



Road Traffic Act 1988

1988 CHAPTER 52

PART I

PRINCIPAL ROAD SAFETY PROVISIONS

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1 Pt. I modified (E.W.S.) (16.8.2006) by [The Dover Harbour Revision Order 2006 \(S.I. 2006/2167\)](#), art. 27

Driving offences

1 Causing death by reckless driving.

A person who causes the death of another person by driving a motor vehicle on a road recklessly is guilty of an offence.

2 Reckless driving.

A person who drives a motor vehicle on a road recklessly is guilty of an offence.

VALID FROM 01/07/1992

[^{F1}2A Meaning of dangerous driving.

(1) For the purposes of sections 1 and 2 above a person is to be regarded as driving dangerously if (and, subject to subsection (2) below, only if)—

- (a) the way he drives falls far below what would be expected of a competent and careful driver, and
- (b) it would be obvious to a competent and careful driver that driving in that way would be dangerous.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Road Traffic Act 1988, Part I is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 03 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)

- (2) A person is also to be regarded as driving dangerously for the purposes of sections 1 and 2 above if it would be obvious to a competent and careful driver that driving the vehicle in its current state would be dangerous.
- (3) In subsections (1) and (2) above “dangerous” refers to danger either of injury to any person or of serious damage to property; and in determining for the purposes of those subsections what would be expected of, or obvious to, a competent and careful driver in a particular case, regard shall be had not only to the circumstances of which he could be expected to be aware but also to any circumstances shown to have been within the knowledge of the accused.
- (4) In determining for the purposes of subsection (2) above the state of a vehicle, regard may be had to anything attached to or carried on or in it and to the manner in which it is attached or carried.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Ss. 1-2A substituted (1.7.1992) for ss. 1-2 by [Road Traffic Act 1991 \(c. 40, SIF 107:1\)](#), [s.1](#); [S.I. 1992/1286](#), [art. 2](#), Sch.

VALID FROM 18/08/2008

[^{F2}2B **Causing death by careless, or inconsiderate, driving**

A person who causes the death of another person by driving a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road or other public place without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons using the road or place, is guilty of an offence.]

Textual Amendments

- F2** [S. 2B](#) inserted (18.8.2008) by [Road Safety Act 2006 \(c. 49\)](#), [ss. 20\(1\)](#), [61\(1\)](#) (with [s. 61\(4\)\(5\)](#)); [S.I. 2008/1918](#), [art. 2](#)

3 **Careless, and inconsiderate, driving.**

If a person drives a motor vehicle on a road without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons using the road, he is guilty of an offence.

VALID FROM 24/09/2007

[^{F3}3ZA **Meaning of careless, or inconsiderate, driving**

- (1) This section has effect for the purposes of sections 2B and 3 above and section 3A below.
- (2) A person is to be regarded as driving without due care and attention if (and only if) the way he drives falls below what would be expected of a competent and careful driver.

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- (3) In determining for the purposes of subsection (2) above what would be expected of a careful and competent driver in a particular case, regard shall be had not only to the circumstances of which he could be expected to be aware but also to any circumstances shown to have been within the knowledge of the accused.
- (4) A person is to be regarded as driving without reasonable consideration for other persons only if those persons are inconvenienced by his driving.]

Textual Amendments

- F3** S. 3ZA inserted (24.9.2007 for certain purposes and otherwise 18.8.2008) by Road Safety Act 2006 (c. 49), ss. 30, 61; S.I. 2007/2472, art. 2(h); S.I. 2008/1918, art. 2

VALID FROM 18/08/2008

[^{F4}3ZB Causing death by driving: unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured drivers

A person is guilty of an offence under this section if he causes the death of another person by driving a motor vehicle on a road and, at the time when he is driving, the circumstances are such that he is committing an offence under—

- (a) section 87(1) of this Act (driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence),
- (b) section 103(1)(b) of this Act (driving while disqualified), or
- (c) section 143 of this Act (using motor vehicle while uninsured or unsecured against third party risks).]

Textual Amendments

- F4** S. 3ZB inserted (18.8.2008) by Road Safety Act 2006 (c. 49), ss. 21(1), 61(1) (with s. 61(4)(5)); S.I. 2008/1918, art. 2

VALID FROM 01/07/1992

[^{F5}3A Causing death by careless driving when under influence of drink or drugs.

- (1) If a person causes the death of another person by driving a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road or other public place without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons using the road or place, and—

- (a) he is, at the time when he is driving, unfit to drive through drink or drugs, or
- (b) he has consumed so much alcohol that the proportion of it in his breath, blood or urine at that time exceeds the prescribed limit, or
- (c) he is, within 18 hours after that time, required to provide a specimen in pursuance of section 7 of this Act, but without reasonable excuse fails to provide it,

he is guilty of an offence.

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- (2) For the purposes of this section a person shall be taken to be unfit to drive at any time when his ability to drive properly is impaired.
- (3) Subsection (1)(b) and (c) above shall not apply in relation to a person driving a mechanically propelled vehicle other than a motor vehicle.]

Textual Amendments

F5 S. 3A inserted (1.7.1992) by Road Traffic Act 1991 (c. 40, SIF 107:1), s.3; S.I. 1992/1286, art. 2, Sch.

Motor vehicles: drink and drugs

4 Driving, or being in charge, when under influence of drink or drugs.

- (1) A person who, when driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle on a road or other public place, is unfit to drive through drink or drugs is guilty of an offence.
- (2) Without prejudice to subsection (1) above, a person who, when in charge of a motor vehicle which is on a road or other public place, is unfit to drive through drink or drugs is guilty of an offence.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (2) above, a person shall be deemed not to have been in charge of a motor vehicle if he proves that at the material time the circumstances were such that there was no likelihood of his driving it so long as he remained unfit to drive through drink or drugs.
- (4) The court may, in determining whether there was such a likelihood as is mentioned in subsection (3) above, disregard any injury to him and any damage to the vehicle.
- (5) For the purposes of this section, a person shall be taken to be unfit to drive if his ability to drive properly is for the time being impaired.
- (6) A constable may arrest a person without warrant if he has reasonable cause to suspect that that person is or has been committing an offence under this section.
- (7) For the purpose of arresting a person under the power conferred by subsection (6) above, a constable may enter (if need be by force) any place where that person is or where the constable, with reasonable cause, suspects him to be.
- (8) Subsection (7) above does not extend to Scotland, and nothing in that subsection affects any rule of law in Scotland concerning the right of a constable to enter any premises for any purpose.

5 Driving or being in charge of a motor vehicle with alcohol concentration above prescribed limit.

- (1) If a person—
 - (a) drives or attempts to drive a motor vehicle on a road or other public place, or
 - (b) is in charge of a motor vehicle on a road or other public place,
 after consuming so much alcohol that the proportion of it in his breath, blood or urine exceeds the prescribed limit he is guilty of an offence.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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- (2) It is a defence for a person charged with an offence under subsection (1)(b) above to prove that at the time he is alleged to have committed the offence the circumstances were such that there was no likelihood of his driving the vehicle whilst the proportion of alcohol in his breath, blood or urine remained likely to exceed the prescribed limit.
- (3) The court may, in determining whether there was such a likelihood as is mentioned in subsection (2) above, disregard any injury to him and any damage to the vehicle.

6 Breath tests.

- (1) Where a constable in uniform has reasonable cause to suspect—
 - (a) that a person driving or attempting to drive or in charge of a motor vehicle on a road or other public place has alcohol in his body or has committed a traffic offence whilst the vehicle was in motion, or
 - (b) that a person has been driving or attempting to drive or been in charge of a motor vehicle on a road or other public place with alcohol in his body and that that person still has alcohol in his body, or
 - (c) that a person has been driving or attempting to drive or been in charge of a motor vehicle on a road or other public place and has committed a traffic offence whilst the vehicle was in motion,he may, subject to section 9 of this Act, require him to provide a specimen of breath for a breath test.
- (2) If an accident occurs owing to the presence of a motor vehicle on a road or other public place, a constable may, subject to section 9 of this Act, require any person who he has reasonable cause to believe was driving or attempting to drive or in charge of the vehicle at the time of the accident to provide a specimen of breath for a breath test.
- (3) A person may be required under subsection (1) or subsection (2) above to provide a specimen either at or near the place where the requirement is made or, if the requirement is made under subsection (2) above and the constable making the requirement thinks fit, at a police station specified by the constable.
- (4) A person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to provide a specimen of breath when required to do so in pursuance of this section is guilty of an offence.
- (5) A constable may arrest a person without warrant if—
 - (a) as a result of a breath test he has reasonable cause to suspect that the proportion of alcohol in that person's breath or blood exceeds the prescribed limit, or
 - (b) that person has failed to provide a specimen of breath for a breath test when required to do so in pursuance of this section and the constable has reasonable cause to suspect that he has alcohol in his body,but a person shall not be arrested by virtue of this subsection when he is at a hospital as a patient.
- (6) A constable may, for the purpose of requiring a person to provide a specimen of breath under subsection (2) above in a case where he has reasonable cause to suspect that the accident involved injury to another person or of arresting him in such a case under subsection (5) above, enter (if need be by force) any place where that person is or where the constable, with reasonable cause, suspects him to be.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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- (7) Subsection (6) above does not extend to Scotland, and nothing in that subsection shall affect any rule of law in Scotland concerning the right of a constable to enter any premises for any purpose.
- (8) In this section “traffic offence” means an offence under—
- (a) any provision of Part II of the ^{M1}Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981,
 - (b) any provision of the ^{M2}Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984,
 - (c) any provision of the ^{M3}Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 except Part III, or
 - (d) any provision of this Act except Part V.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C2** S. 6 applied (with modifications) (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) by Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (c. 20), ss. **83(1)(3)**, **96(1)(3)**, 120 (with ss. 90, 100); S.I. 2004/827, arts. 2, 3

