

BOARD FOR BRANCH PILOTS
Major Incident Response Plan Committee
***Tentative* MEETING AGENDA**
April 30, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.
VPA Board Room
Norfolk, Virginia

1. Call to Order
2. Safety Evacuation Instructions
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Public Comment Period*
5. Draft Major Incident Response Plan for the Board for Branch Pilots
6. Other Business
7. Conflict of Interest Forms / Travel Vouchers
8. Adjourn

*Five minute public comment, per person, with the exception of any open disciplinary or application files. See page two for instructions on providing public comment.

***The meeting is open to the public; however, a portion of the Board's business may be discussed in closed session pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A)(8).*

NEXT BOARD MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 14, 2024 AT 10:30 A.M.

Agenda materials made available to the public do not include written advice of legal counsel or other information protected by the attorney-client privilege pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-3705.1(2).

- **Call to Order**
- **Safety Evacuation Instructions**
- **Public Comment**

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Virginia Board for Branch Pilots Serious Incident Response Plan

Purpose

The Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR)/Virginia Board for Branch Pilots Serious Incident Response Plan outlines the roles, responsibilities, and procedures that will guide DPOR and the Board in promptly sharing information with the appropriate channels, individuals, and departments in the event of a serious incident.

For the purposes of this plan, a serious incident is defined as an event that involves casualties (injuries to one or more individuals that result in hospitalization and/or death) and/or significant economic or environmental damage event and occurred while a branch pilot licensee is conducting a vessel. The incident may prompt significant, often sustained, news coverage and public scrutiny.

Objectives

Our guiding principle will be to communicate facts as quickly as possible, updating information regularly as circumstances change, to promote safety for the Commonwealth and its citizens. Honesty and speed are the most effective means to ensure public safety. It is imperative to speak with accuracy about what is known and not to speculate about unknown details.

We will use multiple mediums to communicate accurate and timely information. This is especially important in the first hours and days of a crisis. Our goal is to be transparent, accountable, and accessible to all audiences, while also being mindful of legal and privacy concerns.

Serious Incident Team

This team shall consist of:

DPOR Director
Branch Pilot Board President
Technical Review Expert (determined by Board, mostly like Board VP)
DPOR Chief Deputy Director
DPOR Branch Pilots Board Executive Director
DPOR Licensing & Regulatory Programs Deputy Director
DPOR Compliance and Investigations Deputy Director
DPOR Director of Investigations - Central Operations
DPOR Director of Investigations - Field Operations
DPOR Investigator – Tidewater Region
DPOR Investigations – Field Supervisor
DPOR Communications & Digital Media Manager
External Stakeholders – Va. Pilot Association (VPA), Virginia Maritime Association (VMA), and Virginia Port Authority (Maritime Incident Response Team).

The Serious Incident Team recognizes that it may have to liaison/communicate directly with other state and/or federal agency stakeholders, e.g., U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Va. Department of Environmental Quality etc.

Internal Steps

DPOR's Communications Manager shall maintain an Updated roster of the Crisis Team members, emergency contacts, and public information officers. The Communications Manager will also maintain a first-hour emergency checklist and message response plan.

Timeline for Responding to a Serious Incident

Branch Pilot President shall communicate a serious incident immediately to the DPOR Director and the DPOR Branch Pilots Board Executive Director to determine the severity of the situation and whether to initiate this plan. Once a serious incident has been determined to have occurred, the DPOR Director and DPOR Branch Pilots Board Executive Director will:

1. Inform the crisis communication team to address the crisis and create holding statements.
2. Communicate with in-house staff regarding the crisis and planned responses.
3. Develop a process to communicate responses to all external stakeholders and members with the crisis communication team.
4. Ensure spokesperson preparation.
5. Update internal staff of the crisis before external publics.
6. Arrange for the DPOR Investigator to obtain a statement from the vessel master.
7. Update the public and stakeholders about the crisis.
8. Determine when the crisis has ended.
9. Hold an end-of-crisis review meeting to discuss improvements to the plan.

Serious Incident Communication Team

The DPOR Serious Incident Communication Team will handle all communications in a time of crisis, subject to any directives from the Secretariat or Governor's Office. The DPOR Director and Communications Manager will lead the Crisis Communication Team.

The team may consist of:

DPOR Director

Technical Review Expert (determined by the Board, likely the Board VP)
DPOR Chief Deputy Director
DPOR Branch Pilots Board Executive Director
DPOR Licensing & Regulatory Programs Deputy Director
DPOR Compliance and Investigations Deputy Director
DPOR Communications Manager
Designees from the Governor's Office
State Emergency Response Public Information Officer(s)

Response Steps

Upon assembly the Crisis Communications Team, the team will proceed to:

Designate a secretary who can maintain meeting notes, to-do lists, and information files on the ongoing crisis and other items.

Assign Communicators to handle calls, speak with media and/or speak at a press conference. Use script, key messages and facts developed by the Serious Incident Communications Team.

Log all calls and interview request from media.

Monitor social media and media regarding incident.

Keep a **list of facts**.

Release a holding statement as soon as appropriate of a confirmed Serious Incident via social media, press release, and website.

Cancel any off topic scheduled social media posts.

Develop several key messages to be included in all communications. All communications must be approved by the DPOR Director.

Determine who will act as head spokesperson. Generally, the DPOR Director or Communications Manager will take on this responsibility.

Determine if press conference and/or on-scene presence is needed. This can be determined by severity of the incident, access to the scene and public or media presence.

Coordinate with other responding agencies (local law enforcement, state police, DEQ, Virginia Attorney General's Office, Virginia Secretary of Labor's Office, Governor's Office, Virginia Department of Emergency Services, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, and/or federal agencies like the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, EPA, or Department Homeland Security) if needed.

Issue press release and updates as situation develops.

Within 10 days of the end of the event, assess how the plan functioned.

Spokesperson Preparation and Guidelines

The spokesperson is designated by the DPOR Director and the Serious Incident Communications Team. The spokesperson will be responsible for responding directly to the public in real time. The spokesperson will be prepared and guided by the Serious Incident Communications Team and will be expected to represent DPOR. The Serious Incident will prepare sample Q&A statements for the spokesperson and prepare them for public speaking, particularly for news/televised interviews. This also includes preparation for quotes and press releases.

Spokesperson Dos:

- Be informed in all aspects of the serious incident, including speculation and which responses to avoid;
- Demonstrate competence, expertise, empathy, and caring;
- Express optimism;
- Use positive body language.

Spokesperson Don'ts:

- Speak off topic.
- Disclose unapproved information.
- Answer a question if the spokesperson does not fully know the answer; instead, the spokesperson should say, "We will look into that for you" or "It's too early in this investigation to answer that. We are still gathering information and will get back to you."

Location

The Serious Incident Communications Team headquarters for any serious incident will be at the DPOR Office and must be approved by the Director. Some situations may require a response from the field or scene of a serious incident, or from the Virginia Port Authority. This will be determined by the Serious Incident Communications Team and approved by the DPOR Director.

End of Serious Incident

The DPOR Director will determine when an emergency has ended and that routine communications processed can resume. This will initiate a review of the serious incident and any needed investigations.

Review

Within one business week of the end of the serious incident, the Serious Incident Communications Team will convene and discuss ways to improve, revise, and/or update the Serious Incident Response Plan. The recommended actions will be summarized in an after-action report that will be presented to the DPOR Director.

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