

## IMCA North America Regional Meeting Report



### 1 Introduction

International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) North America Regional Meeting Report Innovate Newport, Newport, Rhode Island 4 March 2025.

Welcome and Opening Remarks The meeting began with welcoming remarks from North America Chair Adam Dushinske, highlighting IMCA's adherence to competition law compliance across all regions. Adam encouraged active participation through Slido to enhance engagement and interaction.

Attendance 54 persons and 4 IMCA representatives.

#### 1.1 Congressman Address



*Figure 1 – Congressman Gabe Amo*

Congressman Gabe Amo addressed attendees of the North America Regional Meeting in Rhode Island, welcoming them and emphasizing the state's leadership in the blue economy. He highlighted Rhode Island's advancements in offshore wind energy, undersea drone technology, and marine innovation, noting the vital role of marine contracting in job creation, economic growth, and national security.

He acknowledged the conference's focus on offshore wind, vessel inspections, and emergency preparedness, encouraging participants to share their insights and strengthen industry connections. In Congress, he reaffirmed his commitment to protecting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Weather Service from political interference.

Amo also expressed concerns over recent executive decisions that have halted offshore wind lease sales and federal project permits, warning that such actions could harm jobs, energy savings, and climate progress. Despite these challenges, he remained optimistic about advancing the marine contracting industry and fighting against policies that threaten its future.

He concluded by thanking attendees for their participation and wishing them a successful meeting

## 2 Morning Session:

### 2.1 IMCA Update (Richard Purser IMCA)

IMCA is pleased to announce an exciting line-up of events for 2025, headlined by the highly anticipated IMCA Global Summit. This flagship event will bring industry leaders and experts together to address key issues, innovations, and future trends impacting the marine contracting sector.

Regional engagement remains a core focus, with meetings planned across key markets. The next North America Regional Meeting is scheduled for October, offering members opportunities to discuss regional challenges and collaboration prospects. In November, IMCA will convene in South America, continuing our active engagement and dialogue within this vibrant and evolving market. The Middle East & India region will host its gathering in September, providing an essential platform to share regional developments, safety initiatives, and market outlooks.

In our ongoing commitment to improving vessel safety and operational reliability, IMCA recently circulated a report on Dynamic Positioning (DP) incidents. The report highlights an average of 1.3 incident reports per vessel across a reporting fleet of 169 vessels (217 reports received for 2024). A particular emphasis was placed on understanding trigger failure causes, reinforcing the importance of preventive measures and proactive safety management systems.

<b>Event type</b>	
DP incident	59
DP Undesired event	115
DP Observation	43
<b>Total</b>	217
<b>Configuration</b>	
Open Bus	171
Closed Bus	23

Figure 2 – 2025 DP Event Stats

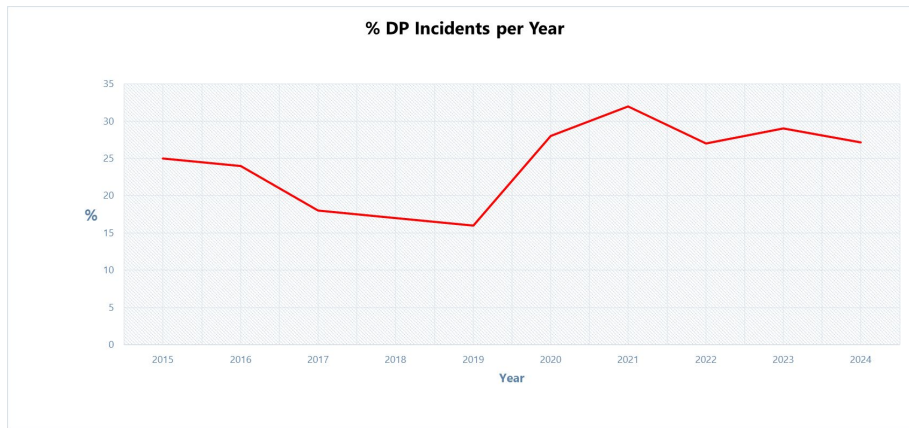


Figure 3 – Percentage of reports received that resulted in Position and/all Heading loss

Additionally, IMCA underscores the critical importance of member contributions towards our collective safety objectives. We encourage all members to submit comprehensive safety statistics, including fatalities, Lost Time Injuries (LTIs), recordable injuries, and safety observations. These submissions are instrumental in benchmarking and enhancing overall industry safety performance. Members are reminded that the deadline for submitting safety statistics is 1 April 2025.

Your active participation in these events and initiatives is vital to the continuous improvement and success of our industry.

