

§ 2303. Duties related to marine casualty assistance and information

(a) The master or individual in charge of a vessel involved in a marine casualty shall—

(1) render necessary assistance to each individual affected to save that affected individual from danger caused by the marine casualty, so far as the master or individual in charge can do so without serious danger to the master's or individual's vessel or to individuals on board; and

(2) give the master's or individual's name and address and identification of the vessel to the master or individual in charge of any other vessel involved in the casualty, to any individual injured, and to the owner of any property damaged.

(b) An individual violating this section or a regulation prescribed under this section shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned for not more than 2 years. The vessel also is liable in rem to the United States Government for the fine.

(c) An individual complying with subsection (a) of this section or gratuitously and in good faith rendering assistance at the scene of a marine casualty without objection by an individual assisted, is not liable for damages as a result of rendering assistance or for an act or omission in providing or arranging salvage, towage, medical treatment, or other assistance when the individual acts as an ordinary, reasonable, and prudent individual would have acted under the circumstances.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 509.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Rows include 2303(a), 2303(b), and 2303(c) with their respective source codes.

Section 2303 requires a master or anyone in charge of a vessel to provide assistance and render aid to those involved in a marine casualty and to exchange information in a manner similar to automobile accident cases. It also includes a "Good Samaritan" clause that exonerates anyone from liability when rendering assistance in an ordinary, reasonable, or prudent manner.

§ 2303a. Post serious marine casualty alcohol testing

(a) The Secretary shall establish procedures to ensure that after a serious marine casualty occurs, alcohol testing of crew members or other individuals responsible for the operation or other safety-sensitive functions of the vessel or vessels involved in such casualty is conducted no later than 2 hours after the casualty occurs, unless such testing cannot be completed within that time due to safety concerns directly related to the casualty.

(b) The procedures in subsection (a) shall require that if alcohol testing cannot be completed within 2 hours of the occurrence of the casualty, such testing shall be conducted as soon thereafter as the safety concerns in subsection (a) have been adequately addressed to permit such testing, except that such testing may not be required more than 8 hours after the casualty occurs.

(Added Pub. L. 105-383, title III, §304(d)(1), Nov. 13, 1998, 112 Stat. 3419; amended Pub. L. 116-283, div. G, title LVXXXV [LXXXV], §8505(b)(1), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 4751.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2021—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 116-283 substituted "individuals" for "persons".

§ 2304. Duty to provide assistance at sea

(a)(1) A master or individual in charge of a vessel shall render assistance to any individual found at sea in danger of being lost, so far as the master or individual in charge can do so without serious danger to the master's or individual's vessel or individuals on board.

(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply to a vessel of war or a vessel owned by the United States Government appropriated only to a public service.

(b) A master or individual violating this section shall be fined not more than \$1,000, imprisoned for not more than 2 years, or both.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 509; Pub. L. 109-304, §15(8), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1703.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Row includes 2304 with source code 46:728.

Section 2304 requires a master or individual in charge of a vessel to render assistance to those in danger at sea if able to do so without seriously endangering the vessel or crew.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109-304 designated existing provisions as par. (1) and added par. (2).

§ 2305. Injunctions

(a) The district courts of the United States have jurisdiction to enjoin the negligent operation of vessels prohibited by this chapter on the petition of the Attorney General for the United States Government.

(b) When practicable, the Secretary shall—

(1) give notice to any person against whom an action for injunctive relief is considered under this section an opportunity to present that person's views; and

(2) except for a knowing and willful violation, give the person a reasonable opportunity to achieve compliance.

(c) The failure to give notice and opportunity to present views under subsection (b) of this section does not preclude the court from granting appropriate relief.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 509.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Row includes 2305 with source code 46:1485.

Section 2305 provides injunctive authority to enjoin the negligent operation of vessels. This authority can also be used to enjoin the operation of foreign or do-

mestic vessels on our waters when they are unsuitable for the voyage intended.

**§ 2306. Vessel reporting requirements**

(a)(1) An owner, charterer, managing operator, or agent of a vessel of the United States, having reason to believe (because of lack of communication with or nonappearance of a vessel or any other incident) that the vessel may have been lost or imperiled, immediately shall—

- (A) notify the Coast Guard; and
- (B) use all available means to determine the status of the vessel.

