

TITLE 46 - SHIPPING**Subtitle II - Vessels and Seamen****Part B - Inspection and Regulation of Vessels****CHAPTER 37 - CARRIAGE OF LIQUID BULK DANGEROUS CARGOES****§ 3703a. Tank vessel construction standards**

- (a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, a vessel to which this chapter applies shall be equipped with a double hull—
- (1) if it is constructed or adapted to carry, or carries, oil in bulk as cargo or cargo residue; and
 - (2) when operating on the waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, including the Exclusive Economic Zone.
- (b) This section does not apply to—
- (1) a vessel used only to respond to a discharge of oil or a hazardous substance;
 - (2) a vessel of less than 5,000 gross tons as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title equipped with a double containment system determined by the Secretary to be as effective as a double hull for the prevention of a discharge of oil;
 - (3) before January 1, 2015—
 - (A) a vessel unloading oil in bulk at a deepwater port licensed under the Deepwater Port Act of 1974 (33 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.); or
 - (B) a delivering vessel that is offloading in lightering activities—
 - (i) within a lightering zone established under section 3715 (b)(5) of this title; and
 - (ii) more than 60 miles from the baseline from which the territorial sea of the United States is measured;
 - (4) a vessel documented under chapter 121 of this title that was equipped with a double hull before August 12, 1992;
 - (5) a barge of less than 1,500 gross tons (as measured under chapter 145 of this title) carrying refined petroleum product in bulk as cargo in or adjacent to waters of the Bering Sea, Chukchi Sea, and Arctic Ocean and waters tributary thereto and in the waters of the Aleutian Islands and the Alaskan Peninsula west of 155 degrees west longitude; or
 - (6) a vessel in the National Defense Reserve Fleet pursuant to section 11 of the Merchant Ship Sales Act of 1946 (50 App. U.S.C. 1744).
- (c)
- (1) In this subsection, the age of a vessel is determined from the later of the date on which the vessel—
 - (A) is delivered after original construction;
 - (B) is delivered after completion of a major conversion; or
 - (C) had its appraised salvage value determined by the Coast Guard and is qualified for documentation as a wrecked vessel under section 12112 of this title.
 - (2) A vessel of less than 5,000 gross tons as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title for which a building contract or contract for major conversion was placed before June 30, 1990, and that is delivered under that contract before January 1, 1994, and a vessel of less than 5,000 gross tons as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title that had its appraised salvage value determined by the Coast Guard before June 30, 1990, and that qualifies for documentation as a wrecked vessel under section 12112 of this title before January 1, 1994, may not operate in the navigable waters or the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States after January 1, 2015, unless the vessel is equipped with a double hull or with a

double containment system determined by the Secretary to be as effective as a double hull for the prevention of a discharge of oil.

(3) A vessel for which a building contract or contract for major conversion was placed before June 30, 1990, and that is delivered under that contract before January 1, 1994, and a vessel that had its appraised salvage value determined by the Coast Guard before June 30, 1990, and that qualifies for documentation as a wrecked vessel under section 12112 of this title before January 1, 1994, may not operate in the navigable waters or Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States unless equipped with a double hull—

(A) in the case of a vessel of at least 5,000 gross tons but less than 15,000 gross tons as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title—

- (i)** after January 1, 1995, if the vessel is 40 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 45 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (ii)** after January 1, 1996, if the vessel is 39 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 44 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (iii)** after January 1, 1997, if the vessel is 38 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 43 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (iv)** after January 1, 1998, if the vessel is 37 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 42 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (v)** after January 1, 1999, if the vessel is 36 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 41 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (vi)** after January 1, 2000, if the vessel is 35 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 40 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides; and
- (vii)** after January 1, 2005, if the vessel is 25 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 30 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;

(B) in the case of a vessel of at least 15,000 gross tons but less than 30,000 gross tons as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title—

- (i)** after January 1, 1995, if the vessel is 40 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 45 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (ii)** after January 1, 1996, if the vessel is 38 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 43 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (iii)** after January 1, 1997, if the vessel is 36 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 41 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (iv)** after January 1, 1998, if the vessel is 34 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 39 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (v)** after January 1, 1999, if the vessel is 32 years old or older and has a single hull, or 37 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (vi)** after January 1, 2000, if the vessel is 30 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 35 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (vii)** after January 1, 2001, if the vessel is 29 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 34 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (viii)** after January 1, 2002, if the vessel is 28 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 33 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (ix)** after January 1, 2003, if the vessel is 27 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 32 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides;
- (x)** after January 1, 2004, if the vessel is 26 years old or older and has a single hull, or is 31 years old or older and has a double bottom or double sides; and

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 5, 2009 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscp.html>).

(II) July 1, 1999.

