



Merchant Shipping Act 1995

1995 CHAPTER 21

PART I

BRITISH SHIPS

2 British flag.

- (1) The flag which every British ship is entitled to fly is the red ensign (without any defacement or modification) and, subject to subsections (2) and (3) below, no other colours.
- (2) Subsection (1) above does not apply to Government ships.
- (3) The following are also proper national colours, that is to say—
 - (a) any colours allowed to be worn in pursuance of a warrant from Her Majesty or from the Secretary of State;
 - (b) in the case of British ships registered in a relevant British possession, any colours consisting of the red ensign defaced or modified whose adoption for ships registered in that possession is authorised or confirmed by Her Majesty by Order in Council.
- (4) Any Order under subsection (3)(b) above shall be laid before Parliament after being made.

Changes to legislation:

Merchant Shipping Act 1995, Section 2 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 15 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.

[View outstanding changes](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 145(2)(a)(ia) inserted by [2003 c. 44 Sch. 36 para. 13\(2\)](#)
- s. 145(2)(a)(ia) words substituted by [2015 c. 2 Sch. 11 para. 16\(2\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. The insertion of s. 145(2)(a)(ia) by 2003 c. 44, Sch. 36 para. 13 is still prospective.)
- s. 145(2A) inserted by [2003 c. 44 Sch. 36 para. 13\(3\)](#)
- s. 145(2A) words substituted by [2015 c. 2 Sch. 11 para. 16\(3\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. The insertion of s. 145(2A) by 2003 c. 44, Sch. 36 para. 13 is still prospective.)