## 2.2 Supply Chain Update (Stephanie Francoeur, Oceantic Network)

The latest status updates on major offshore wind projects, including Vineyard Wind, Revolution Wind, and CVOW-Commercial, indicate significant progress, particularly with the notable participation of US-flagged vessels in construction activities. This engagement reflects the growing capabilities of the domestic maritime industry in supporting offshore wind development, a crucial factor in meeting national renewable energy goals.

However, these projects continue to face challenges stemming from delays in the permitting pipeline and legal uncertainties. Several developments currently awaiting approvals are encountering setbacks due to regulatory complexities and evolving policy frameworks. These issues have the potential to slow progress and create uncertainty for developers and stakeholders who rely on predictable timelines for financing and execution.

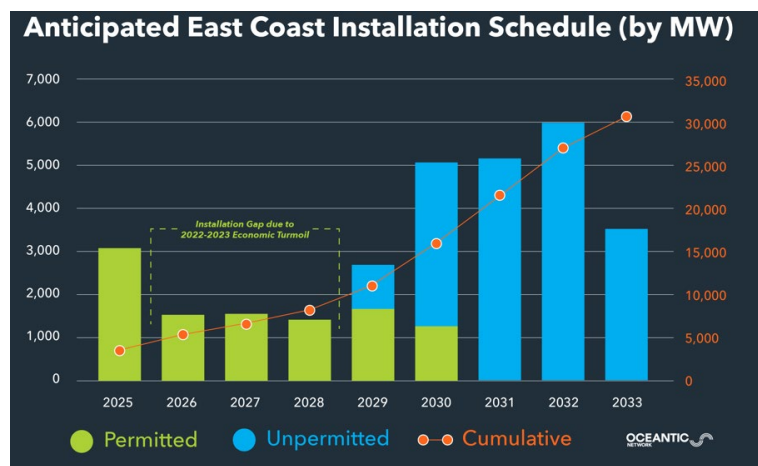


Figure 4 – Coast Installation Schedule

Further complicating the landscape, recent presidential memoranda have introduced temporary restrictions on new offshore wind leasing and permitting. This policy shift raises concerns about its impact on both ongoing

projects and future developments, as it could stall momentum in an industry already navigating regulatory hurdles. The potential consequences include delayed project timelines, financial uncertainties, and possible disruptions to supply chain planning.

Overall, while the offshore wind sector continues to advance with strong industry participation, these regulatory and policy developments underscore the need for a stable and predictable framework to support long-term investment and growth.

### **2.3 Federal Advisory Committees (Chad Fuhrmann, Core Group Consulting)**

Recent updates on the activities of Federal Advisory Committees, particularly the National Offshore Safety Advisory Committee (NOSAC) and its Dynamic Positioning (DP) subcommittee, have provided valuable insights into key operational risks in the offshore sector. The DP subcommittee has conducted thorough assessments, identifying critical areas of concern while evaluating the effectiveness of existing safety protocols.

One of the primary takeaways from NOSAC's discussions is the prevailing consensus that current industry standards adequately address operational risks, eliminating the immediate need for additional US Coast Guard (USCG) regulations. Instead, there is a strong recommendation for the USCG to formally recognise these industry standards, reinforcing their legitimacy and ensuring consistency in their application across the sector. Such recognition would provide regulatory clarity while maintaining the flexibility necessary for continued technological advancements in offshore operations.

Additionally, the discussion clarified regulatory requirements related to Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC), specifically for individuals categorised as Non-Operating Individuals (NOIs). Ensuring clarity in these definitions is critical for compliance and workforce management, preventing unnecessary administrative burdens while maintaining safety and regulatory integrity.

These developments highlight the importance of industry-led standards and regulatory clarity in supporting safe and efficient offshore operations while avoiding unnecessary regulatory expansion.

### **2.4 Training and Re-skill Opportunities (Rhys Jones, IMCA)**

The offshore renewable sector continues to face significant challenges in workforce recruitment and retention, particularly as demand for skilled professionals rises. A key focus has been on attracting talent from maritime academies and military backgrounds, given their relevant experience and transferable skills. However, ensuring a smooth transition into offshore wind and other renewable roles requires targeted efforts to streamline hiring practices and enhance career development opportunities.

One major consideration is the need to reduce friction in workforce transitions by promoting mutual recognition of standards across sectors. This approach would minimise redundant training requirements, enabling workers to move more efficiently between traditional maritime roles and offshore renewable positions. Additionally, establishing well-defined career pathways would provide greater clarity for prospective employees, reinforcing the long-term viability of careers in offshore renewables.

