



# Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

## 1984 CHAPTER 60

### PART II

#### POWERS OF ENTRY, SEARCH AND SEIZURE

##### *Search warrants*

#### 15 Search warrants—safeguards.

- (1) This section and section 16 below have effect in relation to the issue to constables under any enactment, including an enactment contained in an Act passed after this Act, of warrants to enter and search premises; and an entry on or search of premises under a warrant is unlawful unless it complies with this section and section 16 below.
  - (2) Where a constable applies for any such warrant, it shall be his duty—
    - (a) to state—
      - (i) the ground on which he makes the application; <sup>F1</sup> . . .
      - (ii) the enactment under which the warrant would be issued; <sup>F2</sup> and]
      - <sup>F3</sup>(iii) if the application is for a warrant authorising entry and search on more than one occasion, the ground on which he applies for such a warrant, and whether he seeks a warrant authorising an unlimited number of entries, or (if not) the maximum number of entries desired;]
    - <sup>F4</sup>(b) to specify the matters set out in subsection (2A) below; and]
    - (c) to identify, so far as is practicable, the articles or persons to be sought.
- <sup>F5</sup>(2A) The matters which must be specified pursuant to subsection (2)(b) above are—
- <sup>F6</sup>(a) if the application relates to one or more sets of premises specified in the application, each set of premises which it is desired to enter and search;]
  - (b) <sup>F7</sup>if the application relates to any premises occupied or controlled by a person specified in the application—
    - (i) as many sets of premises which it is desired to enter and search as it is reasonably practicable to specify;

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- (ii) the person who is in occupation or control of those premises and any others which it is desired to enter and search;
  - (iii) why it is necessary to search more premises than those specified under sub-paragraph (i); and
  - (iv) why it is not reasonably practicable to specify all the premises which it is desired to enter and search.]
- (3) An application for such a warrant shall be made ex parte and supported by an information in writing.
- (4) The constable shall answer on oath any question that the justice of the peace or judge hearing the application asks him.
- (5) A warrant shall authorise an entry on one occasion only [<sup>F8</sup>unless it specifies that it authorises multiple entries].
- [<sup>F9</sup>(5A) If it specifies that it authorises multiple entries, it must also specify whether the number of entries authorised is unlimited, or limited to a specified maximum.]
- (6) A warrant—
- (a) shall specify—
    - (i) the name of the person who applies for it;
    - (ii) the date on which it is issued;
    - (iii) the enactment under which it is issued; and
    - [<sup>F10</sup>(iv) each set of premises to be searched, or (in the case of an all premises warrant) the person who is in occupation or control of premises to be searched, together with any premises under his occupation or control which can be specified and which are to be searched; and]
  - (b) shall identify, so far as is practicable, the articles or persons to be sought.
- [<sup>F11</sup>(7) Two copies shall be made of a [<sup>F12</sup>warrant] which specifies only one set of premises and does not authorise multiple entries; and as many copies as are reasonably required may be made of any other kind of warrant.]
- (8) The copies shall be clearly certified as copies.

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** Word in s. 15(2)(a)(i) repealed (1.1.2006) by [Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(c. 15\)](#), ss. 114(4)(a), 174(2), 178, [Sch. 17 Pt. 2](#); S.I. 2005/3495, [art. 2\(1\)\(n\)\(t\)\(u\)\(xxiv\)](#)
- F2** Word in s. 15(2)(a)(ii) inserted (1.1.2006) by [Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(c. 15\)](#), ss. 114(4)(b), 178; S.I. 2005/3495, [art. 2\(1\)\(n\)](#)
- F3** S. 15(2)(a)(iii) inserted (1.1.2006) by [Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(c. 15\)](#), ss. 114(4)(c), 178; S.I. 2005/3495, [art. 2\(1\)\(n\)](#)
- F4** S. 15(2)(b) substituted (1.1.2006) by [Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(c. 15\)](#), ss. 113(6), 178; S.I. 2005/3495, [art. 2\(1\)\(n\)](#)
- F5** S. 15(2A) inserted (1.1.2006) by [Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(c. 15\)](#), ss. 113(7), 178; S.I. 2005/3495, [art. 2\(1\)\(n\)](#)
- F6** S. 15(2A)(a) substituted (1.1.2006) by [The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(Amendment\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/3496\)](#), [art. 7\(2\)\(a\)](#)
- F7** Words in s. 15(2A)(b) substituted (1.1.2006) by [The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(Amendment\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/3496\)](#), [art. 7\(2\)\(b\)](#)

