



Customs and Excise Management Act 1979

1979 CHAPTER 2

PART VII

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE CONTROL: SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS

Prevention of smuggling

81 Power to regulate small craft.

- (1) In this section “small ships” means—
 - (a) ships not exceeding 100 tons register; and
 - (b) hovercraft, of whatever size.
- (2) The Commissioners may make general regulations with respect to small ships and any such regulations may in particular make provision as to the purposes for which and the limits within which such ships may be used.
- (3) Different provision may be made by regulations under this section for different classes or descriptions of small ships.
- (4) The Commissioners may, in respect of any small ship, grant a licence exempting that ship from all or any of the provisions of any regulations made under this section.
- (5) Any such licence may be granted for such period, for such purposes and subject to such conditions and restrictions as the Commissioners see fit, and may be revoked at any time by the Commissioners.
- (6) Any small ship which, except under and in accordance with the terms of a licence granted under this section, is used contrary to any regulation made under this section, and any ship granted such a licence which is found not to have that licence on board, shall be liable to forfeiture.

Status: Point in time view as at 22/01/2004.

Changes to legislation: Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, Cross Heading: Prevention of smuggling is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 31 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)

- (7) Every boat belonging to a British ship and every other vessel not exceeding 100 tons register, [^{F1}not being a fishing vessel registered under Part II of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995] and every hovercraft, shall be marked in such manner as the Commissioners may direct, and any such boat, vessel or hovercraft which is not so marked shall be liable to forfeiture.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 81(7) substituted (1.1.1996) by 1995 c. 21, s. 314(2), 316(2), **Sch. 13 para. 53(3)** (with s. 312(1))

82 Power to haul up revenue vessels, patrol coasts, etc.

- (1) The person in command or charge of any vessel in the service of Her Majesty which is engaged in the prevention of smuggling—
- (a) may haul up and leave that vessel on any part of the coast or of the shore or bank of any river or creek; and
 - (b) may moor that vessel at any place below high water mark on any part of the coast or of any such shore or bank.
- (2) Any officer and any person acting in aid of an officer or otherwise duly engaged in the prevention of smuggling may for that purpose patrol upon and pass freely along and over any part of the coast or of the shore or bank of any river or creek, over any railway or aerodrome or land adjoining any aerodrome, and over any land in Northern Ireland within the prescribed area.
- (3) Nothing in this section shall authorise the use of or entry into any garden or pleasure ground.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 82 amended by S.I. 1987/2114, reg. 2

83 Penalty for removing seals, etc.

- (1) Where, in pursuance of any power conferred by the customs and excise Acts or of any requirement imposed by or under those Acts, a seal, lock or mark is used to secure or identify any goods for any of the purposes of those Acts and—
- (a) at any time while the goods are in the United Kingdom or within the limits of any port or on passage between ports in the United Kingdom [^{F2}or between a port in the United Kingdom and a port in the Isle of Man], the seal, lock or mark is wilfully and prematurely removed or tampered with by any person; or
 - (b) at any time before the seal, lock or mark is lawfully removed, any of the goods are wilfully removed by any person,
- that person and the person then in charge of the goods shall each be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of [^{F3}level 4 on the standard scale].
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1) above, goods in a ship or aircraft shall be deemed to be in the charge of the master of the ship or commander of the aircraft.

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- (3) Where, in pursuance of any Community requirement or practice which relates to the movement of goods between countries or of any international agreement to which the United Kingdom is a party and which so relates,—
- (a) a seal, lock or mark is used (whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere) to secure or identify any goods for customs or excise purposes; and
 - (b) at any time while the goods are in the United Kingdom, the seal, lock or mark is wilfully and prematurely removed or tampered with by any person,
- that person and the person then in charge of the goods shall each be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of [^{F3}level 4 on the standard scale].

Textual Amendments

- F2** Words inserted by [Isle of Man Act 1979 \(c. 58\), Sch. 1 para. 19](#)
- F3** Words substituted by virtue of (E.W.) [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\), s. 46](#) and (S.) [Criminal Procedure \(Scotland\) Act 1975 \(c. 21, SIF 39:1\), s. 289G](#) and (N.I.) by [S.I. 1984/703, \(N.I. 3\) art. 5](#)

84 Penalty for signalling to smugglers.

- (1) In this section references to a “prohibited signal” or a “prohibited message” are references to a signal or message connected with the smuggling or intended smuggling of goods into or out of the United Kingdom.
- (2) Any person who by any means makes any prohibited signal or transmits any prohibited message from any part of the United Kingdom or from any ship or aircraft for the information of a person in any ship or aircraft or across the boundary shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of [^{F4}level 3 on the standard scale], or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or to both, and may be detained; and any equipment or apparatus used for sending the signal or message shall be liable to forfeiture.
- (3) Subsection (2) above applies whether or not the person for whom the signal or message is intended is in a position to receive it or is actually engaged at the time in smuggling goods.
- (4) If, in any proceedings under subsection (2) above, any question arises as to whether any signal or message was a prohibited signal or message, the burden of proof shall lie upon the defendant or claimant.
- (5) If any officer or constable or any member of Her Majesty’s armed forces or coastguard has reasonable grounds for suspecting that any prohibited signal or message is being or is about to be made or transmitted from any ship, aircraft, vehicle, house or place, he may board or enter that ship, aircraft, vehicle, house or place and take such steps as are reasonably necessary to stop or prevent the sending of the signal or message.

Textual Amendments

- F4** Words substituted by virtue of (E.W.) [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\), ss. 38, 46](#) and (S.) [Criminal Procedure \(Scotland\) Act 1975 \(c. 21, SIF 39:1\), ss. 289F, 289G](#) and (N.I.) by [S.I. 1984/703, \(N.I. 3\) arts. 5, 6](#)

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C2 S. 84(2) amended by [S.I. 1990/2167](#), art. 4, [Sch. para. 18](#)

85 Penalty for interfering with revenue vessels, etc.

- (1) Any person who save for just and sufficient cause interferes in any way with any ship, aircraft, vehicle, buoy, anchor, chain, rope or mark which is being used for the purposes of any functions of the Commissioners under Parts III to VII of this Act shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of [^{F5}level 1 on the standard scale].
- (2) Any person who fires upon any vessel, aircraft or vehicle in the service of Her Majesty while that vessel, aircraft or vehicle is engaged in the prevention of smuggling shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

Textual Amendments

F5 Words substituted by virtue of (E.W.) [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 46 and (S.) [Criminal Procedure \(Scotland\) Act 1975 \(c. 21, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 289G and (N.I.) by [S.I. 1984/703](#), (N.I. 3) art. 5

86 Special penalty where offender armed or disguised.

Any person concerned in the movement, carriage or concealment of goods—

- (a) contrary to or for the purpose of contravening any prohibition or restriction for the time being in force under or by virtue of any enactment with respect to the importation or exportation thereof; or
- (b) without payment having been made of or security given for any duty payable thereon,

who, while so concerned, is armed with any offensive weapon or disguised in any way, and any person so armed or disguised found in the United Kingdom in possession of any goods liable to forfeiture under any provision of the customs and excise Acts relating to imported goods or prohibited or restricted goods, shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years and may be detained.

87 Penalty for offering goods for sale as smuggled goods.

If any person offers any goods for sale as having been imported without payment of duty, or as having been otherwise unlawfully imported, then, whether or not the goods were so imported or were in fact chargeable with duty, the goods shall be liable to forfeiture and the person so offering them for sale shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of three times the value of the goods or [^{F6}level 3 on the standard scale], whichever is the greater, and may be detained.

Textual Amendments

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

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