

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1042

H.P. 671

House of Representatives, March 14, 2025

**An Act to Require a Person Operating a Watercraft for
Recreational Purposes to Ensure All Passengers Under 13 Years of
Age Wear Coast Guard Approved Personal Flotation Devices**

Received by the Clerk of the House on March 12, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Marine Resources pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative HEPLER of Woolwich.
Cosponsored by Representatives: DILL of Old Town, SARGENT of York.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §13068-A, sub-§4, ¶A, as amended by PL 2023, c. 228, §§13 and 14, is further amended by enacting a new subparagraph (2-A) to read:

(2-A) Fails to ensure that all passenger children who have not attained 13 years of age are wearing an appropriate Coast Guard approved personal flotation device while on board the watercraft when the watercraft is used for recreational purposes;

SUMMARY

This bill modifies the provisions of law governing operation of a watercraft to prohibit a person from operating a watercraft unless all passenger children who are under 13 years of age are wearing an appropriate Coast Guard approved personal flotation device while on board the watercraft when the watercraft is used for recreational purposes, whether or not the watercraft is under way. An exception to this requirement applies to canoes owned by youth camps and log rafts subject to certain conditions.

A person who violates this provision commits a civil violation. After multiple adjudications for violations of the inland fisheries and wildlife laws within a 5-year period, a person who violates this provision commits a Class E crime.