



16711/Serial No. 2250  
CVC Policy Letter 24-02  
August 19, 2024

From: M. R. Neeland, CAPT  
COMDT (CG-CVC)

To: Distribution

Subj: APPLICATION OF FISHING VESSEL CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Ref: (a) Title 46 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) § 4503  
(b) CVC-WI-015 (series)  
(c) Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 00170.1, Revision No. 01.4,  
paragraph (92)(b)  
(d) Department of Homeland Security Instruction Manual 023-01-001-01, Rev. 1

1. PURPOSE. This directive communicates the Coast Guards position on certain requirements that apply to the new construction, survey, and maintenance of select commercial fishing industry vessels (CFIV) as specified in reference (a). This policy letter will expire in two years, unless cancelled or suspended.
2. ACTION. Coast Guard District Commanders, Sector Commanders, Officers in Charge, Marine Inspections (OCMI), and the Marine Industry should use this guidance to assist with decision making, project planning, and interpretations related to new construction, survey, and maintenance of CFIV's.
3. AUTHORIZED RELEASE. Internet release is authorized.
4. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None.
5. BACKGROUND. In lieu of the commercial fishing vessel (CFV) classing requirements specified in United States Code (U.S.C.) § 4503(a), certain vessels may meet alternative requirements per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d), specifically, fishing vessels (FV) and fish tender vessels (FTV) that are between 50 and 180 feet overall in length and were built after the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2016, which is February 8, 2016.
  - a. Documentation of a vessel keel-laid date is needed when determining build date applicability. The build date is considered to be the date the vessels keel was laid; this

date should be determined in accordance with reference (b).<sup>1</sup> Reference (b) provides guidance to OCMI's, owners, and builders when documenting a vessels established keel laid date.

- b. 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d) is comprised of (8) subparagraphs that outline various requirements related to vessel design and construction; project oversight and certification; and post construction surveys, maintenance, and documentation. It is essential that stakeholders such as Coast Guard authorities, vessel owner/operators, ship builders, and third-party organization (TPO) surveyors understand required parameters and applicability. The sections below provide a breakdown of the relevant sections of 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d) and expand on the Coast Guard's thinking on the associated content.
  - c. Application of requirements: Where the statutory language of 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d) states "accepted by the Secretary," it should be noted that in such cases the U.S. Coast Guard acts on behalf of the Secretary of Homeland Security pursuant to reference (c).
  - d. Load line assignment equivalency: Load line assignment by a recognized assigning authority is equivalent to all requirements stipulated in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(1) thru (8). As such, a valid load line certificate is evidence of compliance with 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d).<sup>2</sup>
6. **DISCUSSION.** 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(1) stipulates applicable vessels shall be "designed by an individual licensed by a State as a naval architect or marine engineer." As a means to verify State licensing compliance, the licensed individual is obligated to prove they hold a valid State license as required.
- a. **Authorized Classification Societies:** 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(1) requires that the vessel design incorporate standards equivalent to those prescribed by an authorized Classification Society<sup>3</sup> or another qualified organization. The Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance (CG-CVC) maintains the list of Coast Guard Recognized Organizations and authorized Classification Societies.<sup>4</sup>
  - b. Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 8 establishes the criteria and procedures for Classification Societies to be authorized to conduct certain functions and

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<sup>1</sup> See CVC-WI-015 "keel laid date" guidance found at:

[https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/CG-5PC/CG-CVC/CVC\\_MMS/CVC-WI-015\(series\).pdf?ver=2019-09-30-143049-183](https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/CG-5PC/CG-CVC/CVC_MMS/CVC-WI-015(series).pdf?ver=2019-09-30-143049-183)

<sup>2</sup> Per 46 U.S.C. § 5102(b)(3), a fishing vessel is required to have a load line assignment if built after 1 July 2013, is 79 feet or longer, and operates outside the Boundary Line.

<sup>3</sup> A classification society to which the Coast Guard has delegated authority under 46 U.S.C. § 3316. The Coast Guard grants such authority under the provisions of 46 C.F.R. Part 8 and refers to these classification societies as "Recognized Organizations."

