
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations implement Council Directives [71/354/EEC](#) (OJNo. L243, 29.10.71, p.29) and [80/181/EEC](#) (OJ No. L39, 15.2.80, p.40) (“the Directives”) which relate to the use of units of measurement.

The Directives provide for the phasing out of the use, for economic, public health, public safety or administrative purposes, of imperial units of measurement, for example, those commonly used to describe length, area and mass (such as the yard, acre and pound). They do, however, provide certain exceptions for specific uses which permit the continued use of imperial units until respectively, 31st December 1999, and beyond that date. For example, the pound may be used for the sale of fruit and vegetables loose from bulk until 31st December 1999 and the pint, beyond that date, for draught beer and cider, and milk in returnable bottles.

Legislation has already been made to implement the Directives by the amendment of Acts and subordinate legislation. Examples include the Units of Measurement Regulations 1994 ([S.I. 1994/2867](#)) and the Weights and Measures Act 1985 (Metrication) (Amendment) Order 1994 ([S.I. 1994/2866](#)) which together amend provisions of the Units of Measurement Regulations 1986 ([S.I. 1986/1082](#)) and the Weights and Measures Act 1985. Specific amendments, for example, substitute metric quantities for imperial.

These Regulations provide, from their coming into force on 1st October 1995 (and, for the uses described in regulation 4, from 1st January 2000), for those uses of the imperial system for which no implementing legislation has made specific provision. Where, before those dates, use is made in legislation, or in any deed or document (for example), of an imperial unit in the circumstances specified in the Directives and legal effect is to be given to that use after those dates, these Regulations provide for its conversion into the metric equivalent. No such conversion from imperial to metric is, however, made in the circumstances described in regulation 5. Such circumstances include those in which the Directives permit the continued use of certain imperial units as sole indications of quantity and those in which an imperial unit is used as a supplementary indication.