Marginal Citations

- M1** 1981 c. 14.
M2 1984 c. 27.
M3 1988 c. 53.

VALID FROM 29/03/2004

[^{F6}6A Preliminary breath test

- (1) A preliminary breath test is a procedure whereby the person to whom the test is administered provides a specimen of breath to be used for the purpose of obtaining, by means of a device of a type approved by the Secretary of State, an indication whether the proportion of alcohol in the person’s breath or blood is likely to exceed the prescribed limit.
- (2) A preliminary breath test administered in reliance on section 6(2) to (4) may be administered only at or near the place where the requirement to co-operate with the test is imposed.
- (3) A preliminary breath test administered in reliance on section 6(5) may be administered—
 - (a) at or near the place where the requirement to co-operate with the test is imposed, or
 - (b) if the constable who imposes the requirement thinks it expedient, at a police station specified by him.

Textual Amendments

- F6** Ss. 6-6E substituted (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) for s. 6 by Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (c. 20), ss. 107, 120, **Sch. 7 para. 1**; S.I. 2004/827, arts. 2, 3

Status: Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C3** Ss. 6A-6E applied (with modifications) (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) by Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (c. 20), ss. 83(1)(3), 96(1)(3), 120 (with ss. 90, 100); S.I. 2004/827, arts. 2, 3

VALID FROM 29/03/2004

6B Preliminary impairment test

- (1) A preliminary impairment test is a procedure whereby the constable administering the test—
 - (a) observes the person to whom the test is administered in his performance of tasks specified by the constable, and
 - (b) makes such other observations of the person's physical state as the constable thinks expedient.
- (2) The Secretary of State shall issue (and may from time to time revise) a code of practice about—
 - (a) the kind of task that may be specified for the purpose of a preliminary impairment test,
 - (b) the kind of observation of physical state that may be made in the course of a preliminary impairment test,
 - (c) the manner in which a preliminary impairment test should be administered, and
 - (d) the inferences that may be drawn from observations made in the course of a preliminary impairment test.
- (3) In issuing or revising the code of practice the Secretary of State shall aim to ensure that a preliminary impairment test is designed to indicate—
 - (a) whether a person is unfit to drive, and
 - (b) if he is, whether or not his unfitness is likely to be due to drink or drugs.
- (4) A preliminary impairment test may be administered—
 - (a) at or near the place where the requirement to co-operate with the test is imposed, or
 - (b) if the constable who imposes the requirement thinks it expedient, at a police station specified by him.
- (5) A constable administering a preliminary impairment test shall have regard to the code of practice under this section.
- (6) A constable may administer a preliminary impairment test only if he is approved for that purpose by the chief officer of the police force to which he belongs.
- (7) A code of practice under this section may include provision about—
 - (a) the giving of approval under subsection (6), and
 - (b) in particular, the kind of training that a constable should have undergone, or the kind of qualification that a constable should possess, before being approved under that subsection.

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Textual Amendments

- F6** Ss. 6-6E substituted (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) for s. 6 by [Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 \(c. 20\)](#), ss. 107, 120, [Sch. 7 para. 1](#); S.I. 2004/827, [arts. 2, 3](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C4** Ss. 6A-6E applied (with modifications) (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) by [Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 \(c. 20\)](#), [ss. 83\(1\)\(3\), 96\(1\)\(3\)](#), 120 (with ss. 90, 100); S.I. 2004/827, [arts. 2, 3](#)

VALID FROM 29/03/2004

6C Preliminary drug test

- (1) A preliminary drug test is a procedure by which a specimen of sweat or saliva is—
- (a) obtained, and
 - (b) used for the purpose of obtaining, by means of a device of a type approved by the Secretary of State, an indication whether the person to whom the test is administered has a drug in his body.
- (2) A preliminary drug test may be administered—
- (a) at or near the place where the requirement to co-operate with the test is imposed, or
 - (b) if the constable who imposes the requirement thinks it expedient, at a police station specified by him.

Textual Amendments

- F6** Ss. 6-6E substituted (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) for s. 6 by [Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 \(c. 20\)](#), ss. 107, 120, [Sch. 7 para. 1](#); S.I. 2004/827, [arts. 2, 3](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C5** Ss. 6A-6E applied (with modifications) (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) by [Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 \(c. 20\)](#), [ss. 83\(1\)\(3\), 96\(1\)\(3\)](#), 120 (with ss. 90, 100); S.I. 2004/827, [arts. 2, 3](#)

VALID FROM 29/03/2004

^{F6}6D Arrest

- (1) A constable may arrest a person without warrant if as a result of a preliminary breath test the constable reasonably suspects that the proportion of alcohol in the person's breath or blood exceeds the prescribed limit.
- (2) A constable may arrest a person without warrant if—
- (a) the person fails to co-operate with a preliminary test in pursuance of a requirement imposed under section 6, and

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- (b) the constable reasonably suspects that the person has alcohol or a drug in his body or is under the influence of a drug.
- (3) A person may not be arrested under this section while at a hospital as a patient.]

Textual Amendments

F6 Ss. 6-6E substituted (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) for s. 6 by [Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 \(c. 20\)](#), ss. 107, 120, [Sch. 7 para. 1](#); S.I. 2004/827, [arts. 2, 3](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C6 Ss. 6A-6E applied (with modifications) (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) by [Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 \(c. 20\)](#), [ss. 83\(1\)\(3\), 96\(1\)\(3\)](#), 120 (with ss. 90, 100); S.I. 2004/827, [arts. 2, 3](#)

VALID FROM 29/03/2004

6E Power of entry

- (1) A constable may enter any place (using reasonable force if necessary) for the purpose of—
- (a) imposing a requirement by virtue of section 6(5) following an accident in a case where the constable reasonably suspects that the accident involved injury of any person, or
 - (b) arresting a person under section 6D following an accident in a case where the constable reasonably suspects that the accident involved injury of any person.
- (2) This section—
- (a) does not extend to Scotland, and
 - (b) is without prejudice to any rule of law or enactment about the right of a constable in Scotland to enter any place.]

Textual Amendments

F6 Ss. 6-6E substituted (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) for s. 6 by [Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 \(c. 20\)](#), ss. 107, 120, [Sch. 7 para. 1](#); S.I. 2004/827, [arts. 2, 3](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C7 Ss. 6A-6E applied (with modifications) (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) by [Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 \(c. 20\)](#), [ss. 83\(1\)\(3\), 96\(1\)\(3\)](#), 120 (with ss. 90, 100); S.I. 2004/827, [arts. 2, 3](#)

7 Provision of specimens for analysis.

- (1) In the course of an investigation into whether a person has committed an offence under section 4 or 5 of this Act a constable may, subject to the following provisions of this section and section 9 of this Act, require him—

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- (a) to provide two specimens of breath for analysis by means of a device of a type approved by the Secretary of State, or
 - (b) to provide a specimen of blood or urine for a laboratory test.
- (2) A requirement under this section to provide specimens of breath can only be made at a police station.
- (3) A requirement under this section to provide a specimen of blood or urine can only be made at a police station or at a hospital; and it cannot be made at a police station unless—
- (a) the constable making the requirement has reasonable cause to believe that for medical reasons a specimen of breath cannot be provided or should not be required, or
 - (b) at the time the requirement is made a device or a reliable device of the type mentioned in subsection (1)(a) above is not available at the police station or it is then for any other reason not practicable to use such a device there, or
 - (c) the suspected offence is one under section 4 of this Act and the constable making the requirement has been advised by a medical practitioner that the condition of the person required to provide the specimen might be due to some drug;
- but may then be made notwithstanding that the person required to provide the specimen has already provided or been required to provide two specimens of breath.
- (4) If the provision of a specimen other than a specimen of breath may be required in pursuance of this section the question whether it is to be a specimen of blood or a specimen of urine shall be decided by the constable making the requirement, but if a medical practitioner is of the opinion that for medical reasons a specimen of blood cannot or should not be taken the specimen shall be a specimen of urine.
- (5) A specimen of urine shall be provided within one hour of the requirement for its provision being made and after the provision of a previous specimen of urine.
- (6) A person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to provide a specimen when required to do so in pursuance of this section is guilty of an offence.
- (7) A constable must, on requiring any person to provide a specimen in pursuance of this section, warn him that a failure to provide it may render him liable to prosecution.

