

title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.

Merchandise so concealed, removed, or repacked, or packages upon which any marks or numbers have been so altered, defaced, or obliterated, shall be forfeited to the United States.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 717; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(K), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 1597 of title 19, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Customs Duties (June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title IV, §597, 46 Stat. 752).

This section was rewritten to place the criminal provisions ahead of the forfeiture provisions. This did not require any substantive changes except omission of reference to persons aiding. Such persons are made principals by section 2 of this title.

The punishment prescribed by section 545 of this title was inserted to make this section complete without reference to another section. In doing so it was necessary to rephrase the punishment provision of section 545 of this title, as originally enacted, without change of substance.

Forfeiture provision was rephrased to make it clear that forfeiture was not dependent upon conviction.

Changes were made in phraseology.

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$5,000”.

#### § 549. Removing goods from customs custody; breaking seals

Whoever, without authority, affixes or attaches a customs seal, fastening, or mark, or any seal, fastening, or mark purporting to be a customs seal, fastening, or mark to any vessel, vehicle, warehouse, or package; or

Whoever, without authority, willfully removes, breaks, injures, or defaces any customs seal or other fastening or mark placed upon any vessel, vehicle, warehouse, or package containing merchandise or baggage in bond or in customs custody; or

Whoever maliciously enters any bonded warehouse or any vessel or vehicle laden with or containing bonded merchandise with intent unlawfully to remove therefrom any merchandise or baggage therein, or unlawfully removes any merchandise or baggage in such vessel, vehicle, or bonded warehouse or otherwise in customs custody or control; or

Whoever receives or transports any merchandise or baggage unlawfully removed from any such vessel, vehicle, or warehouse, knowing the same to have been unlawfully removed—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 717; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(K), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147; Pub. L. 109-177, title III, §311(e), Mar. 9, 2006, 120 Stat. 242.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 1598 of title 19, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Customs Duties (June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title IV, §598, 46 Stat. 752; June 25, 1938, ch. 679, §26, 52 Stat. 1089).

Reference to persons causing, procuring, aiding or assisting was omitted as unnecessary in view of definition of “principal” in section 2 of this title.

In view of definition of felony in section 1 of this title words “guilty of a felony” were omitted. (See reviser’s note under section 550 of this title.)

The punishment prescribed by section 545 of this title was inserted to make this section complete without reference to another section. In doing so it was necessary to rephrase the punishment provision of section 545 of this title, as originally enacted, without change of substance.

Forfeiture provision was omitted to conform with current administrative practice.

Changes were made in phraseology.

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

2006—Pub. L. 109-177 substituted “10 years” for “two years” in last par.

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$5,000” in last par.

#### § 550. False claim for refund of duties

Whoever knowingly and willfully files any false or fraudulent entry or claim for the payment of drawback, allowance, or refund of duties upon the exportation of merchandise, or knowingly or willfully makes or files any false affidavit, abstract, record, certificate, or other document, with a view to securing the payment to himself or others of any drawback, allowance, or refund of duties, on the exportation of merchandise, greater than that legally due thereon, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both, and such merchandise or the value thereof shall be forfeited.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 718; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(K), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 1590 of title 19, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Customs Duties (June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title IV, §590, 46 Stat. 750).

Reference to felony, contained in words “such person shall be guilty of a felony” was omitted as unnecessary in view of definition of felony in section 1 of this title. This, too, was the policy adopted by the codifiers of the 1909 Criminal Code. (See S. Rept. 10, pt. I, pp. 12, 13, and 14, 60th Cong., 1st sess.)

Words “and upon conviction thereof” before “shall be punished” were also omitted as unnecessary, since punishment cannot be imposed until a conviction is secured.

Changes were made in phraseology.

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$5,000”.

#### § 551. Concealing or destroying invoices or other papers

Whoever willfully conceals or destroys any invoice, book, or paper relating to any merchandise imported into the United States, after an inspection thereof has been demanded by the collector of any collection district; or

Whoever conceals or destroys at any time any such invoice, book, or paper for the purpose of suppressing any evidence of fraud therein contained—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.