



Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994

1994 CHAPTER 22

PART III

OFFENCES

Offence of not paying duty chargeable at higher rate

37 Penalty for not paying duty chargeable at higher rate.

(1) Where—

- (a) a vehicle licence has been taken out for a vehicle at any rate of vehicle excise duty,
 - (b) at any time while the licence is in force the vehicle is so used that duty at a higher rate becomes chargeable in respect of the licence for the vehicle under section 15, and
 - (c) duty at that higher rate was not paid before the vehicle was so used,
- the person so using the vehicle is guilty of an offence.

(2) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (1) is liable on summary conviction^{F1} . . . to an excise penalty of—

- (a) level 3 on the standard scale^{F1} . . ., or
- (b) five times the difference between the duty actually paid on the licence and the amount of the duty at the higher rate,

whichever is the greater.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 37(2) repealed (1.5.1995 with effect as mentioned in Sch. 4 para. 37(3) and Sch. 29 Pt.V(3) Note 2 of the amending Act) by 1995 c. 4, ss. 19, 162, Sch. 4 Pt. VII para. 37(1)(3), Sch. 29 Pt.V(3) Note 2

Changes to legislation: Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994, Cross Heading: Offence of not paying duty chargeable at higher rate is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 26 March 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

38 Additional liability for keeper of vehicle chargeable at higher rate.

- (1) Where the person convicted of an offence under section 37 is the person by whom the vehicle in respect of which the offence was committed was kept at the time at which it was committed, the court shall (in addition to any penalty which it may impose under that section) order him to pay the amount specified in subsection (2).
- (2) The amount referred to in subsection (1) is an amount equal to one-twelfth of the difference between—
 - (a) the rate of duty at which the licence in relation to which the offence was committed was taken out, and
 - (b) the relevant higher rate of duty (within the meaning of section 39) in relation to the vehicle,
 for each month, or part of a month, in the relevant period (within the meaning of section 40).
- (3) A vehicle is to be taken for the purposes of subsection (2) to have belonged throughout the relevant period to the description of vehicle to which it belonged for the purposes of vehicle excise duty at the date on which the offence was committed, except so far as it is proved to have fallen within some other description for the whole of any month or part of a month in that period.
- (4) Where a person is convicted of more than one offence under section 37 in respect of the same vehicle (whether or not in the same proceedings), the court shall (in calculating the amount payable under this section in respect of any of the offences) reduce the amount in relation to any period by any amount ordered to be paid under this section in relation to the period in respect of any other such offence.

39 Relevant higher rate of duty for purposes of section 38.

- (1) For the purposes of section 38 the relevant higher rate of duty in relation to a vehicle is the rate provided by this section.
- (2) Where—
 - (a) at the time of the offence the vehicle had a [^{F2}revenue weight] which exceeded that which it had when the licence in relation to which the offence was committed was taken out, and
 - (b) the licence was taken out at the rate applicable to the previous weight,
 the relevant higher rate of duty is the rate which would have been applicable had the licence been taken out by reference to the higher weight.
- (3) Where—
 - (a) the vehicle is a tractive unit,
 - (b) the licence in relation to which the offence was committed was taken out at a rate applicable to the use of the vehicle—
 - (i) only with semi-trailers having not fewer than two axles, or
 - (ii) only with semi-trailers having not fewer than three axles, and
 - (c) the offence consisted in using the vehicle with a semi-trailer with a smaller number of axles,
 the relevant higher rate of duty is the rate which would have been applicable had the licence been taken out by reference to the use of the vehicle which constituted the offence.

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(4) Where—

- (a) the licence in relation to which the offence was committed was taken out at a rate applicable, by virtue of paragraph 13 of Schedule 1, to a weight lower than the [^{F3}revenue weight] of the vehicle, and
- (b) the offence consisted in using the vehicle in contravention of a condition imposed under or by virtue of sub-paragraph (2) of that paragraph,

the relevant higher rate of duty is the rate which would have been applicable had the licence been taken out by reference to the [^{F4}revenue weight] of the vehicle.

(5) Where—

- (a) the licence in relation to which the offence was committed was taken out at a rate lower than that applicable to it by reference to its [^{F5}revenue weight], and
- (b) none of subsections (2) to (4) apply,

the relevant higher rate of duty is the rate which would have been applicable had the licence been taken out by reference to the [^{F6}revenue weight] of the vehicle.

(6) Where—

- (a) the licence in relation to which the offence was committed was taken out at a rate lower than that at which duty was chargeable in respect of the condition, manner or purpose of use of the vehicle which constituted the offence, and
- (b) none of subsections (2) to (5) apply,

the relevant higher rate of duty is the rate which would have been applicable had the licence been taken out by reference to the condition, manner or purpose of use of the vehicle which constituted the offence.

