



SEMAPHORE

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Reviewing the Laws Governing the Recovery of Rockets at Sea

An overview of the legal issues related to the maritime recovery of reusable rockets has been provided by Pittsburgh (United States)-headquartered global legal firm Reed Smith.

Authored by Reed Smith partner Han Deng and transportation policy and analysis lead Julia Norsetter, [“Recovering rockets at sea: the intersection of space law and maritime law”](#) summarises the:

- current state of the space economy
- sources of space law in the United States
- regulations affecting the waters and the vessels involved in the recovery operations

Noting the rapid growth being seen in the space economy – including a record number of commercial launches last year – the authors observed the consequent increase in demand for recovery of reusable rockets at sea.

However, as per the United States-based case study put forward to conclude the article, it was also noted the “laws and regulations applicable to the recovery of objects at sea is not well-settled”.

Addressing the “relatively uncharted territory of space law in its application to recovery of rockets at sea”, the case study specifically references:

- international law
- domestic law
- coastal regulation
- legal complications arising from the application of coastal laws to recoveries at sea
- legal complications arising from the use of autonomous vessels

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