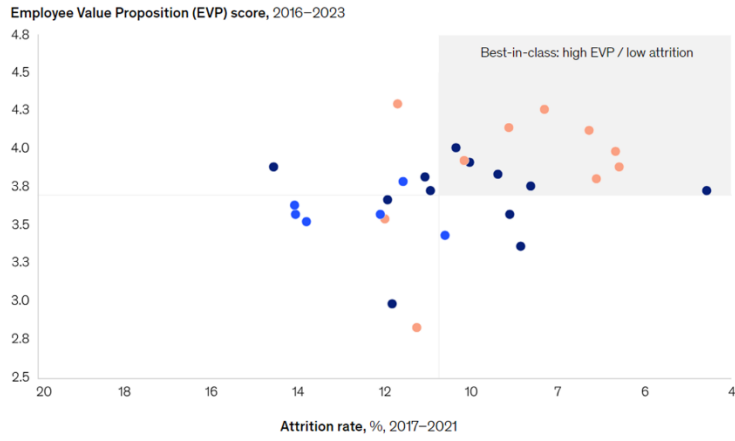


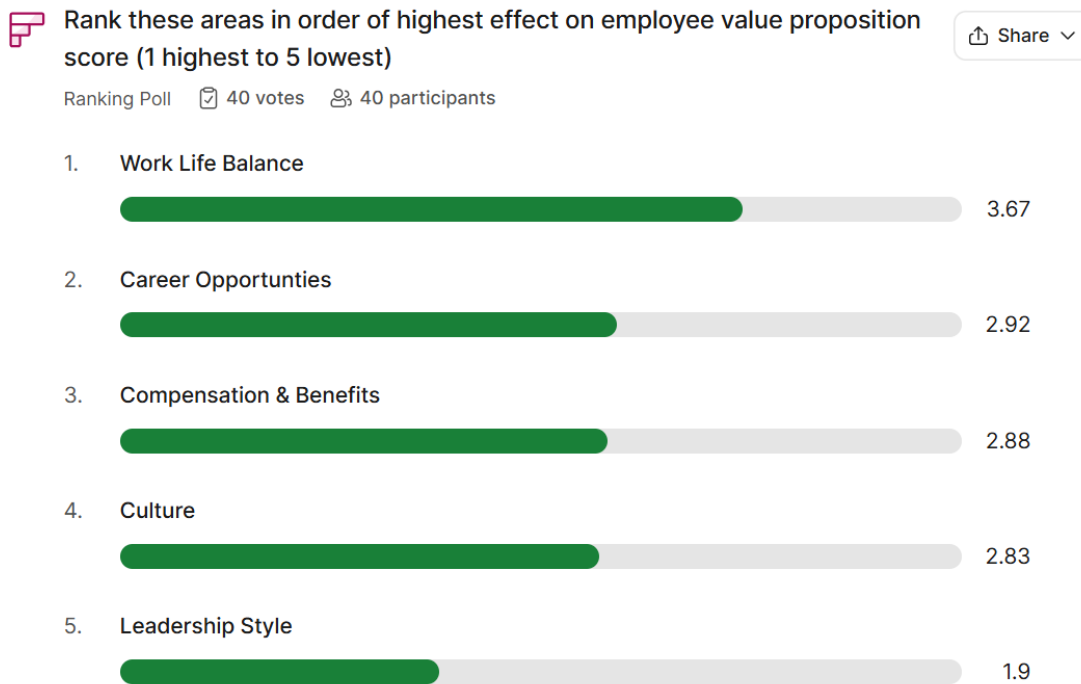
Figure 5 – Retention Chart

To better understand workforce priorities, interactive Slido polls were conducted to assess key factors influencing employee value propositions and retention strategies. Insights from these polls highlighted competitive compensation, career growth opportunities, and work-life balance as primary concerns for attracting and retaining talent. These findings reinforce the importance of aligning industry recruitment efforts with workforce expectations, ensuring that the offshore renewable sector remains an attractive and sustainable career choice.

 Which other sources should we be looking to recruit from?  
 Wordcloud Poll  47 responses  34 participants



Figure 6 – Word Cloud Question on Slido



*Figure 7 – Rank Question Slido*

## 2.5 eCMID Accredited Vessel Inspector Scheme (Mike Schwarz, IIMS)

A detailed presentation of the eCMID (Common Marine Inspection Document) scheme highlighted its critical role in ensuring vessel safety, environmental protection, and overall integrity through a structured, accredited inspection process. This scheme serves as an industry benchmark for verifying the operational standards of offshore and marine vessels, providing a standardized approach to inspections that enhances safety and compliance across the sector.

