

**PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING**

Date : 17 May 2023 (Wednesday)
Format : Conference Room A, 24/F Harbour Building
Time : 9:30 a.m.

Present

Chairman: WONG Sai-fat Deputy Director (1), Marine Department
("MD")

Members: ZHANG Hongwen Hong Kong Shipowners Association
CHAN Kam-foo Shipping Agencies
LAM Wing-chiu Container Terminal Operators
LAU Yiu-ming Oil Terminal Operators
ZHONG Ying Dockyard Industry
Ms LEI Ho-yan, Angelina Tug operators
Capt LI Yongzheng Master Mariner
Capt SHEN Xu-hai Master Mariner
Capt JIAO Jie Master Mariner
Capt CHAN Tak-kei Licensed Pilot

Capt TAO Ming, Rockman Licensed Pilot
LAI Chi-tung Assistant Director / Port Control, MD
HUANG Jihe General Manager / Vessel Traffic Services,
MD
PI Xianzhong Surveyor of Ships (Nautical) / Seafarers and
Examination (2), MD

Secretary: Ms Athena LIU Executive Officer (General & Committee),
MD

In Attendance

Miss Iris YIU Senior Marine Officer/Vessel Traffic Centre
George TANG Marine Manager / Pilotage

Absent with apologies

CHAN Hung-tai	Hong Kong Liner Shipping Association
CHANG Chi-wai, Robson	Dry Bulk Cargo Terminal Operators
LI Yubin	Break Bulk Cargo Operators

I. Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman extended his welcome to all members. A new PAC term was commenced from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2024 for two years. The new PAC members were introduced during the meeting.

II. Interview of ten pilot apprentices-to-be

2. The Chairman said that PAC would interview ten candidates in sequence to test their suitability for being apprentice pilots.
3. All the Members (including the Chairman) of PAC declared no actual/ perceived/ potential conflict of interest, except Captain LI Yongzheng declared his friendship with one of the candidates and did not participate in that part of interview.
4. Candidates were asked to brief PAC on their maritime study and sea-time experience, core competence/qualities of being a pilot and reasons for choosing pilotage to be a vocation, with some being asked about their experience and difficulty in berthing ships to the terminals in the waters of Mirs Bay.
5. PAC considered that the interview performance of the ten candidates was satisfactory and recommended all of them ought to be registered as apprentice pilot.

III. Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting held on 2 December 2022

6. Before confirmation of the minutes, Captain TAO Ming, Rockman raised the following comment –

Since there is not any trace of the terms of “chief pilot” and “co-pilot” in the Annex 2 of IMO’s resolution A.960(23), he opined that the resolution did not mention who should be the one responsible for the pilot-master information exchange. In other words, they considered that the relevant information exchange could be conducted by a co-pilot. Moreover, he elaborated that there are lots of information to be shared from the pilot to the master when navigating a ship such as information on tug arrangement, contingency on the passage, weather and sea condition. In view of the vast information to be exchanged, he opined that it is appropriate for the co-pilot to exchange the information.

7. There was no comment received from other PAC members.
8. While meeting note is a record to the meeting held, the Chairman suggested Hong Kong Pilots Association (HKPA) to provide comment of their side in writing so that their interpretation can be recorded down at the meeting minutes. Captain TAO Ming, Rockman agreed to the suggestion.
9. After receipt of the statement from HKPA, the Secretariat would arrange another round of circulation to the members for comment if any. The minutes would deem to be confirmed if no further comment is received from the members.