<sup>4</sup> See "Recognized Organizations" on the CG-CVC listed Classification Societies found at:

<https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Inspections-Compliance-CG-5PC-/Commercial-Vessel-Compliance/Flag-State-Control-Division/ClassSocAuth/>

certifications on behalf of the Coast Guard. As stated in 46 CFR § 8.230(a)(7), a recognized Classification Society must publish and maintain class rules (standards) for the design, construction, and certification of commercial vessels and their associated engineering systems.

- c. Established classification society rules and standards may differ from organization to organization. The Coast Guards does not determine Classification Society rules and standards; in general, Classification Society rules and standards should align with the intended service of the vessel.
- d. **Documenting Vessel Specifics:** To enable verification that a vessel design incorporates standards equivalent to those prescribed by an Approved Classification Society as stipulated in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2), the State licensed naval architect or marine engineer should accurately reflect certain design specifics in the vessel plan.

Example: If a Classification Society Rule stipulates a specific welding standard, and the welding standard is incorporated in the vessel design, that welding standard should be clearly listed on the vessel's plans so that the certifying marine surveyor has adequate information to assess compliance.

- 1) After a State licensed naval architect or marine engineer has documented relevant standards in the vessel design per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(1), the marine surveyor should be able to attest and certify if the vessel construction is in accordance with its design per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2), as discussed in paragraph (e).
- e. **Vessel Design Standard Equivalencies:** Specific standards that are determined to be equal in design, tolerance, and purpose to related Classification Society standards may be considered equivalent to those standards prescribed by an authorized classification society. In cases where a determination is desired on standard equivalencies, the Coast Guard Marine Safety Center interprets and accepts equivalencies for fittings, equipment, arrangements, calculations, information, or tests required by regulations when substitution provides an equivalent level of safety.
  - 1) To prevent costly project delays or other adverse impacts, questions on equivalencies and how they may impact the vessel design should be addressed by the vessel owner/builder, naval architect, or marine engineer during the design stage of the vessel, not after construction is complete.
  - 2) All requests for equivalencies should be in writing and should clearly indicate the requirement from which relief is sought, the proposed alternative, and supporting justification demonstrating that the alternative provides a level of safety at least

- equivalent to that intended by regulation. Depending on the nature of the substitution, the justification may need to include engineering analyses and/or a risk assessment.
- 3) The Coast Guard Marine Safety Center may be contacted at [msc@uscg.mil](mailto:msc@uscg.mil) and has additional submittal guidance, tools, and information available online at [www.dco.uscg.mil/msc](http://www.dco.uscg.mil/msc).
  - f. **Construction Oversight and Certification:** As specified in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2), the construction of the vessel must be overseen and certified as being in accordance with its design by a marine surveyor of an organization accepted by the Coast Guard. As such, the certifying marine surveyor, on behalf of the organization accepted by the Coast Guard, is attesting that the relevant elements of the vessel design and construction are as specified in the design plan details.
  - g. **Post-Construction Surveys:** As specified in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3) thru (7), post-construction surveys include: condition surveys, out-of-water surveys, and verification of certain compliance measures. Post-construction survey elements that should be considered, but are not limited to:
    - 1) Condition survey verification processes and procedures (i.e. survey of internal structure, through hull fittings, watertight integrity, piping systems);
    - 2) Out-of-water survey processes and procedures (i.e. through hull fittings, sea-chest, shaft, rudder/seals, structural repairs, plate assessment);
    - 3) Stability condition verification processes and procedures (i.e. verifying stability/loading instructions are current, verifying assigned load mark).
  - h. Organizations that are accepted by the Coast Guard to conduct certain functions and certifications on CFIV's fall under two types - Similarly Qualified Organizations (SQO's), and Accepted Organizations (AO's). SQO's are further discussed in paragraph (i); AOs are further discussed in paragraph (j). The Coast Guard maintains a listing of accepted SQO's and AO's on the Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Fishing Vessel Safety Division (CG-CVC-3) website.<sup>5</sup>
    - 1) Designation as an organization accepted by the Coast Guard as specified by 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2) is made by designation letter from the Coast Guard to the organization. Such designation is reserved solely for the organization based on their organizational capabilities (i.e. organizational infrastructure; management of surveyor professional

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<sup>5</sup> See SQO and AO listings on the CG-CVC-3 website under "Third Party Organizations-Construction/Survey Oversight" at: <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Inspections-Compliance-CG-5PC-/Commercial-Vessel-Compliance/Fishing-Vessel-Safety-Division/THIRD-PARTY-ORGANIZATIONS-FV-construction-oversight/>

qualifications and competencies, etc.). Designation as an organization accepted by the Coast Guard is not intended for the individual marine surveyor.

