



# Merchant Shipping Act 1970

## 1970 CHAPTER 36

### *Disqualification of seamen, inquiries and investigations*

#### **55 Inquiries and investigations into shipping casualties**

- (1) Where any of the following casualties has occurred, that is to say.—
- (a) the loss or presumed loss, stranding, grounding, abandonment of or damage to a ship ; or
  - (b) a loss of life caused by fire on board or by any accident to a ship or ship's boat, or by any accident occurring on board a ship or ship's boat; or
  - (c) any damage caused by a ship ;
- and, at the time it occurred, the ship was registered in the United Kingdom or the ship or boat was in the United Kingdom or the territorial waters thereof, the Board of Trade—
- (i) may cause a preliminary inquiry into the casualty to be held by a person appointed for the purpose by the Board; and
  - (ii) may (whether or not a preliminary inquiry into the casualty has been held) cause a formal investigation into the casualty to be held, if in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, by a wreck commissioner and, if in Scotland, by the sheriff.
- (2) A person appointed under this section to hold a preliminary inquiry shall for the purpose of the inquiry have the powers conferred on an inspector by section 729 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894.