



Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995

1995 CHAPTER 46

PART XII

EVIDENCE

[^{F1}Special measures for child witnesses and other vulnerable witnesses]

[^{F1}271C Vulnerable witnesses other than child witnesses

- (1) This section applies where a party citing or intending to cite a person (other than a child witness) to give evidence at, or for the purposes of, a trial (such a person being referred to in this section as “the witness”) considers—
 - (a) that the witness is likely to be a vulnerable witness, and
 - (b) that a special measure or combination of special measures ought to be used for the purpose of taking the witness’s evidence.
- (2) Where this section applies, the party citing or intending to cite the witness shall, [^{F2}by the required time] , make an application (referred to as a “vulnerable witness application”) to the court for an order authorising the use of one or more of the special measures for the purpose of taking the witness’s evidence.
- (3) A vulnerable witness application shall—
 - (a) specify the special measure or measures which the party making the application considers to be the most appropriate for the purpose of taking the evidence of the witness to whom the application relates, and
 - (b) contain or be accompanied by—
 - (i) a summary of any views expressed for the purposes of section 271E(2)(b) of this Act, and
 - (ii) such other information as may be prescribed by Act of Adjournal.
- (4) The court may, on cause shown, allow a vulnerable witness application to be made after the [^{F3}the required time] .

Status: Point in time view as at 01/04/2006. This version of this provision has been superseded.

Changes to legislation: Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, Section 271C is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 27 April 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)

- (5) The court shall, not later than 7 days after a vulnerable witness application is made to it, consider the application in the absence of the parties and—
- (a) make an order authorising the use of the special measure or measures specified in the application if satisfied on the basis of the application that—
 - (i) the witness in respect of whom the application is made is a vulnerable witness,
 - (ii) the special measures or measures specified in the application are the most appropriate for the purpose of taking the witness's evidence, and
 - (iii) it is appropriate to do so after having complied with the duty in subsection (8) below, or
 - (b) if not satisfied as mentioned in paragraph (a) above, [^{F4}make an order under subsection (5A) below.]
- [That order is an order—
- ^{F5}(5A) (a) in the case of proceedings in the High Court where the preliminary hearing is yet to be held, appointing the vulnerable witness application to be disposed of at that hearing,
- (b) in the case of proceedings on indictment in the sheriff court where the first diet is yet to be held, appointing the vulnerable witness application to be disposed of at that diet, or
- (c) in any other case, appointing a diet to be held before the trial diet and requiring the parties to attend the diet.]
- (6) On making an order under subsection [^{F6}(5A)(c)] above, the court may postpone the trial diet.
- [Subsection (7) below applies to—
- ^{F7}(6A) (a) a preliminary hearing or first diet so far as the court is, by virtue of an order under subsection (5A)(a) or (b) above disposing of a vulnerable witness application at the hearing or diet, and
- (b) a diet appointed under subsection (5A)(c) above.]
- (7) At a [^{F8}hearing or diet to which this subsection applies] , the court may—
- (a) after giving the parties an opportunity to be heard, and
 - (b) if satisfied that the witness in respect of whom the application is made is a vulnerable witness,
- make an order authorising the use of such special measure or measures as the court considers to be the most appropriate for the purpose of taking the witness's evidence.
- (8) In deciding whether to make an order under subsection (5)(a) or (7) above, the court shall—
- (a) have regard to—
 - (i) the possible effect on the witness if required to give evidence without the benefit of any special measure, and
 - (ii) whether it is likely that the witness would be better able to give evidence with the benefit of a special measure, and
 - (b) take into account the matters specified in subsection (2)(a) to (f) of section 271 of this Act.
- (9) A [^{F9}hearing or diet to which subsection (7) above applies] may—

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- (a) on the application of the party citing or intending to cite the witness in respect of whom the diet is to be held, or
 - (b) of the court's own motion,
- be held in chambers.
- (10) A diet [^{F10}appointed under subsection (5A)(c) above in any case may be conjoined with any other diet to be held before the trial diet in the case.]
- (11) A party making a vulnerable witness application shall, at the same time, intimate the application to the other parties to the proceedings.
- [In subsections (2) and (4) above, “the required time” means—
- ^{F11}(12) (a) in the case of proceedings in the High Court, no later than 14 clear days before the preliminary hearing,
- (b) in the case of proceedings on indictment in the sheriff court, no later than 7 clear days before the first diet,
- (c) in any other case, no later than 14 clear days before the trial diet.]]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Ss. 271-271M and preceding cross-heading substituted for s. 271 (1.4.2005, 30.11.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes, otherwise 1.4.2008) by [Vulnerable Witnesses \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(asp 3\)](#), **ss. 1, 25**; S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2005/590, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F2** Words in s. 271C(2) substituted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by [Criminal Procedure \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(asp 5\)](#), **ss. 25, 27(1), Sch. para. 44(a)**; S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F3** Words in s. 271C(4) substituted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by [Criminal Procedure \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(asp 5\)](#), **ss. 25, 27(1), Sch. para. 44(b)**; S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F4** Words in s. 271C(5)(b) substituted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by [Criminal Procedure \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(asp 5\)](#), **ss. 25, 27(1), Sch. para. 44(c)**; S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F5** S. 271C(5A) inserted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by [Criminal Procedure \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(asp 5\)](#), **ss. 25, 27(1), Sch. para. 44(d)**; S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F6** Words in s. 271C(6) substituted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by [Criminal Procedure \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(asp 5\)](#), **ss. 25, 27(1), Sch. para. 44(e)**; S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F7** S. 271C(6A) inserted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by [Criminal Procedure \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(asp 5\)](#), **ss. 25, 27(1), Sch.**

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- para. 44(f);** S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F8** Words in s. 271C(7) substituted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 5), ss. 25, 27(1), **Sch. para. 44(g);** S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F9** Words in s. 271C(9) substituted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 5), ss. 25, 27(1), **Sch. para. 44(h);** S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F10** Words in s. 271C(10) substituted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 5), ss. 25, 27(1), **Sch. para. 44(i);** S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)
- F11** S. 271C(12) inserted (1.4.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 5), ss. 25, 27(1), **Sch. para. 44(j);** S.S.I. 2004/405, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-5); S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4(1)); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Ss. 271-271M applied by Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 (asp 7), s. 15A (as inserted (1.4.2005, 30.11.2005, 1.4.2006, 1.4.2007 and 2.7.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 1.4.2008) by Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 3), ss. 3, 25; S.S.I. 2005/168, **art. 2**, Sch. (with savings in art. 4); S.S.I. 2005/590, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2006/59, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/101, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4); S.S.I. 2007/329, **art. 2**, Sch. (with art. 4)); S.S.I. 2008/57, **art. 2** (with art. 3)

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