



Post Office Act 1953

1953 CHAPTER 36

Conveyance of mail bags by ships and aircraft

25 Outward bound ships

- (1) Every master of a ship outward bound shall receive on board his ship every mail bag tendered to him by an officer of the Post Office for conveyance, and having received it shall deliver it, on arriving at the port or place of his destination, without delay.
- (2) If the master of any such ship fails to comply with this section he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred pounds.

26 Inward bound ships and aircraft

- (1) The three next following subsections shall apply in relation to a ship or aircraft inward bound carrying any postal packets within the exclusive privilege of the Postmaster-General, not being packets to which the next following section applies.
- (2) The master of the ship or commander of the aircraft shall collect all such postal packets on board his ship or aircraft and enclose them in some bag or other covering sealed with his seal and addressed to the Postmaster-General and shall without delay deliver them to the proper officer of the Post Office demanding them or, if no demand is made by that officer, then at the post office with which he can first communicate.
- (3) If the master of the ship or the commander of the aircraft does not duly comply with the provisions of the last foregoing subsection he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred pounds.
- (4) The master of the ship or commander of the aircraft shall not break bulk on board his ship or aircraft in any port or place before he has complied with the provisions of subsection (2) of this section and if he does so he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds.
- (5) An officer of customs and excise may refuse to permit bulk to be broken on board any inward bound ship or aircraft until he is satisfied that any postal packets brought

in that ship or aircraft which are required to be delivered under subsection (2) of this section have been so delivered.

- (6) An officer of customs and excise may search any inward bound ship or aircraft for, and seize, any postal packets within the exclusive privilege of the Postmaster-General and forward any such packets seized to the nearest post office ; and subsection (3) of section eight of this Act shall apply in relation to any packet so forwarded.

27 Owners' letters

- (1) The two next following subsections shall apply to any letter addressed to the owner, charterer or consignee of a ship or aircraft inward bound or to the owner, consignee or shipper of any goods carried in such a ship or aircraft, being a letter which, not being excepted from the exclusive privilege of the Postmaster-General, complies with the following conditions, that is to say—
- (a) that the addressee is described in the address or superscription on the letter as such owner, charterer, consignee or shipper; and
 - (b) in the case of a letter addressed to an owner, consignee or shipper of goods, that it also appears by the ship's; manifest or by the manifest and declaration of the aircraft that the addressee has goods on board the ship or aircraft.
- (2) Any such letter required to be delivered to a person at the place of arrival of the ship or aircraft shall be delivered to that person by the master of the ship or the commander of the aircraft free of inland postage and that person shall be entitled to the delivery thereof before the delivery of any other postal packets to the Post Office.
- (3) Any such letter required to be delivered to a person at any other place in the British postal area shall be delivered by post on payment of inland postage only.
- (4) If any person with intent to evade any postage falsely superscribes any letter as being for the owner, charterer or consignee of the ship or aircraft conveying the letter or for the owner, consignee or shipper of goods carried in that ship or aircraft, he shall for each offence be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten pounds.

28 Retention of postal packets after delivery of part thereof to Post Office

If any person, being the master or commander, one of the officers or crew, or a passenger, of a ship or aircraft inward bound, knowingly has in his baggage or in his possession or custody any postal packet, except a postal packet not within the exclusive privilege of the Postmaster-General, after the master of the ship or commander of the aircraft has sent any part of the postal packets on board the ship or aircraft to the Post Office, he shall for every such packet be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five pounds ; and if he detains any such packet after demand made either by an officer of customs and excise or by any person authorised by the Postmaster-General to demand the postal packets on board the ship or aircraft, he shall for every postal packet detained be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten pounds.

29 Carriage of parcels by coasting ships

- (1) Without prejudice to section forty-two of this Act, in the case of any mechanically-propelled ship which carries on regular communications between a port in the United Kingdom and any other port or place in the United Kingdom, or which is a home-trade

ship within the meaning of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, not being a ship owned or worked by railway undertakers, the Postmaster-General may require the person by whom that ship is owned or worked to carry parcels in that ship.

- (2) The remuneration for any services rendered by a ship under this section shall be determined by agreement between the Postmaster-General and the person owning or working the ship or, in default of agreement, by the Transport Tribunal; and any remuneration so determined shall be paid direct to that person.

30 Remuneration of owners and masters or commanders of ships or aircraft

Without prejudice to the last foregoing section, Post Office regulations may provide for the allowance to owners or masters of ships or owners or commanders of aircraft in respect of postal packets or any description thereof conveyed by them on behalf of the Post Office, and also to pilots, crew and others in respect of postal packets or any description thereof brought by them to any post office from any ship or aircraft, of such gratuities under such conditions and restrictions as the Postmaster-General may from time to time think fit.

31 Exemption of certain ships from harbour rates, etc.

- (1) Nothing in any enactment passed after the twenty-eighth day of March, nineteen hundred and thirty-five which incorporates the Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act, 1847, and nothing in any scheme or order made under or confirmed by any such enactment, shall extend to charge with rates or duties, or to regulate or subject to any control, any ship employed by or under the authority of the Postmaster-General for the conveyance under contract of postal packets as defined by this Act, not being a ship also conveying passengers or goods for hire or reward, or any mail bag as so defined conveyed by any such ship or by any other ship whatsoever.
- (2) The said Act of 1847, as incorporated with any such enactment, scheme or order as aforesaid, shall accordingly have effect as if in section twenty-eight thereof for the words from " or any packet boat " to " any such packet boat or packet " there were substituted the words " or any vessel employed by or under the authority of the Postmaster-General for the conveyance under contract of postal packets as defined by the Post Office Act, 1953, not being a vessel also conveying passengers or goods for hire or reward, or any mail bag as so defined conveyed by any such vessel. "

32 Penalty for opening of mail bag by master or commander of ship or aircraft

- (1) If the master of a ship or the commander of an aircraft—
 - (a) opens a sealed mail bag with which he is entrusted for conveyance ; or
 - (b) takes out of a mail bag with which he is entrusted for conveyance any postal packet or other thing,he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred pounds.
- (2) If any person to whom postal packets have been entrusted by the master of a ship or the commander of an aircraft to deliver to the Post Office, breaks the seal, or in any manner wilfully opens them, he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds.