NAO xx-xx Charter Vessel Acquisition and Safety

Section 1. Purpose and Scope.

.01 This Order establishes National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) policy for the acquisition of charter vessel services.

.02 This Order clarifies application of marine safety regulations promulgated by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) based on vessel size, type, and service for vessels chartered by NOAA.

.03 This Order applies to, and sets forth minimum safety requirements for charter vessels that meet all of the following criteria:

a. vessels greater than 65 feet in length,
b. vessels under contract by NOAA, including those offered at no cost, and
c. vessels aboard which NOAA employees, or NOAA-authorized individuals, are embarked.

.04 This Order does not apply to:

a. vessels participating in the NOAA Fisheries Observer program.
b. vessels owned, operated, or licensed by federal or state governments; vessels designated as a University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS) vessel by the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System; and foreign State-owned and operated research vessels from IMO signatory states.
c. use of scheduled carriers for point-to-point transportation, i.e., passenger vessels operated in accordance with International Maritime Organization (IMO) or USCG regulations.

.05 Requirements for NOAA scientists embarked on a non-NOAA chartered vessel for the purpose of observing and collecting data are covered by NAO 209-115, NOAA Employees Aboard Non-NOAA Vessels.

.06.More stringent standards in addition to those described herein may be applied as required by mission operations. The requirements described herein may also be applied to situations that do not meet all of the criteria identified in Section 1.03.

Section 2. Background. NOAA routinely contracts (charters) for vessels, including those defined by the USCG as uninspected vessels of varying size and capability to serve as NOAA operational platforms. Many of the vessels chartered by NOAA are not required to meet the safety regulations applicable to inspected research vessels as defined by the USCG. In addition, many prospective charter vessels are not required and are not operated and maintained to the standards that would apply to a NOAA vessel.

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USCG to conduct examinations of fishing vessels chartered by NOAA. The MOU was established prior to promulgation of regulations specific to commercial fishing vessels. Since then, USCG regulations have been promulgated and a voluntary inspection program is in place for commercial fishing vessels. From a safety perspective, the examinations performed by the USCG under the MOU are equivalent to the voluntary inspections performed under the current regulations.

The examinations and voluntary inspections do not fully address operational-related safety issues such as stability, material condition, medical capabilities, and vessel staffing. In addition, requirements for firefighting, dewatering, emergency communications, and lifesaving may be less stringent aboard uninspected vessels than requirements applicable to NOAA vessels. To advance the safety of NOAA employees, it is the intent of this Order to promote and ensure that all vessels chartered by NOAA comply with or exceed all applicable safety standards.

Section 3. Definitions.

.01 Certificate of Inspection. The official document issued by the USCG to an inspected vessel verifying that the vessel meets or exceeds the safety requirements applicable to a vessel of its size, type, and service and stating as necessary, the provisions under which the vessel may operate including minimum manning requirements. A vessel's Certificate of Inspection (COI) is required to be posted on the vessel's bridge and is valid for a period of one year.

.02 Charter. NOAA's use and control of a vessel pursuant to contracts, purchase orders, and task orders (including those provided at no cost).

.03 Crewmember. A person, either licensed or unlicensed, assigned to a vessel whose primary purpose is to contribute to the safe and efficient navigation, operation, and maintenance of the vessel or its equipment and provisions.

.04 Cruise. The duration of a charter for a specific vessel and mission, of which may include multiple legs.

.05 Demise Charter. A charter in which use and management of the vessel becomes the responsibility of the charterer. This involves the charterer paying all expenses for the operation and maintenance of the vessel. Officers and crew become servants of the charterer. A demise charter whereby the charterer has the right to place its own captain and crew on board the vessel is called a "bareboat charter."

.06 Fishing Vessel Safety Decal. As it applies to commercial fishing industry vessels, it verifies that a vessel has been voluntarily inspected by the USCG and that it meets or exceeds the minimum safety requirements applicable to fishing vessels. The fishing vessel safety decal is affixed to the vessel in a prominent location or locations and is valid for a period of two years.

.07 Gross Registered Tonnage (GRT). An official U.S. measurement standard of volume that represents a vessel's size and used by the USCG to determine applicable regulations for vessels. How GRT is measured is defined in 46 CFR, Part 69.209(a). For typical monohull vessels, GRT = (overall length in feet x overall breadth in feet x overall depth in feet) x 0.67 divided by 100.

.08 Inspected vessel. A vessel whose regulatory status, based on its size, type, and service, requires it to be routinely inspected by the USCG. Non-public research vessels 300 gross tons and greater are by definition inspected vessels.

.09 International Tonnage Convention (ITC). Similar to that of the U.S. measurement system defined in Section 3.12 above, the international tonnage convention measurement system is a measure of a ship's volume which is used to form the basis for application of international regulations for vessel safety and staffing requirements. The convention measurement system allows for the exclusion of certain designated open spaces aboard a vessel in lieu of applying a volume coefficient. In general, a vessel's gross tonnage measured under the ITC results in a number that is larger than if the vessel were measured using the U.S. system. Vessels over 79 feet and on an international voyage are required to be measured in accordance with the ITC in addition to being measured in GRT.

.10 International voyage. In accordance with SOLAS and for purposes of this Order, a vessel is on an international voyage if it is over 500 gross tons (as measured under the International Tonnage Convention), and it is engaged in a voyage from a port in a country that is Party to SOLAS, including the U.S. and its territories and possessions, to a port outside that country, or the reverse. In accordance with 46 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), Subchapter U, this also includes research vessels over 500 gross tons engaged in a voyage between the contiguous U.S. and the State of Alaska or the State of Hawaii and between the States of Alaska and Hawaii.

