



Merchant Shipping Act 1894

1894 CHAPTER 60

PART V

SAFETY.

Unseaworthy Ships.

463 Survey of ships alleged by seamen to be unseaworthy.

- (1) Whenever in any proceeding against any seaman or apprentice belonging to any ship for the offence of desertion, or absence without leave or for otherwise being absent from his ship without leave, it is alleged by one fourth, or if their number exceeds twenty by not less than five, of the seamen belonging to the ship, that the ship is by reason of unseaworthiness, overloading, improper loading, defective equipment, or for any other reason, not in a fit condition to proceed to sea, or that the accommodation in the ship is insufficient, the court having cognizance of the case shall take such means as may be in their power to satisfy themselves concerning the truth or untruth of the allegation, and shall for that purpose receive the evidence of the persons making the same, and may summon any other witnesses whose evidence they may think it desirable to hear, and shall, if satisfied that the allegation is groundless, adjudicate in the case, but if not so satisfied shall before adjudication cause the ship to be surveyed.
- (2) A seaman or apprentice charged with desertion, or with quitting his ship without leave, shall not have any right to apply for a survey under this section unless he has before quitting his ship complained to the master of the circumstances so alleged in justification.
- (3) For the purposes of this section the court shall require any surveyor of ships appointed under this Act, or any person appointed for the purpose by the Board of Trade, or, if such a surveyor or person cannot be obtained without unreasonable expense or delay, or is not, in the opinion of the court, competent to deal with the special circumstances of the case, then any other impartial surveyor appointed by the court, and having no interest in the ship her freight, or cargo, to survey the ship, and to answer any question concerning her which the court think fit to put.

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

- (4) Such surveyor or other person shall survey the ship, and make his written report to the court, including an answer to every question put to him by the court, and the court shall cause the report to be communicated to the parties, and, unless the opinions expressed in the report are proved to the satisfaction of the court to be erroneous, shall determine the questions before them in accordance with those opinions.
- (5) Any person making a survey under this section shall for the purposes thereof have all the powers of a Board of Trade inspector under this Act.
- (6) The costs (if any) of the survey shall be determined by the Board of Trade according to a scale of fees to be fixed by them, and shall be paid in the first instance out of the Mercantile Marine Fund.
- (7) If it is proved that the ship is in a fit condition to proceed to sea, or that the accommodation is sufficient, as the case may be, the costs of the survey shall be paid by the person upon whose demand or in consequence of whose allegation the survey was made, and may be deducted by the master or owner out of the wages due or to become due to that person, and shall be paid over to the Board of Trade.
- (8) If it is proved that the ship is not in a fit condition to proceed to sea, or that the accommodation is insufficient, as the case may be, the master or owner of the ship shall pay the costs of the survey to the Board of Trade, and shall be liable to pay to the seaman or apprentice, who has been detained in consequence of the said proceeding before the court under this section, such compensation for his detention as the court may award.