



# Limitation Act 1980

## 1980 CHAPTER 58

### PART I

#### ORDINARY TIME LIMITS FOR DIFFERENT CLASSES OF ACTION

##### *Actions in respect of wrongs causing personal injuries or death*

#### **11 Special time limit for actions in respect of personal injuries.**

(1) This section applies to any action for damages for negligence, nuisance or breach of duty (whether the duty exists by virtue of a contract or of provision made by or under a statute or independently of any contract or any such provision) where the damages claimed by the plaintiff for the negligence, nuisance or breach of duty consist of or include damages in respect of personal injuries to the plaintiff or any other person.

[<sup>F1</sup>(1A) This section does not apply to any action brought for damages under section 3 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.]

(2) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act shall apply to an action to which this section applies.

(3) An action to which this section applies shall not be brought after the expiration of the period applicable in accordance with subsection (4) or (5) below.

(4) Except where subsection (5) below applies, the period applicable is three years from—

- (a) the date on which the cause of action accrued; or
- (b) the date of knowledge (if later) of the person injured.

(5) If the person injured dies before the expiration of the period mentioned in subsection (4) above, the period applicable as respects the cause of action surviving for the benefit of his estate by virtue of section 1 of the <sup>M1</sup>Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1934 shall be three years from—

- (a) the date of death; or
- (b) the date of the personal representative's knowledge;

*Status: Point in time view as at 16/06/1997.*

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whichever is the later.

- (6) For the purposes of this section “personal representative” includes any person who is or has been a personal representative of the deceased, including an executor who has not proved the will (whether or not he has renounced probate) but not anyone appointed only as a special personal representative in relation to settled land; and regard shall be had to any knowledge acquired by any such person while a personal representative or previously.
- (7) If there is more than one personal representative, and their dates of knowledge are different, subsection (5)(b) above shall be read as referring to the earliest of those dates.

#### Textual Amendments

**F1** S. 11(1A) inserted (16.6.1997) by 1997 c. 40, s.6; S.I. 1997/1498, art.2

#### Marginal Citations

**M1** 1934 c. 41(122:3)

### [<sup>F2</sup>11A] Actions in respect of defective products.

- (1) This section shall apply to an action for damages by virtue of any provision of Part I of the <sup>M2</sup>Consumer Protection Act 1987.
- (2) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act shall apply to an action to which this section applies.
- (3) An action to which this section applies shall not be brought after the expiration of the period of ten years from the relevant time, within the meaning of section 4 of the said Act of 1987; and this subsection shall operate to extinguish a right of action and shall do so whether or not that right of action had accrued, or time under the following provisions of this Act had begun to run, at the end of the said period of ten years.
- (4) Subject to subsection (5) below, an action to which this section applies in which the damages claimed by the plaintiff consist of or include damages in respect of personal injuries to the plaintiff or any other person or loss of or damage to any property, shall not be brought after the expiration of the period of three years from whichever is the later of—
- (a) the date on which the cause of action accrued; and
  - (b) the date of knowledge of the injured person or, in the case of loss of or damage to property, the date of knowledge of the plaintiff or (if earlier) of any person in whom his cause of action was previously vested.
- (5) If in a case where the damages claimed by the plaintiff consist of or include damages in respect of personal injuries to the plaintiff or any other person the injured person died before the expiration of the period mentioned in subsection (4) above, that subsection shall have effect as respects the cause of action surviving for the benefit of his estate by virtue of section 1 of the <sup>M3</sup>Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1934 as if for the reference to that period there were substituted a reference to the period of three years from whichever is the later of—
- (a) the date of death; and
  - (b) the date of the personal representative’s knowledge.

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- (6) For the purposes of this section “personal representative” includes any person who is or has been a personal representative of the deceased, including an executor who has not proved the will (whether or not he has renounced probate) but not anyone appointed only as a special personal representative in relation to settled land; and regard shall be had to any knowledge acquired by any such person while a personal representative or previously.
- (7) If there is more than one personal representative and their dates of knowledge are different, subsection (5)(b) above shall be read as referring to the earliest of those dates.
- (8) Expressions used in this section or section 14 of this Act and in Part I of the <sup>M4</sup>Consumer Protection Act 1987 have the same meanings in this section or that section as in that Part; and section 1(1) of that Act (Part I to be construed as enacted for the purpose of complying with the product liability Directive) shall apply for the purpose of construing this section and the following provisions of this Act so far as they relate to an action by virtue of any provision of that Part as it applies for the purpose of construing that Part.]

#### Textual Amendments

- F2** S. 11A inserted (1.3.1988) by [Consumer Protection Act 1987 \(c. 43, SIF 109:1\)](#), ss. 6(6), 50(2), [Sch. 1 para. 1](#)

#### Marginal Citations

- M2** [1987 c. 43\(109:1\)](#)  
**M3** [1934 c. 41\(122:3\)](#)  
**M4** [1987 c. 43\(109:1\)](#)

## 12 Special time limit for actions under Fatal Accidents legislation.

- (1) An action under the <sup>M5</sup>Fatal Accidents Act 1976 shall not be brought if the death occurred when the person injured could no longer maintain an action and recover damages in respect of the injury (whether because of a time limit in this Act or in any other Act, or for any other reason).

