

STCW Endorsements for Basic and Advanced Polar Code Operations

The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code) entered into force on January 1, 2017. The Polar Code includes training requirements for deck officers engaged on ships operating in polar waters and subject to the Polar Code. Amendments to the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW) Convention and Code supporting the Polar Code were adopted in June, 2016, and will enter into force on July 1, 2018.

The Coast Guard has issued CG-MMC [Policy Letter 02-18](#) “Guidelines for Qualifications of Personnel for Issuing STCW Endorsements for Basic and Advanced Polar Code Operations,” (83 FR 121, June 22, 2018). The policy letter contains guidance on obtaining Basic or Advanced Polar Code Operations endorsements and the application process for the endorsements. The National Maritime Center (NMC) will issue a Basic or Advanced Polar Code endorsement to mariners who have voluntarily fulfilled the applicable STCW requirements and apply for such an endorsement. These endorsements are not currently mandated by Coast Guard regulation; however, since the United States is a signatory to the STCW Convention, vessel owners and operators should be aware that their vessels are subject to foreign port state control actions including detention if mariners are not compliant with the STCW Convention and Code.

In order to expedite issuance of these endorsements, until July 31, 2018, the NMC will accept applications for Polar Code endorsements electronically at IASKNMC@uscg.mil. The e-mail should have a subject line of “POLAR CODE ENDORSEMENT” and the application cannot be combined with any other application transaction. Please refer to the [Electronic Submission Instructions](#) on the NMC website regarding size and format limitations.

The complete policy is available in the public docket on regulations.gov. The Coast Guard is accepting comments on the guidance through September 20, 2018. Please see the Federal Register announcement for details on how to submit comments.

If you have any questions or concerns, visit the [NMC website](#) or contact the NMC Customer Service Center by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, by using the NMC [online chat system](#), or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

Sincerely,

/K. R. Martin/

Kirsten R. Martin
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer