
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1996 No. 107

**The Vehicle Excise Duty (Immobilisation, Removal
and Disposal of Vehicles) Regulations 1996**

**PART I
PRELIMINARY**

Citation and commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Vehicle Excise Duty (Immobilisation, Removal and Disposal of Vehicles) Regulations 1996 and shall come into force on 20th February 1996.

Interpretation

- 2.—(1) In these Regulations, unless the context requires otherwise —
- “the 1994 Act” means the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994;
 - “authorised person” has the meaning given by regulation 3;
 - “custodian” in relation to a vehicle has the meaning given by regulation 10(2);
 - “designated clamping area” has the meaning given by regulation 4;
 - “disabled person’s badge” has the meaning given by paragraph 1(7) of Schedule 2A to the 1994 Act;
 - “G.B. records” means the records kept under the 1994 Act by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency on behalf of the Secretary of State and “G.B. registration mark” means a registration mark assigned to a vehicle registered in those records;
 - “local authority” means a county council, a district council, a London borough council or the Common Council of the City of London;
 - “N.I. records” means the records kept under the 1994 Act by Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland on behalf of the Secretary of State and “N.I. registration mark” means a registration mark assigned to a vehicle registered in those records;
 - “public service vehicle” has the meaning given by section 1 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981(1);
 - “release” in relation to a vehicle means release from an immobilisation device;
 - “surety payment” means a sum payable by virtue of regulation 6(3)(b) or regulation 13(2)(c) (ii); and
 - “voucher” means a voucher issued under regulation 16(2).

(2) References to the prescribed charge for any matter are to the charge specified in relation to that matter in Schedule 1 to these Regulations.

(1) 1981 c. 14. Section 1 was amended by Schedule 8 to the Transport Act 1985 (c. 67).

(3) References to the “owner” of a vehicle at a particular time are to the person by whom it was then kept and the person in whose name the vehicle is registered at a particular time shall be taken, unless the contrary is shown, to be the person by whom the vehicle was kept at that time.

(4) Except where it is expressly provided otherwise, a reference in these Regulations to a numbered regulation is to the regulation in these Regulations so numbered and a reference to a numbered paragraph is to the paragraph so numbered in the regulation in which the reference occurs.

Authorised persons

3.—(1) In these Regulations a reference to an authorised person is to a person authorised by the Secretary of State for the purposes of these Regulations.

(2) An authorised person may be a local authority, an employee of a local authority, a member of a police force or any other person.

(3) Different persons may be authorised for different purposes, but a person who is an authorised person for the purposes of regulation 18 shall not act as an authorised person for any other purpose.

Application

4. These Regulations shall apply only to vehicles which are stationary within an area named in Schedule 2 to these Regulations (in these Regulations referred to as a “designated clamping area”).

PART II

IMMOBILISATION OF VEHICLES

Power to immobilise vehicles

5.—(1) This regulation applies where an authorised person has reason to believe that an offence under section 29(1) of the 1994 Act is being committed as regards a vehicle which is stationary on a public road in a designated clamping area.

(2) Where this regulation applies, without prejudice to the institution of proceedings for any offence under the 1994 Act, the authorised person or a person acting under his direction may —

- (a) fix an immobilisation device to the vehicle where it remains in the place where it is stationary, or
- (b) move it from that place to another place on the same or another public road and fix an immobilisation device to it in that other place.

(3) Where an immobilisation device is fixed to a vehicle in accordance with this regulation, the person fixing the device shall also fix to the vehicle an immobilisation notice which —

- (a) indicates that the device has been fixed to the vehicle and warns that no attempt should be made to drive it or otherwise put it in motion until it has been released from the device;
- (b) states the reason why the device has been fixed;
- (c) specifies the steps to be taken to secure its release including the charges payable under these Regulations and the person to whom and the means by which those charges may be paid.

Release of immobilised vehicles

6.—(1) A vehicle to which an immobilisation device has been fixed in accordance with regulation 5—

- (a) may be released only by or under the direction of an authorised person; and
- (b) subject to sub-paragraph (a) above, shall be released—
 - (i) where there is produced to an authorised person a vehicle licence for the vehicle which was in force when the vehicle was immobilised; or
 - (ii) an authorised person is satisfied that the vehicle was immobilised in any of the circumstances specified in regulation 7(2) or that the vehicle was at the time it was immobilised an exempt vehicle; or
 - (iii) if the first and second requirements specified in paragraphs (2) and (3) are met.
- (2) The first requirement is that the prescribed charge for the release of the vehicle from the immobilisation device is paid in any manner specified in the immobilisation notice.
- (3) The second requirement is that—
 - (a) a vehicle licence is produced in accordance with instructions specified in the immobilisation notice and the licence is one which is in force for the vehicle concerned at the time the licence is produced; or
 - (b) where such a licence is not produced, the prescribed charge for a surety payment is paid in any manner specified in the immobilisation notice.

