

§ 543. Interference with aids to navigation; penalty

It shall be unlawful for any person, or public body, or instrumentality, excluding the armed forces, to remove, change the location of, obstruct, wilfully damage, make fast to, or interfere with any aid to navigation established, installed, operated, or maintained by the Coast Guard pursuant to section 541 of this title, or with any aid to navigation lawfully maintained under authority granted by the Coast Guard pursuant to section 542 of this title, or to anchor any vessel in any of the navigable waters of the United States so as to obstruct or interfere with range lights maintained therein. Whoever violates the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than \$1,500 for each offense. Each day during which such violation shall continue shall be considered as a new offense.

(Aug. 4, 1949, ch. 393, 63 Stat. 500, §84; Pub. L. 113-281, title II, §205(a)(2), Dec. 18, 2014, 128 Stat. 3025; renumbered §543 and amended Pub. L. 115-282, title I, §§105(b), 123(b)(2), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4200, 4240.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 33, U.S.C., 1946 ed., §§761, 762 (May 14, 1908, ch. 168, §6, 35 Stat. 162; June 17, 1910, ch. 301, §6, 36 Stat. 538; Mar. 3, 1915, ch. 81, §8, 38 Stat. 928; 1939 Reorg. Plan No. II, §2(a), eff. July 1, 1939, 4 F.R. 2731, 53 Stat. 1432).

Changes were made in phraseology. 81st Congress, House Report No. 557.

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 543 was renumbered section 2905 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115-282, §123(b)(2), substituted “section 541” for “section 81” and “section 542” for “section 83”.

Pub. L. 115-282, §105(b), renumbered section 84 of this title as this section.

2014—Pub. L. 113-281 substituted “\$1,500” for “\$500”.

§ 544. Aids to maritime navigation; penalty

The Secretary shall prescribe and enforce necessary and reasonable rules and regulations, for the protection of maritime navigation, relative to the establishment, maintenance, and operation of lights and other signals on fixed and floating structures in or over waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and in the high seas for structures owned or operated by persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. Any owner or operator of such a structure, excluding an agency of the United States, who violates any of the rules or regulations prescribed hereunder, commits a misdemeanor and shall be punished, upon conviction thereof, by a fine of not exceeding \$1,500 for each day which such violation continues.

(Aug. 4, 1949, ch. 393, 63 Stat. 501, §85; June 4, 1956, ch. 351, §1, 70 Stat. 226; Pub. L. 93-283, §1(2), May 14, 1974, 88 Stat. 139; Pub. L. 113-281, title II, §205(a)(3), Dec. 18, 2014, 128 Stat. 3025; renumbered §544, Pub. L. 115-282, title I, §105(b), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4200.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 33, U.S.C., 1946 ed., §760 (May 14, 1908, ch. 168, §5, 35 Stat. 162).

Changes were made in phraseology. 81st Congress, House Report No. 557.

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 544 was renumbered section 2906 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115-282 renumbered section 85 of this title as this section.

2014—Pub. L. 113-281 substituted “\$1,500” for “\$100”.

1974—Pub. L. 93-283 struck out “on fixed structures” after “maritime navigation” in section catchline and in text substituted “fixed and floating structures in or over waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and in the high seas for structures owned or operated by persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States” for “fixed structures in or over navigable waters of the United States”.

1956—Act June 4, 1956, amended section generally, vesting in Secretary rule-making authority, for the protection of maritime navigation, relative to the establishment, maintenance, and operation of lights and other signals on fixed structures in or over navigable waters of the United States, and excluding agencies of United States from its provisions.

§ 545. Marking of obstructions

The Secretary may mark for the protection of navigation any sunken vessel or other obstruction existing on the navigable waters or waters above the continental shelf of the United States in such manner and for so long as, in his judgment, the needs of maritime navigation require. The owner of such an obstruction shall be liable to the United States for the cost of such marking until such time as the obstruction is removed or its abandonment legally established or until such earlier time as the Secretary may determine. All moneys received by the United States from the owners of obstructions, in accordance with this section, shall be covered into the Treasury of the United States as miscellaneous receipts. This section shall not be construed so as to relieve the owner of any such obstruction from the duty and responsibility suitably to mark the same and remove it as required by law.

(Aug. 4, 1949, ch. 393, 63 Stat. 501, §86; Pub. L. 89-191, Sept. 17, 1965, 79 Stat. 822; Pub. L. 93-283, §1(3), May 14, 1974, 88 Stat. 139; renumbered §545, Pub. L. 115-282, title I, §105(b), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4200.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 33, U.S.C., 1946 ed., §736 (R.S. 4676; June 17, 1910, ch. 301, §6, 36 Stat. 538; Aug. 16, 1937, ch. 665, §1, 50 Stat. 666; 1939 Reorg. Plan No. II, §2(a), eff. July 1, 1939, 4 F.R. 2731, 53 Stat. 1432).