.11 NOAA-authorized personnel. Any person, other than crew, authorized by NOAA to be carried aboard a vessel and whose primary purpose is to gather scientific data or conduct or support scientific research related to the ocean and atmospheric environment. This definition includes, but is not limited to, NOAA

scientists, contracted employees, educators and students, volunteers, and researchers from other organizations taking part in the cruise.

.12 Passenger. For purposes of this Order and in keeping with USCG regulations, examples include the general public using the vessel as a means of transportation and any invited guests not assigned to the vessel, not assigned to work on the cruise, or not assigned aboard the vessel in support of NOAA's mission.

.13 Program Official. A government or contract employee in charge of, and having oversight over, a specific mission, activity, or scientific investigation within a NOAA Line or Staff Office.

.14 Public vessel. A vessel that is owned, or demise chartered, and operated by the U.S. Government or the government of a foreign country and not engaged in commercial service.

.15 Uninspected vessel. A vessel whose regulatory status, due to its size, type, and service does not require it to be routinely inspected by the USCG. Research vessels less than 300 gross tons and commercial fishing vessels are by definition uninspected vessels.

.16 Vessel Classification. A process by which vessels are designed, constructed, and maintained to ensure that minimum safety standards are met. A list of internationally recognized member classification societies is maintained by the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS). Vessels built and maintained to these classification society standards are defined as being "classed" or "in class." In addition to setting design and construction standards, under International Maritime Organization (IMO) provisions classification societies may be authorized to serve as agents to Flag States to verify compliance with requirements of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) for vessels on international voyages. USCG regulations are consistent with international SOLAS and MARPOL requirements.

.17 Vessel length. Unless specifically stated otherwise in the context of this Order, refers to a vessel's length overall (LOA). LOA is the horizontal distance between the outboard side of the foremost part of the stem and the outboard side of the aftermost part of the stern excluding rudders and other similar fittings.

Section 4. Policy.

.01 Any vessel within the scope of this policy is required to have a signed contract, purchase order, or task order (including those provided at no-cost) which acknowledges the use of this vessel for NOAA-related purposes.

.02 All U.S. flag vessels chartered by NOAA shall meet USCG regulations applicable to a vessel of its size, type and service, and, as a minimum, shall meet the vessel safety, operational safety, and general health and safety requirements set forth in Appendix A of this Order.

.03 All U.S. flag vessels chartered by NOAA shall have and shall maintain for the duration of the charter a current COI, valid for the vessel's intended service, or a fishing vessel safety decal issued by the USCG as applicable. U.S. flag vessels not having a current and valid COI or safety decal shall be examined under the terms of the existing MOU between NOAA and the USCG.

.04 All U.S. flag vessels chartered by NOAA greater than 300 GRT and operating beyond 200 nautical miles from nearest land shall be classed by a recognized member of International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) and shall be maintained in class for the duration of the charter.

.05 All foreign flag vessels chartered by NOAA must be from IMO signatory states and shall meet IMO (including SOLAS, STCW, and MARPOL) regulations applicable to its size. All foreign flag vessels shall have and shall maintain for the duration of the charter a current certificate of compliance issued by the flag state of the vessel or by a recognized member of IACS.

.06 All vessels greater than 500 gross tons, as measured under ITC, chartered by NOAA and operating on an international voyage shall be classed by a member organization of IACS and shall meet and comply with IMO (including SOLAS, STCW, and MARPOL) regulations for the duration of the charter.

.07 Charter vessel operators shall carry insurance that is customary and reasonable for the duration and area of operation of the charter to indemnify and save harmless the government in case of any damage or loss occurring either directly or indirectly as a result of the charter except to the extent there is negligence on the part of the government. Charter vessel owners shall provide an Insurance Certificate prior to notice to proceed. Vessel operators shall carry Protection and Indemnity (P&I) insurance that covers the vessel crew and NOAA-authorized complement. Specific coverage amounts and related issues shall be addressed in all charter contracts.

.08 Passengers are not permitted to be transported aboard NOAA chartered vessels for any reason without review and approval from the NOAA Contracting Officer in consultation with the COR, program official, or designee acting on behalf of the program office chartering the vessel. No individuals shall be aboard without NOAA authorization. Exception to this requirement is permitted for purposes of rescuing and saving life at sea.

.09 Members of the crew, NOAA-authorized complement, and all persons associated with the business of vessels chartered by NOAA shall not harass, assault, oppose, impede, intimidate, interfere with, or make unwelcome advances toward any person aboard the vessel.

Section 5. Responsibilities.

.01 NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations (NMAO) is responsible for maintaining this Order and for coordinating and monitoring NOAA's needs for charter vessels.

a. NMAO, in consultation with NOAA Line Offices, shall establish and maintain minimum charter vessel safety standards set forth as appendices and exhibits to this Order. Changes to the technical information contained in appendices and exhibits of this Order may be made without formal revision to the Order. Proposed changes to appendices and exhibits will be reviewed by a charter vessel safety working group comprised of representatives from all NOAA Line Offices. The charter vessel safety working group will be convened on an ad hoc basis. Proposed changes to appendices and exhibits will be recommended by the working group based upon review and consent of the majority of its members and submitted to the NOAA Safety Council for approval.

b. NMAO shall provide technical guidance and assistance to those NOAA programs contracting for charter vessel services when requested by program officials or NOAA Contracting Officers. NMAO shall be available to assist program offices in preparing procurement packages, evaluating proposals, and arranging for necessary examinations and inspections as requested.

c. NMAO shall serve as the repository for charter vessel information and as a point of contact for questions concerning outsourcing activities including the number of days chartered and cost information.

.02 NOAA Program Officials, Contracting Officers, Contracting Officers Representatives (COR) and their designees, including Chief Scientists, Field Party Chiefs and Principal Investigators, are responsible for ensuring that the policy and guidance contained in this Order is followed.

