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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Coast Guard****46 CFR Part 197****[USCG-1998-3786] - 36****RIN 2115-AF64****Commercial Diving Operations****AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DOT.**ACTION:** Advanced notice of proposed rulemaking; extension of comment period.

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**SUMMARY:** In response to public requests, the Coast Guard is extending the period for public comment on its Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM), Commercial Diving Operations, published in the **Federal Register** on June 26, 1998. The comment period will be extended for 45 days.**DATES:** Comments must reach the Docket Management Facility on or before November 9, 1998.**ADDRESSES:** You may mail comments to the Docket Management Facility (USCG-1998-3786), U.S. Department of Transportation, room PL-40 1, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590-000 1, or deliver them to room PL-40 1, located on the Plaza Level of the Nassif Building at the same address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is 202-366-9329.

The Docket Management Facility maintains the public docket for this rulemaking. Comments will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection or copying at room PL-401

on the Plaza Level of the Nassif Building at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. You may also access this docket on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

For information concerning the advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) provisions, contact LT Diane Kalina, Project Manager, Vessel and Facility Operating Standards Division, Coast Guard, telephone 202-267-1181. For questions on viewing, or submitting material to the docket, contact Dorothy Walker, Chief, Dockets, Department of Transportation, telephone 202-366-9329.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Request for Comments**

The Coast Guard encourages interested persons to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written data, views, or arguments. Persons submitting comments should include their names and addresses, identify this rulemaking (USCG-1998-3786) and the specific section of the ANPRM to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. Please submit all comments and attachments in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing to the Docket Management Facility at the address under **ADDRESSES**. Persons wanting acknowledgment of receipt of comment: should enclose stamped, self-addressed postcards or envelopes.

The Coast Guard will consider all comments received during the comment period. It may change the proposed rule in view of the comments.

The Coast Guard plans no public hearing. Persons may request a public hearing by writing to the Docket Management Facility at the address under **ADDRESSES**. The request must identify this docket [USCG-1998-3786] and should include the reasons why a public meeting would be helpful to this rulemaking. If it determines that the opportunity for oral presentation will aid this rulemaking, the Coast Guard will hold a public hearing at a time and place announced by a later notice in the **Federal Register**.

**Background and Purpose**

The existing commercial diving operations regulations are over 20 years old and do not include current safety and technology standards and industry practices. The Coast Guard needs current information on these subject areas to help us identify necessary regulatory revisions.

In response to several public requests, the Coast Guard is extending the period for public comment on its Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM), Commercial Diving Operations, published in the **Federal Register** on June 26, 1998 (63 FR 34840). The comments stated that more time was needed to collect data, and the diving industry is typically very busy during the summer months and divers need more time to develop comments to the ANPRM. Based on these requests and on the small number of comments received so far, the Coast Guard has decided to extend the comment period for an additional 45 days.

Dated: September 17, 1998.

Howard L. **Hime**,

*Acting, Director of Standards, Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.*

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