

Public Law 96-478  
96th Congress

An Act

To implement the Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, and for other purposes.

Oct. 21, 1980  
[H.R. 6665]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships".*

SEC. 2. Unless the context indicates otherwise, as used in this Act—

(1) "MARPOL Protocol" means the Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, done at London on February 17, 1978. This Protocol incorporates and modifies the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, done at London on November 2, 1973;

(2) "Convention" means the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, including Protocols I and II and Annexes I and II attached thereto;

(3) "discharge" and "harmful substance" and "incident" shall have the meanings provided in the Convention;

(4) "owner" means any person holding title to, or in the absence of title, any other indicia of ownership of, a ship or terminal, but does not include a person who, without participating in the management or operation of a ship or terminal, holds indicia of ownership primarily to protect a security interest in the ship or terminal;

(5) "operator" means—

(a) in the case of a ship, a charterer by demise or any other person, except the owner, who is responsible for the operation, manning, victualing, and supplying of the vessel, or

(b) in the case of a terminal, any person, except the owner, responsible for the operation of the terminal by agreement with the owner;

(6) "person" means an individual, firm, public or private corporation, partnership, association, State, municipality, commission, political subdivision of a State, or any interstate body;

(7) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating;

(8) "ship" means a vessel of any type whatsoever, including hydrofoils, air-cushion vehicles, submersibles, floating craft whether self-propelled or not, and fixed or floating platforms; and

(9) "terminal" means an onshore facility or an offshore structure located in the navigable waters of the United States or subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and used, or intended to be used, as a port or facility for the transfer or other handling of a harmful substance.

SEC. 3. (a) This Act applies to—

(1) a ship of United States registry or nationality, or one operated under the authority of the United States, wherever located;

Act to Prevent  
Pollution from  
Ships.  
33 USC 1901  
note.  
Definitions.  
33 USC 1901.

Applicability.  
33 USC 1902.

(2) a ship registered in or of the nationality of a country party to the MARPOL Protocol, or one operated under the authority of a country party to the MARPOL Protocol, while in the navigable waters of the United States; and

(3) a ship registered in or of the nationality of a country not a party to the MARPOL Protocol, under subsection (c) of this section, while in the navigable waters of the United States.

(b) This Act does not apply to—

(1) a warship, naval auxiliary, or other ship owned or operated by the United States when engaged in noncommercial service; or

(2) any other ship specifically excluded by the MARPOL Protocol.

Regulations.

(c) The Secretary shall prescribe regulations applicable to the ships of a country not a party to the MARPOL Protocol to ensure that their treatment is not more favorable than that accorded ships of parties to the MARPOL Protocol.

Noncommercial  
shipping  
standards.

(d) The heads of Federal departments and agencies shall prescribe standards applicable to ships excluded from this Act by subsection (b)(1) of this section and for which they are responsible. Standards prescribed under this subsection shall ensure, so far as is reasonable and practicable without impairing the operations or operational capabilities of such ships, that such ships act in a manner consistent with the MARPOL Protocol.

Administration  
and  
enforcement.  
33 USC 1903.

SEC. 4. (a) Unless otherwise specified herein, the Secretary shall administer and enforce the MARPOL Protocol and this Act. In the administration and enforcement of the MARPOL Protocol and this Act, Annexes I and II of the MARPOL Protocol shall be applicable only to seagoing ships.

Regulations.

(b) The Secretary shall prescribe any necessary or desired regulations to carry out the provisions of the MARPOL Protocol or this Act.

(c) The Secretary may utilize by agreement, with or without reimbursement, personnel, facilities, or equipment of other Federal departments and agencies in administering the MARPOL Protocol, this Act, or the regulations thereunder.

Certificates.  
33 USC 1904.

SEC. 5. (a) The Secretary shall designate those persons authorized to issue on behalf of the United States the certificates required by the MARPOL Protocol. A certificate required by the MARPOL Protocol shall not be issued to a ship which is registered in or of the nationality of a country which is not a party to the MARPOL Protocol.

(b) A certificate issued by a country which is a party to the MARPOL Protocol has the same validity as a certificate issued by the Secretary under the authority of the MARPOL Protocol.

(c) A ship required by the MARPOL Protocol to have a certificate—

(1) shall carry a valid certificate onboard in the manner prescribed by the authority issuing the certificate; and

(2) is subject to inspection while in a port or terminal under the jurisdiction of the United States.

Onboard  
inspections.

(d) An inspection conducted under subsection (c)(2) of this section is limited to verifying whether or not a valid certificate is onboard, unless clear grounds exist which reasonably indicate that the condition of the ship or its equipment does not substantially agree with the particulars of its certificate. This section shall not limit the authority of any official or employee of the United States under any other treaty, law, or regulation to board and inspect a ship or its equipment.