.03 Program Officials are responsible for:

a. Submitting a procurement request to their respective contracting office for acquiring charter vessel services, identifying vessel needs, and developing Statements of Work and other contract documentation as may be required by their contracting office.

b. Ensuring that solicitation packages and corresponding statements of work for charter vessel services identify minimum safety requirements.

.04 Program Officials shall complete NOAA Form 75-91, Charter Vessel Clearance and Report, and submit it to NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations (NMAO), Program Services and Outsourcing Division (NMAO3), for informational purposes prior to and upon completion of a charter. Use of the report fulfills a NOAA legal requirement to ascertain whether or not in-house platforms may be available to perform the work. It also serves as a means for NMAO to track NOAA-wide vessel outsourcing activities and provides a means for program offices to request assistance from NMAO for arranging vessel examinations and for evaluating vessel safety capabilities. Detailed instructions for filling out and submitting NOAA Form 75-91 can be found at http://www.nmao.noaa.gov/charterreq.html.

.05 NOAA Contracting Officers and Contracting Officer Representatives are responsible to ensure the following:

a. Solicitation packages and corresponding statements of work for charter vessel services shall identify minimum safety requirements.

b. Procurement of charter vessel services shall include an evaluation of offerors' technical capabilities, and those evaluations shall consider whether offers meet all safety requirements described in this Order.

c. Vessels which exceed safety-related capabilities and attributes required by this Order shall be evaluated more favorably, using safety-related technical evaluation factors, than those which have less.

d. No contract shall be awarded to an offeror that does not meet the minimum safety requirements described in this Order.

06. Pre-award surveys based on the NOAA charter vessel safety checklist provided as Appendix B should be used by Program Officials, Contracting Officers, and Contracting Officer Representatives or designee during the charter vessel solicitation process to facilitate evaluation of charter vessel safety capabilities.

Section 6. References.

NAO 209-115 NOAA Employees Aboard Non-NOAA Vessels

Section 7. Effect on Other Issuances. None.

APPENDIX A

VESSEL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

A. Administrative and Related Requirements

1. Charter vessels shall carry documentation applicable to the vessel's size, type, and service listed in Appendix B of this Order.

2. Charter vessel operators shall carry insurance that is customary and reasonable for the duration and area of operation of the charter to indemnify and save harmless the government in case of any damage or loss occurring either directly or indirectly as a result of the charter except to the extent there is negligence on the part of the government. Charter vessel owners shall provide an Insurance Certificate prior to notice to proceed. Vessel operators shall carry Protection and Indemnity (P&I) insurance that covers the vessel crew and NOAA- authorized complement. Specific coverage amounts and related issues shall be addressed in all charter contracts.

3. Passengers are not permitted to be transported aboard NOAA chartered vessels for any reason without review and approval from the NOAA Contracting Officer in consultation with the COR, program official, or designee acting on behalf of the program office chartering the vessel. No individuals shall be aboard without NOAA authorization. Exception to this requirement is permitted for purposes of rescuing and saving life at sea.

4. Members of the crew, NOAA-authorized complement, and all persons associated with the business of vessels chartered by NOAA shall not harass, assault, oppose, impede, intimidate, interfere with, or make unwelcome advances toward any person aboard the vessel.

B. Hull, Mechanical, and Electrical Requirements

1. Stability. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall have stability information and instructions derived based on tests and calculations, in a format required by regulation applicable to the vessel's size, type, and service. Stability information may be provided post selection and prior to notice to proceed.

a. Vessels shall have, as a minimum, a Stability Letter that reflects the vessel's current configuration and intended service, signed by a qualified individual (a recognized naval architect or naval architecture firm having been trained in and having experience in matters of stability calculations) certifying that the vessel meets intact stability requirements, taking into account the loading, over-the-side lifting, and at-sea conditions under which the vessel will reasonably be expected to operate during the charter. The stability letter shall contain instructions and guidance for the vessel's operating personnel intended to maintain satisfactory vessel stability and shall include information regarding loading constraints and operating restrictions under varying conditions. Vessels 79 feet or less, for which regulatory stability evaluation criteria is not available or applicable, may provide evidence that stability has been evaluated by a qualified individual using best available data in lieu of an official Stability Letter required by regulation.

b. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall have and shall maintain stability information aboard the vessel. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall be operated in accordance with the vessel's stability instructions and guidance.

2. Material condition, structural, and watertight integrity. All vessels chartered by NOAA must be maintained in a seaworthy condition.

a. All vessels shall possess one or more of the following documents, reflecting the vessel's current configuration, as evidence of the vessel's material condition, structural, and watertight integrity: current vessel classification, SOLAS Safety Construction (SLC) Certificate, Loadline Certificate, or equivalent applicable Classification Society documents; or evidence of drydocking examination, or underwater survey

in lieu of drydocking, and an internal structural examination, twice within all previous five-year periods with no more than three years between any two examinations and more frequently if required per USCG regulations relevant to the size, age and use of the vessel from a recognized marine surveying company certifying the vessel's structural and watertight integrity.

b. Competitive preference may be given to vessels that have been classed and are maintained in class for the duration of the charter.

3. Means of escape. Aboard all vessels chartered by NOAA there shall be two identified escape routes from all general areas. At least one of these two means shall be independent of watertight hatches and doors, except for quick acting watertight hatches and doors giving final access to weather decks.

4. Fire protection. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall have in place fully functional fire protection systems and equipment, such as portable and semi-portable fire extinguishers, fire pumps, fire mains, fixed gas extinguishing systems, and fire detection and alarm systems in accordance with USCG or SOLAS requirements.

a. A competitive preference may be given to vessels for the following capabilities or any combination thereof: a self-priming power-driven fire pump connected to a fixed fire main piping system with a sufficient number of hydrants to reach any part of the vessel with a single length of fire hose; a fixed, gaseous fire extinguishing system(s) that serves engine compartments, machinery spaces, and other spaces where flammable liquids are stored; a grease extraction hood and extinguishing system that serves galley cooking equipment; or a fire detection and alarm system or an independent modular smoke detector or fire detecting unit located in each accommodation space.

b. All fire protection equipment and system components installed aboard chartered vessels, and the installation details of those systems, shall meet USCG or SOLAS approval requirements as evidenced by a current and valid USCG inspection or SOLAS certificate.

