

# THE UK CONFIDENTIAL HAZARDOUS INCIDENT REPORTING PROGRAMME

## INTRODUCTION

Although accident/incident rates in commercial air transport operations have reduced to an extremely low level, the number of accidents with Human Factors causes has not declined at the same rate and thus has become the dominant cause in major accidents. A similar situation exists within the maritime sector.

Incident reporting programmes have proved to be valuable tools in the identification of safety related issues and the definition of corrective actions. In the specific case of incidents involving human error, the availability of an independent, voluntary, confidential reporting medium has provided valuable additional information to that available through formal or mandatory reporting systems.

## THE CHIRP CHARITABLE TRUST

The UK Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme, more commonly known by the acronym CHIRP, has been operating in aviation since 1982. In 2003, the then Minister for Transport, Dr Kim Howells, launched a maritime programme.

CHIRP was established in its present form, as a charitable company limited by guarantee, on 1 November 1996. This corporate structure was selected in order to provide a totally independent organisation, with management and fiscal responsibilities held by an independent Board of Trustees. The Programme is funded via grant by the UK Department for Transport.

The current Board of Trustees comprises 9 independent members and the Chief Inspector of Air Accidents, the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, the Head of the Operating Standards Division of the Civil Aviation Authority and the Chief Executive of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, who are appointed on an ex-officio basis. The Chairman is Mr Ken Smart, who until his retirement in 2005 held the post of Chief Inspector of Air Accidents. The remaining Trustees are:

Mr Peter Cardy	Chief Executive MCA
Captain David Chapman	Head of OSD, CAA
Captain Clive Elton	Independent
Captain Chris Hodgkinson	GAPAN
Captain John Hughes	Independent
Mr David King	Chief Inspector AAIB
Captain Jock Lowe	Independent
Rear Admiral Stephen Meyer	Chief Inspector MAIB
Captain Nigel Palmer	Independent
Air Cdre Rick Peacock-Edwards	Independent
Mr John Saull	Independent
Captain Tim Sindall	Independent
Mr Philip Wake	CEO The Nautical Institute

The Trustees together with 20 nominees from the principal maritime transport interests in the UK comprise the Maritime Advisory Board. Current Members are:

Captain D Barber	Independent
Professor M Barnett	Warsash Maritime Centre
Mr D Blencowe	Marine Safety Forum
Mr S Carruthers	RYA - Cruising Manager
Dr T Carter	Dept. for Transport
Captain M Dunlop	V Ships
Mr A Graveson	NUMAST
Mr S Greenfield	Carnival Corporation
Mr G Hockley	IMarEST
Mr J Hudson	NFFO
Ms P Hutchinson	DFT
Mr M Molloy	IACS
Mr E Murdoch	Standard P&I
Captain D Preston	RFA - IMarEST
Mr K Richardson	British Ports Association
Captain S Richardson	P&O Ferries

Mr D Smith	Ind. - Engineering
Mr S Stonehouse	Lloyd's Joint Hull Committee
Mr A Waddams	British Marine Federation
Captain J Wilson	UKMPA
Captain J Wright	HCMM
Mr X Zhou	INTERCARGO/ INTERTANKO

The role of the Advisory Board is to provide counsel on the most appropriate way in which specific issues might be resolved and to advise the Trustees on the performance of the Programme. The composition of the Board is reviewed regularly to ensure that the membership is appropriate to the scope of the Programme. Advisory Board members act as individual expert advisers and not as representatives of their sponsoring organisations. Information is provided to the Advisory Board on a confidential basis and all means of identifying the individual reporter are removed from reports prior to any discussion.

CHIRP employs a permanent staff of five under the management of a full-time Chief Executive, Mr Peter Tait. The Maritime Programme is the responsibility of Director (Maritime), Mr Michael Powell whose sea-going experience includes; chemical tankers, refrigerated cargo ships, ro-ro freight ferries, bulk carriers and latterly the command of a crude oil/products carrier. He holds a valid Master Mariner Certificate, is a Solicitor (non-practising), a Fellow of the Nautical Institute and a Warden of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners.

## THE PROGRAMME

CHIRP currently receives confidential incident reports from professional and amateur participants in the maritime sector, both from within the UK and overseas and across all disciplines.

On being received, reports are validated as far as is possible and reviewed with the objective of making the information as widely available as possible whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the source. Anonymous reports are not normally acted upon as they cannot be validated. When appropriate, report information is discussed with relevant agencies with the aim of finding a resolution. Only depersonalised data is used in discussions with third party organisations and the confidentiality of the reporter is assured in any contact with an external organisation.

No personal details are retained from reports received. After ensuring that the report contains all relevant information, all personal details are returned to the reporter with an acknowledgement letter. Each report is allocated unique reference identification. After the return of personal details, CHIRP is unable subsequently to contact the reporter. The reporter may, if he/she wishes, contact the CHIRP office for additional information by using the report reference identification.

A newsletter FEEDBACK, covering current topics from disidentified reports and including new report forms, is produced four times a year and distributed widely, currently with a hard copy circulation of around 140,000. Some reports are disidentified further (e.g. time and place, company, reporter's gender) before being published in FEEDBACK, or making any data available to other agencies. FEEDBACK maintains an awareness of Human Factors issues within the sector and provides a forum for discussion.

Depersonalised data are recorded in a secure database at Farnborough for analysis of key topics and trends. Disidentified data are made available to other safety systems and professional bodies.

**For more information on the Programme, contact:**  
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