IV. PAC Paper No. 4/2023 – Proposed Amendments to the Berthing Guidelines

10. MM/Pilotage introduced the paper and went through the Annexes I to V with the members.
11. Captain TAO Ming, Rockman raised comments to Annex V on South Cheung Chau Anchorage (SCCA) in connection to the tug requirement for vessel entering the anchorage directly from seaward without a pilot. Given the anchorage will be better used by the mega-sized LNG carriers calling Hong Kong, many of them will be of QFlex size and even QMax size, HKPA therefore suggested adding the remark that “for LNG carriers having LOA of more than 250m, a tug of at least 5,000 HP and if LOA is more than 300m, a tug of at least 6,000 HP” in consideration that –
 - (i) the location of this Anchorage differs from the South Lamma Anchorage (“This BGL is modelled on”), which does not have Lamma Island as its shelter and is more exposed to wind and sea also weather conditions, to also allow Pilots to leave the Anchorage;
 - (ii) the depth of water inside the Dumping Ground immediately west of the

Anchorage, mostly of 10m or less, poses navigation hazards to a fully loaded QFlex / QMax LNG carrier;

(iii) the depth of water of this Anchorage is shallower than the South Lamma anchorage, especially the 15m depth contour runs into its northwestern portion. This is particularly dangerous if a fully loaded QFlex or even QMax LNG carrier loses her control and drifts into this area;

(iv) the size of LNG carriers using this Anchorage, in particular their manoeuvrability, i.e. high freeboard (large windage area) together with deep draft at 11-12m;

(v) the nature/characteristic and quantity of LNG cargoes carrying on board LNG carriers (degree of danger); and

(vi) the LNG industry practice as safety is their best concerns.

12. Captain CHAN Tak-kei supplemented that the berthing guideline should also cater for cases of emergency.
13. Captain LI Yongzheng asked about the pilot requirement for vessel leaving the Anchorage. Captain CHAN Tak-kei replied that the pilot requirement depends on the destination.
14. Captain SHEN Xu-hai asked for more details on what conditions that require the presence of a tug. Captain CHAN Tak-kei replied for LNG carriers having LOA of more than 250m, a tug of at least 5,000 HP and if LOA is more than 300m, a tug of at least 6,000 HP is required for pilot to board/disembark pilot boat for safety. Ms LEI Ho-yan, Angelina added that given the lead time required to arrange a tug, the tug requirement would be better to tally with those requirements written in the berthing guidelines for LNG carriers. Captain SHEN Xu-hai expressed that the frequency of the call(s) of LNG carriers might not warrant the requirement of a tug.
15. GM/VTS advised that when considering the tug requirement for the anchorage, the meeting might consider the following –
 - There is no specific purpose or specific type of vessel for this anchorage, i.e. the SCCA is not only specifically for the use by LNG carriers. It is for all visiting ships and opens for 24 hours.
 - Regarding the geographical environment, it is in a similar environment to other anchorages, such as Ma Wan, South Lamma Anchorages. Taking the geographical setting in consideration, Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) will assist the masters to anchor at a specific anchorage in view of the situation at that material time. Indeed, the wind at Southeast Lamma Anchorage (to northwest

direction in winters) should have no great difference to the wind at SCCA due to the proximity. The meeting might also have to consider if a tug of 6,000 HP would really help for emergency cases.

- LNG carriers should have no significant difference in manoeuvring characteristic than other kind of vessels, such as 400m cargo ships without loaded containers, etc..
 - Regarding safety issue, all dangerous goods are of dangerous nature. LNG carrier is only one type of dangerous goods in which it has a complete set of safety guidelines in the industry to minimise the risks that it might have.
 - Berthing guidelines has already specifically helped to address the concerns of pilots such as for adverse weather, tropical cyclone etc. There is a general guideline for suspension / resumption of pilotage service under special circumstances.
16. CHAN Kam-foo asked for the maximum number of vessels allowed to be anchored at the anchorage. He also asked for the VTC's priority of the arrangement of anchorage and if shipping agents can ask for a specific anchorage to anchor.
17. MM/Pilotage replied that the situation depended on the size of vessels anchored at the material time and so no yardstick could be provided for the time being. That said, it also depended on the operational needs of the shipping agents and the availability of anchorages at the material time. GM/VTS supplemented that the size of the SCCA is about doubled to the size of the South Lamma Dangerous Goods Anchorage .
18. Captain CHAN Tak-kei supplemented that making reference to the last anchorage experience for LNG carriers, the concerned master requested to have a tug stand-by for 24 hours. Captain CHAN expressed that the manoeuvrability of a LNG carrier is different from a cargo ship that requires different number of tugs. The requirements are arisen from simulation training which proved to have strong operational needs.
19. GM/VTS responded that LNG Carriers have indeed frequently visited the south of Hong Kong Waters for replenishment. The masters did not require additional tug for the visits. Captain CHAN Tak-kei supplemented that the risk borne by the masters themselves does not necessarily mean the pilot is willing to take such a risk.

