

House Bill 964

By: Representatives Day of the 163rd, Williams of the 178th, Gardner of the 57th, and Carter of the 159th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 52-7-18 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 rules of the road for boat traffic, so as to revise provisions relating to the operation of certain
3 vessels in Georgia ports and harbors; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting
4 laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

7 Code Section 52-7-18 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the rules of the
8 road for boat traffic, is amended as follows:

9 "52-7-18.

10 (a) All vessels operating on the coastal waters of this state shall conform to the 'Steering
11 and Sailing Rules' established by Section II, Rules 11 through 18, of the International
12 Navigation Rules Act of 1977, as amended.

13 (b) All vessels operating on the inland waters of this state shall conform to the 'Steering
14 and Sailing Rules' established by Subpart II, Rules 11 through 18, of the Inland Navigation
15 Rules Act of 1980, as amended.

16 (c) It shall be the duty of each operator to keep his or her vessel to the starboard or right
17 side of the center of any channel, stream, or other narrow body of water; provided,
18 however, that this provision shall not give to the operator of a sailing vessel the right to
19 hamper, in a narrow channel, the safe passage of another vessel which can navigate only
20 inside that channel.

21 (d) Powered vessels approaching nonpowered vessels shall reduce their speed so that their
22 wake shall not endanger the life or property of those occupying the nonpowered vessel.

23 (e) Whenever a vessel approaches a bend, point, or other blind area, it shall be the duty of
24 the operator to:

25 (1) Move as far to the right or starboard as possible;

26 (2) Reduce speed to allow for an unexpected stop if necessary; and

1 (3) Sound a blast of eight to ten seconds' duration on a sounding device if such a device
2 is carried.

3 (f) No person shall operate any vessel or tow a person or persons on water skis, an
4 aquaplane, a surfboard, or any similar device on the waters of this state at a speed greater
5 than idle speed within 100 feet of any vessel which is moored, anchored, or adrift outside
6 normal traffic channels, or any wharf, dock, pier, piling, bridge structure or abutment,
7 person in the water, or shoreline adjacent to a full-time or part-time residence, public park,
8 public beach, public swimming area, marina, restaurant, or other public use area. This
9 subsection shall not be interpreted to prohibit any person from initiating or terminating
10 water skiing from any wharf, dock, or pier owned by such person or used by such person
11 with the permission of the owner of said wharf, dock, or pier nor shall it be interpreted to
12 prohibit the immediate return of a tow vessel to a downed water skier.

13 (g) No vessel shall run around or within 100 feet of another vessel at a speed greater than
14 idle speed unless such vessel is overtaking or meeting such other vessel in compliance with
15 the rules of the road for vessel traffic.

16 (h) In any port or harbor of this state, no vessel less than 75 feet in length shall at any time
17 be operated within 100 feet of any vessel 100 feet in length or greater while such longer
18 vessel is in operation.

19 ~~(h)~~(i) No vessel shall be operated in such a manner as to ride or jump the wake of another
20 vessel within 100 feet of such other vessel unless the vessel is overtaking or meeting such
21 other vessel in compliance with the rules of the road for vessel traffic and, having passed
22 or overtaken such other vessel, the operator of the passing or overtaking vessel shall not
23 change or reverse course for the purpose of riding or jumping the wake of such other vessel
24 within 100 feet of such other vessel.

25 ~~(i)~~(j) Subsections (f), ~~(g)~~, and ~~(h)~~ through (i) of this Code section shall not apply to
26 ocean-going ships or to tugboats or other powered vessels which are assisting ocean-going
27 ships during transit or during docking or undocking maneuvers."

28 **SECTION 2.**

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