

Charleston Area Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) Meeting Minutes

Thursday – August 27, 2026

Roll Call & Call to Orders: LT Nick Jones, USCG

Meeting was conducted via Zoom and in-person at 200 Ports Authority Drive, Mount Pleasant. LT Jones completed a roll call and transitioned to opening remarks.

Opening Comments:

Opening Remarks: Ms. Karen McDonland, Moran Towing, provided a welcome and brief opening remarks.

Committee Administration: HSC Voting team held a vote to add Mr. Stanley Kablick to the roster to represent Commercial Shipping Lines – vote passed unanimously.

New Business: N/A

Open Issues, Presentations, Proposals, Follow-Up:

- **Wolpert** – R. J. Kozik
 - Presented their NOAA hydrographic survey project in Charleston, explaining they are one of five contractors selected for this IDIQ to survey over 4,000 total line miles up to 2-meter depth. The team will use three boats equipped with multi-beam and side-scan sonar equipment to map the area and flag objects over a meter tall, with data collection expected to take about two months. The survey will support nautical chart updates, flood mapping, and habitat monitoring, with Wolpert's proprietary Aspen system managing data collection and providing real-time tracking to clients.
- **Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC)** – Jay Hughes
 - Provided an update on unmanned surface vessels (USV) activities. He also announced that three safety vessels will be added for escorting purposes due to the introduction of 24-foot USVs.
- **Wounded Nature** – Rudy Socha
 - Discussed challenges with marina operators forcing out uninsured and liveaboard vessel owners, leading to an increase in abandoned boats in South Carolina waters, particularly affecting older vessels over 40 years old.
- **Charleston Pilots** – John Cameron
 - Discussed establishing a subcommittee to address recreational boating safety issues, with a focus on creating comprehensive outreach programs across various channels including social media and rental businesses. The group agreed to wait for information from an upcoming National Harbor Safety Committee meeting scheduled for early September before finalizing plans.
- **Moran Towing** – Karen McDonald
 - Discussed the potential deauthorization of Tidewater Reach as a federal channel, which was tagged for deauthorization through the Water Resources Bill in Congress. Highlighted that while the main argument for deauthorization is the sale

of Union Pier Terminal and the absence of cruise ships, Tidewater Reach remains commercially used by non-deep draft vessels and provides access to Anchorage D. The team acknowledged concerns about the impact on fuel barge traffic and tug operations if the channel is shut off, which could affect larger ships entering the harbor.

- The Harbor Safety Committee discussed concerns about any proposed development in Tidewater Reach that could follow the deauthorization. The group agreed to pursue multiple avenues to address safety issues, including drafting letters to the Coast Guard and congressional delegates requesting a 90-day public comment period and safety review. The committee voted to proceed with drafting letters and will communicate their concerns through the Harbor Safety Distribution List before their next meeting in October.

Announcements/General Comments:

- N/A

Closing:

LT Jones thanked everyone for attending and concluded the meeting. The next HSC meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 22nd, 2026.