VALID FROM 01/10/2002

[^{F7}7A Specimens of blood taken from persons incapable of consenting

- (1) A constable may make a request to a medical practitioner for him to take a specimen of blood from a person (“the person concerned”) irrespective of whether that person consents if—
- (a) that person is a person from whom the constable would (in the absence of any incapacity of that person and of any objection under section 9) be entitled under section 7 to require the provision of a specimen of blood for a laboratory test;
 - (b) it appears to that constable that that person has been involved in an accident that constitutes or is comprised in the matter that is under investigation or the circumstances of that matter;

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- (c) it appears to that constable that that person is or may be incapable (whether or not he has purported to do so) of giving a valid consent to the taking of a specimen of blood; and
 - (d) it appears to that constable that that person’s incapacity is attributable to medical reasons.
- (2) A request under this section—
- (a) shall not be made to a medical practitioner who for the time being has any responsibility (apart from the request) for the clinical care of the person concerned; and
 - (b) shall not be made to a medical practitioner other than a police medical practitioner unless—
 - (i) it is not reasonably practicable for the request to be made to a police medical practitioner; or
 - (ii) it is not reasonably practicable for such a medical practitioner (assuming him to be willing to do so) to take the specimen.
- (3) It shall be lawful for a medical practitioner to whom a request is made under this section, if he thinks fit—
- (a) to take a specimen of blood from the person concerned irrespective of whether that person consents; and
 - (b) to provide the sample to a constable.
- (4) If a specimen is taken in pursuance of a request under this section, the specimen shall not be subjected to a laboratory test unless the person from whom it was taken—
- (a) has been informed that it was taken; and
 - (b) has been required by a constable to give his permission for a laboratory test of the specimen; and
 - (c) has given his permission.
- (5) A constable must, on requiring a person to give his permission for the purposes of this section for a laboratory test of a specimen, warn that person that a failure to give the permission may render him liable to prosecution.
- (6) A person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to give his permission for a laboratory test of a specimen of blood taken from him under this section is guilty of an offence.
- (7) In this section “police medical practitioner” means a medical practitioner who is engaged under any agreement to provide medical services for purposes connected with the activities of a police force.]

Textual Amendments

F7 S. 7A inserted (1.10.2002) by 2002 c. 30, s. 56(1); S.I. 2002/2306, art. 2(d)(v)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C8 S. 7A applied (with modifications) (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) by Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (c. 20), ss. 83(1)(3), 96(1)(3), 120 (with ss. 90, 100); S.I. 2004/827, arts. 2, 3

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8 Choice of specimens of breath.

- (1) Subject to subsection (2) below, of any two specimens of breath provided by any person in pursuance of section 7 of this Act that with the lower proportion of alcohol in the breath shall be used and the other shall be disregarded.
- (2) If the specimen with the lower proportion of alcohol contains no more than 50 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath, the person who provided it may claim that it should be replaced by such specimen as may be required under section 7(4) of this Act and, if he then provides such a specimen, neither specimen of breath shall be used.
- (3) The Secretary of State may by regulations substitute another proportion of alcohol in the breath for that specified in subsection (2) above.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C9** S. 8 applied (with modifications) (29.3.2004 for certain purposes and 30.3.2004 otherwise) by [Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 \(c. 20\)](#), [ss. 83\(1\)\(3\), 96\(1\)\(3\)](#), [120](#) (with [ss. 90, 100](#)); [S.I. 2004/827](#), [arts. 2, 3](#)

9 Protection for hospital patients.

- (1) While a person is at a hospital as a patient he shall not be required to provide a specimen of breath for a breath test or to provide a specimen for a laboratory test unless the medical practitioner in immediate charge of his case has been notified of the proposal to make the requirement; and—
 - (a) if the requirement is then made, it shall be for the provision of a specimen at the hospital, but
 - (b) if the medical practitioner objects on the ground specified in subsection (2) below, the requirement shall not be made.
- (2) The ground on which the medical practitioner may object is that the requirement or the provision of a specimen or, in the case of a specimen of blood or urine, the warning required under section 7(7) of this Act, would be prejudicial to the proper care and treatment of the patient.

10 Detention of persons affected by alcohol or a drug.

- (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3) below, a person required to provide a specimen of breath, blood or urine may afterwards be detained at a police station until it appears to the constable that, were that person then driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle on a road, he would not be committing an offence under section 4 or 5 of this Act.
- (2) A person shall not be detained in pursuance of this section if it appears to a constable that there is no likelihood of his driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle whilst his ability to drive properly is impaired or whilst the proportion of alcohol in his breath, blood or urine exceeds the prescribed limit.
- (3) A constable must consult a medical practitioner on any question arising under this section whether a person's ability to drive properly is or might be impaired through drugs and must act on the medical practitioner's advice.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Road Traffic Act 1988, Part I is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 03 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)

11 Interpretation of sections 4 to 10.

- (1) The following provisions apply for the interpretation of sections 4 to 10 of this Act.
- (2) In those sections—
 - “breath test” means a preliminary test for the purpose of obtaining, by means of a device of a type approved by the Secretary of State, an indication whether the proportion of alcohol in a person’s breath or blood is likely to exceed the prescribed limit,
 - “drug” includes any intoxicant other than alcohol,
 - “fail” includes refuse,
 - “hospital” means an institution which provides medical or surgical treatment for in-patients or out-patients,
 - “the prescribed limit” means, as the case may require—
 - (a) 35 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath,
 - (b) 80 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood, or
 - (c) 107 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of urine,or such other proportion as may be prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- (3) A person does not provide a specimen of breath for a breath test or for analysis unless the specimen—
 - (a) is sufficient to enable the test or the analysis to be carried out, and
 - (b) is provided in such a way as to enable the objective of the test or analysis to be satisfactorily achieved.
- (4) A person provides a specimen of blood if and only if he consents to its being taken by a medical practitioner and it is so taken.

Motor racing and motoring events on public ways

12 Motor racing on public ways.

- (1) A person who promotes or takes part in a race or trial of speed between motor vehicles on a public way is guilty of an offence.
- (2) In this section “public way” means, in England and Wales, a public highway and, in Scotland, a public road.

13 Regulation of motoring events on public ways.

- (1) A person who promotes or takes part in a competition or trial (other than a race or trial of speed) involving the use of motor vehicles on a public way is guilty of an offence unless the competition or trial—
 - (a) is authorised, and
 - (b) is conducted in accordance with any conditions imposed,by or under regulations under this section.
- (2) The Secretary of State may by regulations authorise, or provide for authorising, the holding of competitions or trials (other than races or trials of speed) involving the use of motor vehicles on public ways either—

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- (a) generally, or
 - (b) as regards any area, or as regards any class or description of competition or trial or any particular competition or trial,
- subject to such conditions, including conditions requiring the payment of fees, as may be imposed by or under the regulations.
- (3) Regulations under this section may—
- (a) prescribe the procedure to be followed, and the particulars to be given, in connection with applications for authorisation under the regulations, and
 - (b) make different provision for different classes or descriptions of competition or trial.
- (4) In this section “public way” means, in England and Wales, a public highway and, in Scotland, a public road.

VALID FROM 01/07/1992

[^{F8}13A Disapplication of sections 1 to 3 for authorised motoring events.

- (1) A person shall not be guilty of an offence under sections 1, 2 or 3 of this Act by virtue of driving a vehicle in a public place other than a road if he shows that he was driving in accordance with an authorisation for a motoring event given under regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- (2) Regulations under this section may in particular—
- (a) prescribe the persons by whom, and limit the circumstances in which and the places in respect of which, authorisations may be given under the regulations;
 - (b) specify conditions which must be included among those incorporated in authorisations;
 - (c) provide for authorisations to cease to have effect in prescribed circumstances;
 - (d) provide for the procedure to be followed, the particulars to be given, and the amount (or the persons who are to determine the amount) of any fees to be paid, in connection with applications for authorisations;
 - (e) make different provisions for different cases.]