5. Flooding control. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall have in place fully functional bilge piping systems, pumps, and alarms in accordance with USCG or SOLAS requirements for a vessel of its size, type, and service. A competitive preference may be given to vessels that have the following capabilities: at least two means of dewatering the vessel's watertight compartments (other than tanks and those considered small buoyancy compartments) of which one means is a fixed self-priming power driven pump permanently connected to a fixed bilge piping system; visual and audible high water alarms located on the bridge for spaces having through hull fittings below the waterline (for spaces subject to flooding from seawater piping within the space and for spaces having non-watertight closure); and a visual indicator on the bridge indicating when an automatic bilge pump (if fitted) is operating.

6. Lifesaving equipment. As a minimum, vessels chartered by NOAA shall be outfitted with the following lifesaving equipment.

a. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall carry survival craft of aggregate capacity to accommodate at least 100% of the number of persons permitted to be aboard. Survival craft must meet USCG or SOLAS regulations based on vessel size, type, construction, and area of operation. For operations outside the boundary line, survival craft shall be outfitted with SOLAS A pack for ocean service. All survival craft must be stowed so as to float free and inflatable survival craft must automatically inflate in the event the vessel sinks. Each survival craft and stowage arrangement shall meet USCG or SOLAS maintenance, servicing, and certification requirements as evidenced by a current and valid USCG inspection or SOLAS certification. The expiration date of survival craft inspection and certification shall not be exceeded during the charter period.

b. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall carry at least one Type I personal floatation device (PFD) for every person on board. Vessels chartered by NOAA operating seaward of the Boundary Line and north of 32 degrees north latitude or south of 32 degrees south latitude shall also carry at least one immersion suit for each person on board. The immersion suits and PFDs shall be of proper size and fit and shall be outfitted

with ancillary equipment required by USCG regulations such as a light, a whistle, and reflective materials. The suits and PFDs shall be marked in accordance with USCG regulations, shall be stowed in locations accessible to working and berthing areas, and shall be maintained in good working order and condition.

c. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall carry at least one Category 1, 406 mHz, emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) of the type that is automatically activated and stowed to meet float-free arrangement requirements. EPIRBs shall be currently registered per the NOAA Search and Rescue Satellite (SARSAT) program and shall be tested in accordance with USCG or SOLAS regulations and manufacturer's recommendations. EPIRBs that fail testing shall be serviced and repaired or replaced. The expiration date of EPIRB battery and hydro test date shall not be exceeded.

d. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall carry distress signaling devices of the type and quantity required by USCG or SOLAS regulations. As a minimum, all vessels shall carry at least three parachute flares, six hand held flares, and three smoke signal flares. Distress signaling devices shall be serviceable and properly stowed and marked.

7. Navigation equipment requirements. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall meet USCG or SOLAS requirements and international navigational rules with respect to navigational safety including a ship's whistle, a ship's bell, navigation lights and navigation signaling devices. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall be outfitted with a fixed magnetic compass and deviation table, two RADARs, or one RADAR and one electronic chart/tracking system, and a fixed electronic positioning system in accordance with USCG or SOLAS requirements for inspected vessels. Aboard vessels employing a one-person bridge watch, a tamper resistant audible watch or bridge alarm in the wheelhouse is required with an activation cycle not to exceed 15 minute intervals during the charter.

8. Communications. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall have at least one VHF radio and one SSB radio. A single radio transceiver meeting frequency requirements of the VHF and SSB radios may be acceptable in lieu of two separate radios. If a single radio transceiver is used, then another means of communication, e.g., a cellular telephone or satellite communication system that is operational throughout the vessel's area of operation, must also be available. Vessels operating more than 200 nm from shore must have satellite communication capability, e.g., INMARSAT.

a. All vessels chartered by NOAA must be equipped with a general alarm system capable of being activated from the bridge for notifying individuals in any accommodation or work space in case of fire, abandon ship, or emergency in accordance with current USCG or SOLAS regulations. An alternate means of notifying embarked personnel may be used in lieu of a general alarm system, provided it meets the intent of the requirements of a general alarm system.

b. A competitive preference may be given to vessels that have a fixed telephone system, public address system, or hand held radios, that permit clear and audible two-way communication between persons on the bridge and persons located at interior work stations or at on-deck working areas.

9. Emergency power. All vessels chartered by NOAA must have an emergency source of electrical power, independent of the main source of electrical power, to provide power to emergency loads in accordance with USCG or SOLAS requirements for a vessel of its size, type, and service. As a minimum, vessels chartered by NOAA shall have a means to provide emergency power to the following equipment: emergency lighting, navigation equipment, navigation lights, general alarm systems (where fitted), and emergency communication systems and equipment. The emergency source of electrical power must be capable of supplying connected emergency loads continuously for at least three hours and must be located in a space or locker other than the main machinery space. Batteries of sufficient size and capacity may serve as an adequate source of emergency power.

10. Pollution control. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall meet applicable international, federal, state, and local pollution control laws and regulations. Vessels shall be outfitted and operated in accordance with applicable USCG and IMO regulations for the control of pollution by air emissions, sewage, oil, trash and garbage.