Penalties.

(e) In addition to the penalties prescribed in section 9 of the Act, a ship required by the MARPOL Protocol to have a certificate—

(1) which does not have a valid certificate onboard; or

(2) whose condition or whose equipment's condition does not substantially agree with the particulars of the certificate on-board;

shall be detained by order of the Secretary at the port or terminal where the violation is discovered until, in the opinion of the Secretary, the ship can proceed to sea without presenting an unreasonable threat of harm to the marine environment. The detention order may authorize the ship to proceed to the nearest appropriate available shipyard rather than remaining at the place where the violation was discovered.

(f) If a ship is under a detention order under this section, the Secretary of the Treasury, upon the request of the Secretary, may refuse or revoke—

(1) the clearance required by section 4197 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, as amended (46 U.S.C. 91); or

(2) a permit to proceed under section 4367 of the Revised Statutes of the United States (46 U.S.C. 313) or section 442 of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1443).

(g) A person whose ship is subject to a detention order under this section may petition the Secretary, in the manner prescribed by regulation, to review the detention order. Upon receipt of a petition under this subsection, the Secretary shall affirm, modify, or withdraw the detention order within the time prescribed by regulation.

(h) A ship unreasonably detained or delayed by the Secretary acting under the authority of this Act is entitled to compensation for any loss or damage suffered thereby.

SEC. 6. (a) The Secretary, after consultation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, shall establish regulations setting criteria for determining the adequacy of reception facilities of a port or terminal and shall establish procedures whereby a person in charge of a port or terminal may request the Secretary to certify that the port's or terminal's facilities for receiving the residues and mixtures containing oil or noxious liquid substance from seagoing ships are adequate.

(b) In determining the adequacy of reception facilities required by the MARPOL Protocol at a port or terminal, the Secretary may consider, among other things, the number and types of seagoing ships using the port or terminal, including their principal trades.

(c) If, upon inspection, reception facilities of a port or terminal are adequate to meet the requirements of the MARPOL Protocol and the regulations established hereunder, the Secretary shall, after consultation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, issue a certificate to that effect to the applicant. A certificate issued under this subsection—

(1) is valid until suspended or revoked by the Secretary for cause or because of changed conditions; and

(2) shall be available for inspection upon the request of the master, other person in charge, or agent of a seagoing ship using or intending to use the port or terminal.

The suspension or revocation of a certificate issued under this subsection may be appealed to the Secretary and acted on by him in the manner prescribed by regulation.

(d) The Secretary shall periodically cause to be published in the Federal Register a list of the ports or terminals holding a valid certificate issued under this section.

(e) Except in the case of force majeure, the Secretary shall deny entry to a seagoing ship required by the Convention to retain onboard

19 USC 1442.  
Detention order  
review.

Compensation  
for loss or  
damage.

Pollution  
reception  
facilities,  
adequacy.  
33 USC 1905.

Certificate  
issuance.

Publication in  
Federal  
Register.

Entry denial.

while at sea, residues and mixtures containing oil or noxious liquid substances, if—

(1) the port or terminal is one required by the MARPOL Protocol or regulations hereunder to have adequate reception facilities; and

(2) the port or terminal does not hold a valid certificate issued by the Secretary under this section.

Survey.

(f) The Secretary is authorized to conduct surveys of existing reception facilities in the United States to determine measures needed to comply with the MARPOL Protocol.

33 USC 1906.

SEC. 7. (a) As soon as he has knowledge of an incident, the master or other person in charge of a ship shall report it to the Secretary in the manner prescribed by Article 8 of the Convention.

(b) Upon receipt of the report of an incident involving a ship, other than one of United States registry or nationality or one operated under the authority of the United States, the Secretary shall take the action required by Article 8 of the Convention.

Violations.

33 USC 1907.

SEC. 8. (a) It is unlawful to act in violation of the MARPOL Protocol, this Act, or the regulations issued thereunder. The Secretary shall cooperate with other parties to the MARPOL Protocol in the detection of violations and in enforcement of the MARPOL Protocol. The Secretary shall use all appropriate and practical measures of detection and environmental monitoring, and shall establish adequate procedures for reporting violations and accumulating evidence.

Investigations.

(b) Upon receipt of evidence that a violation has occurred, the Secretary shall cause the matter to be investigated. In any investigation under this section the Secretary may issue subpoenas to require the attendance of any witness and the production of documents and other evidence. In case of refusal to obey a subpoena issued to any person, the Secretary may request the Attorney General to invoke the aid of the appropriate district court of the United States to compel compliance. Upon completion of the investigation, the Secretary shall take the action required by the MARPOL Protocol and whatever further action he considers appropriate under the circumstances. If the initial evidence was provided by a party to the MARPOL Protocol, the Secretary, acting through the Secretary of State, shall inform that party of the action taken or proposed.

