

**§ 6308. Information barred in legal proceedings**

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no part of a report of a marine casualty investigation conducted under section 6301 of this title, including findings of fact, opinions, recommendations, deliberations, or conclusions, shall be admissible as evidence or subject to discovery in any civil or administrative proceedings, other than an administrative proceeding initiated by the United States.

(b) Any member or employee of the Coast Guard investigating a marine casualty pursuant to section 6301 of this title shall not be subject to deposition or other discovery, or otherwise testify in such proceedings relevant to a marine casualty investigation, without the permission of the Secretary. The Secretary shall not withhold permission for such employee or member to testify, either orally or upon written questions, on solely factual matters at a time and place and in a manner acceptable to the Secretary if the information is not available elsewhere or is not obtainable by other means.

(c) Nothing in this section prohibits the United States from calling the employee or member as an expert witness to testify on its behalf. Further, nothing in this section prohibits the employee or member from being called as a fact witness in any case in which the United States is a party. If the employee or member is called as an expert or fact witness, the applicable Federal Rules of Civil Procedure govern discovery. If the employee or member is called as a witness, the report of a marine casualty investigation conducted under section 6301 of this title shall not be admissible, as provided in subsections (a) and (b), and shall not be considered the report of an expert under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

(d) The information referred to in subsections (a), (b), and (c) of this section shall not be considered an admission of liability by the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions and statements.

(Added Pub. L. 104-324, title III, §313(a), Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3921; amended Pub. L. 109-241, title IX, §902(e)(2), formerly §902(e)(2)-(4), July 11, 2006, 120 Stat. 567, renumbered §902(e)(2) and amended Pub. L. 111-281, title IX, §903(a)(5)(B)-(7), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 3010.)

**Editorial Notes**

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, referred to in subsec. (c), are set out in the Appendix to Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure.

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 111-281 made technical amendment to directory language of Pub. L. 109-241, §902(e). See 2006 Amendment notes below.

2006—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109-241, §902(e)(2)(B), added subsec. (a) and struck out former subsec. (a) which read as follows: “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no part of a report of a marine casualty investigation conducted under section 6301 of this title, including findings of fact, opinions, recommendations, deliberations, or conclusions, shall be admissible as evidence or subject to discovery in any civil or administrative proceedings, other than an administrative proceeding initiated by the United States. Any employee

of the Department of Transportation, and any member of the Coast Guard, investigating a marine casualty pursuant to section 6301 of this title, shall not be subject to deposition or other discovery, or otherwise testify in such proceedings relevant to a marine casualty investigation, without the permission of the Secretary of Transportation. The Secretary shall not withhold permission for such employee or member to testify, either orally or upon written questions, on solely factual matters at a time and place and in a manner acceptable to the Secretary if the information is not available elsewhere or is not obtainable by other means.”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109-241, §902(e)(2)(B), added subsec. (b). Former subsec. (b) redesignated (c).

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 109-241, §902(e)(2)(A), (C), formerly §902(e)(2)(A), (3), renumbered §902(e)(2)(A), (C) and amended Pub. L. 111-281, §903(a)(5)(B), (C), (6), redesignated subsec. (b) as (c) and substituted “subsections (a) and (b)” for “subsection (a)”. Former subsec. (c) redesignated (d).

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 109-241, §902(e)(2)(A), (D), formerly §902(e)(2)(A), (4), renumbered §902(e)(2)(A), (D) and amended Pub. L. 111-281, §903(a)(5)-(7), redesignated subsec. (c) as (d) and substituted “subsections (a), (b), and (c)” for “subsections (a) and (b)”.

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 111-281, title IX, §903(a), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 3010, provided that the amendment by section 903(a)(5)(B)-(7), is effective with enactment of Pub. L. 109-241.

**§ 6309. Voyage data recorder access**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Coast Guard shall have full, concurrent, and timely access to and ability to use voyage data recorder data and audio held by any Federal agency in all marine casualty investigations, regardless of which agency is the investigative lead.

(Added Pub. L. 115-265, title II, §207(a), Oct. 11, 2018, 132 Stat. 3747.)

**PART E—MERCHANT SEAMEN LICENSES, CERTIFICATES, AND DOCUMENTS**

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Part E establishes the authority for the Coast Guard to issue, suspend, and revoke licenses, certificates of registry, and merchant mariner’s documents for individuals who are to be engaged on vessels of the United States.

**Editorial Notes**

AMENDMENTS

1985—Pub. L. 99-36, §1(a)(9)(B), May 15, 1985, 99 Stat. 67, substituted “Merchant Seamen Licenses, Certificates, and” for “Licenses, Certificates, and Merchant Mariners’” in part E heading.

**CHAPTER 71—LICENSES AND CERTIFICATES OF REGISTRY**

Sec.	
7101.	Issuing and classifying licenses and certificates of registry.
7102.	Citizenship.
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