B. Operational Safety Requirements

1. Vessel staffing. Minimum staffing levels shall be in accordance with the vessel's Certificate of Inspection (COI), when applicable.

a. In the absence of a COI that specifies minimum staffing levels, the vessel shall be sufficiently staffed to safely and efficiently navigate, operate, perform engineering duties, maintain the vessel, provide food and hotel services, and provide mission-related deck operations and assistance described in the charter vessel statement of work. The requirements of the International Code on Standards for Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers as amended (STCW-95) shall be met regarding work hours and rest periods aboard vessels in which they apply.

b. As a minimum, aboard vessels in which STCW-95 requirements do not apply, a two-watch system shall be in place for navigational watches on charters greater than 12 hours in duration. A navigational watch shall be maintained at all times while the vessel is at sea. No crew member shall be required to work continuously in excess of 12 hours at any given time on any given day. Under normal operating scenarios, all crew members shall be provided at least two rest periods per 24 hour period, one of which must be at least six continuous hours in duration.

c. Exceptions to these requirements are permitted in case of emergencies related to saving the vessel, and those on board, or saving life at sea. In addition, work hour requirements may be adjusted under non-routine circumstances if deemed necessary and agreed upon by the captain and chief scientist (or field party chief) provided that the changes do not violate applicable USCG or STCW-95 regulations.

2. Crew qualifications. Licensing and related credentials that demonstrate crewmember qualifications are required in accordance with the vessel's Certificate of Inspection or USCG regulations applicable to the vessel's size, type, and service. In addition, the requirements of STCW-95 shall be met for vessels in which they apply.

a. Vessel operators shall be licensed by the USCG and shall have license endorsements to the appropriate level of vessel tonnage, area of operation, manner of propulsion, and number of NOAA-authorized personnel on board. Aboard vessels for which licenses are not required by the USCG, in lieu of a USCG master's license, the vessel's captain is required to have a minimum of three years experience as a captain relevant to nature and complexity of the planned operation. All watchstanders in charge of a navigational watch shall have a minimum of three years experience aboard vessels equivalent to the vessel being chartered. All persons standing a navigational watch shall be familiarized and trained regarding the operation and use of navigational equipment incidental to their duties aboard the vessel being chartered by the vessel's captain.

b. A competitive preference may be given to those vessels with crewmembers who have current training in vessel familiarization and basic safety including basic firefighting, elementary first aid and CPR, personal survival techniques, or personal safety.

3. Safety briefing, emergency instructions, and drills. Prior to the beginning of a cruise, and also when new personnel embark, an orientation shall be conducted for NOAA-authorized personnel and crew by the vessel's captain or the captain's designee (who themselves have been trained and are qualified in accordance with USCG or SOLAS regulations) in matters related to the vessel's safety, firefighting, and lifesaving equipment capabilities, assigned responsibilities, and emergency procedures. Muster lists, station bills, safety information, and written emergency procedures shall be posted and provided in accordance with USCG or SOLAS regulations.

a. The following USCG or SOLAS drills are required either prior to departure but no later than 24 hours after departure weather permitting, in accordance with the requirements of 46 CFR Part 199.180:

.01 Firefighting, including donning, breakout, and use of firefighting equipment; and

.02 abandon ship, including mustering and accountability procedures, and donning and use of immersion suits.

b. One drill shall be conducted at least once every week while at sea for the duration of the cruise, including the above or

.01 man overboard, including procedures for ship recovery or launch and recovery of rescue craft and equipment, survival equipment, and survival craft;

.02 procedures for using general alarm systems, making voice radio distress calls, and use of visual distress signals; and

.03 control of unintentional flooding,

c. All drills shall be documented and recorded in the vessel's official logbook.

4. Nautical charts and publications. Vessels chartered by NOAA shall have as a minimum one of each chart that covers the vessels' area of operation corrected through the most current *Notice to Mariners*. Vessels shall also carry copies of the U.S. Coast Pilot, local tide and tidal current tables in covered areas, and Inland Navigation Rules and International Rules of the Road. Vessels may choose to use USCG approved, up-to-date, electronic charts and publications in lieu of paper charts. If relying on electronic charts, the vessel shall have on board a set of paper charts necessary to navigate safely to a port near the vessel's area of operation.

5. Equipment tests. In preparation for getting underway, the captain shall ensure that visual inspections and operational tests of onboard systems and equipment deemed to be critical to the safety of the vessel are conducted, such as steering gear, propulsion engines (ahead and astern), the vessel's whistle, navigational equipment, and emergency communication equipment. In addition, while underway, all vessels shall conduct periodic tests of critical safety equipment. A checklist of required tests shall be maintained on the bridge and entries shall be made in the vessel's log to document safety equipment testing. Vessel equipment and systems shall be operational for the duration of the charter

6. Voyage plans and communication requirements. Prior to departure a voyage plan shall be provided by NOAA Program Officials to the vessel detailing the anticipated route, schedule, and itinerary the vessel will follow. In addition, a list of crew members and NOAA-authorized personnel aboard with names and emergency contact information shall be provided and exchanged. The vessel shall communicate regularly with NOAA Program Officials regarding the status of the cruise and regarding any changes to scheduled voyage plans.

C. General Health and Safety

1. Accommodations. All vessels chartered by NOAA shall be outfitted with accommodations for NOAA-authorized personnel at least equivalent to that which is minimally required for crew members and in keeping with good marine practice. For overnight cruises, as a minimum, an individual bunk and locker shall be provided for each NOAA-authorized person unless mutually agreed upon arrangements are made between NOAA-authorized personnel and the vessel operator. An adequate number of staterooms, heads and showers shall be provided to accommodate gender differences and total number of persons aboard to the extent possible. All living and working spaces, including galleys, mess rooms, heads, showers, berthing spaces, passageways, lounges, recreation areas, store rooms, and laboratory spaces, shall be free of pests and vermin and shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition for the duration of the charter.

2. Ship services. The vessel shall have ship service electrical, potable water, ventilation, heating or cooling, marine sanitation, and pollution control equipment of sufficient capacity to support NOAA-authorized personnel and mission-related equipment and activities. All ship service systems, ship

equipment, and vital systems, shall be operational and maintained in good working order for the duration of the charter.

