



Customs and Excise Management Act 1979

1979 CHAPTER 2

PART XII

GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

General powers, etc.

157 Bonds and security.

- (1) Without prejudice to any express requirement as to security contained in the customs and excise Acts, the Commissioners may, if they see fit, require any person to give security [^{F1}(or further security) by bond, guarantee] or otherwise for the observance of any condition in connection with customs or excise.

[^{F2}(1A) For the purposes of this section “condition in connection with excise” includes a condition in connection with excise duty charged, under the law of a member State other than the United Kingdom, on—

- (a) manufactured tobacco,
- (b) alcohol or alcoholic beverages, or
- (c) mineral oils.

The expressions used in paragraphs (a) to (c) above have the same meaning as in Council Directive [92/12/EEC](#).]

- (2) Any bond [^{F3}, guarantee or other security] taken for the purposes of any assigned matter—
- (a) shall be taken [^{F4}either on behalf of Her Majesty or on behalf of Her Majesty and the tax authorities of each member State other than the United Kingdom]; and
 - (b) shall be valid notwithstanding that it is entered into by a person under full age; and

Status: Point in time view as at 28/03/2005.

Changes to legislation: Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: General powers, etc. is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 July 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)

(c) may be cancelled at any time by or by order of the Commissioners.

[^{F5}In this subsection “assigned matter” includes any excise duty charged as mentioned in subsection (1A) above.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 157(1) substituted (28.7.2000) by 2000 c. 17, s. 27(1)(2)
F2 S. 157(1A) inserted (28.7.2000) by 2000 c. 17, s. 27(1)(3)
F3 Words in s. 157(2) inserted (28.7.2000) by 2000 c. 17, s. 27(1)(4)
F4 Words in s. 157(2)(a) substituted (28.7.2000) by 2000 c. 17, s. 27(1)(5)
F5 Words in s. 157(2) added (28.7.2000) by 2000 c. 17, s. 27(1)(6)

158 Power to require provision of facilities.

- (1) A person to whom this section applies, that is to say, a revenue trader and any person required by the Commissioners under the Customs and Excise Acts 1979 to give security in respect of any premises or place to be used for the examination of goods by an officer, shall—
- (a) provide and maintain such appliances and afford such other facilities reasonably necessary to enable an officer to take any account or make any examination or search or to perform any other of his duties on the premises of that trader or at the bonded premises or place as the Commissioners may direct;
 - (b) keep any appliances so provided in a convenient place approved by the proper officer for that purpose; and
 - (c) allow the proper officer at any time to use anything so provided and give him any assistance necessary for the performance of his duties.
- (2) Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any provision of subsection (1) above shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of [^{F6}level 3 on the standard scale].
- (3) A person to whom this section applies shall provide and maintain any fitting required for the purpose of affixing any lock which the proper officer may require to affix to the premises of that person or any part thereof or to any vessel, utensil or other apparatus whatsoever kept thereon, and in default—
- (a) the fitting may be provided or any work necessary for its maintenance may be carried out by the proper officer, and any expenses so incurred shall be paid on demand by that person; and
 - (b) if that person fails to pay those expenses on demand, he shall in addition be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of [^{F6}level 3 on the standard scale].
- (4) If any person to whom this section applies or any servant of his—
- (a) wilfully destroys or damages any such fitting as is mentioned in subsection (3) above or any lock or key provided for use therewith, or any label or seal placed on any such lock; or
 - (b) improperly obtains access to any place or article secured by any such lock; or
 - (c) has any such fitting or any article intended to be secured by means thereof so constructed that that intention is defeated,

Status: Point in time view as at 28/03/2005.

Changes to legislation: Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: General powers, etc. is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 July 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)

he shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of [^{F6}level 5 on the standard scale] and may be detained.

