

SAN DIEGO HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE
Full Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE: January 28, 2026

TIME: 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Port District of San Diego, Administration Building, Training Room
3165 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101

I. Attendance:

Voting Members: Dan Valentine, Jonathon Bishop, Ilias Katsanis, Tony Olson, Will Bartsch, Jim Peugh, Harvey Vallier, Michael Poltorak, Andy Kurtz, Cris Sogliuzzo, Nicholas Maxwell, Philip Weiss

Non-Voting Members: Jeff Ferguson, Casey Oswant, Reuben Macaspac, James Foto, Andy Yingling, Matthew Lynch, Jason Mendes, Renee Rose, Ann Kinner, Tim Wilder, Heather Geldart, Amir Sharifi, Jon Victoria, Josh Hester, Evan Warren, Mike LaFleur, Lou Castagnola

II. OSPR Update: OSPR Administrator Heather Geldart formally recognized Captain Ann Kinner for her dedicated service and influential leadership as Chairperson of the Harbor Safety Committee. In her response, Ms. Kinner reflected on the vital role the HSC plays in maintaining the safety and integrity of maritime operations, emphasizing that the committee's collaborative efforts are essential to the region's success. She concluded her remarks on an optimistic note, expressing her enthusiasm for the upcoming season and her desire to reconnect with colleagues and partners out on the waterfront. To ensure continuity of operations during this transition, it was confirmed that the current Vice Chair will immediately step into the role of Interim Chair.

III. Pilot/Port Maritime Updates: Captain Castagnola formally introduced Captain Mendes as the new Chief Navy Pilot, who then provided an overview of upcoming Navy vessel movements and future coordination meetings. The conversation then shifted to a significant safety issue raised by Mr. Bartsch regarding recreational lobster gear currently cluttering the channel. These traps are creating serious navigational hazards for inbound and outbound commercial ships, prompting a discussion led by Deputy Administrator Sharifi on how California Department of Fish and Wildlife can assist with enforcement and gear removal. To address this long-term, Mr. Victoria and Mr. Foto proposed updating the Harbor Safety Plan and inviting Fish and Wildlife Wardens to future meetings to ensure better compliance. Finally, the update concluded with operational reports: Mr. Valentine summarized vessel activity at the TAMT and NCMT terminals, while Mr. Yingling provided the latest figures and schedules for cruise ship activity.

IV. USCG Updates: The USCG Sector San Diego provided an update on the successful management of maritime activity during the February regattas,

including high-profile events like the Spring Dinghy Regatta and the Harbor Island Cup. Looking ahead, the Coast Guard highlighted the upcoming Waterways Workshop, scheduled for March 4th and 5th. This two-day session will be hosted at the Port of San Diego Administration Building and is intended to foster collaboration on bay safety, navigational efficiency, and upcoming maritime infrastructure projects.

- V. **NOAA/NWS Updates:** The NOAA and NWS updates focused on modernizing digital tools and communication channels for maritime users. Mr. Ferguson provided an update on the Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC) tool, highlighting ongoing improvements to data accuracy and user interface features that assist in safer voyage planning. Following this, Ms. Oswant announced upgrades to the National Weather Service email mailing lists. These enhancements are designed to provide more reliable and timely weather alerts, ensuring that subscribers receive critical atmospheric and marine updates with improved delivery speed and better formatting for mobile devices.

- VI. **OSPR Update:** During the OSPR Update, Mr. Macaspac announced several key leadership transitions within the committee. He confirmed the formal reappointment of Mr. Kurtz and Mr. Olson, ensuring continuity in their respective roles. Additionally, the committee prepared for a significant change in personnel as Mr. Vallier announced his upcoming retirement on May 1st. To ensure a seamless transition of responsibilities, Mr. Macaspac noted that Mr. Wilder is slated for appointment as Mr. Vallier's successor prior to the next Harbor Safety Committee meeting.

- VII. **Staff and Liaisons Announcements:** During the administrative update, Mr. Valentine briefed the committee on the schedule for future meetings, outlining clear expectations for attendance and participation to ensure regional goals are met. Following this, Administrator Geldart emphasized the foundational importance of the Harbor Safety Committee, specifically noting that maintaining proper staffing, including both voting and non-voting members—is critical for the committee to remain a functional and authoritative body. The discussion then turned toward large-scale regional coordination, as Administrator Geldart addressed the upcoming Olympics. She highlighted a strategic opportunity for San Diego to provide essential support to Los Angeles and Long Beach, particularly in managing and securing public events along the waterfront. This collaboration aims to leverage San Diego's maritime expertise and infrastructure to ensure the success of the Games' coastal activities.

- VIII. **Public Comment:** The Public Comment portion of the meeting highlighted two upcoming opportunities for maritime education and industry engagement. Mr. Poltorak announced that the Southwestern Yacht Club will host a comprehensive

Survival at Sea workshop on June 13th and 14th, providing critical safety training for local mariners. Additionally, Ms. Jones shared a key update regarding the National Harbor Safety Conference, noting that public tickets are scheduled to go on sale during the first week of February. These events underscore a continued commitment to professional development and safety standards within the nautical community.

IX. **Next Meeting:** March 25, 2026, at 10:00am