

Panel Biographies
Coordinating Live Exercises



Mike McElroy: Director of Marine Operations and Regulatory Affairs, Wendella Boats; President, Chicago Harbor Safety Committee; Co-Chair, Area Maritime Security Committee; Vice Chair, Harbor Safety Committee National Steering Team

Captain Mike McElroy has been proudly serving the passenger vessel industry for 37 years. He is currently employed as the Director of Marine Operations and Regulatory affairs for Wendella boats and Chicago water taxi. He also serves as the MTSA required Company security officer responsible for maintaining the Company security plan, a robust training regimen, drills, and exercises. Mike is the designated person or DP for Wendella's flagship safety management system.

Mike has previously served the marine passenger vessel industry as Captain, Engineer, and Chief Engineer on USCG inspected commercial passenger vessels. Mike has proudly trained thousands of marine crew members and related personnel in topics ranging from MTSA, Safety, Engineering, environmental compliance and Passenger Vessel Operations.

Mike has a passion for safety, security, hospitality and the environment. He satisfies this passion through engagement and partnerships as the current co-chair of his Area Maritime Security Committee and as President of the Chicago Harbor Safety Committee (CHSC) where he also serves as agency liaison, education committee chair, and emergency preparedness committee chair. Mike has also previously served the CHSC in the capacity of passenger vessel Sector director and later Vice President prior to being elected President.

Under Mikes leadership, the CHSC was awarded the honor of Distinguished harbor safety committee by the USCG Commandant in 2024. Chicago is considered the gold standard for HSCs across the United States.

Mike also serves as co-chair on the harbor safety committee national steering team. The objective of this team is to promote and assist in the establishment of harbor safety committees across the country.

On a national level Mike is a current member and former Chair of the Passenger Vessel Association Safety and Security committee and the Chair of the PVA Engineering committee. Through his work with the PVA he has authored and co-authored articles in the trade magazine "Foghorn" on active shooter training, COVID preparedness and de-escalation training for the marine employee. He has also Authored several PVA member online resources tools including *de-escalation tactics for the passenger vessel employee's*, *Looking beyond the trash can fire*, *battery safety* and *recognizing the dangers of carbon dioxide in your marine environment*.

Mike worked with the CHSC and PVA to establish safe operating procedures during the COVID 19 pandemic. He also authored a video on *Civil unrest during the COVID 19 pandemic* lessons learned for his national trade organization.

He is an elected official as of 2018 in the Village of Worth, Illinois and serves as the Worth Park District President. He has earned the designation of master boardman by the Illinois association of park districts for a second year in 2025 (IAPD).

He is the former appointed life safety officer for his hometown. He also chaired the Village Life safety committee. This Committee was tasked to work directly with Congressman Dan Lipinski's office to investigate the potential consequences of placing dredged material in a local natural area and assist in finding alternatives to the placement site for the Army Corps of Engineers.

Mike is a former BSA scout master and member of good standing of the Sons of the American legion post 991 as well as the Worth Lions Club.

Mike has also been awarded the USCG meritorious public service award three times (2012, 2019, 2024) for his contributions to the USCG's mission by discovering major flaws with fixed firefighting systems that resulted in national safety alerts, developing training products to assist the passenger vessel fleet, assisting first responders on the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, Collaborating with USCG headquarters to clarify vessel automation policy and for publishing MTSA anti-terrorism quick reference tools for passenger vessel operators. Mike also worked closely with Agency partners during the DNC and through annual active shooter and vessel fire exercises.

Mike was awarded the *spirit of the river* award by *Friends of the chicago river* in 2024 for his dedication to environmental stewardship on and off the water.

Mike was awarded the Chicago area waterways heritage award in 2025 for his outreach and expansion of waterways related safety training through building bridges between port stakeholders.

Mike was also awarded the *PVA Roger Murphy safety award* for contributions to marine safety through development of his training programs that target an increase in safety culture.