

vessel is exempt from this chapter when engaged in Aleutian trade if the vessel either operated in that trade before Sept. 8, 1990, or was purchased before that date to be used in such trade and entered into service in that trade before June 1, 1992, did not undergo a major conversion, and did not have a load line assigned at any time before Nov. 16, 1990, see section 602(f) of Pub. L. 101–595, set out as a note under section 4502 of this title.

FISH TENDER VESSELS IN ALEUTIAN TRADE

Pub. L. 107–295, title IV, § 436(b), (c), Nov. 25, 2002, 116 Stat. 2129, provided that:

“(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—Except as provided in subsection (c), a fish tender vessel that before January 1, 2003, transported cargo (not including fishery related products) in the Aleutian trade is subject to chapter 51 of title 46, United States Code (as amended by subsection (a) of this section [amending this section]).

“(c) EXCEPTION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Before December 31, 2006, the BOWFIN (United States official number 604231) is exempt from chapter 51 of title 46, United States Code (as amended by subsection (a) of this section) when engaged in the Aleutian trade, if the vessel does not undergo a major conversion.

“(2) ENSURING SAFETY.—Before the date referred to in paragraph (1), a Coast Guard official who has reason to believe that the vessel referred to in paragraph (1) operating under this subsection is in a condition or is operated in a manner that creates an immediate threat to life or the environment or is operated in a manner that is inconsistent with section 3302 of title 46, United States Code, may direct the master or individual in charge to take immediate and reasonable steps to safeguard life and the environment, including directing the vessel to a port or other refuge.”

[For transfer of authorities, functions, personnel, and assets of the Coast Guard, including the authorities and functions of the Secretary of Transportation relating thereto, to the Department of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 468(b), 551(d), 552(d), and 557 of Title 6, Domestic Security, and the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, as modified, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6.]

§ 5103. Load line requirements

(a) A vessel may be operated only if the vessel has been assigned load lines.

(b) The owner, charterer, managing operator, agent, master, and individual in charge of a vessel shall mark and maintain the load lines permanently and conspicuously in the way prescribed by the Secretary.

(c) A fishing vessel built on or before July 1, 2013, that undergoes a major conversion completed after the later of July 1, 2013, or the date the Secretary establishes standards for an alternate loadline compliance program, shall comply with such an alternative loadline compliance program that is developed in cooperation with the commercial fishing industry and prescribed by the Secretary.

(Pub. L. 99–509, title V, § 5101(2), Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1915; Pub. L. 111–281, title VI, § 604(d)(2), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 2965; Pub. L. 112–213, title III, § 305(d)(2), Dec. 20, 2012, 126 Stat. 1565.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section 5103

Source: Section (U.S. Code) 46 App. U.S.C. 86c, 88b.

Section 5103(a) prohibits a vessel that is subject to load line requirements from operating, unless it has load lines assigned by the Secretary.

Section 5103(b) requires that load lines be permanently and conspicuously maintained in the manner prescribed by the Secretary.

AMENDMENTS

2012—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 112–213 substituted “July 1, 2013,” for “July 1, 2012,” in two places and substituted “major conversion” for “substantial change to the dimension of or type of the vessel”.

2010—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 111–281 added subsec. (c).

§ 5104. Assignment of load lines

(a) The Secretary shall assign load lines for a vessel so that they indicate the minimum safe freeboard to which the vessel may be loaded. However, if the owner requests, the Secretary may assign load lines that result in greater freeboard than the minimum safe freeboard.

(b) In assigning load lines for a vessel, the Secretary shall consider—

(1) the service, type, and character of the vessel;

(2) the geographic area in which the vessel will operate; and

(3) applicable international agreements to which the United States Government is a party.

(c) An existing vessel may retain its load lines assigned before January 1, 1986, unless the Secretary decides that a substantial change in the vessel after those load lines were assigned requires that new load lines be assigned under this chapter.

(d) The minimum freeboard of an existing vessel may be reduced only if the vessel complies with every applicable provision of this chapter.

(e) The Secretary may designate by regulation specific geographic areas that have less severe weather or sea conditions and from which there is adequate time to return to available safe harbors. The Secretary may reduce the minimum freeboard of a vessel operating in these areas.

(Pub. L. 99–509, title V, § 5101(2), Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1915.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section 5104

Source: Section (U.S. Code) 46 App. U.S.C. 86c, 88a.

Section 5104(a) requires the Secretary to assign load lines indicating the minimum safe freeboard to which a vessel may be loaded. It also authorizes the Secretary to assign a load line that results in a freeboard that is greater than the minimum freeboard, if the owner requests.

Section 5104(b) sets forth guidelines that the Secretary must consider when assigning load lines on vessels.

Section 5104(c) allows an existing vessel to retain its load line assigned before January 1, 1986, unless the Secretary decides that a change made in the vessel requires the assignment of a new load line.

Section 5104(d) is a new provision that requires that a vessel comply with all the provisions of this chapter before the Secretary will consider a reduction in its minimum freeboard. This provision is similar to Article 4(4) of the International Convention on Load Lines.

Section 5104(e) is a new provision that authorized the Secretary to designate specific geographic areas having relatively non-severe weather or sea conditions and from which there is adequate time to return to safe harbors. Section 5104(e) also authorizes the Secretary to reduce the minimum freeboard of vessels operating in these areas. Regulations that have been issued under this authority (46 C.F.R. 44) authorize special service load lines for vessels operating not more than 20 nautical miles offshore or between islands in a group.