Changes were made in phraseology. 81st Congress, House Report No. 557.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115-282 renumbered section 86 of this title as this section.

1974—Pub. L. 93-283 substituted “the navigable waters or waters above the continental shelf of the United

States” for “any navigable waters of the United States”.

1965—Pub. L. 89-191 vested sole responsibility for wreck marking in the Coast Guard by giving the Secretary discretionary authority to mark wrecks or other similar obstructions for as long as in his judgment the needs of maritime navigation may require, by removing reference to responsibility of the Department of the Army to mark wrecks, after abandonment and before removal, and by giving the Secretary the authority to terminate an owner’s liability to pay the cost of marking a wreck.

§ 546. Deposit of damage payments

Whenever an aid to navigation or other property belonging to the Coast Guard is damaged or destroyed by a private person, and such private person or his agent shall pay to the satisfaction of the proper official of the Coast Guard for the cost of repair or replacement of such property, the Commandant may accept and deposit such payments, through proper officers of the Fiscal Service, Treasury Department, in special deposit accounts in the Treasury, for payment therefrom to the person or persons repairing or replacing the damaged property and refundment of amounts collected in excess of the cost of the repairs or replacements concerned. In the event that repair or replacement of the damaged property is effected by the Coast Guard, the appropriations bearing the cost thereof and current at the time collection is made shall be reimbursed from the special deposit account.

(Aug. 4, 1949, ch. 393, 63 Stat. 547, § 642; renumbered § 546, Pub. L. 115-282, title I, § 105(b), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4200.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 33, U.S.C., 1946 ed., § 721a (Aug. 16, 1937, ch. 665, § 2, 50 Stat. 667).

Changes were made in phraseology. 81st Congress, House Report No. 557.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115-282 renumbered section 642 of this title as this section.

§ 547. Rewards for apprehension of persons interfering with aids to navigation

The Coast Guard may offer and pay rewards for the apprehension and conviction, or for information helpful therein, of persons found interfering in violation of law with aids to navigation maintained by the Coast Guard; or for information leading to the discovery of missing Coast Guard property or to recovery thereof.

(Aug. 4, 1949, ch. 393, 63 Stat. 547, § 643; renumbered § 547, Pub. L. 115-282, title I, § 105(b), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4200.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 14, U.S.C., 1946 ed., § 50c (Aug. 2, 1946, ch. 756, § 32, 60 Stat. 857).

Section is enlarged to provide for payment of rewards for information leading to the discovery or recovery of missing Coast Guard property. 81st Congress, House Report No. 557.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115-282 renumbered section 643 of this title as this section.

§ 548.¹ Prohibition against officers and employees being interested in contracts for materials

No officer, enlisted member, or civilian member of the Coast Guard in any manner connected with the construction, operation, or maintenance of lighthouses, shall be interested, either directly or indirectly, in any contract for labor, materials, or supplies for the construction, operation, or maintenance of lighthouses, or in any patent, plan, or mode of construction or illumination, or in any article of supply for the construction, operation, or maintenance of lighthouses.

(Added Pub. L. 116-283, div. G, title LVXXXV [LXXXV], § 8509(b), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 4756.)

§ 549. Lighthouse and other sites; necessity and sufficiency of cession by State of jurisdiction

(a) No lighthouse, beacon, public pier, or landmark, shall be built or erected on any site until cession of jurisdiction over the same has been made to the United States.

(b) For the purposes of subsection (a), a cession by a State of jurisdiction over a place selected as the site of a lighthouse, or other structure or work referred to in subsection (a), shall be deemed sufficient if the cession contains a reservation that process issued under authority of such State may continue to be served within such place.

(c) If no reservation of service described in subsection (b) is contained in a cession, all process may be served and executed within the place ceded, in the same manner as if no cession had been made.

(Added Pub. L. 116-283, div. G, title LVXXXV [LXXXV], § 8509(b), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 4756.)

§ 550. Marking pierheads in certain lakes

The Commandant of the Coast Guard shall properly mark all pierheads belonging to the United States situated on the northern and northwestern lakes, whenever he is duly notified by the department charged with the construction or repair of pierheads that the construction or repair of any such pierhead has been completed.

(Added Pub. L. 116-283, div. G, title LVXXXV [LXXXV], § 8509(b), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 4756.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Prior sections 551 to 555 were renumbered sections 2921 to 2925 of this title, respectively.

§ 548.¹ Marking anchorage grounds by Commandant of the Coast Guard

The Commandant of the Coast Guard shall provide, establish, and maintain, out of the annual appropriations for the Coast Guard, buoys or other suitable marks for marking anchorage grounds for vessels in waters of the United States, when such anchorage grounds have been

¹ Another section 548 is set out after section 550 of this title.

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