



Companies Act 2006

2006 CHAPTER 46

PART 5

A COMPANY'S NAME

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Prohibited names

53 Prohibited names

A company must not be registered under this Act by a name if, in the opinion of the Secretary of State—

- (a) its use by the company would constitute an offence, or
- (b) it is offensive.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 53 applied (with modifications) by [S.I. 1989/638](#) reg. 10(1A)-(1C) (as substituted (1.10.2009) by [The European Economic Interest Grouping \(Amendment\) Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/2399\)](#), [reg. 13](#) (with [reg. 2](#)))
- C2** Ss. 53-56 applied (with modifications) (9.7.2009 for certain purposes otherwise 1.10.2009) by [The Limited Liability Partnerships \(Application of Companies Act 2006\) Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1804\)](#), [regs. 2, 8](#) (with [Sch. 1 paras. 3, 4, 34, 35](#)) (as amended (14.12.2009) by [S.I. 2009/2995](#), [reg. 2\(2\)](#))

Status: Point in time view as at 07/02/2023.

Changes to legislation: Companies Act 2006, Chapter 1 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 25 August 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)

Sensitive words and expressions

54 Names suggesting connection with government or public authority

- (1) The approval of the Secretary of State is required for a company to be registered under this Act by a name that would be likely to give the impression that the company is connected with—
- (a) Her Majesty's Government, any part of the Scottish administration [^{F1}, the Welsh Assembly Government] or Her Majesty's Government in Northern Ireland,
 - (b) a local authority, or
 - (c) any public authority specified for the purposes of this section by regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- (2) For the purposes of this section—
- “local authority” means—
- (a) a local authority within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972 (c. 70), the Common Council of the City of London or the Council of the Isles of Scilly,
 - (b) a council constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 (c. 39), or
 - (c) a district council in Northern Ireland;
- “public authority” includes any person or body having functions of a public nature.
- (3) Regulations under this section are subject to affirmative resolution procedure.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 54(1)(a) inserted (6.11.2009) by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications, Transitional Provisions and Saving\) Order 2009 \(S.I. 2009/2958\)](#), [art. 9](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C3** S. 54 applied (with modifications) by [S.I. 1989/638, reg. 10\(1A\)-\(1C\)](#) (as substituted (1.10.2009) by [The European Economic Interest Grouping \(Amendment\) Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/2399\)](#), [reg. 13](#) (with [reg. 2](#)))
- C4** Ss. 53-56 applied (with modifications) (9.7.2009 for certain purposes otherwise 1.10.2009) by [The Limited Liability Partnerships \(Application of Companies Act 2006\) Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1804\)](#), [regs. 2, 8](#) (with [Sch. 1 paras. 3, 4, 34, 35](#)) (as amended (14.12.2009) by [S.I. 2009/2995](#), [reg. 2\(2\)](#))

Commencement Information

- I1** S. 54 wholly in force at 1.10.2009; s. 54 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 1300; s. 54 in force for specified purposes at 20.1.2007 by [S.I. 2006/3428](#), [art. 3\(3\)](#) (subject to [art. 5](#), [Sch. 1](#) and with [arts. 6, 8](#), [Sch. 5](#)); s. 32 otherwise in force at 1.10.2009 by [S.I. 2008/2860](#), [art. 3\(e\)](#) (with [arts. 5, 7, 8](#), [Sch. 2](#)) (as amended by [S.I. 2009/1802](#), [art. 18](#))

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55 Other sensitive words or expressions

- (1) The approval of the Secretary of State is required for a company to be registered under this Act by a name that includes a word or expression for the time being specified in regulations made by the Secretary of State under this section.
- (2) Regulations under this section are subject to approval after being made.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C5** S. 55 applied (with modifications) by [S.I. 1989/638, reg. 10\(1A\)-\(1C\)](#) (as substituted (1.10.2009) by [The European Economic Interest Grouping \(Amendment\) Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/2399\)](#), [reg. 13](#) (with [reg. 2](#)))
- C6** Ss. 53-56 applied (with modifications) (9.7.2009 for certain purposes otherwise 1.10.2009) by [The Limited Liability Partnerships \(Application of Companies Act 2006\) Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1804\)](#), [regs. 2, 8](#) (with [Sch. 1 paras. 3, 4, 34, 35](#)) (as amended (14.12.2009) by [S.I. 2009/2995](#), [reg. 2\(2\)](#))