Ship inspections.

(c) While at a port or terminal subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, a ship to which the MARPOL Protocol applies may be inspected by the Secretary—

(1) to verify whether or not the ship has discharged a harmful substance in violation of the MARPOL Protocol or this Act; or

(2) to comply with a request from a party to the MARPOL Protocol for an investigation as to whether the ship may have discharged a harmful substance anywhere in violation of the MARPOL Protocol. An investigation may be undertaken under this clause only when the requesting party has furnished sufficient evidence to allow the Secretary reasonably to believe that a discharge has occurred.

If an inspection under this subsection indicates that a violation has occurred, the investigating officer shall forward a report to the Secretary for appropriate action. If a report made under this subsection involves a ship, other than one of United States registry or nationality or one operated under the authority of the United States, the Secretary shall undertake to notify the master of the ship concerned and, acting in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall take any additional action required by Article 6 of the Convention.

(d) Remedies and requirements of this Act supplement and neither amend nor repeal any other provisions of law, except as expressly provided in this Act. Nothing in this Act shall limit, deny, amend, modify, or repeal any other remedy available to the United States or any other person, except as expressly provided in this Act.

SEC. 9. (a) A person who knowingly violates the MARPOL Protocol, this Act, or the regulations issued thereunder shall, for each violation, be fined not more than \$50,000 or be imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both.

Violations and  
penalties.  
33 USC 1908.

(b) A person who is found by the Secretary, after notice and an opportunity for a hearing, to have—

(1) violated the MARPOL Protocol, this Act, or the regulations issued thereunder shall be liable to the United States for a civil penalty, not to exceed \$25,000 for each violation; or

(2) made a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation in any matter in which a statement or representation is required to be made to the Secretary under the MARPOL Protocol, this Act, or the regulations thereunder, shall be liable to the United States for a civil penalty, not to exceed \$5,000 for each statement or representation.

Each day of a continuing violation shall constitute a separate violation. The amount of the civil penalty shall be assessed by the Secretary, or his designee, by written notice. In determining the amount of the penalty, the Secretary shall take into account the nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of the prohibited acts committed and, with respect to the violator, the degree of culpability, any history of prior offenses, ability to pay, and other matters as justice may require.

(c) The Secretary may compromise, modify, or remit, with or without conditions, any civil penalty which is subject to assessment or which has been assessed under this section. If any person fails to pay an assessment of a civil penalty after it has become final, the Secretary may refer the matter to the Attorney General of the United States for collection in any appropriate district court of the United States.

(d) A ship operated in violation of the MARPOL Protocol, this Act, or the regulations thereunder is liable in rem for any fine imposed under subsection (a) or civil penalty assessed pursuant to subsection (b), and may be proceeded against in the United States district court of any district in which the ship may be found.

(e) If any ship subject to the MARPOL Protocol or this Act, its owner, operator, or person in charge is liable for a fine or civil penalty under this section, or if reasonable cause exists to believe that the ship, its owner, operator, or person in charge may be subject to a fine or civil penalty under this section, the Secretary of the Treasury, upon the request of the Secretary, shall refuse or revoke—

(1) the clearance required by section 4197 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, as amended (46 U.S.C. 91); or

(2) a permit to proceed under section 4367 of the Revised Statutes of the United States (46 U.S.C. 313) or section 443 of the Tariff Act 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1443).

Clearance or a permit to proceed may be granted upon the filing of a bond or other surety satisfactory to the Secretary.

(f) Notwithstanding subsection (a), (b), or (d) of this section, if the violation is by a ship registered in or of the nationality of a country party to the MARPOL Protocol, or one operated under the authority of a country party to the MARPOL Protocol, the Secretary, acting in coordination with the Secretary of State, may refer the matter to that

MARPOL  
Protocol,  
proposed  
amendments.  
33 USC 1909.

country for appropriate action, rather than taking the actions required or authorized by this section.

SEC. 10. (a) A proposed amendment to the MARPOL Protocol received by the United States from the Secretary-General of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization pursuant to Article VI of the MARPOL Protocol, may be accepted on behalf of the United States by the President following the advice and consent of the Senate, except as provided for in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) A proposed amendment to Annex I or II, appendices to the Annexes, or Protocol I of the MARPOL Protocol, received by the United States from the Secretary-General of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization pursuant to Article VI of the MARPOL Protocol, may be the subject of appropriate action on behalf of the United States by the Secretary of State following consultation with the Secretary, who shall inform the Secretary of State as to what action he considers appropriate at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the period specified in Article VI of the MARPOL Protocol during which objection may be made to any amendment received.

(c) Following consultation with the Secretary, the Secretary of State may make a declaration that the United States does not accept an amendment proposed pursuant to Article VI of the MARPOL Protocol.