3. Medical capabilities and services. First aid equipment and training shall be in accordance with USCG regulations and STCW requirements applicable to the vessel based on its size, type, and service. Exhibit 1 provides additional guidance, as a point of reference, pertaining to USCG and STCW medical qualification requirements.

a. As a minimum, all vessels chartered by NOAA shall have at least two persons aboard that are currently trained in elementary first aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) use. USCG approved courses include those offered by the American Red Cross and the American Heart Association.

b. All vessels shall be outfitted with a first aid manual, a complete first aid kit, an AED, and medical supplies commensurate with the number of persons aboard and level of expertise of medical personnel. All vessels shall have a designated and readily accessible location to store medical supplies and to serve as a medical station to treat illnesses and injuries.

c. NOAA-authorized personnel may be used to fulfill medical qualifications and medical service requirements. A competitive preference may be given to those vessels providing medical capabilities and services that exceed minimum requirements.

4. Medical clearances. NOAA-authorized personnel deploying aboard chartered vessels for overnight cruises shall be medically cleared and shall possess a fit-for-sea-duty certificate. Fit-for-sea-duty certificates shall be issued by NMAO medical staff. In anticipation of and in advance of going to sea, NOAA Line and Program offices shall ensure that NOAA-authorized personnel for any given cruise are medically cleared. Using a secure website established for that purpose, NOAA-authorized personnel shall be requested to complete and submit a NOAA Health Services Questionnaire to NMAO medical staff for review. Hard copies may be submitted in lieu of electronic copies for those employees who are unable to, or prefer not to, submit via the website. Upon review of the medical history information, and upon resolution of any medical concerns that would result in a not fit for sea duty determination, the NMAO medical staff will issue a Fit-for-Sea-Duty Certificate to NOAA-authorized personnel.

a. All copies of NOAA-authorized personnel medical information shall be stored in a secure location and shall remain confidential in accordance with Health Insurance and Portability Accountability Act and Privacy Act requirements.

b. Sealed copies of NOAA-authorized personnel medical information shall be provided to the captain of the vessel or the assigned medical person in charge. All copies of scientists' medical information shall be stored in a secure location, shall remain confidential, and shall only be used in case of emergency or upon disclosure by the scientist. Medical information forms shall be returned to the scientists (in the same sealed envelope providing there was no need for them to be opened) at the end of service aboard the vessel.

5. Diving operations. All diving operations from vessels chartered by NOAA shall be conducted in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations. NOAA-authorized personnel engaged in diving operations must also comply with NOAA Diving Regulations (NAO 209-123). Charter vessels from which diving operations take place shall be of appropriate design and arrangement for the type and location of diving activities being conducted and shall be outfitted with appropriate lifesaving equipment and supplies associated with dive emergencies and shall be capable of communicating with emergency personnel from locations in which dive operations are taking place.

6. Food quality and food preparation. All food storage provisions shall be maintained to ensure food is safely preserved. Food service preparation shall be conducted in a safe and sanitary manner consistent with applicable regulations. For cruises greater than 12 hours, a minimum of three, nutritionally well-balanced meals per day will be provided. Program offices shall address and accommodate special dietary needs.

7. Potable water. Water intended for personal use and consumption that is taken, produced, or stored aboard the vessel shall be handled in accordance with applicable regulations. Evidence of bacteriological and chemical testing of shipboard potable water taken from the vessel's storage tanks via the vessel's distribution system by a certified laboratory within three months of the charter period shall be provided. Potable water shall be tested and treated to maintain a pH of 6.8 to 7.8 and a residual halogen content of 0.2 ppm to 2.0 ppm free available chlorine (or equivalent) weekly. Water should be free of tastes, odors, and turbidity that would be objectionable to the majority of those on board. Program offices shall address the needs of the scientific party to ensure acceptable drinking water is provided if potable water from storage tanks aboard the vessel is cosmetically unacceptable.

7. Illegal drugs and alcohol. The possession or use of illegal drugs, and the improper use of legal drugs and alcohol, is prohibited.

8. Firearms. All firearms, should any be on board a vessel chartered by NOAA, shall be kept under lock and key by the vessel's captain except for authorized use.

9. Security. The captain of the vessel shall take all customary and reasonable precautions to ensure that no harm befalls the vessel and those on board while at sea and while in port. The vessel shall be outfitted and operated in such a manner to meet the requirements of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code and the Maritime Security Act of 2002 and implementing regulations found in 33 CFR Parts 101-106 as applicable. As it pertains to this Order, in short, Vessel Security Plan and Declaration of Security requirements and security alert systems are applicable to vessels for which SOLAS applies. This would include research vessels over 500 gross tons, as measured under ITC, engaged in an international voyage. Vessels owned or operated by a government and used only on government non-commercial service are exempt from vessel security regulatory requirements.

10. In-port safety. During the time period a vessel under contract is in port and a NOAA-authorized person is on board, a fire, flooding, and security watch shall be maintained to protect the safety of the vessel and those on board. A duty watch may be acceptable if needed to meet program objectives provided those on board have means to contact the person on duty and they have received instruction on what to do to protect themselves in response to fire, flooding, or a security issue. Emergency phone numbers and contact information for local port and law enforcement officials shall be maintained on the bridge and made available to watchstanding personnel.