- i. **SQO:** An SQO is a Classification Society organization which has been designated by the Coast Guard (Commandant) for the purpose of classing, providing design and construction oversight, surveys, and examinations on CFIV's under the provisions of 46 CFR § 28.76.
  - 1) An SQO differs from an AO – an example being, per 46 CFR § 28.76, an SQO must verify that it publishes standards for vessel design and construction, which are as widely available, and which are of similar content to the standards published by the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS).

**SQO Construction Oversight and Certification:** Organizations may request designation as a Coast Guard accepted SQO authorized to conduct construction oversight and certification on FV's or FTV's as specified in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2). As a minimum, the organization should:

- 1) Demonstrate compliance with the provisions of 46 CFR § 28.76;<sup>6</sup>
- 2) Upon request, provide documentation to the Coast Guard of organizational capabilities and processes to verify a vessel's construction is in accordance with its design per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2), to include demonstrating organizational abilities to issue documentation attesting to relevant construction oversight and certification.
- 3) Per 46 CFR § 28.76, an organization desiring designation by the Commandant as an SQO must request such designation in writing. As such, application requests for designation as a Coast Guard accepted SQO authorized to conduct construction oversight and certification on FV's or FTV's as specified in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2) should be submitted to the Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Fishing Vessel Safety Division (CG-CVC-3), via [CGCVC3@uscg.mil](mailto:CGCVC3@uscg.mil).

Note: SQO application submissions are reviewed and approved by CG-CVC-3 who determines the adequacy of the submitted content based on established standards and procedures. Incomplete or inaccurate application submissions that lack required content may impact package approval.

**SQO Post-Construction Surveys:** Organizations may request designation as a Coast Guard accepted SQO authorized to verify compliance with post-construction condition surveys, out-of-water surveys, and verification of compliance measures as outlined in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3) thru (7). As a minimum, the organization should:

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<sup>6</sup> See 46 CFR § 28.76 for details on SQO acceptance and designation.

- 1) Demonstrate compliance with the provisions of 46 CFR § 28.76;
- 2) Upon request, provide documentation to the Coast Guard of in-place organizational capabilities to verify compliance with measures outlined in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3) thru (7) to include: condition survey verification processes and procedures; out-of-water survey processes and procedures; stability condition verification processes and procedures; and organizational abilities to issue documentation certifying vessel compliance.
- 3) Application requests for designation as a Coast Guard accepted SQO authorized to conduct post-construction condition surveys, out-of-water surveys, and verification of compliance measures as outlined in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3) thru (7) must be in writing and submitted to the Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Fishing Vessel Safety Division (CG-CVC-3), via [CGCVC3@uscg.mil](mailto:CGCVC3@uscg.mil).

Note: SQO application submissions are reviewed and approved by CG-CVC-3 who determines the adequacy of the submitted content based on established standards and procedures. Incomplete or inaccurate application submissions that lack required content may impact package approval.

- j. **AO:** An AO is a non-classification society organization that has been accepted by the Coast Guard to conduct design and construction oversight, surveys, or examinations on CFIV's under the provisions of 46 CFR § 28.73.

**AO Construction Oversight and Certification:** Organizations may request designation as a Coast Guard accepted AO authorized to conduct construction oversight and certification on select FV's or FTV's as specified in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2). As a minimum, the organization should:

- 1) Demonstrate compliance with the provisions of 46 CFR § 28.73;<sup>7</sup>
- 2) Upon request, provide documentation to the Coast Guard of organizational capabilities and processes to verify a vessel's construction is in accordance with its design per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2), to include demonstrating organizational abilities to issue documentation attesting to relevant construction oversight and certification.
- 3) Per 46 CFR § 28.73, an organization desiring designation by the Commandant as an AO must request such designation in writing. As such, application requests for designation as a Coast Guard accepted AO authorized to conduct construction oversight and certification on FV's or FTV's as specified in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(2)

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<sup>7</sup> See 46 CFR § 28.73 for specifics on Commandant AO acceptance and designation.

should be submitted to the Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Fishing Vessel Safety Division (CG-CVC-3), via [CGCVC3@uscg.mil](mailto:CGCVC3@uscg.mil).

