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(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos.: 93.279, Drug Abuse and Addiction Research Programs, National Institutes of Health, HHS)

Dated: February 8, 2016.

**Natasha M. Copeland,**

*Program Analyst, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy.*

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**BILLING CODE 4140-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### National Institutes of Health

#### National Institute of General Medical Sciences; Notice of Closed Meeting

Pursuant to section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), notice is hereby given of the following meeting.

The meeting will be closed to the public in accordance with the provisions set forth in sections 552b(c)(4) and 552b(c)(6), Title 5 U.S.C., as amended. The grant applications and the discussions could disclose confidential trade secrets or commercial property such as patentable material, and personal information concerning individuals associated with the grant applications, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

*Name of Committee:* NIGMS Initial Review Group; Training and Workforce Development Subcommittee—C.

*Date:* March 7, 2016.

*Time:* 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

*Agenda:* To review and evaluate grant applications.

*Place:* Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean, VA 22102.

*Contact Person:* Mona R. Trempe, Ph.D., Scientific Review Officer, Office of Scientific Review, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Institutes of Health, 45 Center Drive, Room 3AN12, Bethesda, MD 20892, 301-594-3998, [trempe@mail.nih.gov](mailto:trempe@mail.nih.gov).

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 93.375, Minority Biomedical Research Support; 93.821, Cell Biology and Biophysics Research; 93.859, Pharmacology, Physiology, and Biological Chemistry Research; 93.862, Genetics and Developmental Biology Research; 93.88, Minority Access to Research Careers; 93.96, Special Minority Initiatives; 93.859, Biomedical Research and Research Training, National Institutes of Health, HHS)

Dated: February 8, 2016.

**Melanie J. Gray,**

*Program Analyst, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

### Coast Guard

[Docket No. USCG-2016-0017]

#### Policy Letter: Guidance for Training of Deck Officers on Vessels Subject to the International Code for Ships Operating in the Polar Waters

**AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DHS.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Coast Guard announces the availability, in the docket, of a policy letter which provides voluntary guidance for the training of deck officers on vessels operating in polar waters. It recommends training measures that will achieve a higher level of safety for mariners working in this specialized polar environment. It is applicable to SOLAS vessels operating outside the boundary line and subject to the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code). The draft policy letter and voluntary guidance would not apply to vessels on voyages that do not operate in areas subject to the Polar Code.

**DATES:** This policy letter is effective on February 12, 2016.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** If you have questions about this document, contact Cathleen Mauro, Marine Personnel Qualifications Division (CG-OES-1), U.S. Coast Guard; telephone 202-372-1449, or [Cathleen.B.Mauro@uscg.mil](mailto:Cathleen.B.Mauro@uscg.mil).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Viewing Materials in the Docket

The policy letter is available in the docket and can be viewed by going to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), inserting USCG-2016-0017 in the "Keyword" box, and then clicking "Search."

##### Background and Purpose

Current shipping trends show an increase in the number of vessels regularly transiting remote polar areas. Vessels in polar waters experience unpredictable and poor weather conditions, degraded navigation tools, threats to operating equipment and increased stability concerns. In response to the challenges faced by these vessels and the concern for their safe operation,

the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has adopted a mandatory code, the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters, commonly referred to as the Polar Code. The Polar Code addresses safety and environmental requirements for vessels, as well as the level of training required for deck officers, and is expected to come into force on January 1, 2017.

In order to obtain input from U.S. stakeholders and to facilitate the development of the U.S. position at the IMO on the training requirements needed to support the Polar Code, the Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC) chartered a working group in 2013 to address mariner training in support of the polar code. The working group developed a proposal that included the training competencies for U.S. mariners serving on ships operating in polar waters. The working group held multiple meetings and provided recommendations on minimum standards of competence, sea service, and recency requirements for polar training at the basic and advanced levels. The group also developed recommendations on how existing mariners with experience operating in polar waters would be grandfathered under the new requirements. MERPAC adopted the working group's recommendations, which provided the basis of the U.S. position regarding the relevant amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW Convention), 1978, as amended, and the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code (STCW Code). The STCW Convention and Code provide the international standards for seafarers.

Through the work of the IMO's Subcommittee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW), amendments to the STCW Convention and Code were developed to define the training requirements needed to support the implementation of the Polar Code. These amendments were approved by the Maritime Safety Committee on its Ninety Fifth Session (MSC 95), and are expected to be adopted by the IMO in July of 2016. The amendments are expected to enter into force on January 1, 2018.

Cognizant that there is a gap between the time the Polar Code enters into force on January 1, 2017 and the adoption of the amendments to the STCW Convention by IMO in July of 2016, the Coast Guard has developed a policy letter that recommends training guidelines for deck officers on vessels operating in polar waters. The Coast Guard is providing this guidance to