



Agenda Item: ATCM 11

Presented by: IAATO

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Summary Report and Outcomes of IAATO's Marine Committee Meeting on Vessel Operations, Safety and Related Issues

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Information Paper submitted by IAATO

Introduction:

This paper summarizes the discussions and outcomes of a meeting of IAATO's Marine Committee which took place at Crystal Cruises Office, Los Angeles, 4 -5 February 2008. The meeting was convened to discuss vessel operations, safety and related issues, focusing on incidents involving passenger vessels in the 2006/07 season and 2007/08 season including the loss of MS *Explorer*. Recommendations from the meeting were considered at IAATO's 19th Annual Meeting held in late April and the results of those deliberations are summarized at the end of this paper.

Background:

IAATO Marine Committee plus additional representatives from other IAATO marine operators and invited observers (a total of 21 participants) met for a two day meeting to discuss vessel operations, safety and related issues. The meeting objectives were to:

- Review lessons to be learned from recent IAATO Member maritime incidents (2006/07: *Orlova*, *Nordkapp* 2007/08: *Explorer* and *Fram*);
- Review IAATO's current management and mitigation measures to minimize risk and consequences of accidents, including a review of the IAATO Emergency Contingency Plan, with a view to assessing if any further steps were required;
- Develop a list of criteria to be taken into consideration when planning voyages to Polar Regions;
- Review discussions related to ATCM ICG Consideration on Issues Concerning Passenger Ships Operating in Antarctic Waters;
- Review IMO Design and Equipment 51st meeting proposed amendments and comments to the Arctic Shipping Guidelines.

The intended deliverables from the meeting were:

- Agree outline of any new guidelines or amendments to IAATO's current prevention and mitigation measures with proposals to be put to IAATO's 19th Meeting, 29 April – 2 May 2008 Punta del Este, Uruguay.
- Agree any further responses or action required for the ATCM ICG and the IMO D&E meeting.
- Identify key issues, action items, work tasks and time line for IAATO's approach going forward.

Summary of Discussions

The meeting reviewed the incidents which had taken place during the previous two operating seasons. In each case a description of events, responses and lessons learned was considered. In the case of MS *Explorer*, as the Investigation Report from the Liberian Flag Stage Administration will not be available until an estimated mid-summer, 2008, the discussions were confined to the effectiveness of the emergency response.

Lessons learned as a result of these incidents related to two broad categories – operational and public relations. Each of these was discussed from the perspective of defining IAATO's role and can be summarized as follows:

1. Operational

While some improvements in mitigation and management procedures could be addressed immediately, there were other potential steps which would require further consideration. In summary, these were as follows:

For Immediate Action

- IAATO Emergency Contingency Plan worked effectively in the case of MS *Explorer*. It should nonetheless be reviewed and, if necessary, updated. Most importantly, steps need to be taken by all operators to ensure that the IAATO Emergency Contingency Plan is adopted into each vessels' International Safety Management (ISM) code.
- An emergency contact list for member's home office personnel be compiled by IAATO and distributed at the beginning of each season to all IAATO operators. This was perceived as important to ensure that all operators have a 24-hr point of contact with each other should they need to co-ordinate in the case of an emergency.
- Ensure that IAATO members update the vessel database in order to verify that the information listed is accurate.