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- F8** Words in s. 15(5) inserted (1.1.2006) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), **ss. 114(5), 178**; S.I. 2005/3495, **art. 2(1)(n)**
- F9** S. 15(5A) inserted (1.1.2006) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), **ss. 114(6), 178**; S.I. 2005/3495, **art. 2(1)(n)**
- F10** S. 15(6)(a)(iv) substituted (1.1.2006) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), **ss. 113(8)**; S.I. 2005/3495, **art. 2(1)(n)**
- F11** S. 15(7) substituted (1.1.2006) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), **ss. 114(7), 178**; S.I. 2005/3495, **art. 2(1)(n)**
- F12** Words in s. 15(7) substituted (1.1.2006) by The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (Amendment) Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/3496), **art. 7(3)**

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 15(5)-(8) applied by S.I. 2010/906, reg. 33(7) (as inserted (1.7.2011) by The Credit Rating Agencies (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 2011/1435), regs. 1, **4(e)** (with reg. 5))
- C2** Ss. 8, 9, 15, 16, 17(1)(b) (2) (4), 18-20, 21, 22(1)-(4), 28, 29, 30(1)-(4)(a)(5)-(11), 31, 32(1)-(9), 34(1)-(5), 35, 36, 37, 39, 40-44, 50, 51(d), 52, 54, 55, 64(1)-(4)(5)(6), Sch. 1 applied with modifications by S.I. 1985/1800, arts. 3-11, Schs. 1, 2
- C3** S. 15: power to apply (with modifications) conferred (24.2.2003) by Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (c. 29), {ss. 355(1)-(3)(a)}, 458; S.I. 2003/120, **art. 2**, Sch. (subject to transitional provisions and savings in arts. 3-7 (as amended by S.I. 2003/333, art. 14 which in turn is amended by S.I. 2003/531, arts. 3, 4))
- C4** S. 15 modified (2.12.2002) Police Reform Act 2002 (c. 30), s. 38, **Sch. 4 Pt. 2 para. 16(d)**; S.I. 2002/2750, **art. 2(a)(ii)(d)**  
S. 15 modified (20.1.2004) by Police Reform Act 2002 (c. 30), ss. 38, 108, Sch. 4 para. 17(bb) (as inserted by Criminal Justice Act 2003 (c. 44), **Sch. 1 para. 17**); S.I. 2004/81, **art. 2(1)(2)(a)**  
S. 15 modified (27.3.2007 for W. and 6.4.2007 for E.) by Animal Welfare Act 2006 (c. 45), ss. 53, 68, **Sch. 2 para. 1(1)** (with ss. 1(2), 58(1), 59, 60); S.I. 2007/1030, **art. 2(1)(g)**; S.I. 2007/499, **art. 2(2)(i)**  
S. 15 modified (21.8.2007) by The Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/1842), **reg. 53(6)** (with reg. 3)
- C5** S. 15 applied (with modifications) (24.2.2003) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (Application of Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989) Order 2003 (S.I. 2003/174), arts. 2, 10, Sch. 1
- C6** S. 15 applied (25.7.2003) by The Advanced Television Services Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/1901), reg. 8, **Sch. para. 12**
- C7** S. 15 applied (with modifications) (25.6.2013) by The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (Application to immigration officers and designated customs officials in England and Wales) Order 2013 (S.I. 2013/1542), arts. 1, 3(2)-(4), **Sch. 1** (with arts. 4-11)
- C8** S. 15 applied (with modifications) (25.6.2013) by The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (Application to immigration officers and designated customs officials in England and Wales) Order 2013 (S.I. 2013/1542), arts. 1, 12(2)-(4), **Sch. 2** (with arts. 13-31)
- C9** S. 15 applied (with modifications) (1.6.2015) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (Application of Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/759), arts. 1(1), **2** (as amended (31.1.2018 for specified purposes, 16.4.2018 in so far as not already in force) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (Application of Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) (Amendment) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017/1222), arts. 1(2)(3), **2(2)**)
- C10** S. 15 applied (with modifications) (4.11.2015) by The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (Application to Revenue and Customs) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/1783), arts. 1, 3(1), **Sch. 1** (with arts. 3(2)(3), 4-19, Sch. 2)
- C11** S. 15 applied (with modifications) (30.4.2017) by The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (Application to Labour Abuse Prevention Officers) Regulations 2017 (S.I. 2017/520), regs. 1, 2, 3(f), **Sch.**
- C12** S. 15 applied (30.11.2017) by The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (S.I. 2017/1013), regs. 1, **60(6)** (with regs. 3, 4(2))

