

Admiralty & Maritime

With over 30 years of experience in admiralty and maritime law, Clark Hill attorneys represent many of the largest companies in the maritime industry in the Gulf of Mexico and around the world. Most of our Admiralty & Maritime attorneys are located in Houston where many offshore drilling, exploration, and service companies are headquartered. Houston is also the home of the Port of Houston which is ranked first in the United States in foreign waterborne commerce, second in total tonnage, and eighth in the world in size.

Our attorneys regularly represent owners, operators, and charterers of freighters, tankers, tugs, barges, supply boats, offshore drilling rigs/vessels, offshore platforms, and vessels engaged in oceanographic/seismic research, and other oil field services.

We also represent companies and individuals engaged in brown water activities, such as offshore exploration, pipeline construction, commercial diving, supply boat services, and many other maritime energy activities.

Our Admiralty & Maritime team also represents a variety of multinational blue water business concerns, including shipyards, manufacturers, sellers, purchasers, transporters, and insurers of waterborne products.

Marine Cargo Claims

Whether cargo is loaded or discharged from any common carrier vessel throughout the country, we have the experience and resources to handle any claims arising out of the carriage, custody, or control of the goods. Services provided include the investigation of cargo damage, rust or contamination claims, counseling on best shipment practices, adjusting of claims before litigation, and representing the maritime client in federal or state court to prosecute or defend any manner of cargo claims.

Collisions/Allisions

We have represented numerous vessel owners as well as the owners of bridges and other land-based property in a wide variety of collision and allision causes of action. This includes, but is not limited to the initial investigation of such incidents, taking of witness statements and interaction with governmental agencies such as the Coast Guard, the EPA, and international authorities. Such representation can also include discovery, litigation, negotiation, and settlement of the myriad of claims that may arise in collision and allision cases.

Salvage Claims

We have represented vessel owners as well as salvage companies with respect to the marine salvage of commercial and recreational vessels. Issues that may arise include, but are not limited to, the calculation of the salvor's claim, the value of the salvaged vessel, the reasonableness of the salvage claim, the appropriateness of applying salvage principles to recreational vessels, and the prosecution and enforcement of maritime liens for salvage activity.

Personal Injury Actions

Maritime personal injury actions are usually of two types. One is when an injured seaman acting as a crew member on a vessel has a claim, by virtue of the incorporation of the Federal Employer's Liability Act (FELA) into the Jones Act. The other type is where a maritime employee is not acting in the capacity as a seaman but in the capacity as a Stevedore, claims may be brought under the federal Longshoremen's and Harbor Worker's Claims Act. Our attorneys are experienced in defending such claims in both state and federal courts and the Department of Labor.

Maritime Liens

Our attorneys have an extensive record of experience in the attachment and enforcement of maritime liens, and few firms in the region have more experience. The maritime client may require counseling as to the type of vessel subject to maritime liens, the imposition of such liens under federal law or advice on the proper procedures for enforcement of such a lien. Other clients require the prosecution of in rem federal court actions for the enforcement or foreclosure of maritime liens. Such enforcement may include the issuance of a warrant of arrest for a vessel by the United States Marshal's office. Thereafter, the firm will move expeditiously toward the establishment and perfection of proper security by the debtor and/or the payment of the outstanding maritime lien. Firm attorneys are available to successfully negotiate all aspects of the establishment and satisfaction of maritime liens.

Marine Financing



Admiralty & Maritime Leader

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Our attorneys have much experience with respect to the sale and purchase of maritime vessels. Many businesses and vessel owners have been counseled with respect to the benefits and restrictions of vessel documentation under United States law. Eligibility (as it relates to vessels) and ownership citizenship requirements must be clear before the sale or purchase of either a commercial or recreational vessel. Marine financing of vessel purchases is a related area. Representation is optimal for any vessel financing whether or not it includes a first preferred or another type of ship mortgage or other financing procedures. Our attorneys are well experienced in such commercial transactions and can provide a full range of representation in this regard.

Commercial Transactions

Shipping and related maritime activities constitute complicated business enterprises. While certainly admiralty and maritime issues abound in the operation of such an enterprise, general business, labor and employment, and other laws, rules and regulations also exist which govern or control the maritime client. We have a full array of capabilities in any ancillary business issues, including intellectual property, that may arise for the admiralty or maritime client. As a full-service law firm, we offer all clients responsive, efficient and quality legal services.