

HOUSE BILL 676

M1, E1
SB 585/24 – JPR

5lr2735
CF SB 123

By: **Delegates Schmidt, Chisholm, Kipke, and Nkongolo**

Introduced and read first time: January 24, 2025

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Boating Accidents – Duty to Remain at the Scene, Render Assistance, and**
3 **Provide Information – Penalties**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the operator of a vessel involved in a collision, accident, or
5 other casualty to return to and remain at the scene of the collision, accident, or
6 casualty until the operator has rendered certain assistance and provided certain
7 information; establishing criminal penalties for the operator of a vessel involved in
8 a collision, accident, or other casualty who does not take certain actions; and
9 generally relating to the operator of a vessel involved in a collision, accident, or other
10 casualty.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
12 Article – Natural Resources
13 Section 8–724
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
17 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article – Natural Resources**

19 8–724.

20 (a) **(1) (I) THE OPERATOR OF A VESSEL INVOLVED IN A COLLISION,**
21 **ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY THAT RESULTS IN BODILY INJURY TO ANOTHER**
22 **PERSON IMMEDIATELY SHALL STOP THE VESSEL AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THE**
23 **SCENE OF THE COLLISION, ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY.**

24 **(II) THE OPERATOR OF A VESSEL INVOLVED IN A COLLISION,**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY THAT RESULTS IN BODILY INJURY TO ANOTHER
2 PERSON IMMEDIATELY SHALL RETURN TO AND REMAIN AT THE SCENE OF THE
3 COLLISION, ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY UNTIL THE OPERATOR HAS COMPLIED
4 WITH SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION.

5 (2) (I) THE OPERATOR OF A VESSEL INVOLVED IN A COLLISION,
6 ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY THAT RESULTS IN THE DEATH OF ANOTHER
7 PERSON IMMEDIATELY SHALL STOP THE VESSEL AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THE
8 SCENE OF THE COLLISION, ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY.

9 (II) THE OPERATOR OF A VESSEL INVOLVED IN A COLLISION,
10 ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY THAT RESULTS IN THE DEATH OF ANOTHER
11 PERSON IMMEDIATELY SHALL RETURN TO AND REMAIN AT THE SCENE OF THE
12 COLLISION, ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY UNTIL THE OPERATOR HAS COMPLIED
13 WITH SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION.

14 (3) (I) IN THIS PARAGRAPH, "SERIOUS BODILY INJURY" MEANS AN
15 INJURY THAT:

- 16 1. CREATES A SUBSTANTIAL RISK OF DEATH;
- 17 2. CAUSES SERIOUS PERMANENT OR SERIOUS
18 PROTRACTED DISFIGUREMENT;
- 19 3. CAUSES SERIOUS PERMANENT OR SERIOUS
20 PROTRACTED LOSS OF THE FUNCTION OF ANY BODY PART, ORGAN, OR MENTAL
21 FACULTY; OR
- 22 4. CAUSES SERIOUS PERMANENT OR SERIOUS
23 PROTRACTED IMPAIRMENT OF THE FUNCTION OF ANY BODY PART OR ORGAN.

24 (II) 1. EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (III) OF
25 THIS PARAGRAPH, A PERSON CONVICTED OF A VIOLATION OF PARAGRAPH (1) OF
26 THIS SUBSECTION IS SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 1 YEAR OR A FINE
27 NOT EXCEEDING \$3,000 OR BOTH.

28 2. EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (III) OF
29 THIS PARAGRAPH, A PERSON CONVICTED OF A VIOLATION OF PARAGRAPH (2) OF
30 THIS SUBSECTION IS SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 5 YEARS OR A
31 FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$5,000 OR BOTH.

32 (III) 1. A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SUBSECTION AND
33 WHO KNEW OR REASONABLY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT THE COLLISION,

1 ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY MIGHT RESULT IN SERIOUS BODILY INJURY TO
2 ANOTHER PERSON AND SERIOUS BODILY INJURY ACTUALLY OCCURRED TO
3 ANOTHER PERSON IS GUILTY OF A FELONY AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO
4 IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 5 YEARS OR A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$5,000 OR
5 BOTH.

6 **2. A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SUBSECTION AND**
7 **WHO KNEW OR REASONABLY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT THE COLLISION,**
8 **ACCIDENT, OR OTHER CASUALTY MIGHT RESULT IN THE DEATH OF ANOTHER**
9 **PERSON AND DEATH ACTUALLY OCCURRED TO ANOTHER PERSON IS GUILTY OF A**
10 **FELONY AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 10**
11 **YEARS OR A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$10,000 OR BOTH.**

12 **(B) (1)** The operator of a vessel involved in a collision, accident, or other
13 casualty shall [render]:

14 **(I) RENDER** all practical and necessary assistance to persons
15 affected by the collision, accident, or casualty to save the persons from danger caused by
16 the collision, accident, or casualty, to the extent the operator can do so without serious
17 danger to the operator's own vessel, or persons aboard[. The operator also shall give]; **AND**

18 **(II) GIVE** the operator's name, address, and the identification of the
19 operator's vessel to any person injured and to the owner of any property damaged.

20 **(2)** The duties imposed by this subsection are in addition to any duties
21 otherwise imposed by law.

22 **(3) A PERSON CONVICTED OF A VIOLATION OF THIS SUBSECTION IS**
23 **SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 2 MONTHS OR A FINE NOT EXCEEDING**
24 **\$500 OR BOTH.**

25 **[(b)] (C)** If an accident involves any vessel subject to this subtitle while on the
26 waters of the State and results in the death, disappearance, or injury of any person or in
27 property damage of \$2,000 or more, or there is complete loss of the vessel, the operator shall
28 file with the Department a full description of the accident, including any information the
29 Department requires by regulation. If the operator is unable to file the report, the vessel
30 owner shall file the report. If the accident caused the death or disappearance of any person
31 or a person receives medical treatment beyond first aid, the report shall be made within 48
32 hours. Any other accident resulting in personal injury or property damage shall be reported
33 within 10 days. This subsection does not apply to a vessel required to have a certificate of
34 inspection under Chapter 1, Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations.

35 **[(c)] (D)** If any vessel numbered in the State is involved in an accident on waters
36 outside of the State, and the accident results in the death, disappearance, or injury of any
37 person or in property damage of \$2,000 or more, the operator or owner, within 30 days,

1 shall file a complete report with the Department including any information the Department
2 requires by regulation. This subsection does not exempt or excuse any operator or owner
3 from the requirements of any federal or other state law or rule or regulation having
4 jurisdiction over the waters in which the accident occurs. Furthermore, any
5 accident-reporting requirement in the federal or other state law or rule or regulation may
6 not exonerate or excuse any failure of the operator or owner of a vessel numbered in the
7 State to report the accident in the State.

8 **[(d)] (E)** The required report of a boating accident may not be referred to during
9 any judicial proceeding. It is not subject to subpoena or admissible as evidence in any
10 proceeding. Subject to these restrictions, information contained in a boating accident report
11 and any statistical information based on the report is available on request for official
12 purposes to the U.S. Coast Guard and its successor agency.

13 **[(e)] (F)** Any person who complies with subsection **[(a)] (B)** of this section or who
14 gratuitously and in good faith renders or attempts to render assistance to any vessel in
15 distress on any waters of the State without objection from any person assisted, is not liable
16 for any civil damage as the result of any act or omission by the person in rendering
17 assistance, if the act or omission does not amount to gross negligence.

18 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
19 October 1, 2025.