Note: AO application submissions are reviewed and approved by CG-CVC-3 who determines the adequacy of the submitted content based on established standards and procedures. Incomplete or inaccurate application submissions that lack required content may impact package approval.

**AO Post Construction Surveys:** Organizations may request designation as a Coast Guard accepted AO authorized to verify compliance with post-construction condition surveys, out-of-water surveys, and verification of compliance measures as outlined in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3) thru (7). As a minimum, the organization should:

- 1) Demonstrate compliance with the provisions of 46 CFR § 28.73;
- 2) Upon request, provide documentation to the Coast Guard of in-place organizational capabilities to verify compliance with measures outlined in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3) thru (7) to include: condition survey verification processes and procedures; out-of-water survey processes and procedures; stability condition verification processes and procedures; and organizational abilities to issue documentation certifying vessel compliance.
- 3) Application requests for designation as a Coast Guard accepted AO authorized to conduct post-construction condition surveys, out-of-water surveys, and verification of compliance measures as outlined in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3) thru (7), must be in writing and submitted to the Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Fishing Vessel Safety Division (CG-CVC-3), via [CGCVC3@uscg.mil](mailto:CGCVC3@uscg.mil).

Note: AO application submissions are reviewed and approved by CG-CVC-3 who determines the adequacy of the submitted content based on established standards and procedures. Incomplete or inaccurate application submissions that lack required content may impact package approval.

- k. **Stability:** 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3)(A) and (B) sets forth stability requirements to be performed by a qualified individual.<sup>8</sup> Subparagraph (A) requires completion of a stability test (also occasionally called an “inclining test” or “inclining experiment”) by a qualified individual. Subparagraph (B) requires the provision of written stability and loading instructions from a qualified individual that are provided to the owner or operator. The purpose of these instructions is to provide information to the vessel operator that will enable the operator to readily ascertain the stability of the vessel under varying conditions.

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<sup>8</sup> See 46 CFR § 28.510 “qualified individual” definition found at: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-46/chapter-I/subchapter-C/part-28/subpart-E/section-28.510>

- 1) Stability and loading instructions should be in a format and be presented in a style jointly determined by the qualified individual and the vessel's owner to provide the most useable information in the most understandable manner to the vessel's master and crew. The intent is to provide clear information and guidance for operating personnel to deal with conditions the vessel may reasonably be expected to encounter (recognizing that operating personnel need to make decisions quickly, and that few operating personnel may have significant training in stability).<sup>9 10</sup>
- 2) Loading conditions that should be considered, but are not limited to:
  - a) Departure conditions for transit to fishing grounds or next destination that include vessel loaded with fuel, stores, ice, fishing gear, crew weight, etc.
  - b) Arrival at the fishing grounds or next destination with reduced fuel, water, stores, and no catch;
  - c) Departure from fishing grounds or port: vessel loaded with full catch or cargo, and with percentage of stores, fuel, etc., that results in lowest condition of stability;
  - d) Arrival at home port: vessel loaded with 10 percent stores, fuel, etc., remaining and full catch;
  - e) Arrival at home port: vessel loaded with 10 percent stores, fuel, etc., and 20 percent of full catch;
  - f) Intermediate conditions should be examined, and unsafe intermediate loading profiles should be thoroughly addressed in stability instructions;
  - g) Other operating conditions should be examined, and unsafe loading profiles should be thoroughly addressed in stability instructions;
  - h) Free surface corrections considered under 46 CFR § 28.540 should be included.
- 3) The qualified individual should also consider factors that may significantly impact a vessel's stability. Some of these factors include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Allowance for wet fishing gear at its highest storage location;