Textual Amendments

F8 S. 13A inserted (1.7.1992) by [Road Traffic Act 1991 \(c. 40, SIF 107:1\)](#), **s.5**; [S.I. 1992/1286](#), **art. 2**, Sch.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C10 S. 13A: transfer of certain functions (1.7.1999) by [S.I. 1999/1750](#), **arts. 1(1), 2**, **Sch. 1** (with **art. 7**); [S.I. 1999/3178](#), **art. 3**

S. 13A: transfer of functions (1.7.1999) by [S.I. 1999/672](#), **arts. 1, 2**, **Sch. 1**

Status: Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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Protective measures: seat belts, helmets, etc.

14 Seat belts: adults.

- (1) The Secretary of State may make regulations requiring, subject to such exceptions as may be prescribed, persons who are driving or riding in motor vehicles on a road to wear seat belts of such description as may be prescribed.
- (2) Regulations under this section—
 - (a) may make different provision in relation to different classes of vehicles, different descriptions of persons and different circumstances,
 - (b) shall include exceptions for—
 - (i) the users of vehicles constructed or adapted for the delivery of goods or mail to consumers or addresses, as the case may be, while engaged in making local rounds of deliveries,
 - (ii) the drivers of vehicles while performing a manoeuvre which includes reversing,
 - (iii) any person holding a valid certificate signed by a medical practitioner to the effect that it is inadvisable on medical grounds for him to wear a seat belt,
 - (c) may make any prescribed exceptions subject to such conditions as may be prescribed, and
 - (d) may prescribe cases in which a fee of a prescribed amount may be charged on an application for any certificate required as a condition of any prescribed exception.
- (3) A person who drives or rides in a motor vehicle in contravention of regulations under this section is guilty of an offence; but, notwithstanding any enactment or rule of law, no person other than the person actually committing the contravention is guilty of an offence by reason of the contravention.
- (4) If the holder of any such certificate as is referred to in subsection (2)(b) above is informed by a constable that he may be prosecuted for an offence under subsection (3) above, he is not in proceedings for that offence entitled to rely on the exception afforded to him by the certificate unless—
 - (a) it is produced to the constable at the time he is so informed, or
 - (b) it is produced—
 - (i) within seven days after the date on which he is so informed, or
 - (ii) as soon as is reasonably practicable,at such police station as he may have specified to the constable, or
 - (c) where it is not produced at such police station, it is not reasonably practicable for it to be produced there before the day on which the proceedings are commenced.
- (5) For the purposes of subsection (4) above, the laying of the information or, in Scotland, the service of the complaint on the accused shall be treated as the commencement of the proceedings.
- (6) Regulations under this section requiring the wearing of seat belts by persons riding in motor vehicles shall not apply to children under the age of fourteen years.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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15 Restriction on carrying children not wearing seat belts in motor vehicles.

- (1) Except as provided by regulations, where a child under the age of fourteen years is in the front of a motor vehicle, a person must not without reasonable excuse drive the vehicle on a road unless the child is wearing a seat belt in conformity with regulations.
- (2) It is an offence for a person to drive a motor vehicle in contravention of subsection (1) above.
- (3) Except as provided by regulations, where a child under the age of fourteen years is in the rear of a motor vehicle and any seat belt is fitted in the rear of that vehicle, a person must not without reasonable excuse drive the vehicle on a road unless the child is wearing a seat belt in conformity with regulations.
- (4) It is an offence for a person to drive a motor vehicle in contravention of subsection (3) above.
- (5) Provision may be made by regulations—
 - (a) excepting from the prohibition in subsection (1) or (3) above children of any prescribed description, vehicles of a prescribed class or the driving of vehicles in such circumstances as may be prescribed,
 - (b) defining in relation to any class of vehicle what part of the vehicle is to be regarded as the front of the vehicle for the purposes of subsection (1) above or as the rear of the vehicle for the purposes of subsection (3) above,
 - (c) prescribing for the purposes of subsection (1) or (3) above the descriptions of seat belt to be worn by children of any prescribed description and the manner in which such seat belt is to be fixed and used.
- (6) Regulations made for the purposes of subsection (3) above shall include an exemption for any child holding a valid certificate signed by a medical practitioner to the effect that it is inadvisable on medical grounds for him to wear a seat belt.
- (7) If the driver of a motor vehicle is informed by a constable that he may be prosecuted for an offence under subsection (4) above, he is not in proceedings for that offence entitled to rely on an exception afforded to a child by a certificate referred to in subsection (6) above unless—
 - (a) it is produced to the constable at the time he is so informed, or
 - (b) it is produced—
 - (i) within seven days after the date on which he is so informed, or
 - (ii) as soon as is reasonably practicable,
 at such police station as he may have specified to the constable, or
 - (c) where it is not produced at such police station, it is not reasonably practicable for it to be produced there before the day on which the proceedings are commenced.
- (8) For the purposes of subsection (7) above, the laying of the information or, in Scotland, the service of the complaint on the accused shall be treated as the commencement of the proceedings.
- (9) In this section—

“regulations” means regulations made by the Secretary of State under this section, and

“seat belt” includes any description of restraining device for a child and any reference to wearing a seat belt is to be construed accordingly.

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- (10) This section is affected by Schedule 5 to the ^{M4}Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988 (transitory modifications).

Marginal Citations

M4 1988 c.54.

VALID FROM 27/06/1991

^{F9}15A Safety equipment for children in motor vehicles.

- (1) The Secretary of State may make regulations prescribing (by reference to shape, construction or any other quality) types of equipment of any description to which this section applies that are recommended as conducive to the safety in the event of accident of prescribed classes of children in prescribed classes of motor vehicles.
- (2) Regulations under this section may make provision for securing that when equipment of a type prescribed by the regulations is sold or offered for sale as equipment which is so conducive—
 - (a) appropriate information is provided in relation to it in such manner as may be prescribed, and
 - (b) inappropriate information is not provided in relation to it.
- (3) Except in such circumstances as may be prescribed, if a person sells, or offers for sale, equipment of any description for which a type is prescribed under this section as equipment which is so conducive and that equipment—
 - (a) is not of a type so prescribed, or
 - (b) is sold or offered for sale in contravention of regulations under this section,he is, subject to subsection (5) below, guilty of an offence.
- (4) Except in such circumstances as may be prescribed, if a person sells, or offers for sale, equipment of any description for which a type is prescribed under this section as equipment conducive to the safety in the event of accident—
 - (a) of children not of a class prescribed in relation to equipment of that type, or
 - (b) of children in motor vehicles not of a class prescribed in relation to equipment of that type,he is, subject to subsection (5) below, guilty of an offence.
- (5) A person shall not be convicted of an offence under this section in respect of the sale or offer for sale of equipment if he proves that it was sold or, as the case may be, offered for sale for export from Great Britain.
- (6) The provisions of Schedule 1 to this Act shall have effect in relation to contraventions of this section.
- (7) Regulations under this section may make different provision in relation to different circumstances.
- (8) This section applies to equipment of any description for use in a motor vehicle consisting of—
 - (a) a restraining device for a child or for a carry-cot, or

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(b) equipment designed for use by a child in conjunction with any description of restraining device.

(9) References in this section to selling or offering for sale include respectively references to letting on hire and offering to let on hire.]

Textual Amendments

F9 S. 15A inserted by [Motor Vehicles \(Safety Equipment for Children\) Act 1991 \(c. 14, SIF 107:1\)](#), s. 1

VALID FROM 18/09/2006

[^{F10}15B Requirement to notify bus passengers to wear seat belts

(1) Subject to subsection (6) below, the operator of a bus in which any of the passenger seats are equipped with seat belts shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that every passenger is notified that he is required to wear a seat belt at all times when—

- (a) he is in a seat equipped with a seat belt, and
- (b) the bus is in motion.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1) above, a passenger may be notified only by one or more of the following means—

- (a) an official announcement, or an audio-visual presentation, made when the passenger joins the bus or within a reasonable time of his doing so;
- (b) a sign prominently displayed at each passenger seat equipped with a seat belt.

In paragraph (a) above, “official announcement” means an announcement by the driver of the bus, by a conductor or courier or by a person who is a group leader in relation to any group of persons who are passengers on the bus.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(b) above, a sign that takes the form of a pictorial symbol must be in the form shown in Schedule 2A, depicting a white figure on a blue background.

(4) An operator who fails to comply with subsection (1) above is guilty of an offence.