Commencement Information

- I2** S. 55 wholly in force at 1.10.2009; s. 55 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 1300; s. 55 in force for specified purposes at 20.1.2007 by [S.I. 2006/3428](#), [art. 3\(3\)](#) (subject to [art. 5](#), [Sch. 1](#) and with [arts. 6, 8](#), [Sch. 5](#)); s. 55 otherwise in force at 1.10.2009 by [S.I. 2008/2860](#), [art. 3\(e\)](#) (with [arts. 5, 7, 8](#), [Sch. 2](#)) (as amended by [S.I. 2009/1802](#), [art. 18](#))

56 Duty to seek comments of government department or other specified body

- (1) The Secretary of State may by regulations under—
 - (a) section 54 (name suggesting connection with government or public authority),
 - or
 - (b) section 55 (other sensitive words or expressions),require that, in connection with an application for the approval of the Secretary of State under that section, the applicant must seek the view of a specified Government department or other body.
- (2) Where such a requirement applies, the applicant must request the specified department or other body (in writing) to indicate whether (and if so why) it has any objections to the proposed name.
- (3) Where a request under this section is made in connection with an application for the registration of a company under this Act, the application must—
 - (a) include a statement that a request under this section has been made, and
 - (b) be accompanied by a copy of any response received.
- (4) Where a request under this section is made in connection with a change in a company's name, the notice of the change sent to the registrar must be accompanied by—
 - (a) a statement by a director or secretary of the company that a request under this section has been made, and
 - (b) a copy of any response received.
- (5) In this section “specified” means specified in the regulations.

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C7** S. 56 applied (with modifications) by S.I. 1989/638, reg. 10(1A)-(1C) (as substituted (1.10.2009) by [The European Economic Interest Grouping \(Amendment\) Regulations 2009](#) (S.I. 2009/2399), **reg. 13** (with reg. 2))
- C8** Ss. 53-56 applied (with modifications) (9.7.2009 for certain purposes otherwise 1.10.2009) by [The Limited Liability Partnerships \(Application of Companies Act 2006\) Regulations 2009](#) (S.I. 2009/1804), regs. 2, 8 (with Sch. 1 paras. 3, 4, 34, 35) (as amended (14.12.2009) by S.I. 2009/2995, **reg. 2(2)**)

Commencement Information

- I3** S. 56 wholly in force at 1.10.2009; s. 56 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 1300; s. 56 in force for specified purposes at 20.1.2007 by S.I. 2006/3428, **art. 3(3)** (subject to **art. 5**, **Sch. 1** and with **arts. 6, 8**, **Sch. 5**); s. 56 otherwise in force at 1.10.2009 by S.I. 2008/2860, **art. 3(e)** (with **arts. 5, 7, 8**, **Sch. 2**) (as amended by S.I. 2009/1802, **art. 18**)

Permitted characters etc

57 Permitted characters etc

- (1) The Secretary of State may make provision by regulations—
 - (a) as to the letters or other characters, signs or symbols (including accents and other diacritical marks) and punctuation that may be used in the name of a company registered under this Act; and
 - (b) specifying a standard style or format for the name of a company for the purposes of registration.
- (2) The regulations may prohibit the use of specified characters, signs or symbols when appearing in a specified position (in particular, at the beginning of a name).
- (3) A company may not be registered under this Act by a name that consists of or includes anything that is not permitted in accordance with regulations under this section.
- (4) Regulations under this section are subject to negative resolution procedure.
- (5) In this section “specified” means specified in the regulations.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C9** S. 57 applied (with modifications) (1.10.2009) by [The Limited Liability Partnerships \(Application of Companies Act 2006\) Regulations 2009](#) (S.I. 2009/1804), regs. 2, 9 (with Sch. 1 paras. 3, 34, 35) (as amended (31.1.2015) by [The Company, Limited Liability Partnership and Business \(Names and Trading Disclosures\) Regulations 2015](#) (S.I. 2015/17), reg. 1(1), **Sch. 5 para. 2**)
- C10** S. 57(3) applied (with modifications) by S.I. 1989/638, reg. 10(1A)-(1C) (as substituted (1.10.2009) by [The European Economic Interest Grouping \(Amendment\) Regulations 2009](#) (S.I. 2009/2399), **reg. 13** (with reg. 2))

Commencement Information

- I4** S. 57 wholly in force at 1.10.2009; s. 57 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 1300; s. 57 in force for specified purposes at 20.1.2007 by S.I. 2006/3428, **art. 3(3)** (subject to **art. 5**, **Sch. 1** and with **arts. 6**,

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8, Sch. 5); s. 56 otherwise in force at 1.10.2009 by S.I. 2008/2860, **art. 3(e)** (with arts. 5, 7, 8, Sch. 2) (as amended by S.I. 2009/1802, art. 18)

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