

**§ 2237. Criminal sanctions for failure to heave to, obstruction of boarding, or providing false information**

(a)(1) It shall be unlawful for the master, operator, or person in charge of a vessel of the United States, or a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to knowingly fail to obey an order by an authorized Federal law enforcement officer to heave to that vessel.

(2) It shall be unlawful for any person on board a vessel of the United States, or a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to—

(A) forcibly resist, oppose, prevent, impede, intimidate, or interfere with a boarding or other law enforcement action authorized by any Federal law or to resist a lawful arrest; or  
(B) provide materially false information to a Federal law enforcement officer during a boarding of a vessel regarding the vessel's destination, origin, ownership, registration, nationality, cargo, or crew.

(b)(1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, whoever knowingly violates subsection (a) shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both.

(2)(A) If the offense is one under paragraph (1) or (2)(A) of subsection (a) and has an aggravating factor set forth in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, the offender shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for any term of years or life, or both.

(B) The aggravating factor referred to in subparagraph (A) is that the offense—

- (i) results in death; or
- (ii) involves—
  - (I) an attempt to kill;
  - (II) kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap; or
  - (III) an offense under section 2241.

(3) If the offense is one under paragraph (1) or (2)(A) of subsection (a) and results in serious bodily injury (as defined in section 1365), the offender shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for not more than 15 years, or both.

(4) If the offense is one under paragraph (1) or (2)(A) of subsection (a), involves knowing transportation under inhumane conditions, and is committed in the course of a violation of section 274 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, or chapter 77 or section 113 (other than under subsection (a)(4) or (a)(5) of such section) or 117 of this title, the offender shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for not more than 15 years, or both.

(c) This section does not limit the authority of a customs officer under section 581 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1581), or any other provision of law enforced or administered by the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary of Homeland Security, or the authority of any Federal law enforcement officer under any law of the United States, to order a vessel to stop or heave to.

(d) A foreign nation may consent or waive objection to the enforcement of United States law by the United States under this section by radio, telephone, or similar oral or electronic means. Consent or waiver may be proven by certification of the Secretary of State or the designee of the Secretary of State.

(e) In this section—

(1) the term “Federal law enforcement officer” has the meaning given the term in section 115(c);

(2) the term “heave to” means to cause a vessel to slow, come to a stop, or adjust its course or speed to account for the weather conditions and sea state to facilitate a law enforcement boarding;

(3) the term “vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States” has the meaning given the term in section 70502 of title 46;

(4) the term “vessel of the United States” has the meaning given the term in section 70502 of title 46; and

(5) the term “transportation under inhumane conditions” means—

- (A) transportation—
  - (i) of one or more persons in an engine compartment, storage compartment, or other confined space;
  - (ii) at an excessive speed; or
  - (iii) of a number of persons in excess of the rated capacity of the vessel; or
- (B) intentional grounding of a vessel in which persons are being transported.

(Added Pub. L. 109-177, title III, §303(a), Mar. 9, 2006, 120 Stat. 233; amended Pub. L. 111-281, title IX, §917, Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 3021.)

**Editorial Notes**

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 274 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(4), is classified to section 1324 of Title 8, Aliens and Nationality.

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 111-281, §917(a), amended subsec. (b) generally. Prior to amendment subsec. (b) read as follows: “Any person who intentionally violates this section shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both.”

Subsec. (e)(3). Pub. L. 111-281, §917(b)(1), amended par. (3) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (3) read as follows: “the term ‘vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States’ has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Maritime Drug Law Enforcement Act (46 U.S.C. App. 1903); and”.

Subsec. (e)(4). Pub. L. 111-281, §917(b)(2), substituted “section 70502 of title 46; and” for “section 2 of the Maritime Drug Law Enforcement Act (46 U.S.C. App. 1903).”

Subsec. (e)(5). Pub. L. 111-281, §917(b)(3), added par. (5).

**CHAPTER 109A—SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sec. 2241.	Aggravated sexual abuse.
2242.	Sexual abuse.
2243.	Sexual abuse of a minor, a ward, or an individual in Federal custody.
2244.	Abusive sexual contact.
2245.	Sexual abuse resulting in death. <sup>1</sup>
2246.	Definitions for chapter.
2247.	Repeat offenders.
2248.	Mandatory restitution.

**Editorial Notes**

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 99-646 and Pub. L. 99-654 added identical chapters 109A.

<sup>1</sup>Section catchline amended by Pub. L. 109-248 without corresponding amendment of chapter analysis.