

## Abandoned watercraft law effective Dec. 16, 2008

The S.C. General Assembly recently passed a new abandoned watercraft bill into law effective Dec. 16, 2008. The S.C. Code of Laws 50-21-190 makes it a crime to abandon a watercraft or an outboard motor on public lands or waters of the state and also provides for the removal of abandoned watercraft at the expense of the owner. Fines upon conviction of this misdemeanor are between \$1000 and \$5000 and/or imprisonment up to 30 days.

An abandoned watercraft is defined as any that has been moored, stranded, wrecked, sinking, or sunk, and has been left unattended for more than 45 days. This does not apply to a watercraft abandoned in an emergency although after an emergency the owner/operator is expected to recover the watercraft.

"This is more than dealing with an eyesore on state waterways," said S.C. Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) Law Enforcement Colonel Alvin Taylor. "We now have another tool to deal with navigational and environmental hazards. Abandoned watercraft can float free and cause damage to private property and leak fuel."

Any owner or other person with information on an abandoned watercraft should contact the DNR Law Enforcement Investigations Section at (843) 953-9378 or 1-800-922-5431. Read the actual wording of the new law.

DNR protects and manages South Carolina's natural resources by making wise and balanced decisions for the benefit of the state's natural resources and its people.

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David, you are correct ,except.....that law is clear as it relates to boats on public waters, etc. However, the docks are private property and for that reason, the law does not cover it. I spent some time investigating this and spoke to the Mt Pleasant Police and the City of Charleston marine Division. Since this is private property, the owner of the dock can call, Sea Tow or the other tow company and they will tow the boat and the owner will have to cover the costs or the boat will be considered a salvage. We do not own the docks, so it it up to Mike and I don't know what his relationship to the boat own is. I am happy to discuss