Exemptions from immobilisation

7.—(1) These Regulations shall not apply in relation to a vehicle in any of the circumstances specified in paragraph (2).

- (2) The circumstances are that—
 - (a) a current disabled person's badge is displayed on the vehicle;
 - (b) the vehicle is an exempt vehicle and a current nil licence is displayed on it;
 - (c) a badge issued pursuant to the British Medical Association car badge scheme is displayed on the vehicle;
 - (d) the vehicle appears to an authorised person to have been abandoned;
 - (e) the vehicle is a public service vehicle being used for the carriage of passengers;
 - (f) the vehicle is being used for the purpose of the removal of any obstruction to traffic, the maintenance, improvement or reconstruction of a public road, or the laying, erection, alteration, repair or cleaning in or near a road of any traffic sign or sewer or of any main, pipe or apparatus for the supply of gas, water or electricity, or of any telegraph or telephone wires, cables, posts or supports;
 - (g) the vehicle is being used by the Post Office in connection with the delivery or collection of postal packets and each side of the vehicle is clearly marked with the words "Post Office" or "Royal Mail"; or
 - (h) the vehicle is stationary at a time when, having been immobilised or removed under these Regulations, less than 24 hours have elapsed since it was released or, as the case may be, removed.
- (3) In this regulation "nil licence" means a document which —
 - (a) was issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with regulations under the 1994 Act;
 - (b) is in the form of a vehicle licence; and
 - (c) has "NIL" marked in the space provided for indicating the amount of vehicle excise duty payable.

Removal of or interference with immobilisation notice

8.—(1) An immobilisation notice shall not be removed or interfered with except by or under the authority of an authorised person.

(2) A person contravening paragraph (1) shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

(3) Any person who, without being authorised to do so in accordance with paragraph (1), removes or attempts to remove an immobilisation device fixed to a vehicle in accordance with these Regulations is guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

Other offences connected with immobilisation

9.—(1) Where these Regulations would apply in relation to a vehicle but for the provisions of regulation 7(1) and (2)(a) and the vehicle was not, at the time it was stationary, being used —

- (a) in accordance with regulations under section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970⁽²⁾ or with regulations under section 14 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1978,⁽³⁾ and
- (b) in circumstances falling within section 117(1)(b) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984⁽⁴⁾ or Article 174A(2)(b) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981⁽⁵⁾ (use where a disabled person's concession would be available),

the person in charge of the vehicle at that time is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(2) Where—

- (a) a person makes a declaration with a view to securing the release of a vehicle from an immobilisation device purported to have been fixed in accordance with these Regulations,
- (b) the declaration is that the vehicle is or was an exempt vehicle, and
- (c) the declaration is to the person's knowledge either false or in any material respect misleading,

that person is guilty of an offence.

(3) A person guilty of an offence by virtue of paragraph (2) is liable—

- (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum, and
- (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.

PART III

REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF VEHICLES

Removal of immobilised vehicles

10.—(1) This regulation applies in a case where—

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- (2) 1970 c. 44. Section 21 was amended by the Local Government Act 1972 (c. 72) Schedule 30, the Transport Act 1982 (c. 49) section 68, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (c. 27) Schedule 13, paragraph 11, the Local Government Act 1985 (c. 51) Schedule 5, paragraph 1 and the Road Traffic Act 1991 (c. 40) section 35 and Schedule 8.
 - (3) 1978 c. 53.
 - (4) 1984 c. 27. Section 117(1) was substituted by the Road Traffic Act 1991, section 35(6).
 - (5) S.I.1981/154 (N.I.1).

- (a) an immobilisation device is fixed to a vehicle in accordance with these Regulations, and
- (b) 24 hours have elapsed since the device was fixed to the vehicle, and
- (c) the vehicle has not been released in accordance with these Regulations.

(2) In a case where this regulation applies, an authorised person or a person acting under the direction of an authorised person, may remove the vehicle and deliver it to a person authorised by the Secretary of State to keep vehicles so removed in his custody (in these Regulations called a “custodian”).