Textual Amendments

- F6** Words substituted by virtue of (E.W.) [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), [ss. 38, 46](#) and (S.) [Criminal Procedure \(Scotland\) Act 1975 \(c. 21, SIF 39:1\)](#), [ss. 289F, 289G](#) and (N.I.) by [S.I. 1984/703](#), (N.I. 3) arts. 5, 6

159 Power to examine and take account of goods.

- (1) Without prejudice to any other power conferred by the Customs and Excise Acts 1979, an officer may examine and take account of any goods—
- (a) which are imported; or
 - (b) which are in a warehouse or Queen's warehouse; or
 - ^{F7}(bb) which are in a free zone; or]
 - (c) which have been loaded into any ship or aircraft at any place in the United Kingdom [^{F8}or the Isle of Man]; or
 - (d) which are entered for exportation or for use as stores; or
 - (e) which are brought to any place in the United Kingdom for exportation or for shipment for exportation or as stores; or
 - (f) in the case of which any claim for drawback, allowance, rebate, remission or repayment of duty is made;
- and may for that purpose require any container to be opened or unpacked.
- (2) Any examination of goods by an officer under the Customs and Excise Acts 1979 shall be made at such place as the Commissioners appoint for the purpose.
- (3) In the case of such goods as the Commissioners may direct, and subject to such conditions as they see fit to impose, an officer may permit goods to be skipped on the quay or bulked, sorted, lotted, packed or repacked before account is taken thereof.
- (4) Any opening, unpacking, weighing, measuring, repacking, bulking, sorting, lotting, marking, numbering, loading, unloading, carrying or landing of goods or their containers for the purposes of, or incidental to, the examination by an officer, removal or warehousing thereof shall be done, and any facilities or assistance required for any such examination shall be provided, by or at the expense of the proprietor of the goods.
- (5) If any imported goods which an officer has power under the Customs and Excise Acts 1979 to examine are without the authority of the proper officer removed from customs and excise charge before they have been examined, those goods shall be liable to forfeiture.
- (6) If any goods falling within subsection (5) above are removed by a person with intent to defraud Her Majesty of any duty chargeable thereon or to evade any prohibition or restriction for the time being in force with respect thereto under or by virtue of any enactment, that person shall be guilty of an offence under this subsection and may be detained.
- (7) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (6) above shall be liable—

Status: Point in time view as at 28/03/2005.

Changes to legislation: *Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: General powers, etc. is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 July 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)*

- (a) on summary conviction, to a penalty of the prescribed sum or of three times the value of the goods, whichever is the greater, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or to both; or
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to a penalty of any amount, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [^{F9}7 years], or to both.
- (8) Without prejudice to the foregoing provisions of this section, where by this section or by or under any other provision of the Customs and Excise Acts 1979 an account is authorised or required to be taken of any goods for any purpose by an officer, the Commissioners may, with the consent of the proprietor of the goods, accept as the account of those goods for that purpose an account taken by such other person as may be approved in that behalf by both the Commissioners and the proprietor of the goods.

Textual Amendments

- F7** S. 159(1)(bb) inserted by Finance Act 1984 (c. 43, SIF 40:1), s. 8, Sch. 4 Pt. II para. 5
- F8** Words inserted by Isle of Man Act 1979 (c. 58), Sch. 1 para. 22
- F9** Words substituted by Finance Act 1988 (c. 39, SIF 40:1), s. 12(1)(a)(6)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 159(1) amended by S.I. 1990/2167, art. 4, Sch. para. 24

160 Power to take samples.

- (1) An officer may at any time take samples of any goods—
 - (a) which he is empowered by the Customs and Excise Acts 1979 to examine; or
 - (b) which are on premises where goods chargeable with any duty are manufactured, prepared or subjected to any process; or
 - (c) which, being dutiable goods, are held by any person as stock for his business or as materials for manufacture or processing.
- (2) Where an officer takes from any vessel, pipe or utensil on the premises of any of the following revenue traders, that is to say, a distiller, [^{F10}registered brewer], producer of wine, producer of made-wine or maker of cider, a sample of any product of, or of any materials for, the manufacture of that trader—
 - (a) the trader may, if he wishes, stir up and mix together the contents of that vessel, pipe or utensil before the sample is taken; and
 - (b) the sample taken by the officer shall be deemed to be representative of the whole contents of that vessel, pipe or utensil.
- (3) Any sample taken under this section shall be disposed of and accounted for in such manner as the Commissioners may direct.
- (4) Where any sample is taken under this section from any goods chargeable with a duty of customs or excise after that duty has been paid, other than—
 - (a) a sample taken when goods are first entered on importation; or
 - (b) a sample taken from goods in respect of which a claim for drawback, allowance, rebate, remission or repayment of that duty is being made,
 and the sample so taken is to be retained, the officer taking it shall, if so required by the person in possession of the goods, pay for the sample on behalf of the Commissioners such sum as reasonably represents the wholesale value thereof.