Legal actions.  
33 USC 1910.

SEC. 11. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, any person having an interest which is, or can be, adversely affected, may bring an action on his own behalf—

(1) against any person alleged to be in violation of the provisions of this Act, or regulations issued hereunder;

(2) against the Secretary where there is alleged a failure of the Secretary to perform any act or duty under this Act which is not discretionary with the Secretary;

(3) against the Secretary of the Treasury where there is alleged a failure of the Secretary of the Treasury to take action under section 9(e) of this Act.

(b) No action may be commenced under subsection (a) of this section—

(1) prior to 60 days after the plaintiff has given notice, in writing and under oath, to the alleged violator, the Secretary concerned, and the Attorney General; or

(2) if the Secretary has commenced enforcement or penalty action with respect to the alleged violation and is conducting such procedures diligently.

(c) Any suit brought under this section shall be brought—

(1) in a case concerning an onshore facility or port, in the United States district court for the judicial district where the onshore facility or port is located;

(2) in a case concerning an offshore facility or offshore structure under the jurisdiction of the United States, in the United States district court for the judicial district nearest the offshore facility or offshore structure;

(3) in a case concerning a ship, in the United States district court for any judicial district wherein the ship or its owner or operator may be found; or

(4) in any case, in the District Court for the District of Columbia.

(d) The court, in issuing any final order in any action brought pursuant to this section, may award costs of litigation (including

reasonable attorney and expert witness fees) to any party including the Federal Government.

(e) In any action brought under this section, if the Secretary or Attorney General are not parties of record, the United States, through the Attorney General, shall have the right to intervene.

Sec. 12. On the effective date of this Act—

(a) the Oil Pollution Act, 1961, as amended (75 Stat. 402; 33 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) is repealed. Any criminal or civil penalty proceeding under that Act for a violation which occurred prior to the effective date of this Act may be initiated or continued to conclusion as though that Act had not been repealed; and

(b) the Oil Pollution Act Amendments of 1973 (87 Stat. 428, Public Law 93-119) are repealed.

33 USC 1001 et seq.

Sec. 13. (a) Section 4417a of the Revised Statutes of the United States (46 U.S.C. 391a) is amended as follows—

(1) by amending subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2) by deleting the word “or” in clause (ii); by deleting the period at the end of clause (iii) and inserting “; or”; and by adding a new clause (iv) as follows:

“(iv) designated as a noxious liquid substance under Annex II of the Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973.”;

(2) by amending subparagraph (E) of paragraph (3) to read as follows:

“(E) which is constructed or adapted to carry, or which carries, oil or any hazardous materials in bulk as cargo or in residue.”.

(b) The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, is further amended in the first sentence of section 311(b)(3), after the words “except (A) in the case of such discharges”, by striking the words “of oil”; and by striking the phrase “the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil, 1954, as amended” and inserting in lieu thereof the phrase “the Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973”.

33 USC 1321.

Sec. 14. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, this Act is effective upon the date of enactment, or on the date the MARPOL Protocol becomes effective as to the United States, whichever is later.

Effective date.  
33 USC 1901 note.

(b) The Secretary and the heads of Federal departments shall have the authority to issue regulations, standards, and certifications under sections 3(c), 3(d), 4(b), 5(a), 6(a), 6(c), and 6(f) effective on the date of enactment of this Act. Section 13(a)(2) is effective upon the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) Any rights or liabilities existing on the effective date of this Act shall not be affected by this enactment. Any regulations or procedures promulgated or effected pursuant to the Oil Pollution Act, 1961, as amended, remain in effect until modified or superseded by regulations promulgated under the authority of the MARPOL Protocol or this Act.

33 USC 1001 note.

Sec. 15. Nothing in this Act shall be construed as limiting, diminishing, or otherwise restricting any of the authority of the Secretary under the Port and Tanker Safety Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-474).

33 USC 1911.

Sec. 16. (a) Subsection (c) of section 4 of the Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742c(c)) is amended—

33 USC 1221 note.

(1) by striking out “September 30, 1980,” each place it appears therein and inserting in lieu thereof “September 30, 1982,”; and

(2) by striking out the third, fourth, and fifth sentences thereof.

Effective date.  
16 USC 742c  
note.

(b) The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on September 1, 1980.

Approved October 21, 1980.

**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:**

**HOUSE REPORT No. 96-1224 (Comm. on Merchant Marine and Fisheries).  
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 126 (1980):**

Aug 18, considered and passed House.

Sept. 23, considered and passed Senate, amended.

Sept. 30, House concurred in certain Senate amendments and in No. 15 with an amendment.

Oct. 1, Senate concurred in House amendment.

**WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 16, No. 43:**

Oct. 21, Presidential statement.