11. Hazardous materials. Carriage of hazardous materials aboard vessels chartered by NOAA is only permitted when necessary for proper operation of the vessel and for satisfactory conduct of the mission. Storage, handling, and use of hazardous materials shall be in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. Hazardous materials needed for the scientific mission shall be handled in accordance with chemical hygiene plans and prudent laboratory practices. Quantities of all hazardous materials shall be kept to a minimum. Storage containers and storage locations, including labeling of containers and locations, shall meet transportation regulations and USCG or IMO standards for the type and quantity of material being carried.

a. NOAA-authorized personnel shall provide to the vessel's captain an inventory of the hazardous materials that will be brought aboard, along with copies of MSDSs and any special neutralizing agents and personal protective equipment that may be required that can not reasonably be expected to be provided by the vessel.

b. The captain, or the captain's designee, shall evaluate the risks posed by the materials and shall make all accommodations and take any precautions as may be necessary to protect the vessel and those aboard. Information related to OSHA's Hazard Communication, "Right to Know," Standards shall be maintained and made available to all on board.

c. All hazardous materials brought aboard and hazardous waste generated by NOAA-authorized personnel that remain after completion of the mission shall be removed from the vessel prior to, or upon, completion of the charter unless specific arrangements have been made with the vessel owner and captain to deliver the hazardous material to a port other that the port of contract termination.

APPENDIX B

NOAA CHARTER VESSEL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Note: This checklist is a compilation of safety related requirements identified in the NAO. It is intended as a tool that may be used by NOAA Contracting Officers (CO) and Contracting Officer Representatives (COR) to facilitate implementation of the NAO. It is intended to be used to identify technical information that will need to be requested of offerors as part of the charter vessel solicitation process. It is intended to be used by COs and CORs during the evaluation of offers to verify the degree to which vessels meet the safety requirements identified in the NAO.

Description	**Y/N**	**Notes**
Required Documentation - Vessels under 300 GRT		
Vessel Certificate of Documentation		
Certificate of Inspection, Vessel Safety Examination Decal, or USCG Letter of Inspection		
Stability evaluation report (or Stability Letter/Booklet)		
Vessel hull and material condition report		
Vessel description, general arrangements, and history of vessel alterations, if any		
Master and Mate(s) qualifications and experience		
Station Bill for fire, emergencies, and abandon ship		
Pollution prevention placards for oil and trash		
Certificate of Insurance		

Required Documentation - Vessels 300 GRT and over		
Vessel Certificate of Documentation		
Certificate of Inspection		
Stability Booklet		
Vessel hull and material condition report		
Vessel description, general arrangement drawings, and record of vessel alterations		
Master, Mates, and Engineers licenses, qualifications, and experience		
STCW Training Certificates		
Station Bill for fire, emergencies, and abandon ship		
Pollution prevention placards and plans		
Certificate of Insurance		

Additional Documentation		
Vessel Classification		required if over 300 GRT and beyond 200nmi
Loadline Certificate		required if over 500 ITC and on international voyage
SOLAS Certificates (SLC, SLE, SLR)		required if over 500 ITC and on international voyage
Pollution prevention record books		required if over 400 GRT
International Oil Pollution Prevention Certificate		required if over 400 GRT and on international voyage

NOAA CHARTER VESSEL SAFETY EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Description	Y/N	Notes
Required Documentation -Vessels 500 ITC and over on an international voyage		
Vessel Certificate of Documentation		
Certificate of Inspection		
Stability Booklet		
Vessel hull and material condition report		
Vessel description, general arrangement drawings, and record of vessel alterations		
Loadline Certificate		
Vessel Classification		
SOLAS Certificates (SLC, SLE, SLR)		
International Oil Pollution Prevention Certificate		
Pollution prevention placards and plans		
Pollution prevention record books		
Master, Mates, and Engineers licenses, qualifications, and experience		
STCW Training Certificates		
Station Bill for fire, emergencies, and abandon ship		
Certificate of Insurance		

NOAA CHARTER VESSEL SAFETY EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Description	Y/N	Notes
Minimum safety related equipment and capabilities - All Vessels greater than 65 feet in length		
Survival craft of sufficient capacity to accommodate all on board and outfitted with SOLAS A pack if operating beyond boundary line		
Survival craft arrangements, and current inspection status, iaw USCG regulations		as evidenced by current and valid USCG inspection
Immersion suits and Type I personal floatation devices for all on board outfitted with light, whistle and reflective material		Immersion suit requirement does not have to be made to apply if area of operation is below 32 degrees latitude
At least one registered USCG-certified Category 1, 406 mHz EPIRB not exceeding battery expiration and testing dates		
Emergency signaling devices – at least 3 parachute flares, 6 hand held flares, 3 smoke signal flares		expiration dates not to be exceeded
Means to alert those on board of fire, emergency, or abandon ship preferably by general alarm or public address system		
At least two means of navigation including magnetic compass with deviation table, and a combination of either two RADARs or one RADAR and one fixed electronic positioning system		
Navigation lights, ship's whistle, ship's bell		
Navigational charts and publications and/or electronic system(s), software, and data in electronic format appropriate to the area of operations		A set of paper charts is required to be aboard for navigating vessel back to port
Automated bridge watch alarm		aboard vessels employing a one-person bridge watch
At least two means of communications, ship to shore, eg., VHF/SSB in combination with a Cell and/or Sat phone		
Emergency power generator or emergency power batteries in an enclosed space or locker not located in the main machinery space.		
Two routes of escape from all general living and working areas		
Firefighting systems and equipment appropriate to vessel size and type iaw USCG regulations		as evidenced by current and valid USCG inspection
Dewatering systems and equipment appropriate to vessel size and type iaw USCG regulations		as evidenced by current and valid USCG inspection
Vessel staffing in accordance with COI or, in lieu of COI, staffing level that meets operational needs and provides for adequate rest periods		
First aid kit with medical supplies at a designated first aid station and AED		
Two persons trained in elementary first aid and CPR one of which also trained in advanced first aid, CPR, and AED use		