(5) Where an offence under subsection (4) above which has been committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or to be attributable to any neglect on the part of, a director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body corporate, or any person who was purporting to act in such a capacity, he as well as the body corporate shall be guilty of the offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

(6) Subsection (1) above does not apply in relation to a bus—

- (a) which is being used to provide a local service (within the meaning of the Transport Act 1985 ^{F11}) in a built-up area, or
- (b) which is constructed or adapted for the carriage of standing passengers and on which the operator permits standing.

For the purposes of paragraph (a) above, a local service is provided in a built-up area if the entire route used by that service consists of restricted roads.

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(7) In this section—

“bus” has the same meaning as in section 15;

“operator”, in relation to a bus, means—

- (a) the owner of the bus, or
- (b) if the bus is in the possession of any other person under an agreement for hire, hire-purchase, conditional sale, loan or otherwise, that person;

“passenger seat”, in relation to a bus, means any seat other than the driver's seat;

“restricted road” means a road that is restricted for the purposes of section 81 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ^{F12} (ignoring any direction under section 82(2)(b) of that Act) or would be so restricted but for a direction under section 82(2)(a) or an order under section 84(1) of that Act.]

Textual Amendments

F10 S. 15B inserted (18.9.2006) by [The Motor Vehicles \(Wearing of Seat Belts\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1892\)](#), reg. 4

F11 1985 c. 67. A “local service” is defined in section 2 of that Act.

F12 1984 c. 27.

16 Wearing of protective headgear.

- (1) The Secretary of State may make regulations requiring, subject to such exceptions as may be specified in the regulations, persons driving or riding (otherwise than in side-cars) on motor cycles of any class specified in the regulations to wear protective headgear of such description as may be so specified.
- (2) A requirement imposed by regulations under this section shall not apply to any follower of the Sikh religion while he is wearing a turban.
- (3) Regulations under this section may make different provision in relation to different circumstances.
- (4) A person who drives or rides on a motor cycle in contravention of regulations under this section is guilty of an offence; but notwithstanding any enactment or rule of law no person other than the person actually committing the contravention is guilty of an offence by reason of the contravention unless the person actually committing the contravention is a child under the age of sixteen years.

17 Protective helmets for motor cyclists.

- (1) The Secretary of State may make regulations prescribing (by reference to shape, construction or any other quality) types of helmet recommended as affording protection to persons on or in motor cycles, or motor cycles of different classes, from injury in the event of accident.
- (2) If a person sells, or offers for sale, a helmet as a helmet for affording such protection and the helmet is neither—
 - (a) of a type prescribed under this section, nor

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- (b) of a type authorised under regulations made under this section and sold or offered for sale subject to any conditions specified in the authorisation

subject to subsection (3) below, he is guilty of an offence.

- (3) A person shall not be convicted of an offence under this section in respect of the sale or offer for sale of a helmet if he proves that it was sold or, as the case may be, offered for sale for export from Great Britain.
- (4) The provisions of Schedule 1 to this Act shall have effect in relation to contraventions of this section.
- (5) In this section and that Schedule “helmet” includes any head-dress, and references in this section to selling or offering for sale include respectively references to letting on hire and offering to let on hire.

18 Authorisation of head-worn appliances for use on motor cycles.

- (1) The Secretary of State may make regulations prescribing (by reference to shape, construction or any other quality) types of appliance of any description to which this section applies as authorised for use by persons driving or riding (otherwise than in sidecars) on motor cycles of any class specified in the regulations.
- (2) Regulations under this section—
 - (a) may impose restrictions or requirements with respect to the circumstances in which appliances of any type prescribed by the regulations may be used, and
 - (b) may make different provision in relation to different circumstances.
- (3) If a person driving or riding on a motor cycle on a road uses an appliance of any description for which a type is prescribed under this section and that appliance—
 - (a) is not of a type so prescribed, or
 - (b) is otherwise used in contravention of regulations under this section,
 he is guilty of an offence.
- (4) If a person sells, or offers for sale, an appliance of any such description as authorised for use by persons on or in motor cycles, or motor cycles of any class, and that appliance is not of a type prescribed under this section as authorised for such use, he is, subject to subsection (5) below, guilty of an offence.
- (5) A person shall not be convicted of an offence under this section in respect of the sale or offer for sale of an appliance if he proves that it was sold or, as the case may be, offered for sale for export from Great Britain.
- (6) The provisions of Schedule 1 to this Act shall have effect in relation to contraventions of subsection (4) above.
- (7) This section applies to appliances of any description designed or adapted for use—
 - (a) with any headgear, or
 - (b) by being attached to or placed upon the head,
 (as, for example, eye protectors or earphones).
- (8) References in this section to selling or offering for sale include respectively references to letting on hire and offering to let on hire.

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Stopping on verges, etc., or in dangerous positions, etc.

19 Prohibition of parking of HGVs on verges, central reservations and footways.

- (1) Subject to subsection (2) below, a person who parks a heavy commercial vehicle (as defined in section 20 of this Act) wholly or partly—
 - (a) on the verge of a road, or
 - (b) on any land situated between two carriageways and which is not a footway, or
 - (c) on a footway,is guilty of an offence.
- (2) A person shall not be convicted of an offence under this section in respect of a vehicle if he proves to the satisfaction of the court—
 - (a) that it was parked in accordance with permission given by a constable in uniform, or
 - (b) that it was parked in contravention of this section for the purpose of saving life or extinguishing fire or meeting any other like emergency, or
 - (c) that it was parked in contravention of this section but the conditions specified in subsection (3) below were satisfied.
- (3) The conditions mentioned in subsection (2)(c) above are—
 - (a) that the vehicle was parked on the verge of a road or on a footway for the purpose of loading or unloading, and
 - (b) that the loading or unloading of the vehicle could not have been satisfactorily performed if it had not been parked on the footway or verge, and
 - (c) that the vehicle was not left unattended at any time while it was so parked.
- (4) In this section “carriageway” and “footway”, in relation to England and Wales, have the same meanings as in the ^{M5}Highways Act 1980.

Marginal Citations

M5 1980 c. 66.

[^{F13}19A Prohibition of parking of vehicles on verges, central reservations and footways.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, a person who parks a vehicle, other than a heavy commercial vehicle (as defined in section 20 of this Act) wholly or partly—
 - (a) on the verge of an urban road, or
 - (b) on any land which is situated between two carriageways of an urban road and which is not a footway, or
 - (c) on a footway comprised in an urban road,is guilty of an offence.
- (2) A person shall not be convicted of an offence under this section with respect to a vehicle if he proves to the satisfaction of the court—
 - (a) that it was parked in accordance with permission given by a constable in uniform, or
 - (b) that it was parked in contravention of this section for the purpose of saving life or extinguishing fire or meeting any other like emergency, or

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- (c) that it was parked in contravention of this section but the conditions specified in subsection (3) below were satisfied.
- (3) The conditions mentioned in subsection (2)(c) above are—
- (a) that the vehicle was parked on a verge or footway for the purpose of loading or unloading, and
 - (b) that the loading or unloading of the vehicle could not have been satisfactorily performed if it had not been parked on the footway or verge, and
 - (c) that the vehicle was not left unattended at any time while it was so parked.
- (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in relation to vehicles of such classes as may be specified in the regulations, subsection (1) above shall not apply or shall apply subject to such conditions as may be so specified.
- (5) The authority having power, otherwise than by virtue of Part I of Schedule 9 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act ^{M6}1984 (reserve powers of Secretary of State), to make an order under section 1 or section 6 of that Act (orders for regulating traffic) in relation to a road may by order specifying that road provide that the provisions of subsection (1) above shall not apply in relation to it or to any part of it specified in the order, either at all times or during periods so specified.
- (6) In England and Wales, the council of a county, district or London borough or the Common Council of the City of London may institute proceedings for an offence under this section committed in relation to the verge of a road, land or a footway in their area.
- (7) Section 125 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (boundary roads) applies for the purposes of subsection (5) above as it applies for the purposes of sections 1 (1) and 6 (1) of that Act; and Parts I (reserve powers of Secretary of State), III (procedure as to certain orders), IV (variation or revocation of certain orders) and VI (validity of certain orders) of Schedule 9 to that Act shall apply in relation to orders under subsection (5) above as they apply in relation to orders under any provision of section 1 or 6 of that Act.
- (8) Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (manner of exercise of functions by local authorities) applies to functions conferred by subsections (1) and (5) above as it applies to functions conferred by that Act.
- (9) In this section—
- “footway”, in relation to England and Wales, has the same meaning as in the Highways Act ^{M7}1980, and
- “urban road” means a road which—
- (i) is a restricted road for the purposes of section 81 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (30 m.p.h. speed limit), or
 - (ii) is subject to an order under section 84 of that Act imposing a speed limit not exceeding 40 m.p.h., or
 - (iii) is subject to a speed limit not exceeding 40 m.p.h. which is imposed by or under any local Act.]