For Mid-term Consideration and Action

- *Vessel tracking*: Discussion noted that all commercial vessels must have a Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system onboard by the end of 2008. Given that IAATO operators agree to provide back up for each other in the case of an emergency and need to co-ordinate on a daily basis, it was perceived that there would be value in having a single website which would track all IAATO vessels. It was agreed that operators be canvassed for the different kinds of tracking system currently used and a proposal sought for a single tracking system to be considered at IAATO's 19th Annual Meeting.
- *MRCC Coordination*: Value in establishing an agreed annual information exchange with the five relevant MRCCs was discussed. Correspondence with the Australian MRCC had proved useful in establishing a practical level of information to be exchanged on a commercial in-confidence basis, including contact details, itineraries, vessel tracking data, and background vessel information. which included each vessel's assets available. This information can improve co-ordination in the case of an emergency.
- *Use of iridium satellite system*: The iridium phone carried on the lifeboats of the MS *Explorer* proved for those members responding to the incident to be of key importance during the co-ordination of the rescue. It was discussed that iridium has an advantage over other satellite communication systems at high latitude as the satellite track works on a polar orbit (versus equatorial) and because of its mobility. Thus while it was noted that iridium was not and should not be regarded as an official emergency communication system, it could serve a purpose as a useful additional mobile communication system in the case of an emergency. It was agreed that there would be value in encouraging all operators to have an iridium system for their field operations. Additionally, if a separate iridium phone is kept strictly for use in an emergency then these numbers could be kept by IAATO and distributed only according to strict procedures.
- *Weather and Ice Information*: Discussion noted the importance of ensuring that vessels have the most accurate weather and ice information available for their region. It was agreed that IAATO should create a list of recommended weather and ice web-based information in different languages and make this available to all member operators.

For Further Investigation and Consideration

- *Oil spill contingency plans*: Discussions took place as to whether IAATO as an organization should have – in addition to each vessel's SOPEP plan – a fuel spill response plan in place. Discussions included how this could be approached, resourced and how it would dovetail with vessels current SOPEP and insurance plans. It was agreed that an initial assessment of the assets currently carried within the IAATO fleet for oil spill response equipment would be useful and further consideration of the issues was merited.

- *Mitigation and Management:* Development of a sector and seasonal approach to define mitigation methods and management of the fleet. Discussion revolved around the potential development of a sector approach to operations with respect to defining mitigation methods and Search and Rescue Contingency Plans.
- *Planning:* The value of developing a list of criteria to consider when planning voyages to the Antarctic (e.g safe manning, appropriate navigational tools and redundancy of equipment) was discussed. It was agreed that a useful flow-chart of criteria could be developed by the Marine Committee;

2. Public Relations

It was widely agreed that the handling of the public relations had improved with each incident. It was understood that there were communications issues when the incident with the MV *Nordkapp* occurred, but following the two emergencies involving MS *Explorer* and MV *Fram*, IAATO was able to produce factual information updates to Members, Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, other stakeholders and the press promptly and effectively.

It was agreed that IAATO has an important role to play as a source of factual information for its Members, Governments and the press in the case of an emergency involving a member's operation. To improve the efficiency of this role, IAATO will amend its incident report form to a checklist of information required in the case of an emergency. Any press releases or updates will always be approved by the company involved in the incident.

Further Steps agreed at IAATO's 19th Annual Meeting

Emergency Contact List of Office Personnel

It was agreed that IAATO Secretariat will compile a list of office personnel to be contacted in the case of an emergency. This emergency contact list will be distributed between members at the beginning of each season.

Vessel Tracking

IAATO Members agreed the desirability of a single password-protected website where all IAATO vessels can be viewed and tracked. Members agreed to work towards this over the next 12 months.

MRCC Coordination

IAATO members agreed to the desirability to develop a means to make available to the five relevant MRCCs the ship scheduler, vessel call data, vessel database information, and vessel tracking web page on the strict understanding that this information would be held commercial in confidence.

Use of Iridium Telephones

It was agreed that IAATO members be encouraged to carry iridium telephones as an additional safety measure in the case of an emergency ashore and/or in lifeboats. The IAATO Secretariat will keep a strictly controlled list of these numbers. Numbers would only be given out in the case of emergency and then only to those directly involved in assisting with the emergency.

Future Work Program for IAATO's Marine Committee During 2008-09

It was agreed that the next phase work program for the Marine Committee include steps towards the development of a sector and seasonal approach to mitigation measures and contingency planning. In addition the Marine Committee will assess oil spill response assets within the IAATO fleet and give consideration to any additional oil spill response options. Outcomes of these assessments and any related proposals will be made at IAATO's 20th Annual Meeting.

IAATO
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