

"Harbor Safety Committees as effective regional planning tools."

HSC's are a unique tool for all waterway users to become engaged in helping to solve local issues, and maybe more importantly, in helping to develop new opportunities.

This local coordination plays a critical role in local port safety.

HSC's are at the core to good communications and good relationships with all waterfront stakeholders.

HSC's serve as a forum for local stakeholders to address navigational safety issues without regulators imposing mandates on industry that are typically reactive in nature.

Stakeholders organized under a HSC can more fully vet concerns and thereby present solutions to local COTP's or Sector Commands.

HSC's can become the workhorses for problems, concerns, and opportunities around a port.

In Houston our local HSC has worked on:

Barge lanes,
Boating safety,
Swimmer safety,
Dredging issues,
Fleeting issues,
Dock condition reviews & reporting,
slack mooring line reporting,
AtoN knockdown reporting,
The Port Coord. Team for port reconstitution issues.

A good relationship with the USCG is vital. The support of the local USCG is key. They are critical partners, but at the same time they should not control the agenda.

I strongly recommend keeping the commercial aspects of a subject out of the HSC. There is a thin line here, but this committee should only focus on safety issues

HSC's usually operate with a very low overhead and cost. The members on the HSC control the agenda and can elect new members to fill designated positions deemed necessary by those on the HSC.

Websites for HSC's have proven to be very effective as well. San Francisco has a great one.

Participation in our HSC led my organization, the Houston Pilots, to our involvement with helping terminals along our waterfront with new dock design. We do not claim to be naval architects or marine engineers but, on the other hand, with close to 200 berths in the port we see what works well and what works not so well.

The USCG has issued NVIC 1-00, which contains good info and guidance on organizing a HSC.

Every port is unique, so hence, every HSC should be somewhat unique.

Two HSC's in the U.S. are mandated under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

In the Houston-Galveston-T. City-Freeport area there is HOGANSAC.

In the Lower Mississippi River area there is LMRWSAC.

When these HSC's were established in 1991 they were effective and helped 'force' the concept upon us.

Prior to this, in the 1980's attempts were made in Houston at forming a HSC but there was never much enthusiasm for it.

Over the last three decades we have come along way with our safety culture along the waterfront.

Today, in Houston we are transitioning away from HOGANSAC due to delays by the federal government in renewing HOGANSAC's charter and making appointments to this committee.

I certainly believe a HSC NOT established under FACA is a better model. There is much more flexibility and maneuverability for a HSC when not required to follow strict government regulation.

By plugging into the annual National Harbor Safety Conferences members of a local HSC can improve their committee by learning of 'best practices' from around

the country. A stronger, more professional HSC will lead to a safer and more efficient port.

Issues brought forward by local HSC's that need national exposure have a route to get there by using the USCG's national advisory committees as a go-between.

Thanks for your attention!!