

BoBo Legare of Edisto Island writes, "Dear Lawyer Cooper, Could you say what you said last week, but with more short words?"

Well, BoBo, I will do my best.

Some admiralty cases involve a lawsuit for breaking a maritime contract, such as a contract for operation of a boat on navigable waters, or for use of ships in commerce, or for employment of seamen on vessels. Other admiralty cases involve negligence or wrong conduct which results in injury or damage on the navigable waters or high seas.

Admiralty cases can be filed in state court or in federal court. The thing to remember is that federal admiralty law applies in admiralty cases, no matter which court decides the case. This rule is important because admiralty law is different from state law.

There. And without too many Sunday words!

Ellen Dorman of Mt. Pleasant writes, "Dear Mr. Cooper: My husband and I are considering whether to document our new boat with the Coast Guard or to register it with the Boating Division of the S.C. Wildlife & Marine Resources Dept. What is involved?"

Very briefly, all vessels in the state qualify to be registered with the Boating Division, and most are required to be registered with the Boating Division. If your vessel qualifies for documentation with the Coast Guard, you may document your vessel instead of registration with the Boating Division, or in addition to registration with the Boating Division.

Registration of a vessel with the Boating Division is cheaper than documentation with the Coast Guard, but documentation with the

Coast Guard allows recording of a preferred ship mortgage which better protects a bank loaning money on a boat. This is important. A better protected bank will loan more money on the same boat.

Miss Wilhelmina Thomas of Wadmalaw Island writes, "Dear Mr. Cooper: I have a question. What is the best way to handle a crazy old lady who carries a loaded gun and thinks that her husband was coming to see me when his batteau sank and he was drowned?"

Good question, Ms. Thomas. There is only one way to handle a crazy lady who carries a loaded gun . . . very carefully.

More next week on The Admiralty Docket. Until then remember, your rights and responsibilities may change as you approach the shore and may God Almighty grant you pleasant sailing.

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