

# COAST GUARD MARITIME COMMONS

## THE COAST GUARD BLOG FOR MARITIME PROFESSIONALS

## 11/30/2016: Polar Code – An overview

Posted by LT Katie Braynard, Wednesday, November 30, 2016

Written by Lt. Chris Rabalais

The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters, commonly known as the Polar Code, is a ship-focused code with specific provisions that enhance the design, operations, and equipment standards of vessels operating in Arctic and Antarctic waters. The Polar Code will enter into force on Jan. 1, 2017, and is divided into two Parts. Part I contains provisions incorporated through SOLAS while Part II contains MARPOL provisions. Each Part is subsequently divided into two sections. Section A of each Part contains mandatory requirements. Section B provides additional voluntary guidance. In addition to these two Parts, the Polar Code addresses manning and training requirements through a set of amendments to the STCW convention. These STCW amendments have a later entry into force date of Jan. 1, 2018.

The Polar Code then organizes specific topics into chapters which contain a set of goals, functional requirements which fulfill those goals, and regulations. Compliance with the Polar Code is achieved by either meeting the regulations listed or through alternative means which meet the functional requirements. However, because the Polar Code is a risk-based standard, many of these requirements are not highly prescriptive.

Similar to the ISPS Code, the Polar Code is based on risk assessments conducted by vessel operators. The use of this risk based approach makes the Polar Code adaptable to the large variety of vessels which may operate in polar waters. For example, a vessel which operates seasonally when hazards are low does not have to meet the same standards as vessels that operate in extreme cold and heavy ice. In this way, safety is improved without overly burdening maritime operators or communities dependent on polar marine traffic.

As the Polar Code entry into force date approaches, additional information will be posted on the Maritime Commons in the [Polar Code series](#). Additionally, the Coast Guard will continue to publish notable policy and regulatory updates in the federal register.

*This blog is not a replacement or substitute for the formal posting of regulations and updates or existing processes for receiving formal feedback of the same. Links provided on this blog will direct the reader to official source documents, such as the Federal Register, Homeport and the Code of Federal Regulations. These documents remain the official source for regulatory information published by the Coast Guard.*



### Comments

0 comments

0 Comments

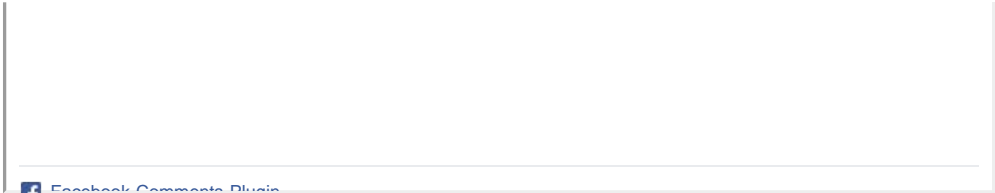
Sort by Oldest ▼



### Categories

- Bridge Programs
- Commercial Vessel Compliance
  - Domestic Vessels
  - Fishing Vessels
  - Foreign Vessels
- Congressional Hearings
- Design & Engineering Standards
  - Lifesaving & Fire Safety
- Emerging Policy
- Environmental Response Policy
- Federal Register
- Investigations & Casualty Analysis
- Navigation Systems
- Operating & Environmental Standards
- Ports and Facilities
  - Cargo & Facilities
  - Domestic Ports
- Safety
- Standards Evaluation & Development
- Vessel Documentation
- Waterways Policy





Facebook Comments Plugin

Tags: [polar code](#)



**National Maritime Center**  
United States Coast Guard  
One Mission...One Team...One Voice



**NAVIGATION CENTER**  
The Navigation Center of Excellence




**HOMEPORT**  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

**FOIA Library**



National Terrorism Advisory System



**NTAS**  
NATIONAL TERRORISM ADVISORY SYSTEM

**ACTIVE BULLETIN**  
[READ MORE](#)

[Put this widget on your web page](#)

This blog is not a replacement or substitute for the formal posting of regulations and updates or existing processes for receiving formal feedback of the same. Links provided on this blog will direct the reader to official source documents, such as the Federal Register, Homeport and the Code of Federal Regulations. These documents remain the official source for regulatory information published by the Coast Guard.



Accessibility/Section 508