

Merchant Shipping Act, 1958

Section 355 - OBLIGATION TO RENDER ASSISTANCE ON RECEIVING SIGNAL OF DISTRESS

1) The master of an Indian ship on receiving at sea a signal of distress or information from any source that a vessel or aircraft is in distress shall proceed with all speed to the assistance of the persons in distress (informing them if possible that he is doing so) unless he is unable or in the special circumstances of the case considers it unreasonable or unnecessary to do so or unless he is released from such obligation under the provisions of sub-section (3) or sub-section (4). (2) Where the master of any ship in distress has requisitioned any Indian ship that has answered his call, it shall be the duty of the master of the requisitioned ship to comply with the requisition by continuing to proceed with all speed to the assistance of the persons in distress unless he is released from the obligation under the provisions of sub-section (4). (3) The master shall be released from the obligation imposed by sub-section (1) as soon as he is informed of the requisition of one or more ships other than his own and that the requisition is being complied with by the ship or ships requisitioned. (4) The master shall be released from the obligation imposed by sub-section (1), and if his ship has been requisitioned, from the obligation imposed by sub-section (2), if he is informed by the persons in distress or by the master of any ship that has reached the persons in distress that assistance is no longer required. (5) If the master of an Indian ship on receiving at sea a signal of distress or information from any source that a vessel or aircraft is in distress is unable or in the special circumstances of the case considers it unreasonable or unnecessary to go to the assistance of the persons in distress, he shall forthwith cause a statement to be entered in the official logbook or, if there is no official log book, cause other record to be kept of his reasons for not going to the assistance of those persons. (6) The master of every Indian ship for which an official log is required shall enter or cause to be entered in the official log book every signal of distress or message that a vessel, aircraft or person is in distress at sea.