



Public Order Act 1986

1986 CHAPTER 64

PART V

MISCELLANEOUS AND GENERAL

- 38 Contamination of or interference with goods with intention of causing public alarm or anxiety, etc.**
- (1) It is an offence for a person, with the intention—
- of causing public alarm or anxiety, or
 - of causing injury to members of the public consuming or using the goods, or
 - of causing economic loss to any person by reason of the goods being shunned by members of the public, or
 - of causing economic loss to any person by reason of steps taken to avoid any such alarm or anxiety, injury or loss,
- to contaminate or interfere with goods, or make it appear that goods have been contaminated or interfered with, or to place goods which have been contaminated or interfered with, or which appear to have been contaminated or interfered with, in a place where goods of that description are consumed, used, sold or otherwise supplied.
- (2) It is also an offence for a person, with any such intention as is mentioned in paragraph (a), (c) or (d) of subsection (1), to threaten that he or another will do, or to claim that he or another has done, any of the acts mentioned in that subsection.
- (3) It is an offence for a person to be in possession of any of the following articles with a view to the commission of an offence under subsection (1)—
- materials to be used for contaminating or interfering with goods or making it appear that goods have been contaminated or interfered with, or
 - goods which have been contaminated or interfered with, or which appear to have been contaminated or interfered with.
- (4) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable—
- on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years or a fine or both, or

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- (b) on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or both.
- (5) In this section “goods” includes substances whether natural or manufactured and whether or not incorporated in or mixed with other goods.
- (6) The reference in subsection (2) to a person claiming that certain acts have been committed does not include a person who in good faith reports or warns that such acts have been, or appear to have been, committed.

F139

Textual Amendments
F1 S. 39 repealed (3.11.1994) by 1994 c. 33, ss. 168(3), 172(4), Sch. 11

40 Amendments, repeals and savings.

- (1) Schedule 1, which amends the ^{M1}Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act 1985 and Part V of the ^{M2}Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980, shall have effect.
- (2) Schedule 2, which contains miscellaneous and consequential amendments, shall have effect.
- (3) The enactments mentioned in Schedule 3 (which include enactments related to the subject matter of this Act but already obsolete or unnecessary) are repealed to the extent specified in column 3.
- (4) Nothing in this Act affects the common law powers in England and Wales to deal with or prevent a breach of the peace.
- (5) As respects Scotland, nothing in this Act affects any power of a constable under any rule of law.

Marginal Citations
M1 1985 c. 57.
M2 1980 c. 62.

41 Commencement.

- (1) This Act shall come into force on such day as the Secretary of State may appoint by order made by statutory instrument, and different days may be appointed for different provisions or different purposes.
- (2) Nothing in a provision of this Act applies in relation to an offence committed or act done before the provision comes into force.
- (3) Where a provision of this Act comes into force for certain purposes only, the references in subsection (2) to the provision are references to it so far as it relates to those purposes.

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 Power of appointment conferred by s. 41 partly exercised: [S.I. 1986/2041](#), 1987/198, 852

42 Extent

- (1) The provisions of this Act extend to England and Wales except so far as they—
 - (a) amend or repeal an enactment which does not so extend, or
 - (b) relate to the extent of provisions to Scotland or Northern Ireland.
- (2) The following provisions of this Act extend to Scotland—
 - in Part I, section 9(2) except paragraph (a);
 - in Part II, sections 12 and 14 to 16;
 - Part III;
 - Part V, except sections 38, ^{F2} . . . , 40(4), subsections (1) and (3) of this section and any provision amending or repealing an enactment which does not extend to Scotland.
- (3) The following provisions of this Act extend to Northern Ireland—
 - sections 38, 41, this subsection, [^{F3} and section 43].

Textual Amendments

- F2** Word in [s. 42\(2\)](#) repealed (3.11.1994) by [1994 c. 33, s. 168\(3\), 172\(2\)](#), [Sch. 11](#)
- F3** Words substituted by [S.I. 1987/463 \(N.I. 7\)](#), [art. 28\(1\)](#), [Sch. 1 para. 6](#)

43 Short title.

This Act may be cited as the Public Order Act 1986.

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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. 4B inserted by [2023 c. 47 s. 1](#)