

# **MARITIME CODE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

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CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1 This Code is enacted with a view to regulating the relations arising from maritime transport and those pertaining to ships, to securing and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of the parties concerned, and to promoting the development of maritime transport, economy and trade.

Article 2 "Maritime transport" as referred to in this Code means the carriage of goods and passengers by sea, including the sea-river and river-sea direct transport.

The provisions concerning contracts of carriage of goods by sea as contained in Chapter IV of this Code shall not be applicable to the maritime transport of goods between the ports of the People's Republic of China.

Article 3 "Ship" as referred to in this Code means sea-going ships and other mobile units, but does not include ships or craft to be used for military or public service purposes, nor small ships of less than 20 tons gross tonnage.

The term "ship" as referred to in the preceding paragraph shall also include ship's apparel.

Article 4 Maritime transport and towage services between the ports of the People's Republic of China shall be undertaken by ships flying the national flag of the People's Republic of China, except as otherwise provided for by laws or administrative rules and regulations.

No foreign ships may engage in the maritime transport or towage services between the ports of the People's Republic of China unless permitted by the competent authorities of transport and communications under the State Council.

The provision, use and refund of the deposits shall be without prejudice to the ultimate liability of the contributing parties.

Article 203 The adjustment of general average shall be governed by the average adjustment rules agreed upon in the relevant contract. In the absence of such an agreement in the contract, the relevant provisions contained in this Chapter shall apply.

## CHAPTER XI LIMITATION OF LIABILITY FOR MARITIME CLAIMS

Article 204 Shipowners and salvors may limit their liability in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter for claims set out in Article 207 of this Code.

The shipowners referred to in the preceding paragraph shall include the charterer and the operator of a ship.

Article 205 If the claims set out in Article 207 of this Code are not made against shipowners or salvors themselves but against persons for whose act, neglect or default the shipowners or salvors are responsible, such persons may limit their liability in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter.

Article 206 Where the assured may limit his liability in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter, the insurer liable for the maritime claims shall be entitled to the limitation of liability under this Chapter to the same extent as the assured.

Article 207 Except as provided otherwise in Articles 208 and 209 of this Code, with respect to the following maritime claims, the person liable may limit his liability in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter, whatever the basis of liability may be:

- (1) Claims in respect of loss of life or personal injury or loss of or damage to property including damage to harbour works, basins and waterways and aids to navigation occurring on board or in direct connection with the operation of the ship or with salvage operations, as well as consequential damages resulting therefrom;
- (2) Claims in respect of loss resulting from delay in delivery in the carriage of goods by sea or from delay in the arrival of passengers or their luggage;
- (3) Claims in respect of other loss resulting from infringement of rights other than contractual rights occurring in direct connection with the operation of the ship or salvage operations;
- (4) Claims of a person other than the person liable in respect of measures taken to avert or minimize loss for which the person liable may limit his liability in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter, and further loss caused by such measures.

All the claims set out in the preceding paragraph, whatever the way they are lodged, may be entitled to limitation of liability. However, with respect to the remuneration set out in subparagraph (4) for which the person liable pays as agreed upon in the contract, in relation to the obligation for payment, the person liable may not invoke the provisions on limitation of liability of this Article.

Article 208 The provisions of this Chapter shall not be applicable to the following claims:

- (1) Claims for salvage payment or contribution in general average;

(2) Claims for oil pollution damage under the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage to which the People's Republic of China is a party;

(3) Claims for nuclear damage under the International Convention on Limitation of Liability for Nuclear Damage to which the People's Republic of China is a party;

(4) Claims against the shipowner of a nuclear ship for nuclear damage;

(5) Claims by the servants of the shipowner or salvor, if under the law governing the contract of employment, the shipowner or salvor is not entitled to limit his liability or if he is by such law only permitted to limit his liability to an amount greater than that provided for in this Chapter.

Article 209 A person liable shall not be entitled to limit his liability in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter, if it is proved that the loss resulted from his act or omission done with the intent to cause such loss or recklessly and with knowledge that such loss would probably result.

