

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
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CG-ENG Policy Letter
No. 03-15
September 3, 2015

From:  B. J. Hawkins, CAPT
COMDT (CG-ENG)

To: Distribution

Subj: ACCEPTANCE OF CAP 437, STANDARDS FOR OFFSHORE HELICOPTER
LANDING AREAS

1. **PURPOSE.** This policy letter establishes that the Coast Guard considers the design and equipment standards of CAP 437 to be at least as effective as the helicopter facilities regulations in 46 CFR Part 108, applicable to Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODUs) and Floating Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) facilities.
2. **DIRECTIVES AFFECTED.** None.
3. **ACTION.** USCG Headquarters Units and Offices, Districts, and Sector Commanders may use this policy letter to ensure compliance with U.S. statutory and regulatory requirements.
4. **BACKGROUND.**
 - a. U.S.-flagged MODUs, floating OCS facilities and vessels use the MODU design and equipment regulations for helicopter facilities in 46 CFR 108.231 through 108.241 and 108.486 through 108.489. U.S.-flagged MODUs are required to comply with 46 CFR part 108 by 46 CFR 107.01. U.S.-flagged floating OCS facilities must comply with the MODU design and equipment requirements of 46 CFR 108 under 33 CFR 143.120. U.S.-flagged vessels are encouraged to follow NVIC 9-81, which provides design guidance for helicopter facilities and references 46 CFR 108.
 - b. CAP 437, Standards for Offshore Helicopter Landing Areas, February 2013, is the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority standard for helicopter facilities on offshore installations and vessels. The design and equipment standards of CAP 437 have been reviewed by the Coast Guard and are considered to be at least as effective as the helicopter facilities regulations in 46 CFR Part 108.
 - c. Under 46 CFR 108.105, the Commandant (CG-ENG) may permit the use of alternate arrangements for unit design and equipment. CG-ENG has fielded multiple requests to use CAP 437 as an alternative standard to the helicopter facilities regulations listed in 46 CFR Part 108 on a case-by-case basis. The experience and knowledge gained in reviewing CAP 437 has enabled the U.S. Coast Guard to accept it as an alternative standard to the MODU helicopter facilities regulations and no longer requiring approval on a case-by-case basis.

5. DISCUSSION.

- a. Helicopter facilities on foreign-flagged vessels, floating OCS facilities, and MODUs must comply with SOLAS and the MODU Code. Helicopter facilities installed on domestic MODUs and floating OCS facilities must comply with the helicopter facilities regulations in 46 CFR Part 108. Domestic vessels are encouraged to follow the Coast Guard guidance for shipboard helicopter facilities found in Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 9-81, which refers to sections of 46 CFR Part 108. This policy letter applies to helicopter facilities on domestic vessels, floating OCS facilities and MODUs.
- b. MODUs, floating OCS facilities, and vessels may follow CAP 437 in lieu of the helicopter facilities standards listed in 46 CFR 108. The U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Center (MSC) and Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) may consider CAP 437 as providing a degree of safety consistent with the minimum standard set forth in 46 CFR 108.231 through 108.241, and 108.486 through 108.489.

6. DISCLAIMER. While the guidance contained in this document may assist the industry, public, Coast Guard, and other Federal and State regulators in applying statutory and regulatory requirements, the guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements nor is it a regulation itself. Thus, it is not intended to, nor does it, impose legally binding requirements on any party outside the U.S. Coast Guard.

7. CHANGES. Changes to this policy will be issued as necessary. Suggestions for improvements of this policy should be submitted in writing to this office.

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