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<sup>9</sup> See NVIC 5-86 "Voluntary Standards for U.S. Uninspected Commercial Fishing Vessels" found at: <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/5ps/NVIC/1986/n5-86.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> See NVIC 3-89 "Guidelines for the Presentation of Stability Information for Operating Personnel" found at: <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/5ps/NVIC/1989/n3-89.pdf>



- b) Deck cargo, including fish, pots, traps, etc.;
  - c) Icing loads to suit geographic/seasonal requirements;
  - d) Catch on deck, if anticipated, in loading conditions, including water on deck if freeing ports are blocked in normal operation;
  - e) Catch at any intermediate location including when landing catch;
  - f) Allowance for free surface effect of liquids and, if applicable, catch carried;
  - g) Water ballast if carried in tanks provided specifically for this purpose;
  - h) Fixed ballast; Persons onboard and their effects;
  - i) Stores, spares, and cordage; Ice and bait.
1. To satisfy stability requirements addressed in the written stability and loading instructions required:
- 1) A vessel not less than 79 feet overall in length may:
    - a) Obtain a certificate issued by the American Bureau of Shipping or SQO that attests the societies rules applicable to vessel have been met to their satisfaction;  
or
    - b) A qualified individual demonstrates compliance with applicable stability rules of the American Bureau of Shipping or SQO; or
    - c) A qualified individual demonstrates compliance with the stability requirements of 46 CFR Part 28, Subpart E.
  - 2) A vessel less than 79 feet and not less than 50 feet overall in length may:
    - a) Obtain a certificate issued by the American Bureau of Shipping or SQO that attests the societies rules applicable to vessel have been met to their satisfaction;  
or
    - b) A qualified individual demonstrates compliance with one of the following standards:

- i. Applicable stability rules of the American Bureau of Shipping or SQO for vessels not less than 79 feet overall in length; or
  - ii. All applicable stability standards contained in NVIC 5-86; or
  - iii. All applicable stability standards contained in the IMO Voluntary Guidelines for Small Fishing Vessels, 2005.<sup>11</sup>
- m. **Loading Marks:** 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3)(C) requires the vessel be assigned a loading mark. A loading mark is a reference mark or known draft marks located on the vessel's hull that indicates the maximum depth to which the vessel may be safely loaded with cargo in the fully loaded condition in accordance with its stability instructions.<sup>12</sup>
- 1) Loading marks shall be placed on each side of the vessel forward, mid-length, and aft to indicate the maximum allowable trim and maximum allowable draft in the full load condition. A loading mark should be a horizontal line of at least 205 millimeters (8 inches) in length and 25 millimeters (1 inch) in height, with its upper edge passing through the point of maximum draft. The loading mark should be permanently fixed or welded and painted in a contrasting color to the side shell paint.<sup>13 14</sup>
- n. **Substantial Alterations:** Per 46 U.S.C. § 4503 (d)(4), a vessel must not be substantially altered without the review and approval of an individual licensed by a State as a naval architect or marine engineer before the beginning of such substantial alteration.
- 1) A substantial alteration means the vessel is physically altered in a manner that affects the vessels stability; changing critical lightweight displacement characteristics, buoyancy volume, and certain down flooding characteristics as defined in 46 CFR § 28.510.
  - 2) Questions pertaining to substantial alterations should be directed to the Coast Guard Marine Safety Center.
- o. **Condition Surveys:** Per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(5), vessels are required to undergo a condition survey at least twice in 5 years, not to exceed 3 years between surveys, to the satisfaction of a marine surveyor of an organization accepted by the Coast Guard.

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<sup>11</sup> IMO (2006), "Voluntary Guidelines for the Design, Construction and Equipment of Small Fishing Vessels, 2005". ISBN: 978-92-801-4210-5

<sup>12</sup> A loading mark should not be confused with load line marks on vessels required to have a load line assignment.

<sup>13</sup> Bow and stern load marks may be omitted if the vessel is marked with draft marks and the stability instructions are based on allowable drafts.

<sup>14</sup> Questions pertaining to loading reference marks should be directed to the Coast Guard Office of Design and Engineering Standards (CG-ENG) at: [CGENG@uscg.mil](mailto:CGENG@uscg.mil).