(B) A waiver under subparagraph (A) shall not be effective after the expiration of the 3-year period beginning on the first date on which the tank vessel would have been prohibited by subsection (c) from operating if the alterations referred to in subparagraph (A)(ii)(I) were not made.

(3) This subsection does not apply to a tank vessel that, before July 1, 1997, had undergone, or was the subject of a contract for, alterations that reduce the gross tonnage of the tank vessel, as shown by reliable evidence acceptable to the Secretary.

(Added Pub. L. 101–380, title IV, § 4115(a), Aug. 18, 1990, 104 Stat. 517; amended Pub. L. 104–324, title VII, § 715, title XI, § 1103, Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3937, 3966; Pub. L. 105–85, div. C, title XXXVI, § 3606, Nov. 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 2077; Pub. L. 109–304, § 15(15), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1703.)

References in Text

The Deepwater Port Act of 1974, referred to in subsec. (b)(3)(A), is Pub. L. 93–627, Jan. 3, 1975, 88 Stat. 2126, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 29 (§ 1501 et seq.) of Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1501 of Title 33 and Tables.

The date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998, referred to in subsec. (e)(2)(A)(iv)(I), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 105–85, which was approved Nov. 18, 1997.

Amendments

2006—Subsec. (c)(1)(C), (2), (3). Pub. L. 109–304 substituted “documentation as a wrecked vessel under section 12112 of this title” for “documentation under section 4136 of the Revised Statutes of the United States (46 App. U.S.C. 14)”.

1997—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 105–85 added subsec. (e).

1996—Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 104–324, § 715(1), inserted “as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title” after “5,000 gross tons”.

Subsec. (b)(4) to (6). Pub. L. 104–324, § 1103(1), added pars. (4) to (6).

Subsec. (c)(2). Pub. L. 104–324, § 715(2), inserted “as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title” after “5,000 gross tons” in two places.

Subsec. (c)(3)(A). Pub. L. 104–324, § 715(3), inserted “as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title” after “15,000 gross tons”.

Subsec. (c)(3)(B). Pub. L. 104–324, § 715(4), inserted “as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title” after “30,000 gross tons”.

Subsec. (c)(3)(C). Pub. L. 104–324, § 715(5), inserted “as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title” after “30,000 gross tons”.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 104–324, § 1103(2), added subsec. (d).

Effective Date

Section applicable to incidents occurring after Aug. 18, 1990, see section 1020 of Pub. L. 101–380, set out as a note under section 2701 of Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters.

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

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of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, as modified, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6.

Tank Vessels Over 5,000 Gross Tons To Comply Until January 1, 2015, With Environmentally Protective Structural and Operational Requirements

Pub. L. 101-380, title IV, § 4115(b), Aug. 18, 1990, 104 Stat. 520, provided that: “The Secretary shall, within 12 months after the date of the enactment of this Act [Aug. 18, 1990], complete a rulemaking proceeding and issue a final rule to require that tank vessels over 5,000 gross tons affected by section 3703a of title 46, United States Code, as added by this section, comply until January 1, 2015, with structural and operational requirements that the Secretary determines will provide as substantial protection to the environment as is economically and technologically feasible.”

Study on Other Structural and Operational Tank Vessel Requirements

Pub. L. 101-380, title IV, § 4115(e), Aug. 18, 1990, 104 Stat. 520, as amended by Pub. L. 105-383, title IV, § 423, Nov. 13, 1998, 112 Stat. 3440; Pub. L. 108-293, title VII, § 705, Aug. 9, 2004, 118 Stat. 1075; Pub. L. 109-241, title IX, § 901(n), July 11, 2006, 120 Stat. 565, provided that:

“(1) Other requirements.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act [Aug. 18, 1990], the Secretary shall determine, based on recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences or other qualified organizations, whether other structural and operational tank vessel requirements will provide protection to the marine environment equal to or greater than that provided by double hulls, and shall report to the Congress that determination and recommendations for legislative action.

“(2) Review and assessment.—The Secretary shall—

“(A) periodically review recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences and other qualified organizations on methods for further increasing the environmental and operational safety of tank vessels;

“(B) not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act [Aug. 18, 1990], assess the impact of this section on the safety of the marine environment and the economic viability and operational makeup of the maritime oil transportation industry; and

“(C) report the results of the review and assessment to the Congress with recommendations for legislative or other action.

“(3) No later than one year after the date of enactment of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004 [Aug. 9, 2004], the Secretary shall, taking into account the recommendations contained in the report by the Marine Board of the National Research Council entitled ‘Environmental Performance of Tanker Design in Collision and Grounding’ and dated 2001, establish and publish an environmental equivalency evaluation index (including the methodology to develop that index) to assess overall outflow performance due to collisions and groundings for double hull tank vessels and alternative designs.”

Territorial Sea of United States

For extension of territorial sea of United States, see Proc. No. 5928, set out as a note under section 1331 of Title 43, Public Lands.