



Civil Contingencies Act 2004

2004 CHAPTER 36

PART 2

EMERGENCY POWERS

19 Meaning of “emergency”

- (1) In this Part “emergency” means—
 - (a) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in the United Kingdom or in a Part or region,
 - (b) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment of the United Kingdom or of a Part or region, or
 - (c) war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(a) an event or situation threatens damage to human welfare only if it involves, causes or may cause—
 - (a) loss of human life,
 - (b) human illness or injury,
 - (c) homelessness,
 - (d) damage to property,
 - (e) disruption of a supply of money, food, water, energy or fuel,
 - (f) disruption of a system of communication,
 - (g) disruption of facilities for transport, or
 - (h) disruption of services relating to health.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b) an event or situation threatens damage to the environment only if it involves, causes or may cause—
 - (a) contamination of land, water or air with biological, chemical or radio-active matter, or
 - (b) disruption or destruction of plant life or animal life.

Changes to legislation: Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Section 19 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 21 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) [View outstanding changes](#)

- (4) The Secretary of State may by order amend subsection (2) so as to provide that in so far as an event or situation involves or causes disruption of a specified supply, system, facility or service—
 - (a) it is to be treated as threatening damage to human welfare, or
 - (b) it is no longer to be treated as threatening damage to human welfare.
- (5) An order under subsection (4)—
 - (a) may make consequential amendment of this Part, and
 - (b) may not be made unless a draft has been laid before, and approved by resolution of, each House of Parliament.
- (6) The event or situation mentioned in subsection (1) may occur or be inside or outside the United Kingdom.

Changes to legislation:

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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):

- Sch. 1 para. 11A inserted by [2006 c. 16 Sch. 11 para. 174](#) (Sch. 11 para. 174 repealed (12.1.2010) without ever being in force by 2009 c. 23, Sch. 22 Pt. 8; S.I. 2009/3345, art. 2, Sch. para 27(d))
- Sch. 1 para. 19(2)(d) and word inserted by [2023 c. 52 Sch. 17 para. 15\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- Sch. 1 para. 30(2)(d) and word inserted by [2023 c. 52 Sch. 17 para. 15\(3\)\(b\)](#)