



# Piracy Act 1721

1721 CHAPTER 24 8 Geo 1

An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Piracy.

Whereas the number of persons committing piracies, felonies, and robberies upon the seas is of late very much increased, and notwithstanding the laws already made and now in being, many idle and profligate persons have turned pirates, and betaken themselves to that wicked course of life, whereby the trade and navigation into remote parts will greatly suffer unless some further provision be speedily made for bringing such persons and all others who shall be any ways aiding and assisting, or in confederacy with them, to condign punishment:

#### **Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

- C1 Short title given by [Short Titles Act 1896 \(c. 14\)](#)
- C2 Act repealed so far as it relates to the punishment of piracy or of any offence declared to be piracy or of accessories thereto respectively by [Piracy Act 1837 \(c. 88\), s. 1](#)

#### **Commencement Information**

- I1 Act wholly in force at Royal Assent

**[1.] Commanders of ships or others, trading with pirates, furnishing them with stores, corresponding with them, &c. guilty of piracy. Forcibly boarding any merchant ship, and throwing any goods overboard, shall be punished as pirates.**

If any commander or master of any ship or vessel, or any other person or persons, shall anywise trade with any pirate, by truck, barter, exchange, or in any other manner, or shall furnish any pirate, felon, or robber upon the seas, with any ammunition, provision, or stores of any kind, or shall fit out any ship or vessel knowingly, and with a design to trade with, or supply, or correspond with any pirate, felon, or robber upon the seas, or if any person or persons shall any ways consult, combine, confederate, or correspond with any pirate, felon, or robber on the seas, knowing him to be guilty of any such piracy, felony, or robbery, such offender and offenders and every of them shall, in each and every of the said cases, be deemed, adjudged, and taken to be guilty of piracy, felony, and robbery, [<sup>F1</sup>and he and they shall and may be enquired of, tried, heard, and adjudged of and for all or any the matters aforesaid, according to the

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*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Piracy Act 1721 (repealed 5.11.1993). (See end of Document for details)*

Offences at Sea Act 1536, and the Piracy Act 1698] . . . <sup>F2</sup> and in case any person or persons belonging to any ship or vessel whatsoever, upon meeting any merchant ship or vessel on the high seas, or in any port, haven, or creek whatsoever, shall forcibly board or enter into such ship or vessel, and though they do not seize and carry off such ship or vessel, shall throw overboard or destroy any part of the goods or merchandizes belonging to such ship or vessel, the person and persons who shall be guilty thereof shall in all respects be deemed and punished as pirates as aforesaid.

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** Words repealed (E.W.) by [Criminal Law Act 1967 \(c. 58\)](#), [Sch. 3 Pt. I](#)  
**F2** Words repealed by [Statute Law Revision Act 1948 \(c. 62\)](#), [Sch. I](#)

## 2 Ships and the goods, forfeited, half to the crown, half to the discoverers.

And every ship or vessel which shall be fitted out with a design to trade with, or supply, or correspond with any pirate, and all and every goods and merchandizes put on board the same for any intent or purpose to trade with any pirate, felon, or robber on the seas, shall be ipso facto forfeited; one moiety thereof to the use of the Kings Majesty, his heirs and successors, the other moiety to the person or persons who shall first make discovery and give information of such intent or design; and such person or persons who shall first make such discovery, shall and may sue for and recover the said ship or vessel, and all and every the goods and merchandizes on board the same, in the [<sup>F3</sup>High Court].

#### Textual Amendments

- F3** Words substituted by virtue of [Court of Sessions Act 1825 \(c. 120\)](#), [s. 57](#) and [Supreme Court of Judicature \(Consolidation\) Act 1925 \(c. 49\)](#), [s. 224\(1\)](#)

## 3 Accessories to piracy by 11 Will. 3. c. 7. shall be deemed principals.

And whereas there are some defects in the laws for bringing persons who are accessories to piracy and robbery upon the seas, to condign punishment, if the principal who committed such piracy and robbery is not or cannot be apprehended and brought to justice all and every person and persons whatsoever, who, by the <sup>M1</sup>Piracy Act 1698, are declared to be accessory or accessories to any piracy or robbery therein mentioned, are hereby declared and shall be deemed and taken to be principal pirates, felons, and robbers, and shall and may, be enquired of, heard, determined, and adjudged, in the same manner as persons guilty of piracy and robbery may and ought to be enquired of, tried, heard, determined, and adjudged by the Piracy Act 1698 . . . <sup>F4</sup>

#### Textual Amendments

- F4** Words repealed by [Statute Law Revision Act 1948 \(c. 62\)](#), [Sch. I](#)

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C3** [S. 3](#) repealed (E.W.) by [Criminal Law Act 1967 \(c. 58\)](#), [Sch. 3 Pt. I](#)

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**Marginal Citations**

**M1** 1698 c. 7.

**4** <sup>F5</sup> .....

**Textual Amendments**

**F5** S. 4 repealed by Piracy Act 1837 (c. 88), s. 1

**5** <sup>F6</sup> .....

**Textual Amendments**

**F6** S. 5 repealed by the Act 4 and 5 Will. 4. c. 34, s. 1

**6 Masters or seamen not defending themselves against pirates, etc. forfeit their wages and suffer six months imprisonment.**

And in case any commander, master, or other officer, or any seaman or mariner of any merchant ship or vessel, which carries guns and arms, shall not when they are attacked by any pirate, or by any ship or vessel on which any such pirate is on board, fight and endeavour to defend themselves and their said ship or vessel from being taken by the said pirate, or shall utter any words to discourage the other mariners from defending the ship, and by reason thereof the said ship or vessel shall fall into the hands of such pirate, then and in every such case every such commander or master or other officer and every seaman or mariner who shall not fight and endeavour to defend and save the said ship or vessel, or who shall utter any such words as aforesaid, shall lose and forfeit all and every part of the wages due to him and them respectively, to the owner and owners of the said ship or vessel, and shall not be permitted to sue for or recover the same or any part thereof in any court either of law or equity, and as a further punishment shall suffer six months imprisonment.

**7** <sup>F7</sup> .....

**Textual Amendments**

**F7** S. 7 repealed by Statute Law Revision Act 1948 (c. 62), Sch. 1

**8, 9.** <sup>F8</sup> .....

**Textual Amendments**

**F8** Ss. 8, 9 repealed by the Act 22 Geo. 2. c. 33, s. 1

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**10 To extend to Asia, &c.**

And this Act shall extend to all his Majesties dominions in Asia, Africa, and America, and shall be taken as a publick Act . . . <sup>F9</sup>

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**Textual Amendments**

**F9** Words repealed by [Statute Law Revision Act 1867 \(c. 59\)](#)

**Status:**

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**Changes to legislation:**

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