20. AD/PC advised that –
- SCCA is a multi-purpose anchorage. It was earlier a special anchorage for handling special circumstance of vessels such as to tidy up collapsed containers.
 - This anchorage is a Specified anchorage under the Pilotage Ordinance (Cap.84) which states clearly that no pilot is required for its inward voyage.
 - For specific type of vessels such as LNG carriers that require specific number of pilot and/or tug, the relevant requirement should be put under the relevant berthing guidelines instead of at the anchorage.
21. The Chairman suggested that the meeting should clearly separate the purpose of the anchorage from the specific berthing requirement for specific vessels. For the Annex V, it is specifically for an anchorage but not for a specific type of ships to berth.
22. Captain TAO Ming, Rockman agreed that SCCA does not serve LNG carriers specifically. But he would like to point out that the anchorage would have a LNG carrier to anchor and thus the consequence. Captain TAO supplemented that different geographical environment would cause different requirement of tug such as strong wind without protection in South Cheung Chau anchorage.
23. The Chairman advised that while marine safety is important to the industry, the meeting should be made clear that SCCA is a multi-purpose anchorage, not specifically for LNG carriers only, therefore specific requirement for any specific vessel should not apply here. Any specific requirement for any vessel should be made in the Berthing Guideline of that particular berth for that specific type of vessel.
24. GM/VTS advised that Environmental Protection Department has a safety management plan covering pilotage / tug requirement for the LNG carriers. It is at the discretion of the master of a ship to decide how many tug(s) to be used. AD/PC supplemented that the berthing guidelines should be generally applicable to all vessels and be the minimum requirement for specific berth. Chapters 4 and 9 of the Berthing Guidelines has clearly set out the guidelines for requirement of tug and pilotage service such as wind speed and wave height under special circumstances. Review on Chapters 4 and 9 could be arranged if warrants.

25. AD/PC further remarked that there should be a review on the tug requirement for Lamma Island South anchorage. The Chairman concurred the view. Captain TAO Ming, Rockman advised that one tug is required for that anchorage given the geographical environment.
26. Captain SHEN Xu-hai shared that pilot can require shipping agent / master to arrange tug(s) as per his requirement. He concurred that it generally seldom required a tug for anchorage and tug requirement should not be added for any specific anchorage.
27. The meeting concluded to delete the tug requirement for SCCA and General Remarks for Annex V. As for Annexes I to IV, the meeting has agreed to them.
28. The meeting noted that Captain TAO Ming, Rockman and Captain CHAN Tak-kei from HKPA raised objection.

V. Any Other Business

Application for Class I Licence – Gain experience in more than 12 months

29. The Chairman informed members that PAC Secretariat received applications from two Shenzhen Pilots to extend the period for gaining appropriate experience in application for Class I licence given their health situations happened during the apprenticeship. They were both approved as an Apprentice Pilot with effect from 7 December 2021.
30. According to section 4 of Cap. 84C, for person applying for a licence, he shall have the appropriate experience specified gained within a period of not less than 6 months and not more than 12 months or such longer period as may be allowed by the Authority after consultation with the Pilotage Advisory Committee. Accordingly, PAC members were consulted.
31. In consideration of the duration of the extended period, GM/VTS suggested in the meeting to extend four months after the PAC Meeting, i.e. by 16 September 2023, to tie in the coming training schedule for other apprentice pilots.

32. All members agreed and recommended PA to allow extension of four months for the two Shenzhen Pilots to acquire appropriate experience in application of Class I Licence.

VI. Date of next meeting

33. The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m. The date of the next meeting would be announced in due course.

Distribution list

Chairman, PAC

Members, PAC