



Merchant Shipping Act 1894

1894 CHAPTER 60 57 and 58 Vict

PART IX

WRECK AND SALVAGE

Vessels in Distress

510 Definition of “wreck” and “salvage.”

In this Part of this Act unless the context otherwise requires—

- (1) The expression “wreck” includes jetsam, flotsam, lagan, and derelict found in or on the shores of the sea or any tidal water:
- (2) The expression “salvage” includes all expenses, properly incurred by the salvor in the performance of the salvage services.

511 Duty of receiver where vessel in distress.

- (1) Where a British or foreign vessel is wrecked, stranded, or in distress at any place on or near the coasts of the United Kingdom or any tidal water within the limits of the United Kingdom, the receiver of wreck for the district in which that place is situate shall, upon being made acquainted with the circumstance, forthwith proceed there, and upon his arrival shall take the command of all persons present, and shall assign such duties and give such directions to each person as he thinks fit for the preservation of the vessel and of the lives of the persons belonging to the vessel (in this Part of this Act referred to as shipwrecked persons) and of the cargo and apparel of the vessel.
- (2) If any person wilfully disobeys the direction of the receiver, he shall for each offence be liable to a fine not exceeding [^{F1} fifty pounds][^{F1} level 3 on the standard scale]; but the receiver shall not interfere between the master and the crew of the vessel in reference to the management thereof, unless he is requested to do so by the master.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/02/1991.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Merchant Shipping Act 1894, Cross Heading: Vessels in Distress. (See end of Document for details)

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words “level 3 on the standard scale” substituted (E.W.S.) for “fifty pounds” by virtue of (E.W.) [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), [ss. 38, 46](#) and (S.) [Criminal Procedure \(Scotland\) Act 1975 \(c.21, SIF 39:1\)](#), [ss. 289F, 289G](#)

512 Powers of the receiver in case of vessels in distress.

- (1) The receiver may, with a view to such preservation as aforesaid of shipwrecked persons or of the vessel, cargo, or apparel—
 - (a) require such persons as he thinks necessary to assist him:
 - (b) require the master, or other person having the charge, of any vessel near at hand to give such aid with his men, or vessel, as may be in his power:
 - (c) demand the use of any waggon, cart, or horses that may be near at hand.
- (2) If any person refuses without reasonable cause to comply with any such requisition or demand, that person shall, for each refusal, be liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds: . . . ^{F2}

Textual Amendments

- F2** Words repealed by [Finance Act 1944 \(c. 23\)](#), [Sch. 5 Pt. II](#)

513 Power to pass over adjoining lands.

- (1) Whenever a vessel is wrecked, stranded, or in distress as aforesaid, all persons may, for the purpose of rendering assistance to the vessel, or of saving the lives of the shipwrecked persons, or of saving the cargo or apparel of the vessel, unless there is some public road equally convenient, pass and repass, either with or without carriages or horses, over any adjoining lands without being subject to interruption by the owner or occupier, so that they do as little damage as possible, and may also, on the like condition, deposit on those lands any cargo or other article recovered from the vessel.
- (2) Any damage sustained by an owner or occupier in consequence of the exercise of the rights given by this section shall be a charge on the vessel, cargo, or articles in respect of or by which the damage is occasioned, and the amount payable in respect of the damage shall, in case of dispute, be determined and shall, in default of payment, be recoverable in the same manner as the amount of salvage is under this Part of this Act determined or recoverable.
- (3) If the owner or occupier of any land—
 - (a) impedes or hinders any person in the exercise of the rights given by this section by locking his gates, or refusing, upon request, to open the same, or otherwise; or
 - (b) impedes or hinders the deposit of any cargo or other article recovered from the vessel as aforesaid on the land: or
 - (c) prevents or endeavours to prevent any such cargo or other article from remaining deposited on the land for a reasonable time until it can be removed to a safe place of public deposit;

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he shall for each offence be liable to a fine not exceeding [^{F3}one hundred pounds][^{F3}level 3 on the standard scale].

Textual Amendments

- F3** Words “level 3 on the standard scale” substituted (E.W.S.) for “one hundred pounds” by virtue of (E.W.) [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), [ss. 38, 46](#) and (S.) [Criminal Procedure \(Scotland\) Act 1975 \(c. 21, SIF 39:1\)](#), [ss. 289F, 289G](#)

514 Power of receiver to suppress plunder and disorder by force.

- (1) Whenever a vessel is wrecked, stranded, or in distress as aforesaid, and any person plunders, creates disorder, or obstructs the preservation of the vessel or of the shipwrecked persons or of the cargo or apparel of the vessel, the receiver may cause that person to be apprehended.
- (2) The receiver may use force for the suppression of any such plundering, disorder, or obstruction, and may command all Her Majesty’s subjects to assist him in so using force.
- (3) If any person is killed, maimed, or hurt by reason of his resisting the receiver or any person acting under the orders of the receiver in the execution of the duties by this Part of this Act committed to the receiver, neither the receiver nor the person acting under his orders shall be liable to any punishment, or to pay any damages by reason of the person being so killed, maimed, or hurt.

