



Merchant Shipping Act 1894

1894 CHAPTER 60

PART XIII

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.

Evidence, Service of Documents, owl Declarations.

694 Proof of attestation not required.

Where any document is required by this Act to be executed in the presence of or to be attested by any witness or witnesses, that document may be proved by the evidence of any person who is able to bear witness to the requisite facts without calling the attesting witness or the attesting witnesses or any of them.

695 Admissibility of documents in evidence.

- (1) Where a document is by this Act declared to be admissible in evidence, such document shall, on its production from the proper custody, be admissible in evidence in any court or before any person having bylaw or consent of parties authority to receive evidence, and, subject to all just exceptions, shall be evidence of the matters stated therein in pursuance of this Act or by any officer in pursuance of his duties as such officer.
- (2) A copy of any such document or extract therefrom shall also be so admissible in evidence if proved to be an examined copy or extract, or if it purports to be signed and certified as a true copy or extract by the officer to whose custody the original document was entrusted, and that officer shall furnish such certified copy or extract to any person applying at a reasonable time for the same, upon payment of a reasonable sum for the same, not exceeding fourpence for every folio of ninety words, but a person shall be entitled to have—
 - (a) a certified copy of the particulars entered by the registrar in the register book on the registry of the ship, together with a certified statement showing the ownership of the ship at the time being; and

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- (b) a certified copy of any declaration, or document, a copy of which is made evidence by this Act,
 on payment of one shilling for each copy.
- (3) If any such officer wilfully certifies any document as being a true copy or extract knowing the same not to be a true copy or extract, he shall for each offence be guilty of a misdemeanor, and be liable on conviction to imprisonment for any term not exceeding eighteen months.
- (4) If any person forges the seal, stamp, or signature of any document to which this section applies, or tenders in evidence any such document with a false or counterfeit seal, stamp, or signature thereto, knowing the same to be false or counterfeit, he shall for each offence be guilty of felony, and be liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding seven years, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour, and whenever any such document has been admitted in evidence, the court or the person who admitted the same may on request direct that the same shall be impounded, and be kept in the custody of some officer of the court or other proper person, for such period or subject to such conditions as the court or person thinks fit.

696 Service of documents.

- (1) Where for the purposes of this Act any document is to be served on any person, that document may be served—
 - (a) in any case by delivering a copy thereof personally to the person to be served, or by leaving the same at his last place of abode; and,
 - (b) if the document is to be served on the master of a ship, where there is one, or on a person belonging to a ship, by leaving the same for him on board that ship with the person being or appearing to be in command or charge of the ship; and,
 - (c) if the document is to be served on the master of a ship, where there is no master, and the ship is in the United Kingdom, on the managing owner of the ship, or, if there is no managing owner, on some agent of the owner residing in the United Kingdom, or where no such agent is known or can be found, by affixing a copy thereof to the mast of the ship.
- (2) If any person obstructs the service on the master of a ship of any document under the provisions of this Act relating to the detention of ships as unseaworthy, that person shall for each offence be liable to a fine not exceeding ten pounds, and, if the owner or master of the ship is party or privy to the obstruction, he shall in respect of each offence be guilty of a misdemeanor.

697 Proof, &c. of exemption.

Any exception, exemption, proviso, excuse, or qualification, in relation to any offence under this Act, whether it does or does not accompany in the same section the description of the offence, may be proved by the defendant, but need not be specified or negatived in any information or complaint, and, if so specified or negatived, no proof in relation to the matter so specified or negatived shall be required on the part of the informant or complainant.

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698 Declarations.

Any declaration required by this Act to be taken before a justice of the peace or any particular officer may be taken before a commissioner for oaths.