation has now moved onto the Justice Department, which will probably take years. The C-NLOPB has begun to strictly enforce a 6m significant wave height limitation (the current certified limit of the flotation systems used on Cougar’s fleet).

A committee member wished to discuss the practicality of this prescriptive requirement, considering that the C-NLOPB is moving towards goal-based regulation. Examples of the difficulties given were helicopters having to return to St. John’s when seas hover around 6.0, or the helicopter landing with seas just below 6, then not being able to take off if the seas go above 6. Dan said that there needs to be a limit and it must be adhered to, just like there is a limit to the weight that a crane can lift or a limit to acceptable wind speed for helicopter take-off and landing.

Peter reminded the committee of the high-frequency radar significant wave height measurement research project that the C-NLOPB initiated with C-CORE, which it is hoped will bring more accurate and en-route forecasting offshore NL. Peter said that if the research is successful, which should be known soon, he would like the HOSC to see a demo.

4. Offshore Helicopter Safety Inquiry implementation update

An implementation plan for a safety oversight management system is underway, under the guidance of the OHSI Implementation Team Lead, Terry Kelly.

Regarding night flights, the committee had been forwarded [the Operators’ recent update](#). Pete advised that the C-NLOPB had reviewed the update and met with the Operators. The plan is still being discussed. When C-NLOPB staff are satisfied that [the recommendations of the OHSI Implementation Team regarding night flight](#) are met, a meeting will be held between the staff and the Team before the staff make a recommendation to the C-NLOPB Board.

Recognizing that workers need to be involved in the process, **Don Williams asked that all the Operator reps on the committee please write to their management to recommend a tour of the helicopter simulator in Lafayette for members of the workforce.**

Continuing with his OHSI update, Pete said that Dr. Susan Coleshaw's assessment of Basic Survival Training (which will help the C-NLOPB develop performance goals for training) should be in by the end of March.

The [Operators have responded](#) to [Peter's First Response Helicopter level of service report](#). The C-NLOPB was satisfied with the response and now considers Recommendation 2 (performance-based goals for first response) to be implemented.

5. Cougar Update

Occurrences since the last meeting:

- A stuck brake: snow got into a landing gear area – resolved with rubbing alcohol.
- An indicator related to autopilot in flight – the pilot elected to return to St. John's.
- Indication from active vibration control system during taxi caused by strong winds – flight cancelled.

Mike Whittle noted that snow clearing on the installations' helidecks is an issue because snow often gets caught in the nets (which are needed on the decks): this was a root cause of the landing gear issue, above. Mike said that Cougar will be working with the Operators' Logistics staff on the methods of snow clearing.

January statistics were normal for the time of year. Mike noted particularly high payload utilization, and that there were no medevacs.

Committee members asked about Eurocopter's ongoing investigation regarding their recent ditchings: Peter said that they still had a lot of work to do. Mike Whittle said that the situation affects Cougar due to the increased demand for Sikorsky S-92's: availability of spares and parts from the manufacturer is lower, resulting in more time in maintenance for Cougar.

6. Action Log Review

The draft committee charter was recently re-distributed for review by members. The consensus was positive. **Don will prepare a final version of the charter.**

Committee members continue to monitor the state of aviation occurrence notification offshore. John Whelan said that notifications on the Hibernia Platform are improving. Justin Meaney said that a [SkyRouter](#) display in the SeaRose FPSO's IT café has improved personnel's access to information substantially. Don Williams thought that would be a great thing for all the Operators to start doing and asked Justin to draft a note that would help the committee Operator reps recommend this to their management. Mike Whittle volunteered to help with this. **Justin and Mike will draft a note on the SeaRose FPSO SkyRouter setup and its benefits.**

Various personal protective equipment initiatives are being tracked by the committee:

- Regarding Marine Institute's dive mask study: Members were very pleased with the update from earlier in the meeting. **Matthew Hawco will send an e-mail to thank Greg and Kerri-Ann and encourage their work on behalf of the committee.**
- Matthew noted that Dr. Jonathon Power of the National Research Council's Institute for Ocean Technology has accepted the C-NLOPB's offer to present at the Safety Forum on April 23, as requested by the committee. **Ray Dalton will secure permission from Suncor to share the study results in time for the Safety Forum.**

New reps for the GSF Grand Banks and West Aquarius are expected at the next meeting.

7. New Business

Don Williams requested that the committee establish a Deputy Chair to share the work of running the committee. **Ray Dalton was nominated for and accepted the position of HOSC Deputy Chair.**

The upcoming [Heli-Expo](#) (March 4-7 in Las Vegas) and [CHC Safety and Quality Summit](#) (March 18-20 in Vancouver) were brought up. Peter McKeage will attend the latter on behalf of the C-NLOPB, but there are no other HOSC members confirmed for either event. Conference participation has been a challenge for the committee. Don encouraged members to e-mail the whole committee about upcoming events. **Don will help facilitate HOSC member participation in conferences by sending recommendations to the Operators.**

8. Next Meeting

The consensus was to continue with the current frequency of meetings (every six weeks). The change to Tuesdays was appreciated, but for early April Wednesday will work better for some. Therefore, **the tentative date for the next meeting is Wednesday, April 3.**