



# Crossbows Act 1987

## 1987 CHAPTER 32

An Act to create offences relating to the sale and letting on hire of crossbows to, and the purchase, hiring and possession of crossbows by, persons under the age of seventeen; and for connected purposes. [15th May 1987]

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

### 1 Sale and letting on hire.

A person who sells or lets on hire a crossbow or a part of a crossbow to a person under the age of [<sup>F1</sup>eighteen] is guilty of an offence, [<sup>F2</sup>unless he believes him to be <sup>F1</sup>eighteen years of age or older and has reasonable ground for the belief].

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** Word in s. 1 substituted (E.W.) (1.10.2007) by [Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 \(c. 38\)](#) , **ss. 44** , **66(2)** ; [S.I. 2007/2180](#) , **art. 3(k)** ; and said word also substituted (S.) (1.10.2007) by [Custodial Sentences and Weapons \(Scotland\) Act 2007 \(asp 17\)](#) , **s. 62(1)(2)(a)67(2)** ; [S.S.I. 2007/431](#) , **art. 3** , **Sch.**
- F2** Words in s. 1 repealed (S.) (28.3.2011) by [Criminal Justice and Licensing \(Scotland\) Act 2010 \(asp 13\)](#) , **ss. 35(2)** , **206(1)** ; [S.S.I. 2011/178](#) , **art. 2** , **Sch.**

### [<sup>F3</sup>1A Defences

- (1) It is a defence for a person charged with an offence under section 1 (referred to in this section as “ the accused ”) to show that—
- the accused believed the person to whom the crossbow or part was sold or let on hire (referred to in this section as “ the purchaser or hirer ”) to be aged 18 or over, and
  - either—

---

*Changes to legislation:* There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Crossbows Act 1987. (See end of Document for details)

---

- (i) the accused had taken reasonable steps to establish the purchaser or hirer's age, or
  - (ii) no reasonable person could have suspected from the purchaser or hirer's appearance that the purchaser or hirer was under the age of 18.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b)(i), the accused is to be treated as having taken reasonable steps to establish the purchaser or hirer's age if and only if—
- (a) the accused was shown any of the documents mentioned in subsection (3), and
  - (b) the document would have convinced a reasonable person.
- (3) Those documents are any document bearing to be—
- (a) a passport,
    - [ a UK driving licence,]
  - <sup>F4</sup>(aa) a European Union photocard driving licence, or
  - (c) such other document, or a document of such other description, as the Scottish Ministers may by order made by statutory instrument prescribe.
- (4) A statutory instrument containing an order under subsection (3)(c) is subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of the Scottish Parliament.]

---

**Textual Amendments**

- F3** S. 1A inserted (S.) (28.3.2011) by [Criminal Justice and Licensing \(Scotland\) Act 2010 \(asp 13\)](#), **ss. 35(3)**, 206(1); S.S.I. 2011/178, art. 2, Sch.
- F4** S. 1A(3)(aa) inserted (S.) (31.12.2020) by [The Licensing \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2019 \(S.S.I. 2019/6\)](#), regs. 1, **3(2)**; 2020 c. 1, **Sch. 5 para. 1(1)**

**2 Purchase and hiring.**

A person under the age of [<sup>F5</sup>eighteen] who buys or hires a crossbow or a part of a crossbow is guilty of an offence.

---

**Textual Amendments**

- F5** Word in s. 2 substituted (E.W.) (1.10.2007) by [Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 \(c. 38\)](#), **ss. 44**, 66(2); S.I. 2007/2180, art. 3(k); and said word also substituted (S.) (1.10.2007) by [Custodial Sentences and Weapons \(Scotland\) Act 2007 \(asp 17\)](#), **s. 62(1)(2)(b)67(2)**; S.S.I. 2007/431, art. 3, Sch.

**3 Possession.**

A person under the age of [<sup>F6</sup>eighteen] who has with him—

- (a) a crossbow which is capable of discharging a missile, or
- (b) parts of a crossbow which together (and without any other parts) can be assembled to form a crossbow capable of discharging a missile,

is guilty of an offence, unless he is under the supervision of a person who is twenty-one years of age or older.

---

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Crossbows Act 1987. (See end of Document for details)*

---

**Textual Amendments**

- F6** Word in s. 3 substituted (E.W.) (1.10.2007) by [Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 \(c. 38\), ss. 44, 66\(2\); S.I. 2007/2180, art. 3\(k\)](#); and said word also substituted (S.) (1.10.2007) by [Custodial Sentences and Weapons \(Scotland\) Act 2007 \(asp 17\), s. 62\(1\)\(2\)\(c\)67\(2\); S.S.I. 2007/431, art. 3, Sch.](#)

**[<sup>F7</sup>3A Test purchasing**

- (1) A person under the age of 18 who buys or hires, or attempts to buy or hire, a crossbow or a part of a crossbow does not commit an offence under section 2 or 3 if the person is authorised to do so by the chief constable for the purpose of determining whether an offence is being committed under section 1.
- (2) A chief constable may authorise a person under the age of 18 to buy or hire, or attempt to buy or hire, a crossbow or a part of a crossbow only if satisfied that all reasonable steps have been or will be taken to—
  - (a) ensure the person's safety, and
  - (b) avoid any risk to the person's welfare.]

**Textual Amendments**

- F7** [S. 3A](#) inserted (S.) (28.3.2011) by [Criminal Justice and Licensing \(Scotland\) Act 2010 \(asp 13\), ss. 35\(4\), 206\(1\); S.S.I. 2011/178, art. 2, Sch.](#)

**4 Powers of search and seizure etc.**

- (1) If a constable suspects with reasonable cause that a person is committing or has committed an offence under section 3, the constable may—
  - (a) search that person for a crossbow or part of a crossbow;
  - (b) search any vehicle, or anything in or on a vehicle, in or on which the constable suspects with reasonable cause there is a crossbow, or part of a crossbow, connected with the offence.
- (2) A constable may detain a person or vehicle for the purpose of a search under subsection (1).
- (3) A constable may seize and retain for the purpose of proceedings for an offence under this Act anything discovered by him in the course of a search under subsection (1) which appears to him to be a crossbow or part of a crossbow.
- (4) For the purpose of exercising the powers conferred by this section a constable may enter any land other than a dwelling-house.

**5 Exception.**

This Act does not apply to crossbows with a draw weight of less than 1.4 kilograms.

---

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Crossbows Act 1987. (See end of Document for details)*

---

## 6 Punishments.

- (1) A person guilty of an offence under section 1 shall be liable, on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, or to both.
- (2) A person guilty of an offence under section 2 or 3 shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
- (3) The court by which a person is convicted of an offence under this Act may make such order as it thinks fit as to the forfeiture or disposal of any crossbow or part of a crossbow in respect of which the offence was committed.

## 7 Corresponding provision for Northern Ireland.

An Order in Council under paragraph 1(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the <sup>M1</sup>Northern Ireland Act 1974 (legislation for Northern Ireland in the interim period) which contains a statement that it is made only for purposes corresponding to the purposes of this Act—

- (a) shall not be subject to paragraph 1(4) and (5) of that Schedule (affirmative resolution of both Houses of Parliament), but
- (b) shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.

---

### Marginal Citations

M1 1974 c. 28.

## 8 Short title, commencement and extent.

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Crossbows Act 1987.
- (2) Sections 1 to 6 shall come into force at the end of the period of two months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed.
- (3) Sections 1 to 6 shall not extend to Northern Ireland.

**Changes to legislation:**

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Crossbows Act 1987.