

§ 31342. Establishing maritime liens

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, a person providing necessaries to a vessel on the order of the owner or a person authorized by the owner—

- (1) has a maritime lien on the vessel;
(2) may bring a civil action in rem to enforce the lien; and
(3) is not required to allege or prove in the action that credit was given to the vessel.

(b) This section does not apply to a public vessel.

(Pub. L. 100-710, title I, §102(c), Nov. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 4748; Pub. L. 101-225, title III, §303(6), Dec. 12, 1989, 103 Stat. 1924.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Row 1: 31342, 46:971

Section 31342 provides that any authorized person providing necessaries for a vessel has a maritime lien on the vessel, may bring a civil action in rem in admiralty to enforce the lien, and is not required to allege or prove that credit was given to the vessel.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1989—Pub. L. 101-225 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), substituted "Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, a person providing necessaries to a vessel on the order of the owner" for "A person providing necessaries to a vessel (except a public vessel) on the order of a person listed in section 31341 of this title", and added subsec. (b).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Jan. 1, 1989, with certain exceptions and qualifications, see section 107 of Pub. L. 100-710, set out as a note under section 31301 of this title.

§ 31343. Recording and discharging notices of claim of maritime lien

(a) Except as provided under subsection (d) of this section, a person claiming a lien on a vessel documented, or for which an application for documentation has been filed, under chapter 121 may record with the Secretary a notice of that person's lien claim on the vessel. To be recordable, the notice must—

- (1) state the nature of the lien;
(2) state the date the lien was established;
(3) state the amount of the lien;
(4) state the name and address of the person; and
(5) be signed and acknowledged.

(b)(1) The Secretary shall record a notice complying with subsection (a) of this section if, when the notice is presented to the Secretary for recording, the person having the claim files with the notice a declaration stating the following:

(A) The information in the notice is true and correct to the best of the knowledge, information, and belief of the individual who signed it.

(B) A copy of the notice, as presented for recordation, has been sent to each of the following:

- (i) The owner of the vessel.
(ii) Each person that recorded under subsection (a) of this section an unexpired notice of a claim of an undischarged lien on the vessel.
(iii) The mortgagee of each mortgage filed or recorded under section 31321 of this title that is an undischarged mortgage on the vessel.

(2) A declaration under this subsection filed by a person that is not an individual must be signed by the president, member, partner, trustee, or other individual authorized to execute the declaration on behalf of the person.

(c)(1) On full and final discharge of the indebtedness that is the basis for a notice of claim of lien recorded under subsection (b) of this section, the person having the claim shall provide the Secretary with an acknowledged certificate of discharge of the indebtedness. The Secretary shall record the certificate.

(2) The district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction over a civil action in Admiralty to declare that a vessel is not subject to a lien claimed under subsection (b) of this section, or that the vessel is not subject to the notice of claim of lien, or both, regardless of the amount in controversy or the citizenship of the parties. Venue in such an action shall be in the district where the vessel is found or where the claimant resides or where the notice of claim of lien is recorded. The court may award costs and attorneys fees to the prevailing party, unless the court finds that the position of the other party was substantially justified or other circumstances make an award of costs and attorneys fees unjust. The Secretary shall record any such declaratory order.

(d) A person claiming a lien on a vessel covered by a preferred mortgage under section 31322(d) of this title must record and discharge the lien as provided by the law of the State in which the vessel is titled.

(e)(1) A notice of claim of lien recorded under subsection (b) of this section shall expire 3 years after the date the lien was established, as such date is stated in the notice under subsection (a) of this section.

(2) On expiration of a notice of claim of lien under paragraph (1), and after a request by the vessel owner, the Secretary shall annotate the abstract of title to reflect the expiration of the lien.

(f) This section does not alter in any respect the law pertaining to the establishment of a maritime lien, the remedy provided by such a lien, or the defenses thereto, including any defense under the doctrine of laches.

(Pub. L. 100-710, title I, §102(c), Nov. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 4748; Pub. L. 107-295, title II, §205(a)(1), Nov. 25, 2002, 116 Stat. 2095; Pub. L. 111-281, title IX, §913(a)(1), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 3017; Pub. L. 116-283, div. G, title LVXXXIII [LXXXIII], §8333, Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 4705.)