- 1) In general, a condition survey verifies the overall integrity of internal hull/bulkheads, watertight components, thru-hull fittings, piping systems, deck, etc.
  - 2) Specifics of the condition survey should be accurately documented. The scope and specifics of the condition survey are subject to the discretion of the attending marine surveyor.
- p. **Out-of-Water Surveys:** Per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(6), vessels are required to undergo an out-of-water survey at least once every 5 years, to the satisfaction of a marine surveyor of an organization accepted by the Coast Guard.
- 1) In general, an out-of-water survey verifies the condition of the hull, keel cooler, thru-hull fittings/sea-chest, shaft/propeller, rudder, etc.
  - 2) Specifics of the out-of-water survey should be accurately documented. The scope and specifics of the out-of-water survey are subject to the discretion of the attending marine surveyor.
- q. **Compliance Verification of Stability Requirements:** Per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(7), once every 5 years and at the time of a substantial alteration to applicable vessels, compliance with the stability requirements outlined in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3) should be reviewed and updated as necessary.
- 1) Per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(4), in situations where a vessel has been substantially altered; alterations must be reviewed and approved by an individual licensed by a State as a naval architect or marine engineer before the beginning of such substantial alteration.
  - 2) In situations where changes to stability information is involved, such as changes that require a new stability test, changes to stability and loading instructions, or changes to assigned loading marks; such changes shall be performed/administered by a qualified individual (as specified in 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(3)).
- r. **Maintaining Vessel Records:** Per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(d)(8), vessel owners/operators are required to maintain records for the life of the vessel that demonstrate compliance with the relevant requirements and be prepared to make these records available to the Coast Guard upon request.
- s. **Compliance:** Per 46 U.S.C. § 4503(c)(2), applicable vessels are subject to the provisions of 46 U.S.C. § 4502(b), (Safety Standards). Noncompliance with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements may:

- 1) Result in not satisfying dockside examination requirements, and as such, receiving an unsatisfactory dockside examination reflected on the CG-5587 FV Dockside Examination form, and non-issuance of a FV Dockside Exam Decal.
- 2) Per 33 CFR § 160.111, be subject to Coast Guard District Commander or Captain of the Port controls on vessel operations as a result of not being in compliance with applicable laws or regulations.
7. APPEALS. An owner or managing operator submitting an appeal regarding an action taken as a result of this policy should follow the procedures outlined in 46 CFR subpart 1.03 – Rights of Appeal.
8. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of this instruction and have been determined to be not applicable. Per reference (d),<sup>15</sup> the preparation of guidance documents that implement, without substantive change, the applicable Commandant Instruction or other Federal agency regulations, procedures, manuals, and other guidance documents are categorically excluded from further review.
9. DISCLAIMER. This policy letter provides guidance and is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements. It is not intended, nor does it impose legally binding requirements on any party. It represents the Coast Guard’s current thinking on this topic and may assist industry, mariners, the general public, and the Coast Guard, as well as other federal and state regulators in applying statutory and regulatory requirements. An alternative approach may be used if it satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations. If stakeholders want to discuss an alternative approach (they are not required to do so), they may contact the Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance (CG-CVC) who is responsible for implementing this guidance.
10. QUESTIONS. Questions concerning this policy letter and guidance should be directed to the Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, COMDT (CG-CVC), Fishing Vessel Safety Division at [CGCVC3@uscg.mil](mailto:CGCVC3@uscg.mil).

Dist: (1) CGD ONE (dp)  
(2) CGD FIVE (dp)  
(3) CGD SEVEN (dp)  
(4) CGD EIGHT (dp)  
(5) CGD NINE (dp)

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<sup>15</sup> See “Department of Homeland Security Instruction Manual 023–01–001–01, Rev. 1” found at: [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/DHS\\_Instruction%20Manual%20023-01-001-01%20Rev%2001\\_508%20Admin%20Rev.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/DHS_Instruction%20Manual%20023-01-001-01%20Rev%2001_508%20Admin%20Rev.pdf)

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- (6) CGD ELEVEN (dp)
- (7) CGD THIRTEEN (dp)
- (8) CGD FOURTEEN (dp)
- (9) CGD SEVENTEEN (dp)
- (10) LANT-543
- (11) PAC-543
- (12) COMDT (CG-ENG)
- (13) CG MSC