



Most accepted alternatives in vessel response plans will expire on June 30, 2018. This will affect approved vessel response plans that are using an accepted alternative when the national planning criteria are inappropriate.

The Coast Guard recommends that new alternatives, or those submitted for renewal, follow the updated alternative planning criteria national guidelines, MER Policy Letter 1-17. Alternatives should be submitted to the Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) office of the location where the planholder has determined that the national planning criteria are inappropriate. The Coast Guard will reject an alternative for areas where the planholder is able to meet the national planning criteria.

Due to the complexity of alternative review, plan preparers should allow 180 days for review and potential acceptance. The Coast Guard Vessel Response Plan program has already sent notice to planholders, or respective third party plan preparers, of the expiration date of existing alternatives with instructions on how to renew. Planholders who need additional time may submit a "request for extension" of a currently accepted alternative for a period not to exceed six months from the date of expiration.

Further information on alternative planning criteria, including a copy of the Coast Guard's Office of Marine Environmental Response (CG-MER) Policy Letter 1-17, may be found on CG Homeport: <https://homeport.uscg.mil> [Missions>Environmental>Vessel Response Plan Program>What's New?]. For additional questions, please contact the respective local COTP office, or you may also direct any questions to the Vessel Response Plan program via email: vrp at uscg.mil.

Sincerely,

U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters

Vessel Response Plan Program

Office of Marine Environmental Response Policy (CG-MER)

Email: vrp at uscg.mil

<http://homeport.uscg.mil/vrp>