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§ 30501. Definition

In this chapter, the term “owner” includes a charterer that mans, supplies, and navigates a vessel at the charterer’s own expense or by the charterer’s own procurement.

(Pub. L. 109–304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1512.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
30501	46 App.:186.	R.S. § 4286.

The words “In this chapter” are substituted for “within the meaning of the provisions of title 48 of the Revised Statutes relating to the limitation of the liability of the owners of vessels” because of the codification of title 46, United States Code. The word “supplies” is substituted for “victual” for clarity. The words “and such vessel, when so chartered, shall be liable in the same manner as if navigated by the owner thereof” are omitted as unnecessary.

§ 30502. Application

Except as otherwise provided, this chapter (except section 30503) applies to seagoing vessels and vessels used on lakes or rivers or in inland navigation, including canal boats, barges, and lighters.

(Pub. L. 109–304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1512.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
30502	46 App.:188.	R.S. § 4289; Feb. 18, 1875, ch. 80, § 1 (related to R.S. § 4289), 18 Stat. 320; June 19, 1886, ch. 421, § 4, 24 Stat. 80; June 5, 1936, ch. 521, § 4, 49 Stat. 1481.

§ 30503. Declaration of nature and value of goods

(a) IN GENERAL.—If a shipper of an item named in subsection (b), contained in a parcel, package, or trunk, loads the item as freight or baggage on a vessel, without at the time of loading giving to the person receiving the item a written notice of the true character and value of the item and having that information entered on the bill of lading, the owner and master of the vessel are not liable as carriers. The owner and master are not liable beyond the value entered on the bill of lading.

(b) ITEMS.—The items referred to in subsection (a) are precious metals, gold or silver plated articles, precious stones, jewelry, trinkets, watches, clocks, glass, china, coins, bills, securities, printings, engravings, pictures, stamps, maps,

papers, silks, furs, lace, and similar items of high value and small size.

(Pub. L. 109–304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1512.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
30503	46 App.:181.	R.S. § 4281.

In subsection (a), the words “load” and “loading” are substituted for “lade” and “lading” to use more common terminology. The words “person receiving the item” are substituted for “master, clerk, agent, or owner of such vessel receiving the same” to eliminate unnecessary words. The words “thereof in any form or manner” and “and according to the character thereof so notified and” are omitted as unnecessary.

In subsection (b), the words “precious metals” are substituted for “platina, gold, gold dust, silver, . . . or other precious metals, . . . gold or silver in a manufactured or unmanufactured state”, the words “precious stones” are substituted for “diamonds, or other precious stones”, the words “watches, clocks” are substituted for “watches, clocks, or timepieces of any description”, the words “coins, bills, securities” are substituted for “bullion, . . . coins, . . . bills of any bank or public body, . . . orders, notes, or securities for the payment of money”, the word “papers” is substituted for “writings, title deeds”, and the word “silks” is substituted for “silks in a manufactured or unmanufactured state, and whether wrought up or not wrought up with any other material”, to eliminate unnecessary words. The words “and similar items of high value and small size” are added to ensure that any of the items specifically named in the source but omitted in the revised section, or similar items, will be covered by this section.

§ 30504. Loss by fire

The owner of a vessel is not liable for loss or damage to merchandise on the vessel caused by a fire on the vessel unless the fire resulted from the design or neglect of the owner.

(Pub. L. 109–304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1513.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
30504	46 App.:182.	R.S. § 4282.

The words “liable for” are substituted for “liable to answer for or make good to any person”, the words “merchandise on the vessel” are substituted for “any merchandise whatsoever, which shall be shipped, taken in, or put on board any such vessel”, and the words “caused by a fire on the vessel” are substituted for “by reason or by means of any fire happening to or on board the vessel”, to eliminate unnecessary words.

§ 30505. General limit of liability

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in section 30506 of this title, the liability of the owner of a vessel for any claim, debt, or liability described in subsection (b) shall not exceed the value of the vessel and pending freight. If the vessel has more than one owner, the proportionate share of the liability of any one owner shall not exceed that owner’s proportionate interest in the vessel and pending freight.

(b) CLAIMS SUBJECT TO LIMITATION.—Unless otherwise excluded by law, claims, debts, and liabilities subject to limitation under subsection (a) are those arising from any embezzlement,