NOAA CHARTER VESSEL SAFETY EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Description	**Y/N**	**Notes**
Optional* safety-related capabilities - Uninspected vessels ***Required of vessels 300 GRT and over, i.e., inspected vessels, and all vessels with more than 6 in the scientific party and on an overnight voyage**		
Fixed fire pump and fire main		
Fixed fire extinguishing system serving engine compartment, machinery spaces, and paint locker if fitted		
Fire Suppression hood(s) serving galley equipment		
Fire detection and alarm system		
Two means of dewatering all watertight compartments one of which may be portable		
High water bilge alarm system		
Vessel staffing level and qualifications iaw STCW requirements, or meeting the intent of STCW requirements, in which at least 10 hours of rest per day, 6 hours of which must be continuous, is provided		

EXHIBIT 1

MEDICAL QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for vessels subject to STCW medical standards found in Table A-VI/4-1

Specification of minimum standard of proficiency in medical first aid, i.e., for persons on board required to have training in first aid and CPR

COMPETENCE	KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND PROFICIENCY	METHODS FOR DEMONSTRATING COMPETENCE	CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING COMPETENCE
Apply immediate first aid in the event of accident or illness on board	First aid kit Body structure and function Toxicological hazards on board, including use of the Medical First Aid Guide for Use in Accidents Involving Dangerous Goods (MFAG) or its national equivalent Examination of casualty or patient Spinal injuries Burns, scalds and effects of cold fractures, dislocations and muscular injuries Medical care of rescued persons Radio-medical advice Pharmacology Sterilisation Cardiac arrest, drowning and asphyxia	Assessment of evidence obtained from practical instruction	The identification of probable cause, nature and extent of injuries is prompt, complete and conforms to current first aid practice Risk of harm to self and others is minimized at all times Treatment of injuries and the patients condition is appropriate, conforms to recognized first aid practice and international guidelines

Requirements for vessels subject to STCW medical standards found in Table A-VI/4-2

Specification of minimum standard of proficiency for persons in charge of medical care on board ship, i.e., for persons assigned as the Medical Person in Charge (MPIC)

COMPETENCE	KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND PROFICIENCY	METHODS FOR DEMONSTRATING COMPETENCE	CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING COMPETENCE
Provide medical care to the sick and injured while they remain on board	Care of casualty involving: .1 head and spinal injuries .2 injuries of ear, nose, throat and eyes .3 external and internal bleeding .4 burns, scalds and frostbite .5 fractures, dislocations and muscular injuries .6 wounds, wound healing and infection .7 pain relief .8 techniques of sewing and clamping .9 management of acute abdominal conditions .10 minor surgical treatment .11 dressing and bandaging Aspects of nursing: .1 general principles .2 nursing care	Assessment of evidence obtained from practical instruction and demonstration Where practicable, approved practical experience at a hospital or similar establishment	Identification of symptoms is based on the concepts of clinical examination and medical history Protection against infection and spread of diseases is complete and effective Personal attitude is calm, confident and reassuring Treatment of injury or condition is appropriate and conforms to accepted medical practice and relevant national and international medical guides The dosage and application of drugs and medication complies with manufacturers' recommendations and accepted medical practice The significance of changes in patients' condition is promptly recognized
Provide medical care to the sick and injured while they remain on board (continued)	Diseases, including: .1 medical conditions and emergencies .2 sexually transmitted diseases .3 tropical and infectious diseases Alcohol and drug abuse Dental care Gynaecology, pregnancy and childbirth Medical care of rescued persons Death at sea Hygiene Disease prevention including: .1 disinfection, disinfestation, de-ratting .2 vaccinations Keeping records and copies of applicable regulations:		

	.1 keeping medical records .2 international and national maritime medical regulations		
COMPETENCE	**KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND PROFICIENCY**	**KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND PROFICIENCY**	**CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING COMPETENCE**
Participate in co-ordinated schemes for medical assistance to ships	External assistance, including: .1 radio-medical advice .2 transportation of the ill and injured, including helicopter evacuation .3 medical care of sick seafarers involving co-operation with port health authorities or outpatient wards in port		Clinical examination procedures are complete and comply with instructions received The method and preparation for evacuation is in accordance with recognized procedures and is designed to maximize the welfare of the patient Procedures for seeking radio-medical advice conform to established practice and recommendations

USCG regulations for medical first aid equipment and training applicable to fishing vessels

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TITLE 46--SHIPPING

CHAPTER I--COAST GUARD, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

PART 28 REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY VESSELS
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Subpart C Requirements for Documented Vessels That Operate Beyond the Boundary Lines or With More Than 16 Individuals On Board, or for Fish Tender Vessels Engaged in the Aleutian Trade

Sec. 28.210 First aid equipment and training.

(a) Each vessel must have on board a complete first aid manual and medicine chest of a size suitable for the number of individuals on board in a readily accessible location.

(b) First aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) course certification. Certification in first aid and CPR must be as described in this paragraph.
(1) First aid--a certificate indicating completion of a first aid course from:
(i) The American National Red Cross ``Standard First Aid and Emergency Care'' or ``Multi-media Standard First Aid'' course; or
(ii) A course approved by the Coast Guard under Sec. 10.205(h)(l)(ii) of this chapter.
(2) CPR--A certificate indicating completion of course from:
(i) The American National Red Cross;
(ii) The American Heart Association; or
(iii) A course approved by the Coast guard under Sec. 10.205(h)(2)(iii) of this chapter.

(c) Each vessel that operates with more than 2 individuals on board must have at least 1 individual certified in first aid and at least 1 individual certified in CPR. An individual certified in both first aid and CPR will satisfy both of these requirements.

(d) Each vessel that operates with more than 16 individuals on board must have at least 2 individuals certified in first aid and at least 2 individuals certified in CPR. An individual certified in both first aid and CPR may be counted for both requirements.

(e) Each vessel that operates with more than 49 individuals on board must have at least 4 individuals certified in first aid and at least 4 individuals certified in CPR. An individual certified in both first aid and CPR may be counted for both requirements.

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