Textual Amendments

- F13** S. 19A inserted (*prosp.*) except so far as relates to subsections (5) to (8) which came into force on 15.5.1989) by [Road Traffic \(Consequential Provisions\) Act 1988 \(c. 54, SIF 107:1\)](#), ss. 4, 8(3)(b), [Sch. 2 Pt. II para. 22\(1\)](#)

Status: Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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Marginal Citations

M6 1984 c.27 (107:1).

M7 1980 c.66 (59).

20 Definition of “heavy commercial vehicle” for the purposes of section 19.

- (1) In section 19 of this Act, “heavy commercial vehicle” means any goods vehicle which has an operating weight exceeding 7.5 tonnes.
- (2) The operating weight of a goods vehicle for the purposes of this section is—
 - (a) in the case of a motor vehicle not drawing a trailer or in the case of a trailer, its maximum laden weight,
 - (b) in the case of an articulated vehicle, its maximum laden weight (if it has one) and otherwise the aggregate maximum laden weight of all the individual vehicles forming part of that articulated vehicle, and
 - (c) in the case of a motor vehicle (other than an articulated vehicle) drawing one or more trailers, the aggregate maximum laden weight of the motor vehicle and the trailer or trailers attached to it.
- (3) In this section “articulated vehicle” means a motor vehicle with a trailer so attached to it as to be partially superimposed upon it; and references to the maximum laden weight of a vehicle are references to the total laden weight which must not be exceeded in the case of that vehicle if it is to be used in Great Britain without contravening any regulations for the time being in force under section 41 of this Act.
- (4) In this section, and in the definition of “goods vehicle” in section 192 of this Act as it applies for the purposes of this section, “trailer” means any vehicle other than a motor vehicle.
- (5) The Secretary of State may by regulations amend subsections (1) and (2) above (whether as originally enacted or as previously amended under this subsection)—
 - (a) by substituting weights of a different description for any of the weights there mentioned, or
 - (b) in the case of subsection (1) above, by substituting a weight of a different description or amount, or a weight different both in description and amount, for the weight there mentioned.
- (6) Different regulations may be made under subsection (5) above as respects different classes of vehicles or as respects the same class of vehicles in different circumstances and as respects different times of the day or night and as respects different localities.
- (7) Regulations under subsection (5) above shall not so amend subsection (1) above that there is any case in which a goods vehicle whose operating weight (ascertained in accordance with subsection (2) above as originally enacted) does not exceed 7.5 tonnes is a heavy commercial vehicle for any of the purposes of section 19 of this Act.

21 Prohibition of driving or parking on cycle tracks.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, any person who, without lawful authority, drives or parks a motor vehicle wholly or partly on a cycle track is guilty of an offence.
- (2) A person shall not be convicted of an offence under subsection (1) above with respect to a vehicle if he proves to the satisfaction of the court—

Status: Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Road Traffic Act 1988, Part I is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 03 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) that the vehicle was driven or (as the case may be) parked in contravention of that subsection for the purpose of saving life, or extinguishing fire or meeting any other like emergency, or
 - (b) that the vehicle was owned or operated by a highway authority or by a person discharging functions on behalf of a highway authority and was driven or (as the case may be) parked in contravention of that subsection in connection with the carrying out by or on behalf of that authority of any of the following, that is, the cleansing, maintenance or improvement of, or the maintenance or alteration of any structure or other work situated in, the cycle track or its verges, or
 - (c) that the vehicle was owned or operated by statutory undertakers and was driven or (as the case may be) parked in contravention of that subsection in connection with the carrying out by those undertakers of any works in relation to any apparatus belonging to or used by them for the purpose of their undertaking.
- (3) In this section—
- (a) “cycle track” and other expressions used in this section and in the ^{M8}Highways Act 1980 have the same meaning as in that Act,
 - (b) in subsection (2)(c) above “statutory undertakers” means any body who are statutory undertakers within the meaning of the Highways Act 1980, any sewerage authority within the meaning of that Act or the operator of a telecommunications code system (as defined by paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 4 to the ^{M9}Telecommunications Act 1984), and in relation to any such sewerage authority “apparatus” includes sewers or sewerage disposal works.
- (4) This section does not extend to Scotland.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C11 S. 21(2)(c) extended by [Water Act 1989](#) (c. 15, SIF 130), s. 190(1), **Sch. 25 para. 1(2)(xxx)** (with ss. 58(7), 101(1), 141(6), 160(1)(2)(4), 163, 189(4)–(10), 190, 193, Sch. 26 paras. 3(1)(2), 17, 40(4), 57(6), 58) and by [Electricity Act 1989](#) (c. 29, SIF 44:1), s. 112(1)(3), **Sch. 16 para. 1(1)(xxxviii)**(with Sch. 17 paras. 33, 35(1))

Marginal Citations

M8 1980 c. 66.

M9 1984 c. 12.

22 Leaving vehicles in dangerous positions.

If a person in charge of a vehicle causes or permits the vehicle or a trailer drawn by it to remain at rest on a road in such a position or in such condition or in such circumstances as to be likely to cause danger to other persons using the road, he is guilty of an offence.

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VALID FROM 01/07/1992

[^{F14}22A Causing danger to road-users.

- (1) A person is guilty of an offence if he intentionally and without lawful authority or reasonable cause—
 - (a) causes anything to be on or over a road, or
 - (b) interferes with a motor vehicle, trailer or cycle, or
 - (c) interferes (directly or indirectly) with traffic equipment,in such circumstances that it would be obvious to a reasonable person that to do so would be dangerous.
- (2) In subsection (1) above “dangerous” refers to danger either of injury to any person while on or near a road, or of serious damage to property on or near a road; and in determining for the purposes of that subsection what would be obvious to a reasonable person in a particular case, regard shall be had not only to the circumstances of which he could be expected to be aware but also to any circumstances shown to have been within the knowledge of the accused.
- (3) In subsection (1) above “traffic equipment” means—
 - (a) anything lawfully placed on or near a road by a highway authority;
 - (b) a traffic sign lawfully placed on or near a road by a person other than a highway authority;
 - (c) any fence, barrier or light lawfully placed on or near a road—
 - (i) in pursuance of section 174 of the Highways Act 1980, section 8 of the Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 or section 65 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (which provide for guarding, lighting and signing in streets where works are undertaken), or
 - (ii) by a constable or a person acting under the instructions (whether general or specific) of a chief officer of police.
- (4) For the purposes of subsection (3) above anything placed on or near a road shall unless the contrary is proved be deemed to have been lawfully placed there.
- (5) In this section “road” does not include a footpath or bridleway.
- (6) This section does not extend to Scotland.]

Textual Amendments

F14 S. 22A inserted (E.W.) (1.7.1992) by Road Traffic Act 1991 (c. 40, SIF 107:1), s. 6; S.I. 1992/1286, art. 2, Sch.

Other restrictions in interests of safety

23 Restriction of carriage of persons on motor cycles.

- (1) Not more than one person in addition to the driver may be carried on a [^{F15}motor bicycle].

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- (2) No person in addition to the driver may be carried on a [^{F15}motor bicycle] otherwise than sitting astride the motor cycle and on a proper seat securely fixed to the motor cycle behind the driver's seat.
- (3) If a person is carried on a motor cycle in contravention of this section, the driver of the motor cycle is guilty of an offence.

Textual Amendments

F15 Words substituted by Road Traffic (Driver Licensing and Information Systems) Act 1989 (c. 22, SIF 107:1), s. 7, Sch. 6 para. 6

24 Restriction of carriage of persons on bicycles.

- (1) Not more than one person may be carried on a road on a bicycle not propelled by mechanical power unless it is constructed or adapted for the carriage of more than one person.
- (2) In this section—
 - (a) references to a person carried on a bicycle include references to a person riding the bicycle, and
 - (b) “road” includes bridleway.
- (3) If a person is carried on a bicycle in contravention of subsection (1) above, each of the persons carried is guilty of an offence.

25 Tampering with motor vehicles.

If, while a motor vehicle is on a road or on a parking place provided by a local authority, a person—

- (a) gets on to the vehicle, or
 - (b) tampers with the brake or other part of its mechanism,
- without lawful authority or reasonable cause he is guilty of an offence.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C12 S. 25 applied (S.) (21.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/854, art. 3(4)(a)(b)

26 Holding or getting on to vehicle in order to be towed or carried.

- (1) If, for the purpose of being carried, a person without lawful authority or reasonable cause takes or retains hold of, or gets on to, a motor vehicle or trailer while in motion on a road he is guilty of an offence.
- (2) If, for the purpose of being drawn, a person takes or retains hold of a motor vehicle or trailer while in motion on a road he is guilty of an offence.