515 Liability for damage in case of a vessel plundered.

Where a vessel is wrecked, stranded, or in distress as aforesaid, and the vessel or any part of the cargo and apparel thereof, is plundered, damaged, or destroyed by any persons riotously and tumultuously assembled together, whether on shore or afloat, compensation shall be made to the owner of the vessel, cargo, or apparel:

In England in the same manner, by the same authority, and out of the same rate as if the plundering, damage, injury, or destruction were an injury, stealing, or destruction in respect of which compensation is payable under the provisions of the ^{M1}Riot (Damages) Act 1886, and in the case of the vessel, cargo, or apparel not being in any police district, as if the plundering, damage, injury, or destruction took place in the nearest police district:

In Scotland by the [^{F4}council of the region or islands area] in or nearest to which such offence is committed, in manner provided by the ^{M2}Riot Act, with respect to prosecutions for repairing the damages of any churches and other buildings, or as near thereto as circumstances permit, and

[^{F5}In Northern Ireland, in pursuance of an application, under the Criminal Injuries to Property (Compensation) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971 as modified for the purposes of this section by the Transfer of Functions (Criminal Injuries to Vessels) (Northern Ireland) Order 1973.]

Textual Amendments

- F4** Words substituted by [Local Government \(Scotland\) Act 1973 \(c. 65\)](#), [Sch. 27 Pt. II para. 24](#)
- F5** Words substituted by S.R. & O. (N.I.) 1973/56, art. 3(1)(3)

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 S. 515 amended (E.W.) by [Public Order Act 1986 \(c. 64, SIF 39:2\)](#), **s. 10(1)**

Marginal Citations

M1 [1886 c. 38.](#)

M2 [1 Geo. 1st. 1 c. 5.](#)

516 Exercise of powers of receiver in his absence.

- (1) Where a receiver is not present, the following officers or persons in succession (each in the absence of the other, in the order in which they are named), namely, any chief officer of customs, principal officer of the coastguard, officer of inland revenue, sheriff, justice of the peace, commissioned officer on full pay in the naval service of Her Majesty, or commissioned officer on full pay in the military service of Her Majesty, may do anything by this Part of this Act authorised to be done by the receiver.
- (2) An officer acting under this section for a receiver shall, with respect to any goods or articles belonging to a vessel the delivery of which to the receiver is required by this Act, be considered as the agent of the receiver, and shall place the same in the custody of the receiver; but he shall not be entitled to any fees payable to receivers, or be deprived by reason of his so acting of any right to salvage to which he would otherwise be entitled.

517 Examination in respect of ships in distress.

- (1) Where any ship, British or foreign, is or has been in distress on the coasts of the United Kingdom, a receiver of wreck, or at the request of the Board of Trade a wreck commissioner or deputy approved by the Board, or, in the absence of the persons aforesaid, a justice of the peace, shall, as soon as conveniently may be, examine on oath (and they are hereby respectively empowered to administer the oath) any person belonging to the ship, or any other person who may be able to give any account thereof or of the cargo or stores thereof, as to the following matters; (that is to say,)
 - (a) The name and description of the ship;
 - (b) The name of the master and of the owners;
 - (c) The names of the owners of the cargo;
 - (d) The ports from and to which the ship was bound;
 - (e) The occasion of the distress of the ship;
 - (f) The services rendered; and
 - (g) Such other matters or circumstances relating to the ship, or to the cargo on board the same, as the person holding the examination thinks necessary.
- (2) The person holding the examination shall take the same down in writing, and shall send one copy thereof to the Board of Trade, and another to the secretary of Lloyd's in London, and the secretary shall place it in some conspicuous situation for inspection.
- (3) The person holding the examination shall, for the purposes thereof, have all the powers of a Board of Trade inspector [^{F6}under section 27 of the ^{M3}Merchant Shipping Act 1979].

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Textual Amendments

F6 Words substituted by [Merchant Shipping Act 1979 \(c. 39\), s. 28\(7\)\(a\)](#)

Marginal Citations

M3 [1979 c. 39.](#)

Status:

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