Status: Point in time view as at 28/03/2005.

Changes to legislation: Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: General powers, etc. is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 July 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)

Textual Amendments

F10 Words in s. 160(2) substituted (1.6.1993) by Finance Act 1991 (c. 31), s. 7(4)(5), Sch. 2 para. 1(a); S.I. 1993/1152, art. 3, Sch. 1 Pt. 2

[^{F11}161 Power to search premises: writ of assistance.

- (1) The powers conferred by this section are exercisable by an officer having a writ of assistance if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that anything liable to forfeiture under the customs and excise Acts—
 - (a) is kept or concealed in any building or place, and
 - (b) is likely to be removed, destroyed or lost before a search warrant can be obtained and executed.
- (2) The powers are—
 - (a) to enter the building or place at any time, whether by day or night, on any day, and search for, seize, and detain or remove any such thing, and
 - (b) so far as is necessary for the purpose of such entry, search, seizure, detention or removal, to break open any door, window or container and force and remove any other impediment or obstruction.
- (3) An officer shall not exercise the power of entry conferred by this section by night unless accompanied by a constable.
- (4) A writ of assistance shall continue in force during the reign in which it is issued and for six months thereafter.]

Textual Amendments

F11 S. 161 and s. 161A substituted for s. 161 (28.7.2000) by 2000 c. 17, s. 25

^{F12}161A Power to search premises: search warrant.

- (1) If a justice of the peace is satisfied by information upon oath given by an officer that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that anything liable to forfeiture under the customs and excise Acts is kept or concealed in any building or place, he may by warrant under his hand authorise any officer, and any person accompanying an officer, to enter and search the building or place named in the warrant.
- (2) An officer or other person so authorised has power—
 - (a) to enter the building or place at any time, whether by day or night, on any day, and search for, seize, and detain or remove any such thing, and
 - (b) so far as is necessary for the purpose of such entry, search, seizure, detention or removal, to break open any door, window or container and force and remove any other impediment or obstruction.
- (3) Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that any still, vessel, utensil, spirits or materials for the manufacture of spirits is or are unlawfully kept or deposited in any building or place, subsections (1) and (2) above apply in relation to any constable as they would apply in relation to an officer.

Status: Point in time view as at 28/03/2005.

Changes to legislation: Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: General powers, etc. is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 July 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)

- (4) The powers conferred by a warrant under this section are exercisable until the end of the period of one month beginning with the day on which the warrant is issued.
- (5) A person other than a constable shall not exercise the power of entry conferred by this section by night unless accompanied by a constable.

Textual Amendments

F12 S. 161 and s. 161A substituted for s. 161 (28.7.2000) by 2000 c. 17, s. 25

162 Power to enter land for or in connection with access to pipelines.

Where any thing conveyed by a pipe-line is chargeable with a duty of customs and excise which has not been paid, an officer may enter any land adjacent to the pipe-line in order to get to the pipe-line for the purpose of exercising in relation to that thing any power conferred by or under the Customs and Excise Acts 1979 or to get from the pipe-line after an exercise of any such power.

This section does not extend to Northern Ireland.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C2** S. 162 modified by S.I. 1983/947, **regs. 12, 13** (which S.I. is revoked 1.1.1993 by S.I. 1992/3152, **reg. 1(2)**)
- C3** S. 162 amended by S.I. 1985/1032, **reg. 11(a)** (which S.I. is revoked 1.1.1993 by S.I. 1992/3152, **reg. 1(2)**)
- C4** S. 162 amended (1.1.1993) by S.I. 1992/3152, **reg. 11(a)**.