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- C13** S. 15 applied (with modifications) (1.4.2018) by [The Welsh Revenue Authority \(Powers to Investigate Criminal Offences\) Regulations 2018 \(S.I. 2018/400\)](#), regs. 1(2), 3(1)(3), **Sch.** (with regs. 4-8)
- C14** [Ss. 15, 16](#) applied (29.4.2021 for specified purposes, 29.6.2021 in so far as not already in force) by [Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 21(1)(a), **Sch. 8 para. 3(4)**; S.I. 2021/748, reg. 2(k)
- C15** S. 15(5)-(8) applied (7.6.2010) by [The Credit Rating Agencies Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/906\)](#), **reg. 18(5)**
- C16** S. 15(5)-(8) applied (3.9.2001) by [2000 c. 8, s. 176\(6\)](#); S.I. 2001/2632, art. 2, **Sch. 1 Pt. 2**
- C17** S. 15(5)-(8) applied (31.12.2009) by [Banking Act 2009 \(c. 1\)](#), **ss. 194(7)**, 263(1) (with ss. 206, 247); S.I. 2009/3000, **art. 4**, Sch. para. 2
- C18** S. 15(5)-(8) applied by [2000 c. 8, s. 131FB\(7\)](#) (as inserted (1.11.2012) by [The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 \(Short Selling\) Regulations 2012 \(S.I. 2012/2554\)](#), regs. 1(1), **2(5)**)
- C19** S. 15(5)-(8) applied (1.4.2013) by [The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 \(Over the Counter Derivatives, Central Counterparties and Trade Repositories\) Regulations 2013 \(S.I. 2013/504\)](#), regs. 1(2), **17(10)** (with regs. 52-58)
- C20** S. 15(5)-(8) applied (1.3.2014) by [Financial Services \(Banking Reform\) Act 2013 \(c. 33\)](#), **ss. 88(9)**, 148(5); S.I. 2014/377, art. 2(1)(a), Sch. Pt. 1
- C21** S. 15(5)-(8) applied by [2009 c. 1, s. 83ZL\(9\)](#) (as inserted (1.1.2015) by [The Bank Recovery and Resolution Order 2014 \(S.I. 2014/3329\)](#), arts. 1(2), **97**)
- C22** S. 15(5)-(8) applied by [2000 c. 8, s. 122D\(7\)](#) (as inserted (3.7.2016) by [The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 \(Market Abuse\) Regulations 2016 \(S.I. 2016/680\)](#), regs. 1, **9(4)**)
- C23** S. 15(5)-(8) applied (26.6.2017) by [The Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds \(Information on the Payer\) Regulations 2017 \(S.I. 2017/692\)](#), regs. 1(2), **70(11)** (with regs. 8, 15)
- C24** S. 15(5)-(8) applied (29.8.2023) by [2009 c. 1, s. 206P\(7\)-\(9\)](#) (as inserted by [Financial Services and Markets Act 2023 \(c. 29\)](#), s. 86(2)(d), **Sch. 9 para. 1**)
- C25** S. 15(5)-(8) applied (31.12.2023) by [Financial Services and Markets Act 2023 \(c. 29\)](#), s. 86(3), **Sch. 11 para. 130(9)**; S.I. 2023/1382, reg. 8(b)

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**Changes and effects yet to be applied to :**

- s. 15 amendment to earlier affecting provision S.I. 2015/759, art. 2 by [S.I. 2024/426 art. 2\(2\)](#)

**Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:**

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 17(1)(cza) inserted by [2021 c. 17 s. 26\(9\)](#)
- s. 47A(3A) substituted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 7](#)
- s. 61(6BA) inserted by [2008 c. 28 s. 10\(1\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). S. 10 omitted (14.12.2011) by virtue of 2011 c. 23, ss. 29, 31(2), Sch. 7 para. 5(3))
- s. 63(3D) inserted by [2008 c. 28 s. 10\(2\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). S. 10 omitted (14.12.2011) by virtue of 2011 c. 23, ss. 29, 31(2), Sch. 7 para. 5(3))
- s. 64(1AA) inserted by [2008 c. 28 s. 10\(4\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). S. 10 omitted (14.12.2011) by virtue of 2011 c. 23, ss. 29, 31(2), Sch. 7 para. 5(3))
- s. 64A(1B)(cb) inserted by [2022 c. 32 Sch. 11 para. 18\(a\)](#)
- Sch. 1A para. 21A added by 1995 c. 32, s. 8B(1) (as inserted) by [2006 c. 12 Sch. 3 para. 13](#)