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27 Control of dogs on roads.

- (1) A person who causes or permits a dog to be on a designated road without the dog being held on a lead is guilty of an offence.
- (2) In this section “designated road” means a length of road specified by an order in that behalf of the local authority in whose area the length of road is situated.
- (3) The powers which under subsection (2) above are exercisable by a local authority in England and Wales are, in the case of a road part of the width of which is in the area of one local authority and part in the area of another, exercisable by either authority with the consent of the other.
- (4) An order under this section may provide that subsection (1) above shall apply subject to such limitations or exceptions as may be specified in the order, and (without prejudice to the generality of this subsection) subsection (1) above does not apply to dogs proved—
 - (a) to be kept for driving or tending sheep or cattle in the course of a trade or business, or
 - (b) to have been at the material time in use under proper control for sporting purposes.
- (5) An order under this section shall not be made except after consultation with the chief officer of police.
- (6) The Secretary of State may make regulations—
 - (a) prescribing the procedure to be followed in connection with the making of orders under this section, and
 - (b) requiring the authority making such an order to publish in such manner as may be prescribed by the regulations notice of the making and effect of the order.
- (7) In this section “local authority” means—
 - (a) in relation to England and Wales, the council of a county, metropolitan district or London borough or the Common Council of the City of London, and
 - (b) in relation to Scotland, a regional or islands council.
- (8) The power conferred by this section to make an order includes power, exercisable in like manner and subject to the like conditions, to vary or revoke it.

Cycling offences and cycle racing

28 Reckless cycling.

A person who rides a cycle on a road recklessly is guilty of an offence.

In this section “road” includes a bridleway.

29 Careless, and inconsiderate, cycling.

If a person rides a cycle on a road without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons using the road, he is guilty of an offence.

In this section “road” includes a bridleway.

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30 Cycling when under influence of drink or drugs.

- (1) A person who, when riding a cycle on a road or other public place, is unfit to ride through drink or drugs (that is to say, is under the influence of drink or a drug to such an extent as to be incapable of having proper control of the cycle) is guilty of an offence.
- (2) In Scotland a constable may arrest without warrant a person committing an offence under this section.
- (3) In this section “road” includes a bridleway.

31 Regulation of cycle racing on public ways.

- (1) A person who promotes or takes part in a race or trial of speed on a public way between cycles is guilty of an offence, unless the race or trial—
 - (a) is authorised, and
 - (b) is conducted in accordance with any conditions imposed, by or under regulations under this section.
- (2) The Secretary of State may by regulations authorise, or provide for authorising, for the purposes of subsection (1) above, the holding on a public way other than a bridleway—
 - (a) of races or trials of speed of any class or description, or
 - (b) of a particular race or trial of speed,in such cases as may be prescribed and subject to such conditions as may be imposed by or under the regulations.
- (3) Regulations under this section may—
 - (a) prescribe the procedure to be followed, and the particulars to be given, in connection with applications for authorisation under the regulations, and
 - (b) make different provision for different classes or descriptions of race or trial.
- (4) Without prejudice to any other powers exercisable in that behalf, the chief officer of police may give directions with respect to the movement of, or the route to be followed by, vehicular traffic during any period, being directions which it is necessary or expedient to give in relation to that period to prevent or mitigate—
 - (a) congestion or obstruction of traffic, or
 - (b) danger to or from traffic,in consequence of the holding of a race or trial of speed authorised by or under regulations under this section.
- (5) Directions under subsection (4) above may include a direction that any road or part of a road specified in the direction shall be closed during the period to vehicles or to vehicles of a class so specified.
- (6) In this section “public way” means, in England and Wales, a public highway and, in Scotland, a public road and includes a bridleway but not a footpath.

32 Electrically assisted pedal cycles.

- (1) An electrically assisted pedal cycle of a class specified in regulations made for the purposes of section 189 of this Act and section 140 of the ^{M10}Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 shall not be driven on a road by a person under the age of fourteen.

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- (2) A person who—
- (a) drives such a pedal cycle, or
 - (b) knowing or suspecting that another person is under the age of fourteen, causes or permits him to drive such a pedal cycle,
- in contravention of subsection (1) above is guilty of an offence.

Marginal Citations

M10 1984 c. 27.

Use of motor vehicles away from roads

33 Control of use of footpaths and bridleways for motor vehicle trials.

- (1) A person must not promote or take part in a trial of any description between motor vehicles on a footpath or bridleway unless the holding of the trial has been authorised under this section by the local authority.
- (2) A local authority shall not give an authorisation under this section unless satisfied that consent in writing to the use of any length of footpath or bridleway for the purposes of the trial has been given by the owner and by the occupier of the land over which that length of footpath or bridleway runs, and any such authorisation may be given subject to compliance with such conditions as the authority think fit.
- (3) A person who—
- (a) contravenes subsection (1) above, or
 - (b) fails to comply with any conditions subject to which an authorisation under this section has been granted,
- is guilty of an offence.
- (4) The holding of a trial authorised under this section is not affected by any statutory provision prohibiting or restricting the use of footpaths or bridleways or a specified footpath or bridleway; but this section does not prejudice any right or remedy of a person as having any interest in land.
- (5) In this section “local authority”—
- (a) in relation to England and Wales, means the council of a county, metropolitan district or London borough, and
 - (b) in relation to Scotland, means a regional or islands council.

34 Prohibition of driving motor vehicles elsewhere than on roads.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, if without lawful authority a person drives a motor vehicle—
- (a) on to or upon any common land, moorland or land of any other description, not being land forming part of a road, or
 - (b) on any road being a footpath or bridleway,
- he is guilty of an offence.

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- (2) It is not an offence under this section to drive a motor vehicle on any land within fifteen yards of a road, being a road on which a motor vehicle may lawfully be driven, for the purpose only of parking the vehicle on that land.
- (3) A person shall not be convicted of an offence under this section with respect to a vehicle if he proves to the satisfaction of the court that it was driven in contravention of this section for the purpose of saving life or extinguishing fire or meeting any other like emergency.
- (4) It is hereby declared that nothing in this section prejudices the operation of—
 - (a) section 193 of the ^{M11}Law of Property Act 1925 (rights of the public over commons and waste lands), or
 - (b) any byelaws applying to any land,
 or affects the law of trespass to land or any right or remedy to which a person may by law be entitled in respect of any such trespass or in particular confers a right to park a vehicle on any land.

Marginal Citations

M11 1925 c. 20.

Directions to traffic and to pedestrians and traffic signs

35 Drivers to comply with traffic directions.

- (1) Where a constable is for the time being engaged in the regulation of traffic in a road, a person driving or propelling a vehicle who neglects or refuses—
 - (a) to stop the vehicle, or
 - (b) to make it proceed in, or keep to, a particular line of traffic,
 when directed to do so by the constable in the execution of his duty is guilty of an offence.
- (2) Where—
 - (a) a traffic survey of any description is being carried out on or in the vicinity of a road, and
 - (b) a constable gives to a person driving or propelling a vehicle a direction—
 - (i) to stop the vehicle,
 - (ii) to make it proceed in, or keep to, a particular line of traffic, or
 - (iii) to proceed to a particular point on or near the road on which the vehicle is being driven or propelled,
 being a direction given for the purposes of the survey (but not a direction requiring any person to provide any information for the purposes of a traffic survey),
 the person is guilty of an offence if he neglects or refuses to comply with the direction.
- (3) The power to give such a direction as is referred to in subsection (2) above for the purposes of a traffic survey shall be so exercised as not to cause any unreasonable delay to a person who indicates that he is unwilling to provide any information for the purposes of the survey.

