Admiralty & Maritime Law

In all facets of maritime practice, GrayRobinson maritime attorneys bring resources to address your legal problems and to work towards achieving your goals. Our services include:

- Personal injury and wrongful death litigation.
- Analyzing and litigating marine insurance coverage issues.
- Investigating, preparing and litigating sea and intermodal cargo claims.
- Responding to, investigating and litigating maritime casualties.
- Providing advice, investigating and litigating marine salvage, general average, demurrage, limitation of liability and maritime liens.
- Preparing and litigating claims related to ship repair.
- Drafting and negotiating charter parties, concession agreements and terminal agreements.
- Litigation of products liability and toxic tort claims.
- Responding to pollution and natural resource damage incidents and litigating of resulting claims and enforcement issues.
- Responding to shipboard casualties and litigating resulting claims.
- Advising and assisting with FMC licensing.
- Advising and assisting in compliance with international laws, treaties and trade agreements.
- Advising and assisting with immigration issues including, stowaways, fugitives and fines and penalties.
- Advising and assisting with environmental compliance and providing enforcement defense.
- Providing representation before regulatory agencies and administrative bodies.
- Sale, financing and U.S./foreign flag state documentation and registration of vessels.
- Advising and assisting vessel owners regarding flag state, classification society and regulatory agency compliance.

Our Maritime Experience

GrayRobinson maritime lawyers provide a broad range of quality legal services in admiralty and maritime litigation and transactions. We represent all facets of the maritime law industry, including marine insurers and underwriters, vessel owners, operators, repairers, managers, lenders, manufacturers and terminal operators. Our attorneys are experienced in litigation and transactions touching virtually all marine matters, including personal injury and wrongful death, hull and machinery claims, cargo disputes, charter party formation and disputes, ship financing and sales, pollution incidents, groundings, collisions, explosions, fires and regulatory matters.

Marine Insurance

GrayRobinson maritime attorneys provide experienced representation in defending marine insurers and their insureds. Whether the case involves defending the insured in maritime personal injury litigation, rendering a coverage opinion or defending the insurer in coverage
litigation, we have the knowledge and resources to meet the needs of the marine insurance industry.

**Protection and Indemnity Associations**

Our firm has the resources to provide the maritime legal services required by P&I associations and their members. Our experience includes defending cargo claims, personal injury litigation, liabilities to third parties other than personal injury, fines and penalties imposed against ship owners, resolving U.S. regulatory and flag state and classification society compliance issues, and litigating claims under the association's FD&D cover.

**Regulatory Compliance**

We represent and counsel vessel owners in all facets of regulatory compliance, including U.S. Homeland Security (Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and Immigration and Naturalization Service), Federal Maritime Commission, Maritime Administration and flag state and international regulatory schemes such as SOLAS and ISPS. Our seagoing experience and waterfront knowledge and capabilities enable us to resolve immediate problems that may arise which could delay or hinder a vessel getting underway, entering port, or completing cargo or passenger embarkation/disembarkation operations.

**Marine Pollution**

Our attorneys have handled all manner of marine pollution incidents from oil pollution (under OPA 90, FWPCA and CWA) to hazardous materials under CERCLA. They are also well-versed in all facets of marine natural resources damages and have litigated numerous seagrass and reef damage claims. Of particular significance is our attorneys’ experience in handling environmental claims on behalf of both insurers and their insureds and the U.S. government.

**The Cruise Line Industry**

As the cruise industry has grown, so has the volume of personal injury claims against the cruise lines. The firm has experience in the defense of cruise lines and their protection and indemnity associations in personal injury lawsuits by crew members, passengers, longshoremen and harbor workers. In conjunction with the defense of personal injury litigation, and often before litigation is commenced, we assist our cruise line clients in the investigation of marine casualties and in dealing with maritime investigative and law enforcement authorities. From our experience defending cruise lines we have gained the perspective to assist our clients in minimizing losses and promptly evaluating claims so appropriate action can be taken.

The firm also has been involved in drafting contracts required by the cruise industry, including passenger tickets, visitor passes, concessionaire contracts and crew employment agreements. From considerable litigation experience, we have learned how best to protect our clients' interests through the drafting of appropriate contracts to address a variety of situations and needs. Many times future losses and litigation expenses may be minimized through carefully drafted contracts. In this way our maritime legal experience and your contract needs go hand in hand.
Major cruise lines have called on the firm to provide opinions and recommendations on a wide variety of maritime legal issues facing the industry. These opinions are often sought by the cruise lines' general counsel or upper management in situations requiring immediate action by the company. From a working knowledge of the cruise business and maritime legal experience, the firm is able to meet the need for this type of consultation and counseling.

Cargo Claims and Advice

We have extensive experience in handling cargo claims stemming from all modes of carriage, including marine, air, trucking and rail. We have represented a variety of interests including carriers, insurers, shippers and cargo owners. In addition, our maritime attorneys represent commercial transportation and retail entities of all kinds and sizes and perform the necessary transactional work to ensure that goods move as our clients desire and that the risk of loss is properly allocated to those with the most control over the goods throughout the chain of transportation, storage, delivery and sales.

Marinas, Ship Repairers, and Marine Suppliers

The firm provides legal services to marinas, marine repair facilities and the suppliers of goods and services to vessels of all sizes. The provision of goods or services to a vessel may create a maritime lien in favor of the supplier that is not extinguished until payment is made. Where payment is not made, the supplier may have the right under maritime law to have the U.S. Marshals Service seize the vessel as security for payment. We have considerable experience in the area of maritime liens, both in asserting them on behalf of the supplier and in defending them on behalf of the vessel owner.

GrayRobinson maritime attorneys also have the experience and know-how to draft the contracts required by marinas, vessel repair yards and marine suppliers. Properly drafted, contracts often minimize liability to third parties while preserving the client's rights and remedies under maritime law.

Yachts and Small Boats

The firm has experience handling legal issues and litigation involving yachts, smaller commercial and pleasure boats, and personal watercraft. From defending and enforcing maritime lien claims to handling property damage and personal injury litigation, our maritime lawyers have the experience needed to deal with the maritime legal issues confronting yacht and smallboat owners.

Vessel Mortgage Financing Foreclosures

On the commercial side of the ledger, our maritime lawyers are experienced in representing both lenders and purchasers financing, documenting secured interests, and foreclosing on vessel mortgages. This experience ranges from small pleasure boats to oceangoing ships. Our transactional assistance is provided with an eye toward protecting the rights of the lender or owner through thorough evaluation of liens, marine insurance issues, and appropriate surveys and valuation assessment. Our foreclosure cases have involved numerous seizures by the U.S. Marshals Service, litigation of the merits of the mortgage or other lien claim and ultimate sale of the vessels by the U.S. Marshals Service after entry of judgment.
In handling vessel lien foreclosure litigation we strive to promptly and cost effectively secure the sale of the vessel both to preserve the collateral and to attempt to recover as much of the amount outstanding as possible. Our experience enables us to achieve these goals in the vast majority of cases handled for lending institutions.