The accreditation process for eCMID inspectors was thoroughly outlined, emphasising key qualification requirements. Prospective inspectors must hold relevant certifications, such as a Certificate of Competency (CoC) or equivalent, to be eligible. Additionally, accredited inspectors are required to submit high-quality inspection reports that align with industry expectations. To maintain consistency and professional standards, a mandatory one-day training course is required following initial accreditation, ensuring that inspectors remain updated on best practices and evolving regulatory requirements.

The presentation also highlighted the ongoing expansion of the eCMID scheme, reflecting its growing acceptance and industry demand. To date, over 1,000 accreditation applications have been processed, with approximately 800 individuals achieving accreditation and 450 currently active inspectors operating worldwide. This steady growth underscores the scheme’s effectiveness in fostering a robust inspection framework, ultimately contributing to enhanced safety and operational standards within the offshore and marine industries.



Figure 8 – eCMID 10 Years on

### 3 Afternoon Session

#### 3.1 Market/Supply Chain Update (Jamie Lescinski, Boskalis)

A comprehensive review of ongoing offshore wind projects, with a particular focus on Revolution Wind, provided valuable insights into construction progress, operational lessons, and future development plans. The project continues to advance, incorporating key refinements in operational procedures, vessel layouts, and regulatory preparedness to enhance efficiency and ensure compliance with evolving industry standards. These improvements have contributed to a more streamlined construction process, minimising delays and optimising resource utilisation.

An important aspect of the discussion centred on lessons learned from current operations. Enhancements in vessel deployment strategies, logistical coordination, and workforce management have led to greater efficiency in offshore construction activities. By refining these operational aspects, projects like Revolution Wind are better positioned to meet timelines and regulatory requirements, strengthening the broader offshore wind supply chain.

However, the regulatory landscape remains a significant factor influencing the sector’s trajectory. The impacts of the recent US Presidential election have introduced uncertainty, particularly with the temporary cessation of federal offshore wind leasing and permitting activities. This policy shift has raised concerns among developers, investors, and industry stakeholders, as prolonged regulatory uncertainty could hinder project financing and planning for future developments. While the long-term outlook for offshore wind remains positive, the industry continues to monitor policy decisions closely, adapting strategies to navigate potential challenges in an evolving regulatory environment.

#### 3.2 Diving Operations in Offshore Wind (Bill Chilton, IMCA)

A focused discussion on key operational challenges in offshore wind construction and maintenance highlighted critical areas such as emergency preparedness, unexploded ordnance (UXO) management, and confined space diving within monopiles. These issues require meticulous planning and adherence to safety protocols to protect personnel and ensure smooth project execution.



*Figure 9 – Threat from UXO*

A major point of emphasis was the management of UXO, which remains a significant risk in offshore wind farm development, particularly in regions with a history of military activity. Information from the International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) was shared, outlining best practices for UXO detection, risk assessment, and safe disposal. Case studies of recent incidents provided valuable insights into the importance of early-stage UXO surveys and the implementation of structured mitigation strategies to prevent project delays and safety hazards.

Additionally, the discussion addressed the complexities of confined space diving operations within monopiles, underscoring the need for enhanced safety measures. IMCA's latest guidance on therapeutic recompression chambers was reviewed, reinforcing the critical role of emergency preparedness in diving operations. Lessons learned from recent incidents have informed updates to industry protocols, ensuring that diving teams have access to proper medical facilities and response procedures.



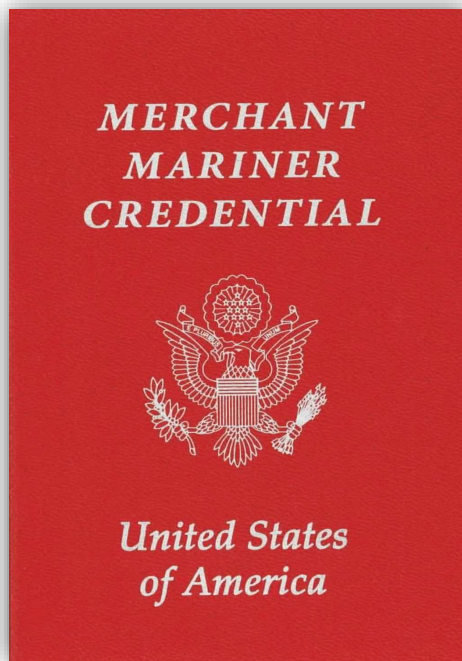
*Figure 10 – Confined space diving activities*

The session reinforced the importance of maintaining robust diving safety management systems, emphasizing proactive risk assessment, training, and continuous improvement of operational procedures. By adhering to these evolving safety standards, the industry can mitigate risks and enhance overall offshore operational resilience.

