§ 2253. Certificates of registration, registration numbers, and validating stickers. 1. Issuance. Upon the approval of an application for registration and payment of the fee as provided in this article, the commissioner shall assign to a vessel a registration number, and, without further expense to the applicant, issue a certificate of registration and, effective April first, nineteen hundred eighty-six, a validating sticker or stickers, in such manner and form as the commissioner shall prescribe.

2. Certificate of registration. The certificate of registration issued by the commissioner shall be available at all times for inspection on the vessel for which it is issued whenever such vessel is in operation, unless otherwise provided by a rule or regulation of the commissioner. Every person operating a vessel shall, upon demand of any peace officer, federal officer or other person having the authority to enforce the provisions of this chapter, produce the certificate of registration for inspection. The failure to produce the certificate of registration, as provided herein, shall not be an offense, but shall be presumptive evidence of operating a vessel which is not registered as required by this article.

3. Registration number. A registration number once assigned under this section shall remain with the vessel until the vessel is destroyed, abandoned or permanently removed from the state, or until changed or terminated by the commissioner. The registration number assigned to the vessel shall be painted on or attached to each side of the forward half of the vessel by the owner in such a position as to be displayed in a conspicuous manner with figures and letters at least three inches in height. The registration number shall be maintained in a legible condition so that the figures and letters are readily discernible during daylight hours at a distance of one hundred feet. No other number shall be carried on the forward half of such vessel. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this subdivision, a vessel having a valid marine document issued by the United States or a foreign government shall not be required to display its assigned registration number on the vessel.

4. Validating stickers. Effective April first, nineteen hundred

eighty-six, at the time of the original registration and at the time of each renewal thereof, the commissioner shall also issue to said registrant a validating sticker or stickers indicating the validity of the current registration and the expiration date thereof, which validating sticker or stickers shall be affixed to the vessel in such manner as the commissioner may prescribe provided, however, that where the hull of a vessel equipped with a windshield is constructed of wood, such validating sticker or stickers may be affixed to the windshield of the vessel. From that time and notwithstanding the fact that a vessel has been assigned a registration number, it shall not be considered as validly registered within the meaning of this article unless a validating sticker and current registration certificate have been issued. In addition, the commissioner may issue a validating sticker or stickers to the holder of a certificate of registration issued prior to April first, nineteen hundred eighty-six, without further expense to the holder, indicating the validity of the current registration and the expiration date thereof, which validating sticker or stickers shall be affixed to the vessel in such a manner as the commissioner may prescribe. The commissioner shall establish by regulation such terms and conditions as may be necessary to accomplish the issuance of such validating sticker or stickers and the date upon which their issuance shall be completed. From thirty days after such date and notwithstanding the fact that a vessel has been assigned a registration number and has a current certificate of registration, it shall not be considered as validly registered within the meaning of this article unless a validating sticker or stickers is displayed on the vessel.