Where any such action by the injured person would have been barred by the time limit in section 11 [<sup>F3</sup>or 11A] of this Act, no account shall be taken of the possibility of that time limit being overridden under section 33 of this Act.

- (2) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act shall apply to an action under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976, but no such action shall be brought after the expiration of three years from—
  - (a) the date of death; or
  - (b) the date of knowledge of the person for whose benefit the action is brought;whichever is the later.
- (3) An action under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976 shall be one to which sections 28, 33 and 35 of this Act apply, and the application to any such action of the time limit under subsection (2) above shall be subject to section 39; but otherwise Parts II and III of this Act shall not apply to any such action.

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#### Textual Amendments

**F3** Words inserted (1.3.1988) by [Consumer Protection Act 1987 \(c. 43, SIF 109:1\)](#), ss. 6(6), 50(2), [Sch. 1 para. 2](#)

#### Marginal Citations

**M5** [1976 c. 30\(122:3\)](#)

### 13 Operation of time limit under section 12 in relation to different dependants.

- (1) Where there is more than one person for whose benefit an action under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976 is brought, section 12(2)(b) of this Act shall be applied separately to each of them.
- (2) Subject to subsection (3) below, if by virtue of subsection (1) above the action would be outside the time limit given by section 12(2) as regards one or more, but not all, of the persons for whose benefit it is brought, the court shall direct that any person as regards whom the action would be outside that limit shall be excluded from those for whom the action is brought.
- (3) The court shall not give such a direction if it is shown that if the action were brought exclusively for the benefit of the person in question it would not be defeated by a defence of limitation (whether in consequence of section 28 of this Act or an agreement between the parties not to raise the defence, or otherwise).

### 14 Definition of date of knowledge for purposes of sections 11 and 12.

- (1) [<sup>F4</sup>Subject to subsection (1A) below,] in sections 11 and 12 of this Act references to a person's date of knowledge are references to the date on which he first had knowledge of the following facts—
  - (a) that the injury in question was significant; and
  - (b) that the injury was attributable in whole or in part to the act or omission which is alleged to constitute negligence, nuisance or breach of duty; and
  - (c) the identity of the defendant; and
  - (d) if it is alleged that the act or omission was that of a person other than the defendant, the identity of that person and the additional facts supporting the bringing of an action against the defendant;

and knowledge that any acts or omissions did or did not, as a matter of law, involve negligence, nuisance or breach of duty is irrelevant.

- [<sup>F5</sup>(1A) In section 11A of this Act and in section 12 of this Act so far as that section applies to an action by virtue of section 6(1)(a) of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 (death caused by defective product) references to a person's date of knowledge are references to the date on which he first had knowledge of the following facts—

- (a) such facts about the damage caused by the defect as would lead a reasonable person who had suffered such damage to consider it sufficiently serious to justify his instituting proceedings for damages against a defendant who did not dispute liability and was able to satisfy a judgment; and
- (b) that the damage was wholly or partly attributable to the facts and circumstances alleged to constitute the defect; and
- (c) the identity of the defendant;

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but, in determining the date on which a person first had such knowledge there shall be disregarded both the extent (if any) of that person's knowledge on any date of whether particular facts or circumstances would or would not, as a matter of law, constitute a defect and, in a case relating to loss of or damage to property, any knowledge which that person had on a date on which he had no right of action by virtue of Part I of that Act in respect of the loss or damage.]

- (2) For the purposes of this section an injury is significant if the person whose date of knowledge is in question would reasonably have considered it sufficiently serious to justify his instituting proceedings for damages against a defendant who did not dispute liability and was able to satisfy a judgment.
- (3) For the purposes of this section a person's knowledge includes knowledge which he might reasonably have been expected to acquire—
- (a) from facts observable or ascertainable by him; or
  - (b) from facts ascertainable by him with the help of medical or other appropriate expert advice which it is reasonable for him to seek;

but a person shall not be fixed under this subsection with knowledge of a fact ascertainable only with the help of expert advice so long as he has taken all reasonable steps to obtain (and, where appropriate, to act on) that advice.

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#### **Textual Amendments**

- F4** Words inserted (1.3.1988) by [Consumer Protection Act 1987 \(c. 43, SIF 109:1\)](#), ss. 6(6), 50(2), **Sch. 1 para. 3**
- F5** [S. 14\(1A\)](#) inserted (1.3.1988) by [Consumer Protection Act 1987 \(c. 43, SIF 109:1\)](#), ss. 6(6), 50(2), **Sch. 1 para. 3**

**Status:**

Point in time view as at 16/06/1997.

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