### **3.3 Clarification on Industrial Personnel MMC Requirements (Dustin Varnell, IMCA)**

A detailed clarification was provided regarding the reinstatement of Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) regulations for non-operating personnel aboard US-flagged vessels, ensuring a clear

understanding of the credentialing requirements, exemptions, and affected roles. The discussion emphasised the importance of compliance with these regulations while balancing operational flexibility for specialized offshore personnel.



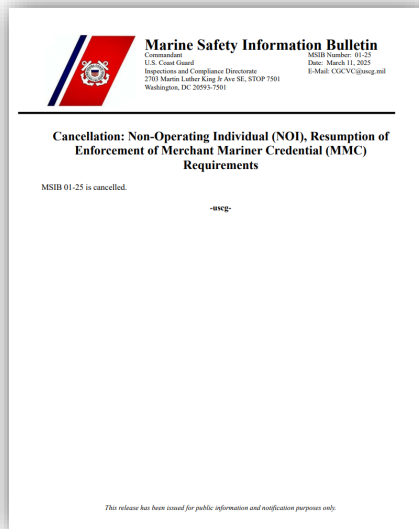
*Figure – MMC*

Key distinctions were made in defining industrial personnel, particularly regarding whether an MMC is required based on their specific duties. While some non-operating individuals, such as surveyors, inspectors, and technicians, may be exempt from credentialing, the requirement applies to those who engage in operational tasks that directly contribute to vessel functions. This clarification is essential for companies managing workforce compliance, ensuring personnel are properly classified according to US Coast Guard (USCG) regulations.

Additionally, the procedures for verifying MMCs during routine USCG vessel inspections were outlined, addressing common questions related to surveyors, inspectors, and other specialised roles. The discussion provided guidance on how vessel operators can ensure compliance, including maintaining accurate records and preparing for potential inquiries during inspections.

By reinforcing these regulatory requirements and addressing industry concerns, the session helped improve clarity on credentialing expectations, reducing administrative uncertainties while ensuring adherence to maritime safety and operational standards.

**NB.** Since this session as of the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 the USCG has issued a cancellation of MSIB 01-25



*Figure – MSIB*

## 4 Networking and Engagement

A series of interactive workshops and Slido polls were conducted to identify and address industry-specific pain points, fostering a dynamic and solutions-oriented dialogue among participants. These sessions allowed industry professionals to voice their key concerns, prioritize challenges, and collaboratively explore strategies to enhance operational efficiency, workforce development, and regulatory compliance. The use of real-time polling provided valuable insights into emerging trends and common obstacles, ensuring that discussions remained data-driven and directly relevant to industry needs.

Beyond the structured discussions, extensive networking opportunities played a crucial role in facilitating collaboration among members. These interactions encouraged knowledge-sharing and cooperative problem-solving, enabling participants to exchange best practices, discuss innovative solutions, and build strategic partnerships. The emphasis on open dialogue helped strengthen industry connections, reinforcing a collective approach to overcoming shared challenges and advancing the offshore sector as a whole.

## 5 Conclusion

The IMCA North America Regional Meeting successfully provided a comprehensive update on critical operational areas, regulatory clarity, and industry challenges and opportunities. Through effective presentations and interactive sessions, attendees gained valuable insights into current industry practices, emerging trends, and upcoming regulatory changes. The active participation demonstrated the industry's commitment to maintaining safety standards, driving operational excellence, and navigating regulatory complexities collaboratively. IMCA continues to be a pivotal organisation, fostering industry collaboration, advocating for clear regulatory frameworks, and supporting member organisations to achieve sustainability and growth in a challenging and evolving operational landscape.

### 5.1 Reflections

The following is a summation of the takeaways and reflections:

- Now more than ever the region needs IMCA to assist our members in this region in these uncertain times.
- Offshore wind projects under construction still moving ahead despite challenges
- US offshore wind leasing currently stopped seen as political and members expect that to change in future
- Training, skills transfer and retention is an industry wide problem. Universities and training schools seeking clarity for skills development from IMCA
- There was an elevated level of interest from entities in the NE for IMCA Membership.
- The regulatory and political sphere needs careful navigation.
- Rhode Island political leadership supportive of IMCA efforts
- Members are engaged with local union using labour on installation vessels and projects. Union training centres seeking safety guidance and best practices for training of workforce. 500,000 members in US and Canada. Invite to host meeting in Boston location also Las Vegas training facility
- Canadian marine contractors active in US OW market and seeking support. Canadian consulate supports IMCA effort and invite to visit
- MASS and autonomous technologies cluster in NE area potential topic for future meetings. Opportunity to discuss MASS or ROV at next regional