Textual Amendments

- F2** Words in s. 39(2)(a) substituted (1.5.1995 with effect as mentioned in Sch. 4 para. 29 of the amending Act) by 1995 c. 4, s. 19, Sch. 4 Pt. IV paras. 22(a), 29
- F3** Words in s. 39(4)(a) substituted (1.5.1995 with effect as mentioned in Sch. 4 para. 29 of the amending Act) by 1995 c. 4, s. 19, Sch. 4 Pt. IV paras. 22(b), 29
- F4** Words after para. (b) in s. 39(4) substituted (1.5.1995 with effect as mentioned in Sch. 4 para. 29 of the amending Act) by 1995 c. 4, s. 19, Sch. 4 Pt. IV paras. 22(c), 29
- F5** Words in s. 39(5)(a) substituted (1.5.1995 with effect as mentioned in Sch. 4 para. 29 of the amending Act) by 1995 c. 4, s. 19, Sch. 4 Pt. IV paras. 22(b), 29
- F6** Words after para. (b) in s. 39(5) substituted (1.5.1995 with effect as mentioned in Sch. 4 para. 29 of the amending Act) by 1995 c. 4, s. 19, Sch. 4 Pt. IV paras. 22(c), 29

40 Relevant period for purposes of section 38.

(1) For the purposes of section 38 the relevant period is the period—

- (a) ending with the date on which the offence was committed, and
- (b) beginning as provided by subsection (2) or (3).

(2) If the offence consists in the vehicle having a [^{F7}revenue weight] which exceeds that which it had when the licence in relation to which the offence was committed was taken out, the relevant period begins with the date on which the vehicle [^{F8}became a vehicle with a higher revenue weight].

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- (3) In any other case, the relevant period begins with the date on which the licence in relation to which the offence was committed first took effect.
- (4) Where the person convicted proves—
- (a) that throughout any month or part of a month in the relevant period the vehicle was not kept by him, or
 - (b) that he has paid the duty due (or an amount equal to the duty due) at the relevant higher rate in respect of the vehicle for any such month or part of a month,
- any amount which the person is ordered to pay under section 38 is to be calculated as if that month or part of a month were not in the relevant period.

Textual Amendments

- F7** Words in s. 40(2) substituted (1.5.1995 with effect as mentioned in Sch. 4 para. 29 of the amending Act) by 1995 c. 4, s. 19, Sch. 4 Pt. IV paras. 23(a), 29
- F8** Words in s. 40(2) substituted (1.5.1995 with effect as mentioned in Sch. 4 para. 29 of the amending Act) by 1995 c. 4, s. 19, Sch. 4 Pt. IV paras. 23(b), 29

41 Sections 37 to 40: supplementary.

- (1) Where in the case of an offence under section 37 there is made against a person—
- (a) an order under [^{F9}section 79 or 80 of the Sentencing Code] discharging him absolutely or conditionally,
 - [^{F10}(b) or an order under section 228 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 placing him on probation or under 246(2) or (3) of that Act discharging him absolutely, or]
 - (c) an order under the ^{M1}Probation Act (Northern Ireland) 1950 discharging him absolutely or conditionally or placing him on probation,
- he is to be treated for the purposes of sections 38 to 40 as having been convicted.
- (2) Section 38 has effect subject to the provisions (applying with the necessary modifications) of any enactment relating to the imposition of fines by magistrates' courts and courts of summary jurisdiction, other than any conferring a discretion as to their amount.
- (3) Where a sum is payable by virtue of an order under section 38—
- (a) in England and Wales, the sum is to be treated as a fine, and the order as a conviction, for the purposes of Part III of the ^{M2}Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 (including any enactment having effect as if contained in that Part) and of any other enactment relating to the recovery or application of sums ordered to be paid by magistrates' courts,
 - (b) in Scotland, the sum is to be treated as a fine, and the order as a conviction, for the purposes of any enactment relating to the recovery or application of sums ordered to be paid by courts of summary jurisdiction, and
 - (c) in Northern Ireland, the sum is recoverable as a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction and is to be treated for all purposes as a fine within the meaning of section 20 of the ^{M3}Administration of Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1954.

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Textual Amendments

- F9** Words in s. 41(1)(a) substituted (1.12.2020) by Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), s. 416(1), **Sch. 24 para. 127** (with **Sch. 24 para. 447**, **Sch. 27**); S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2
- F10** S. 41(1)(b) substituted (1.4.1996) by 1995 c. 40, ss. 5, 7(2), **Sch. 4 para. 90(3)**
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Marginal Citations

- M1** 1950 c. 7 (N.I.).
- M2** 1980 c. 43.
- M3** 1954 c. 9 (N.I.).

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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. 7(1A) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 47\(2\)](#)
- s. 7(5)(za) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 47\(3\)](#)
- s. 22(1)(aa) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 47\(6\)](#)
- s. 22(1AA) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 47\(9\)](#)
- s. 22(1BA) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 47\(10\)](#)
- Sch. 1 para. 1N inserted by [2023 c. 1 s. 10\(5\)\(e\)\(7\)](#)
- Sch. 2 para. 20G(2)(za)-(zc) inserted by [2023 c. 1 s. 10\(2\)\(a\)\(i\)\(7\)](#)