



16710
CG-ENG
Policy Letter 03-21
August 2, 2021

From: 
D. H. Cost, CAPT
COMDT (CG-ENG)

To: Distribution

Subj: ACCEPTANCE OF HELICOPTER SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HSAC)
RECOMMENDED PRACTICE (RP) 161, NEW BUILD HELIDECK DESIGN
GUIDELINES

Ref: (a) HSAC RP 161, New Build Helideck Design Guidelines, Second Edition Revision 1
January 2021

1. Purpose. This policy letter establishes that the Coast Guard considers the design and equipment standards of HSAC RP 161 to be at least as effective as the helicopter facilities regulations in 46 CFR Part 108, applicable to certain Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODUs), floating Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) facilities, and domestic vessels.
2. Directives Affected. None.
3. Action. USCG Headquarters Units and Offices, Districts, and Sector Commanders may use this policy letter as they ensure compliance with U.S. statutory and regulatory requirements.
4. Background.
 - a. Design and equipment regulations for helicopter facilities are published in 46 CFR 108.231 through 108.241 and 108.486 through 108.489.
 - b. U.S.-flagged MODUs must comply with 46 CFR Part 108 by 46 CFR 107.01. Floating OCS facilities must comply with 46 CFR Part 108 by 33 CFR 143.120. Coast Guard certificated vessels with helicopter facilities are encouraged to follow the MODU helicopter facilities regulations in 46 CFR Part 108 by Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 9-81, Coast Guard Guidance Regarding Shipboard Helicopter Facilities.
 - c. Under 46 CFR 108.105, the Commandant (CG-ENG) may permit the use of alternate arrangements for unit design and equipment. Ref (a) has been reviewed by the Coast Guard and is considered to be at least as effective as the helicopter facilities regulations in 46 CFR Part 108.
 - d. It is noted that ref (a) was intended as an equivalent basis for planning and designing new helidecks for floating OCS facilities, except MODUs and ships. However, as the design and equipment regulations in 46 CFR Part 108 for helicopter facilities on floating OCS facilities,

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MODUs, and domestic vessels are the same, ref (a) is considered acceptable for helideck designs on all applicable MODUs and domestic vessels subject to 46 CFR Part 108.

5. Policy.

- a. Floating OCS facilities, MODUs and vessels may follow ref (a) in lieu of the helicopter facilities standards listed in 46 CFR Part 108. The U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Center (MSC) and Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) may consider Ref (a) as providing a degree of safety consistent with the minimum standards set forth in 46 CFR 108.231 through 108.241, and 108.486 through 108.489.

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 a regulation itself. Each OCMI has discretionary authority on how best to address specific safety and security concerns within their area of responsibility. Thus, it is not intended to, nor does it, impose legally binding requirements on any party outside the U.S. Coast Guard.

7. Changes. Changes to this policy will be issued as necessary. Suggestions for improvements of this policy should be submitted in writing to this office.

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