This Statutory Instrument has been made in consequence of a defect in SI 2025/278 and is being issued free of charge to all known recipients of that Statutory Instrument.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2026 No. 234

MERCHANT SHIPPING

The Merchant Shipping (Light Dues) (Amendment) Regulations 2026

Made - - - -	*4th March 2026*
Laid before Parliament	*9th March 2026*
Coming into force - -	*1st April 2026*

The Secretary of State makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by section 205(5) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995(**a**).

Citation, commencement and extent

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Merchant Shipping (Light Dues) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 and come into force on 1st April 2026.

(2) These Regulations extend to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Amendment of the Merchant Shipping (Light Dues) Regulations 2025

2.—(1) The Merchant Shipping (Light Dues) Regulations 2025(**b**) are amended as follows.

(2) In regulation 2 (interpretation), after the definition of "pleasure vessel" insert—

> ""registered length" means the measurement which—
>
> (a) is recorded as the registered length in a vessel's certificate of registry issued under regulation 37 of the Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Regulations 1993(**c**), in the case of a vessel which is registered in the United Kingdom,
>
> (b) is recorded as the registered length in any equivalent certificate issued in the case of a vessel which is registered outside the United Kingdom, or
>
> (c) would be recorded as the registered length if the vessel were registered in the United Kingdom, in the case of an unregistered vessel;".

(3) In regulation 4 (periodical payments)—

(a) in paragraphs 3(a) and (b) and (4), for "load line" substitute "registered";

(**a**) 1995 c. 21.
(**b**) S.I. 2025/278, amended by S.I. 2025/369.
(**c**) S.I. 1993/3138.

(b) in paragraph (4), for "less than" substitute "not exceeding".

(4) In regulation 5 (payments per voyage), for paragraph 2 substitute—

"(2) The amount of light dues per voyage must be calculated on the basis of the tonnage of the ship—

(a) from 1st April 2026 at the rate of 46 pence per ton subject to—

(i) a minimum charge of £60, and

(ii) a maximum charge of £23,000;

(b) from 1st April 2027 at the rate of 47 pence per ton subject to—

(i) a minimum charge of £60, and

(ii) a maximum charge of £23,500.".

(5) In Schedule 1 (vessels exempt from light dues)—

(a) in paragraph 5, for "load line" substitute "registered";

(b) for paragraph 13, substitute—

"13. Vessels arriving solely for the purpose of moderation, alteration or scrapping.".

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State for Transport

Keir Mather
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Department for Transport

4th March 2026

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations amend the Merchant Shipping (Light Dues) Regulations 2025 (S.I. 2025/278) (the "2025 Regulations").

Regulation 2(2) inserts a new definition of "registered length" into the 2025 Regulations.

Regulation 2(3)(a) amends regulation 4 of the 2025 Regulations which provides for the calculation of periodical payments by vessels by reference to their length. Regulation 2(3) replaces references to "load line length" with references to "registered length".

Regulation 2(3)(b) amends regulation 4 of the 2025 Regulations to clarify when a specified measurement should be rounded down, or up, to the nearest metre.

Regulation 2(4) increases the charges for vessels that pay light dues on a per voyage basis under the 2025 Regulations. From 1st April 2026, the rate and maximum charge are increased to 46 pence per ton and £23,000 respectively. From 1st April 2027, the rate and the maximum charge are further increased to 47 pence per ton and £23,500 respectively.

Regulation 2(5) amends Schedule 1 to the 2025 Regulations, which exempts certain vessels from the obligation to pay light dues. The exemption in paragraph 5 of Schedule 1 is expressed by reference to the length of the vessel. Regulation 2(5)(a) replaces the reference to "load line length" in paragraph 5 of Schedule 1 with a reference to "registered length". Regulation 2(5)(b) simplifies one of the other exemptions in Schedule 1.

A full impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no, or no significant impact on the private, voluntary or public sectors is foreseen. An Explanatory Memorandum has been published alongside this instrument at www.legislation.gov.uk.

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