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C13** S. 35 modified (12.2.2002) by 2002 c. 30, s. 38, **Sch. 4 Pt. 1 para. 12(2)**; S.I. 2002/2750, **art. 2(a)(ii)(d)**
S. 35 modified (12.2.2002) by 2002 c. 30, s. 41, **Sch. 5 para. 9(2)**; S.I. 2002/2750, **art. 2(a)(iii)**
- C14** S. 35(1): power to extend conferred by Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (c.27, SIF 107:1), **s. 96(2)(c)(i)** (as amended by Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988 (c. 54, SIF 107:1), s. 4, **Sch. 3 para. 25(6)(a)**)
S. 35(1) extended (S.) (21.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/854, **art. 3(2)(b)**

36 Drivers to comply with traffic signs.

- (1) Where a traffic sign, being a sign—
- of the prescribed size, colour and type, or
 - of another character authorised by the Secretary of State under the provisions in that behalf of the ^{M12}Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984,
- has been lawfully placed on or near a road, a person driving or propelling a vehicle who fails to comply with the indication given by the sign is guilty of an offence.
- (2) A traffic sign shall not be treated for the purposes of this section as having been lawfully placed unless either—
- the indication given by the sign is an indication of a statutory prohibition, restriction or requirement, or
 - it is expressly provided by or under any provision of the Traffic Acts that this section shall apply to the sign or to signs of a type of which the sign is one;
- and, where the indication mentioned in paragraph (a) of this subsection is of the general nature only of the prohibition, restriction or requirement to which the sign relates, a person shall not be convicted of failure to comply with the indication unless he has failed to comply with the prohibition, restriction or requirement to which the sign relates.
- (3) For the purposes of this section a traffic sign placed on or near a road shall be deemed—
- to be of the prescribed size, colour and type, or of another character authorised by the Secretary of State under the provisions in that behalf of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and
 - (subject to subsection (2) above) to have been lawfully so placed, unless the contrary is proved.
- (4) Where a traffic survey of any description is being carried out on or in the vicinity of a road, this section applies to a traffic sign by which a direction is given—
- to stop a vehicle,
 - to make it proceed in, or keep to, a particular line of traffic, or
 - to proceed to a particular point on or near the road on which the vehicle is being driven or propelled,
- being a direction given for the purposes of the survey (but not a direction requiring any person to provide any information for the purposes of the survey).
- (5) Regulations made by the Secretary of State for Transport, the Secretary of State for Wales and the Secretary of State for Scotland acting jointly may specify any traffic

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sign for the purposes of column 5 of the entry in Schedule 2 to the ^{M13}Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 relating to offences under this section (offences committed by failing to comply with certain signs involve discretionary disqualification).

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C15** S. 36: power to extend conferred by Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (c.27, SIF 107:1), **ss. 64(5), 96(2)(c)(i)** (as amended by Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988 (c. 54, SIF 107:1), s. 4, **Sch. 3 paras. 25(3)(6)(a)**)
- C16** S. 36 extended by Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (c. 27, SIF 107:1), **s. 67(2)** (as amended by Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988 (c. 54, SIF 107:1), s. 4, **Sch. 3 para. 25(5)**)
- C17** S. 36 applied (with modifications) (29.3.1993) by 1993 c. iv, **ss. 25(1)(b)(3), 26(1)(b)(3)** (with ss. 36, 41(5), 44(1))
S. 36 applied (12.8.1994) by S.I. 1994/1519, **reg. 10(1)**
S. 36 applied (S.) (4.1.1995) by 1994 c. 39, **s. 150(2)**; S.I. 1994/2850, art. 3(a), **Sch. 2**

Marginal Citations

- M12** 1984 c. 27.
M13 1988 c. 53.

37 Directions to pedestrians.

Where a constable in uniform is for the time being engaged in the regulation of vehicular traffic in a road, a person on foot who proceeds across or along the carriageway in contravention of a direction to stop given by the constable in the execution of his duty, either to persons on foot or to persons on foot and other traffic, is guilty of an offence.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C18** S. 37: power to extend conferred by Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (c.27, SIF 107:1), **s. 96(2)(c)(i)** (as amended by Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988 (c. 54, SIF 107:1), s. 4, **Sch. 3 paras. 25(6)(a)**)
- C19** S. 37 extended (S.) (21.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/854, **art. 3(2)(b)**
- C20** S. 37 modified (2.12.2002) by 2002 c. 30, s. 38, **Sch. 4 Pt. 1 para. 12(2)**; S.I. 2002/2750, **art. 2(a)(ii)(d)**
S. 37 modified (2.12.2002) by 2002 c. 30, s. 41, **Sch. 5 para. 9(2)**; S.I. 2002/2750, **art. 2(a)(iii)**
S. 37 modified by Police Reform Act 2002 (c. 30), Sch. 4 para. 11B(4) (as inserted (E.W.) (1.7.2005) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), ss. 122(7), 178, **Sch. 8 para. 10**; S.I. 2005/1521, **art. 3(1)** (subject to art. 3(4)(5)))
S. 37 modified by Police Reform Act 2002 (c. 30), Sch. 5 para. 8B(4) (as inserted (E.W.) (1.7.2005) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), ss. 122(7), 178, **Sch. 8 para. 20**; S.I. 2005/1521, **art. 3(1)** (subject to art. 3(4)(5)))

Promotion of road safety

38 The Highway Code.

- (1) The Highway Code shall continue to have effect, subject however to revision in accordance with the following provisions of this section.

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- (2) Subject to the following provisions of this section, the Secretary of State may from time to time revise the Highway Code by revoking, varying, amending or adding to the provisions of the Code in such manner as he thinks fit.
- (3) Where the Secretary of State proposes to revise the Highway Code by making any alterations in the provisions of the Code (other than alterations merely consequential on the passing, amendment or repeal of any statutory provision) he must lay the proposed alterations before both Houses of Parliament and must not make the proposed revision until after the end of a period of forty days beginning with the day on which the alterations were so laid.
- (4) If within the period mentioned in subsection (3) above either House resolves that the proposed alterations be not made, the Secretary of State must not make the proposed revision (but without prejudice to the laying before Parliament of further proposals for alteration in accordance with that subsection).
- (5) Before revising the Highway Code by making any alterations in its provisions which are required by subsection (3) above to be laid before Parliament, the Secretary of State must consult with such representative organisations as he thinks fit.
- (6) The Secretary of State must cause the Highway Code to be printed and may cause copies of it to be sold to the public at such price as he may determine.
- (7) A failure on the part of a person to observe a provision of the Highway Code shall not of itself render that person liable to criminal proceedings of any kind but any such failure may in any proceedings (whether civil or criminal, and including proceedings for an offence under the Traffic Acts, the ^{M14}Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 or sections 18 to 23 of the ^{M15}Transport Act 1985) be relied upon by any party to the proceedings as tending to establish or negative any liability which is in question in those proceedings.
- (8) In this section “the Highway Code” means the code comprising directions for the guidance of persons using roads issued under section 45 of the ^{M16}Road Traffic Act 1930, as from time to time revised under this section or under any previous enactment.
- (9) For the purposes of subsection (3) above—
 - (a) “statutory provision” means a provision contained in an Act or in subordinate legislation within the meaning of the ^{M17}Interpretation Act 1978 (and the reference to the passing or repeal of any such provision accordingly includes the making or revocation of any such provision),
 - (b) where the proposed alterations are laid before each House of Parliament on different days, the later day shall be taken to be the day on which they were laid before both Houses, and
 - (c) in reckoning any period of forty days, no account shall be taken of any time during which Parliament is dissolved or prorogued or during which both Houses are adjourned for more than four days.

Marginal Citations

- M14** 1981 c. 14.
M15 1985 c. 67.
M16 1930 c. 43.
M17 1978 c. 30.

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39 Powers of Secretary of State and local authorities as to giving road safety information and training.

- (1) The Secretary of State may, with the approval of the Treasury, provide for promoting road safety by disseminating information or advice relating to the use of roads.
- (2) Each local authority must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety and may make contributions towards the cost of measures for promoting road safety taken by other authorities or bodies.
- (3) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (2) above, in pursuance of their duty under that subsection each local authority—
 - (a) must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or parts of roads, other than trunk roads, within their area,
 - (b) must, in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of roads, the giving of practical training to road users or any class or description of road users, the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are the highway authority (in Scotland, local roads authority) and other measures taken in the exercise of their powers for controlling, protecting or assisting the movement of traffic on roads, and
 - (c) in constructing new roads, must take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to reduce the possibilities of such accidents when the roads come into use.
- (4) In this section “local authority” means—
 - (a) in relation to England and Wales, the council of a county, metropolitan district or London borough or the Common Council of the City of London,
 - (b) in relation to Scotland, a regional or islands council.

40 Powers of Secretary of State to subsidise bodies other than local authorities for giving road safety information and training.

The Secretary of State may, with the approval of the Treasury, make out of monies provided by Parliament contributions towards the cost of measures for promoting road safety, being measures taken by authorities or bodies other than local authorities (within the meaning of section 39 of this Act).

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C21** S. 40: Transfer of functions (1.7.1999) by 1998 c. 46, ss. 53, 56(1)(i) (with s. 126(3)-(11)); S.I. 1998/3178, art. 2(1)
 S. 40 modified (1.7.1999) by S.I. 1999/672, arts. 1, 2, Sch. 1

Status:

Point in time view as at 01/05/1991. This version of this part contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation:

Road Traffic Act 1988, Part I is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 03 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.