

**§ 1603. Vessels subject to International Regulations**

Except as provided in section 1604 of this title and subject to the provisions of section 1605 of this title, the International Regulations, as proclaimed under section 1602 of this title, shall be applicable to, and shall be complied with by—

- (1) all vessels, public and private, subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, while upon the high seas or in waters connected therewith navigable by seagoing vessels, and
- (2) all other vessels when on waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

(Pub. L. 95-75, § 4, July 27, 1977, 91 Stat. 309.)

**§ 1604. Vessels not subject to International Regulations**

(a) The International Regulations do not apply to vessels while in the waters of the United States shoreward of the navigational demarcation lines dividing the high seas from harbors, rivers, and other inland waters of the United States.

(b) Whenever a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States is in the territorial waters of a foreign state the International Regulations shall be applicable to, and shall be complied with by, that vessel to the extent that the laws and regulations of the foreign state are not in conflict therewith.

(Pub. L. 95-75, § 5, July 27, 1977, 91 Stat. 309; Pub. L. 96-591, § 6(1), Dec. 24, 1980, 94 Stat. 3434.)

AMENDMENTS

1980—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 96-591 substituted provision providing that the International Regulations do not apply to vessels while in the waters of the United States shoreward of the navigational demarcation lines dividing the high seas from harbors, rivers, and other inland waters of the United States for provisions that had made specific reference to harbors, rivers, and other inland waters of the United States, as defined in section 154 of this title, to the Great Lakes of North America and their connecting and tributary waters, as defined in section 241 of this title, and to the Red River of the North and rivers emptying into the Gulf of Mexico and their tributaries, as defined in section 301 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1980 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 96-591, § 7, Dec. 24, 1980, 94 Stat. 3435, provided that: “Sections 2, 4, 6(1), and 8(a) [enacting section 2072 and former sections 2001 to 2038 of this title, amending this section, and repealing sections 154 to 159, 171 to 183, 191, 192, 201 to 213, 221, 222, 231, 232, 301 to 303, 311 to 323, 331, 341 to 356, 360, and 360a of this title and sections 526b, 526c, and 526d of former Title 46, Shipping] are effective 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 24, 1980], except that on the Great Lakes, the effective date of sections 2 and 4 [enacting section 2072 and former sections 2001 to 2038 of this title] will be established by the Secretary. [The effective date on the Great Lakes was established as Mar. 1, 1983. See 47 F.R. 15135, Apr. 8, 1982.] Section 5 [enacting section 2073 of this title] is effective on October 1, 1981.”

**§ 1605. Navy and Coast Guard vessels of special construction or purpose**

**(a) Certification for alternative compliance**

Any requirement of the International Regulations with respect to the number, position, range, or arc of visibility of lights, with respect

to shapes, or with respect to the disposition and characteristics of sound-signaling appliances, shall not be applicable to a vessel of special construction or purpose, whenever the Secretary of the Navy, for any vessel of the Navy, or the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating, for any other vessel of the United States, shall certify that the vessel cannot comply fully with that requirement without interfering with the special function of the vessel.

**(b) Closest possible compliance by vessels covered by certification for alternative compliance**

Whenever a certification is issued under the authority of subsection (a) of this section, the vessel involved shall comply with the requirement as to which the certification is made to the extent that the Secretary issuing the certification shall certify as the closest possible compliance by that vessel.

**(c) Publication of certifications in Federal Register**

Notice of the certifications issued pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall be published in the Federal Register.

**(d) Issuance of certification for a class of vessels**

A certification authorized by this section may be issued for a class of vessels.

(Pub. L. 95-75, § 6, July 27, 1977, 91 Stat. 309; Pub. L. 96-591, § 6(2), Dec. 24, 1980, 94 Stat. 3434.)

AMENDMENTS

1980—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 96-591 added subsec. (d).

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

For transfer of authorities, functions, personnel, and assets of the Coast Guard, including the authorities and functions of the Secretary of Transportation relating thereto, to the Department of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 468(b), 551(d), 552(d), and 557 of Title 6, Domestic Security, and the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, as modified, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6.

**§ 1606. Special rules for ships of war, vessels proceeding under convoy, and fishing vessels engaged in fishing as a fleet**

(a) The Secretary of the Navy is authorized to promulgate special rules with respect to additional station or signal lights or whistle signals for ships of war or vessels proceeding under convoy, and the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating is authorized to promulgate special rules with respect to additional station or signal lights for fishing vessels engaged in fishing as a fleet.

(b) The additional station or signal lights or whistle signals contained in the special rules authorized under subsection (a) of this section shall be, as far as possible, such that they cannot be mistaken for any light or signal authorized by the International Regulations. Notice of such special rules shall be published in the Federal Register and, after the effective date specified in such notice, they shall have effect as if they were a part of the International Regulations.