163 Power to search vehicles or vessels.

- (1) Without prejudice to any other power conferred by the Customs and Excise Acts 1979, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that any vehicle or vessel is or may be carrying any goods which are—
 - (a) chargeable with any duty which has not been paid or secured; or
 - (b) in the course of being unlawfully removed from or to any place; or
 - (c) otherwise liable to forfeiture under the customs and excise Acts,
 any officer or constable or member of Her Majesty's armed forces or coastguard may stop and search that vehicle or vessel.
- (2) If when so required by any such officer, constable or member the person in charge of any such vehicle or vessel refuses to stop or to permit the vehicle or vessel to be searched, he shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of [^{F13}level 3 on the standard scale].
- [^{F14}(3) This section shall apply in relation to aircraft as it applies in relation to vehicles or vessels but the power to stop and search in subsection (1) above shall not be available in respect of aircraft which are airborne.]

Status: Point in time view as at 28/03/2005.

Changes to legislation: Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: General powers, etc. is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 July 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)

Textual Amendments

- F13** Words substituted by virtue of (E.W.) [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), **ss. 38, 46** and (S.) [Criminal Procedure \(Scotland\) Act 1975 \(c. 21, SIF 39:1\)](#), **ss. 289F, 289G** (as inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), **s. 54**) and (N.I.) by [S.I. 1984/703](#), (N.I. 3) arts. 5, 6
- F14** S. 163(3) inserted (16.7.1992) by [Finance \(No. 2\) Act 1992 \(c. 48\)](#), **s. 10(4)**.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C5** S. 163 amended by [S.I. 1988/1852 \(N.I. 19\)](#), **art. 4(2)**
- C6** S. 163 extended (E.W.S.) by [Scotch Whisky Act 1988 \(c. 22, SIF 109:1\)](#), **s. 1(4)**

[^{F15}163A Power to search articles.

- (1) Without prejudice to any other power conferred by the Customs and Excise Acts 1979, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a person in the United Kingdom (referred to in this section as “the suspect”) has with him, or at the place where he is, any goods to which this section applies, an officer may—
 - (a) require the suspect to permit a search of any article that he has with him or at that place, and
 - (b) if the suspect is not under arrest, detain him (and any such article) for so long as may be necessary to carry out the search.
- (2) The goods to which this section applies are dutiable alcoholic liquor, or tobacco products, which are—
 - (a) chargeable with any duty of excise, and
 - (b) liable to forfeiture under the customs and excise Acts.
- (3) Notwithstanding anything in subsection (4) of section 24 of the ^{M1}Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995 (detention and questioning by customs officers), detention of the suspect under subsection (1) above shall not prevent his subsequent detention under subsection (1) of that section.]

Textual Amendments

- F15** [S. 163A](#) inserted (28.7.2000) by [2000 c. 17](#), **s. 26**

Marginal Citations

- M1** [1995 c. 39](#).

164 Power to search persons.

- (1) Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that any person to whom this section applies [^{F16}(referred to in this section as “the suspect”)] is carrying any article—
 - (a) which is chargeable with any duty which has not been paid or secured; or
 - (b) with respect to the importation or exportation of which any prohibition or restriction is for the time being in force under or by virtue of any enactment.

[^{F17}an officer may exercise the powers conferred by subsection (2) below and, if the suspect is not under arrest, may detain him for so long as may be necessary for the exercise of those powers and (where applicable) the exercise of the rights conferred by subsection (3) below].

Status: Point in time view as at 28/03/2005.