Article 210 The limitation of liability for maritime claims, except as otherwise provided for in Article 211 of this Code, shall be calculated as follows:

(1) In respect of claims for loss of life or personal injury:

a) 333,000 Units of Account for a ship with a gross tonnage ranging from 300 to 500 tons;

b) For a ship with a gross tonnage in excess of 500 tons, the limitation under a) above shall be applicable to the first 500 tons and the following amounts in addition to that set out under a) shall be applicable to the gross tonnage in excess of 500 tons:

For each ton from 501 to 3,000 tons: 500 Units of Account;

For each ton from 3,001 to 30,000 tons: 333 Units of Account;

For each ton from 30,001 to 70,000 tons: 250 Units of Account;

For each ton in excess of 70,000 tons: 167 Units of Account;

(2) In respect of claims other than that for loss of life or personal injury:

a) 167,000 Units of Account for a ship with a gross tonnage ranging from 300 to 500 tons;

b) For a ship with a gross tonnage in excess of 500 tons, the limitation under a) above shall be applicable to the first 500 tons, and the following amounts in addition to that under a) shall be applicable to the part in excess of 500 tons:

For each ton from 501 to 30,000 tons: 167 Units of Account;

For each ton from 30,001 to 70,000 tons: 125 Units of Account;

For each ton in excess of 70,000 tons: 83 Units of Account.

(3) Where the amount calculated in accordance with sub-paragraph (1) above is insufficient for payment of claims for loss of life or personal injury set out therein in full, the amount calculated in accordance with sub-paragraph (2) shall be available for payment of the unpaid

balance of claims under sub-paragraph (1), and such unpaid balance shall rank rateably with claims set out under sub-paragraph (2).

(4) However, without prejudice to the right of claims for loss of life or personal injury under sub-paragraph (3), claims in respect of damage to harbour works, basins and waterways and aids to navigation shall have priority over other claims under sub-paragraph (2).

(5) The limitation of liability for any salvor not operating from any ship or for any salvor operating solely on the ship to, or in respect of which, he is rendering salvage services, shall be calculated according to a gross tonnage of 1,500 tons.

The limitation of liability for ships with a gross tonnage not exceeding 300 tons and those engaging in transport services between the ports of the People's Republic of China as well as those for other coastal works shall be worked out by the competent authorities of transport and communications under the State Council and implemented after its being submitted to and approved by the State Council.

Article 211 In respect of claims for loss of life or personal injury to passengers carried by sea, the limitation of liability of the shipowner thereof shall be an amount of 46,666 Units of Account multiplied by the number of passengers which the ship is authorized to carry according to the ship's relevant certificate, but the maximum amount of compensation shall not exceed 25,000,000 Units of Account.

The limitation of liability for claims for loss of life or personal injury to passengers carried by sea between the ports of the People's Republic of China shall be worked out by the competent authorities of transport and communications under the State Council and implemented after its being submitted to and approved by the State Council.

Article 212 The limitation of liability under Articles 210 and 211 of this Code shall apply to the aggregate of all claims that may arise on any given occasion against shipowners and salvors themselves, and any person for whose act, neglect or fault the shipowners and the salvors are responsible.

Article 213 Any person liable claiming the limitation of liability under this Code may constitute a limitation fund with a court having jurisdiction. The fund shall be constituted in the sum of such an amount set out respectively in Articles 210 and 211, together with the interest thereon from the date of the occurrence giving rise to the liability until the date of the constitution of the fund.

Article 214 Where a limitation fund has been constituted by a person liable, any person having made a claim against the person liable may not exercise any right against any assets of the person liable. Where any ship or other property belonging to the person constituting the fund has been arrested or attached, or, where a security has been provided by such person, the court shall order without delay the release of the ship arrested or the property attached or the return of the security provided.

Article 215 Where a person entitled to limitation of liability under the provisions of this Chapter has a counter-claim against the claimant arising out of the same occurrence, their respective claims shall be set off against each other and the provisions of this Chapter shall only apply to the balance, if any.