



16721
CG-MMC Policy Letter
No. 05-18
OCT 19 2018

From: M. Medina
COMDT (CG-MMC)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Medina", written over the typed name and title.

To: National Maritime Center

Subj: GUIDELINES FOR COAST GUARD APPROVED TRAINING FOR BASIC AND
ADVANCED METEOROLOGY

1. Purpose. This policy letter provides guidance for Coast Guard approved meteorology courses required to qualify for STCW endorsements as Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch (OICNW), Chief Mate, and Master.
2. Action. The Coast Guard will use Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 3-14, Guidelines for Approval of Training Courses and Programs, COMDTPUB 16721 and this policy as a guide when evaluating requests for approval of courses in Advanced Meteorology and Basic Meteorology and when auditing these courses.
3. Directives Affected. This policy letter provides additional guidance on the policy specified in NVIC 3-14. This policy letter does not overrule or change the guidance in NVIC 3-14.
4. Background.
 - a. On October 1, 2015, the SS El Faro, a 40-year-old cargo ship owned by TOTE Maritime Puerto Rico and operated by TOTE Services, Inc., was on a regular route from Jacksonville, Florida, to San Juan, Puerto Rico, when it foundered and sank during Hurricane Joaquin in the Atlantic Ocean about 40 nautical miles northeast of Acklins and Crooked Island, Bahamas. The ship had sailed directly into the path of Hurricane Joaquin. All those aboard perished in the sinking.
 - b. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) identified a number of safety issues. The NTSB made safety recommendations to the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies and organizations. Among those to the Coast Guard were recommendations concerning the content of the meteorology training provided to mariners seeking STCW officer endorsements.
5. Discussion.
 - a. Courses to meet the Advanced Meteorology training requirements for STCW endorsements as Master and Chief Mate found in 46 CFR 11.305(a)(3)(iii), 11.307(a)(3)(iii), 11.311(a)(3)(iii), and 11.313(a)(3)(iii) should include the meteorology

topics found in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Model Course 7.01, Master and Chief Mate, with particular emphasis on the following:

- 1) Characteristics of weather systems including tropical revolving storms;
 - 2) Advanced meteorological concepts, including synoptic charts and weather forecasting, and voyage planning with respect to weather conditions and wave height;
 - 3) Use of technology to transmit and receive weather forecasts (such as navigational telex or weather-routing providers); and
 - 4) Ship-routing services (capabilities and limitations).
- b. Courses to meet the (Basic) Meteorology training requirement for an STCW endorsement as Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch found in 46 CFR 11.309(a)(3)(xiii) should include the meteorology topics found in the IMO Model Course 7.03, Officer In Charge of a Navigational Watch, with particular emphasis on the following topics:
- 1) Characteristics of weather systems;
 - 2) Weather charting and reporting;
 - 3) Importance of sending weather observations;
 - 4) Sources of weather information; and
 - 5) Interpreting weather forecast products.
- c. Training providers holding approvals for meteorology courses should review and if necessary, revise their courses as part of their continuous improvement process to ensure that the subjects above are included and adequately covered in their courses. We remind providers that any substantial modification of an approved course curricula should be submitted to the National Maritime Center (NMC) for review and approval before they are implemented.
- d. The NMC will review courses submitted for original approval, modification, or renewal of approval to ensure inclusion of the topics contained in IMO Model Courses 7.01 and 7.03, as appropriate, including the topics described above.
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 itself a regulation.
7. Changes. This policy letter will be posted on the web at <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Commercial-Regulations-standards-CG-5PS/Office-of-Merchant-Mariner-Credentialing/CG-MMC-2/CG->

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[MMC-2-New-Policies/](#) and the NMC website www.uscg.mil/nmc in the Policy and Regulation tab. Changes to this policy will be issued as necessary. Suggestions for improvement of this policy should be submitted in writing to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Office of Merchant Mariner Credentialing (CG-MMC) at the address listed on the first page.

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