Changes to legislation: Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: General powers, etc. is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 July 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)

- [^{F18}(2) The officer may require the suspect—
- (a) to permit such a search of any article which he has with him; and
 - (b) subject to subsection (3) below, to submit to such searches of his person, whether rub-down, strip or intimate,
- as the officer may consider necessary or expedient; but no such requirement may be imposed under paragraph (b) above without the officer informing the suspect of the effect of subsection (3) below.
- (3) If the suspect is required to submit to a search of his person, he may require to be taken—
- (a) except in the case of a rub-down search, before a justice of the peace or a superior of the officer concerned; and
 - (b) in the excepted case, before such a superior;
- and the justice or superior shall consider the grounds for suspicion and direct accordingly whether the suspect is to submit to the search.
- (3A) A rub-down or strip search shall not be carried out except by a person of the same sex as the suspect; and an intimate search shall not be carried out except by a suitably qualified person.]
- (4) This section applies to the following persons, namely—
- (a) any person who is on board or has landed from any ship or aircraft;
 - (b) any person entering or about to leave the United Kingdom;
 - (c) any person within the dock area of a port;
 - (d) any person at a customs and excise airport;
 - (e) any person in, entering or leaving any approved wharf or transit shed which is not in a port;
 - [^{F19}(ee) any person in, entering or leaving a free zone;]
 - (f) in Northern Ireland, any person travelling from or to any place which is on or beyond the boundary.
- [^{F20}(5) In this section—
- “intimate search” means any search which involves a physical examination (that is, an examination which is more than simply a visual examination) of a person’s body orifices;
- “rub-down search” means any search which is neither an intimate search nor a strip search;
- “strip search” means any search which is not an intimate search but which involves the removal of an article of clothing which—
- (a) is being worn (wholly or partly) on the trunk; and
 - (b) is being so worn either next to the skin or next to an article of underwear;
- “suitably qualified person” means a registered medical practitioner or a registered nurse.
- (6) Notwithstanding anything in subsection (4) of section 48 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act ^{M2}1987 (detention and questioning by customs officers), detention of the suspect under subsection (1) above shall not prevent his subsequent detention under subsection (1) of that section.]

Status: Point in time view as at 28/03/2005.

Changes to legislation: Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: General powers, etc. is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 July 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)

Textual Amendments

- F16** Words inserted by [Finance Act 1988 \(c. 39, SIF 40:1\), s. 10\(1\)\(a\)\(b\)](#)
F17 Words substituted by [Finance Act 1988 \(c. 39, SIF 40:1\), s. 10\(1\)\(a\)\(b\)](#)
F18 [S. 164\(2\)–\(3A\)](#) substituted for s. 164(2)(3) by [Finance Act 1988 \(c. 39, SIF 40:1\), s. 10\(2\)](#)
F19 [S. 164\(4\)\(ee\)](#) inserted by [Finance Act 1984 \(c. 43, SIF 40:1\), s. 8, Sch. 4 para. 6](#)
F20 [S. 164\(5\)\(6\)](#) inserted by [Finance Act 1988 \(c. 39, SIF 40:1\), s. 10\(3\)](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C7** [S. 164](#) amended by [S.I. 1990/2167, art. 4, Sch. para. 25](#)
C8 [S. 164](#) restricted (1.1.1993) by [Finance \(No. 2\) Act 1992 \(c. 48\), s. 4\(1\)\(3\)\(h\)\(6\)](#).

Marginal Citations

- M2** [1987 c. 41\(39:1\)](#).

165 Power to pay rewards.

Subject to any directions of the Treasury as to amount, the Commissioners may at their discretion pay rewards in respect of any service which appears to them to merit reward rendered to them by any person in relation to any assigned matter.

166 Agents.

- (1) If any person requests an officer or a person appointed by the Commissioners to transact any business relating to an assigned matter with him on behalf of another person, the officer or person so appointed may refuse to transact that business with him unless written authority from that other person is produced in such form as the Commissioners may direct.
- (2) Subject to subsection (1) above, anything required by the Customs and Excise Acts 1979 to be done by the importer or exporter of any goods may, except where the Commissioners otherwise require, be done on his behalf by an agent.

Status:

Point in time view as at 28/03/2005.

Changes to legislation:

Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: General powers, etc. is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 July 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.