

§ 7653. Court in which proceedings brought

(a) If a prize is brought into a port of the United States, or the Commonwealths or possessions, proceedings for the adjudication of the prize cause shall be brought in the district in which the port is located.

(b) If a prize is brought into the territorial waters of a cobelligent, or is brought into a locality in the temporary or permanent possession of, or occupied by, the armed forces of the United States, or is appropriated for the use of the United States, before proceedings are started, the venue of the proceedings for adjudication of the cause shall be in the judicial district selected by the Attorney General, or his designee, for the convenience of the United States.

(c) If the prize property is lost or entirely destroyed or if, because of its condition, no part of it has been or can be sent in for adjudication, proceedings for adjudication of the cause may be brought in any district designated by the Secretary of the Navy. In such cases the proceeds of anything sold shall be deposited with the Treasurer of the United States or public depository in or nearest the district designated by the Secretary, subject to the orders of the court for that district.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 474; Pub. L. 109-163, div. A, title X, §1057(a)(5), Jan. 6, 2006, 119 Stat. 3440.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
7653(b)	34 U.S.C. 1160.	Aug. 18, 1942, ch. 553, §2, 56 Stat. 746.
7653(c)	34 U.S.C. 1141 (less last sentence).	R.S. 4625 (less last sentence).

Subsection (a) is inserted in order to present a complete statement of the subject matter of the section. Its substance is not specifically set out in the Revised Statutes but is strongly implied in 34 U.S.C. 1135 which requires the United States attorney for the district in which the port is located to file a libel.

In subsection (b) the requisites for jurisdiction conferred under the 1942 Act are substituted for the words "brought under the jurisdiction conferred by this Act". The substituted words are the same as those used in clauses (2), (3), and (4) of the preceding section except that the words "before proceedings are started" are added following the words "appropriated for the use of the United States" for clarity. An appropriation can take place before or after proceedings are commenced, but in the latter case there is no occasion for the Attorney General to determine venue.

In subsection (c) the words "or if because the whole has been appropriated to the use of the United States" and the words "or the value of anything taken or appropriated for the use of the United States" are omitted. The provision in the 1942 Act which empowers the Attorney General to decide the venue of proceedings when the prize property has been appropriated is incompatible with the provision in R.S. 4625 which authorizes the Secretary of the Navy to select the judicial district in such cases. Hence the 1942 Act superseded R.S. 4625 with respect to cases of this type. Deposit of the value of prize property appropriated by the United States is adequately covered in §7663 of this title and is not mentioned here. The second sentence of 34 U.S.C. 1141 (R.S. 4625), relating to proceedings by captors, is omitted because it was rendered inoperative by the Act of March 3, 1899, ch. 413, §13, 30 Stat. 1007, which repealed all laws authorizing the distribution of prize money to captors.

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109-163 substituted "Commonwealths or possessions" for "Territories, Commonwealths, or possessions".

§ 7654. Effect of failure to start proceedings

If a vessel is captured as prize and no proceedings for adjudication are started within a reasonable time, any party claiming the captured property may, in any district court as a court of prize—

(1) move for a monition to show cause why such proceedings shall not be started; or

(2) bring an original suit for restitution.

The monition issued in either case shall be served on the United States Attorney for the district, on the Secretary of the Navy, and on such other persons as are designated by order of the court.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 475.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
7654	34 U.S.C. 1141 (last sentence).	R.S. 4625 (last sentence).

§ 7655. Appointment of prize commissioners and special prize commissioners

(a) In each judicial district there may be not more than three prize commissioners, one of whom is the naval prize commissioner. They shall be appointed by the district court for service in connection with any prize cause in which proceedings are brought under section 7653(a) or (c) of this title. The naval prize commissioner must be an officer of the Navy whose appointment is approved by the Secretary of the Navy. The naval prize commissioner shall protect the interests of the Department of the Navy in the prize property. At least one of the other commissioners must be a member of the bar of the court, of not less than three years' standing, who is experienced in taking depositions.

(b) A district court may appoint special prize commissioners to perform abroad, in connection with any prize cause in which proceedings are brought under section 7653(b) of this title, the duties prescribed for prize commissioners, and, in connection with those causes, to exercise anywhere such additional powers and perform such additional duties as the court considers proper, including the duties prescribed by this chapter for United States marshals. The court may determine the number and qualifications of the special prize commissioners it appoints, except that for each cause there shall be at least one naval special prize commissioner. The naval special prize commissioner must be an officer of the Navy whose appointment is approved by the Secretary. The naval special prize commissioner shall protect the interests of the Department of the Navy in the prize property.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 475.)