

House Bill 207

By: Representatives Rhodes of the 124th, Corbett of the 174th, Ridley of the 6th, Williams of the 148th, and LaHood of the 175th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 7 of Title 52 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to general provisions relative to registration, operation, and sale of watercraft, so as
3 to provide for the carrying of night visual distress signals upon coastal waters of this state
4 during certain hours; to provide for the carrying of such signals by vessels of a certain size;
5 to update the reference date to department rules and regulations relating to criminal
6 violations relating to registration, operation, and sale of watercraft; to provide for related
7 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Article 1 of Chapter 7 of Title 52 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
11 general provisions relative to registration, operation, and sale of watercraft, is amended in
12 Code Section 52-7-8, relating to classification of vessels and required equipment, by revising
13 subsections (e) and (f) as follows:

14 "(e) All vessels, when operated upon the coastal waters of the state between the hours of
15 sunset and sunrise shall carry the United States Coast Guard approved night visual distress
16 signal. If a pyrotechnic visual distress signal is carried, a minimum of three unexpired

17 visual distress signals shall be carried in the vessel. Pyrotechnic night visual distress
18 signals are handheld red flare distress signals, parachute red flare distress signals with
19 launcher, hand-held ~~rocket-propelled~~ rocket propelled parachute red flare distress signals,
20 or red aerial pyrotechnic flare. Nonpyrotechnic nighttime visual distress signals include
21 one electric distress light meeting the standards of 46 C.F.R. Subpart 161.013. One electric
22 distress light shall meet the nighttime requirement.

23 (f) All vessels, except recreational vessels that are less than 16 feet in length,
24 nonmotorized open sailboats that are less than 26 feet in length, and manually propelled
25 vessels, when operated upon the coastal waters of the state between the hours of sunrise
26 and sunset shall carry the United States Coast Guard approved daytime visual distress
27 signals. Pyrotechnic daytime visual distress signals include all night visual distress signals,
28 as well as floating orange smoke distress signals and hand-held orange smoke distress
29 signals. Nonpyrotechnic daytime visual distress signals include an orange flag meeting the
30 standards of 46 C.F.R. Subpart 160.072. One orange flag shall meet the daytime only
31 requirement."

32 **SECTION 2.**

33 Said article shall be further amended in Code Section 52-7-26, relating to penalty, by revising
34 subsection (a) as follows:

35 "(a) Except as otherwise provided in this article, any person who violates this article or any
36 rule or regulation promulgated hereunder shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. For purposes
37 of establishing criminal violations of the rules and regulations promulgated by the board
38 as provided in this article, the term 'rules and regulations' means those rules and regulations
39 of the board in force and effect on January 1, ~~2022~~ 2023."

40 **SECTION 3.**

41 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.