

Bahamas - Pilotage Concerns at Freeport

14th March 2014

Earlier this week the Bahamas Maritime Pilots Association (BMPA) advised that five of the seven pilots in Freeport, Bahamas employed by the Freeport Harbour Company (FHC) have tendered their resignations. According to the BMPA the two remaining pilots are the Port Director and the Marine Manager who also act as administrators. Although a third pilot has recently been hired, the BMPA consider him to be unfit for duty due to illness and a medical investigation complaint has been filed with the Bahamas Ministry of Transportation.

Similarly, six of the nine pilots employed by Buckeye Partners LP at BORCO terminal have resigned, leaving only the Marine Manager (who is said to be recovering from a leg injury) and two other pilots, one of whom is a trainee.

Reports indicate the pilots who have resigned will cease working for their current employers on 28 March 2014.

The pilots claim that they took such action in response to unsafe working conditions including poor oversight, insufficient training, fatigue and unsatisfactory incident investigation contrary to the provisions of [IMO Resolution A.960](#). They are also concerned that both companies have been unwilling to provide pilots to vessels required to anchor off Freeport, citing a number of collisions, groundings and power cable incidents at the anchorage which, they allege, may have been avoided if pilotage assistance had been available.

It is understood that the pilots who resigned have formed an independent pilotage service named the Freeport Pilotage Company. However, the legal status and authority of the Freeport Pilotage Company remains in need of clarification. In the meantime, the masters of vessels due to call at Freeport, Bahamas are advised to be particularly vigilant when entering and leaving the port under pilotage.

Members requiring further information should contact the [Loss Prevention department](#).

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