(2) When more than 48 hours have passed since the owner, charterer, managing operator, or agent of a vessel required to report to the United States Flag Merchant Vessel Location Filing System under authority of section 50113 of this title has received a communication from the vessel, the owner, charterer, managing operator, or agent immediately shall—

- (A) notify the Coast Guard; and
- (B) use all available means to determine the status of the vessel.

(3) An owner, charterer, managing operator, or agent of a vessel of the United States notifying the Coast Guard under paragraph (1) or (2) shall—

- (A) provide the name and identification number of the vessel, the names of individuals on board, and other information that may be requested by the Coast Guard; and
- (B) submit written confirmation to the Coast Guard within 24 hours after nonwritten notification to the Coast Guard under such paragraphs.

(4) An owner, charterer, managing operator, or agent violating this subsection is liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of not more than \$5,000 for each day during which the violation occurs.

(b)(1) The master of a vessel of the United States required to report to the System shall report to the owner, charterer, managing operator, or agent at least once every 48 hours.

(2) A master violating this subsection is liable to the Government for a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000 for each day during which the violation occurs.

(c) The Secretary may prescribe regulations to carry out this section.

(Added Pub. L. 98-498, title II, §212(a)(3), Oct. 19, 1984, 98 Stat. 2305; amended Pub. L. 109-304, §15(9), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1703; Pub. L. 116-283, div. G, title LVXXXV [LXXXV], §8505(b)(2), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 4751.)

**Editorial Notes**

AMENDMENTS

2021—Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 116-283 amended par. (3) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (3) read as follows: “A person notifying the Coast Guard under paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection shall provide the name and identification number of the vessel, the names of individuals on board, and other information that may be requested by the Coast Guard. The owner, charterer, managing operator, or agent also shall submit written confirmation to the Coast Guard within 24 hours after nonwritten notification to the Coast Guard under those paragraphs.”

2006—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 109-304 substituted “section 50113 of this title” for “section 212(A) of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 App. U.S.C. 1122a).”

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 98-498, title II, §214, Oct. 19, 1984, 98 Stat. 2306, provided that: “Sections 211(a) and 212 of this subtitle [enacting this section and amending sections 2302, 3309, 6101, and 6103 of this title] are effective one hundred and eighty days after the date of enactment of this Act [Oct. 19, 1984].”

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.

**[§ 2307. Repealed. Pub. L. 115-282, title IV, § 402(d), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4264]**

Section, added Pub. L. 107-295, title IV, §431(a), Nov. 25, 2002, 116 Stat. 2128; amended Pub. L. 112-213, title III, §302(a), Dec. 20, 2012, 126 Stat. 1562, related to limitation of liability for Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service pilots and non-Federal vessel traffic service operators.

PART B—INSPECTION AND REGULATION OF VESSELS

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Part B provides authority and responsibility for the inspection and regulation of vessels by the Coast Guard. This part specifies those vessels subject to inspection, those that are specifically exempt from inspection, and related inspection requirements and procedures. Due to the need for special requirements for the inspection and regulation of passenger vessels and those vessels carrying liquid bulk dangerous cargoes separate chapters have been developed. Additional chapters provide for recreational vessels and those other vessels that are regulated but are not subject to inspection and certification by the Coast Guard. It should also be noted that the United States is signatory to a number of international treaties on maritime safety and seamen’s welfare, such as the various Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) treaties, and that their provisions and requirements are part of United States maritime law and in many cases are quite extensive.

**CHAPTER 31—GENERAL**

Sec. 3101.	Authority to suspend inspection.
3102.	Immersion suits.
3103.	Use of reports, documents, and records.
3104.	Survival craft.
3105.	Electronic charts.

**Editorial Notes**

AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115-282, title IV, §402(a)(2), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4264, added item 3105.  
 2010—Pub. L. 111-281, title VI, §609(b), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 2968, added item 3104.  
 1996—Pub. L. 104-324, title VI, §603(b), Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3930, added item 3103.  
 1988—Pub. L. 100-424, §8(a)(3), Sept. 9, 1988, 102 Stat. 1593, substituted “Immersion” for “Exposure” in item 3102.  
 1985—Pub. L. 99-36, §2, May 15, 1985, 99 Stat. 68, repealed section 22 of Pub. L. 98-557 and the amendments