Disposal of removed vehicles

11.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this regulation, the custodian of a vehicle delivered to him in accordance with regulation 10(2) may dispose of it by selling it or dealing with it as scrap, as he thinks fit.

(2) A vehicle shall not be disposed of pursuant to this regulation before the end of the period of 5 weeks beginning with the date on which the vehicle was removed in accordance with regulation 10(2) and until the custodian has, for the purpose of ascertaining the owner of the vehicle, taken such of the steps specified in Schedule 3 to these Regulations as are applicable to the vehicle and either—

- (a) he has failed to ascertain the name and address of the owner; or
- (b) the owner has failed to comply with a notice in accordance with paragraph (3) served on him by post.

(3) A notice under paragraph (2)(b) shall be a notice addressed to the owner which—

- (a) states—
 - (i) the registration mark and make of the vehicle;
 - (ii) the place where the vehicle was found before it was immobilised;
 - (iii) the place to which the vehicle has been removed;
 - (iv) the steps to be taken to obtain possession of the vehicle in accordance with regulation 13;
 - (v) that, if he is the owner of the vehicle, he is required to remove the vehicle from the custody of the custodian on or before a specified date (being not less than 21 days after the date on which the notice is served on him);
 - (vi) that unless the vehicle is removed by him on or before that date, the custodian intends to dispose of it; and
 - (vii) that, if he is the owner of the vehicle, he is required to remove it from the custody of the custodian; and
- (b) requires the owner to remove the vehicle from the custody of the custodian within 21 days of the date on which the notice was served.

(4) Where it appears to a custodian of a vehicle that more than one person is the owner, such one of them as he thinks fit shall be treated as the owner for the purposes of this regulation.

Recovery of prescribed charges

12.—(1) Where a vehicle has been removed and delivered into the custody of a custodian in accordance with regulation 10(2), the Secretary of State or the custodian may (whether or not any claim is made under regulation 13 or 15) recover from the person who was the owner of the vehicle at the time the immobilisation device was fixed the prescribed charges for—

- (a) its release, removal and storage; and
- (b) if the vehicle has been disposed of, its disposal.

(2) Where, by virtue of paragraph (1), any sum is recoverable in respect of a vehicle by a custodian, he shall be entitled to retain custody of it until that sum is paid.

Taking possession of a vehicle

13.—(1) A person (“the claimant”) may take possession of a vehicle which has been removed and delivered to a custodian and has not been disposed of under regulation 11, if the conditions specified in paragraph (2) are satisfied.

(2) The conditions are—

- (a) the claimant satisfies the custodian that he is the owner of the vehicle or that he is authorised by the owner to take possession of the vehicle;
- (b) except where the claimant produces a vehicle licence in respect of the vehicle which was in force when the vehicle was immobilised or the custodian is satisfied that the vehicle was immobilised in any of the circumstances specified in regulation 7(2) or that the vehicle was, at the time it was immobilised, an exempt vehicle, the claimant pays to the custodian—
 - (i) the prescribed charge in respect of the removal of the vehicle; and
 - (ii) the prescribed charge for the storage of the vehicle during the period whilst it was in the custody of the custodian; and
- (c) the claimant either—
 - (i) produces to the custodian a vehicle licence in respect of the vehicle which is in force at the time the vehicle is claimed; or
 - (ii) pays to the custodian the prescribed charge for the surety payment.

(3) On giving the claimant possession of a vehicle pursuant to this regulation, the custodian shall give the claimant a statement of the right of the owner or person in charge of the vehicle at the time it was immobilised to appeal pursuant to regulation 18(2), of the steps to be taken in order to appeal and of the address to which representations to an authorised person made as mentioned in that regulation should be sent.

Offences as to securing possession of vehicles

14.—(1) Where—

- (a) a person makes a declaration with a view to securing possession of a vehicle purported to have been delivered into the custody of a custodian in accordance with regulation 10(2);
- (b) the declaration is that the vehicle is or was an exempt vehicle, and
- (c) the declaration is to the person’s knowledge either false or in any material respect misleading,

that person is guilty of an offence.

(2) A person guilty of an offence under paragraph (1) is liable —

- (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum, and
- (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.

Claim by owner of a vehicle after its disposal

15.—(1) If, after a vehicle has been disposed of by a custodian pursuant to regulation 11, a person claims to have been the owner of the vehicle at the time when it was disposed of and the

conditions specified in paragraph (2) are fulfilled, there shall be payable to him by the custodian a sum calculated in accordance with paragraph (3).

(2) The conditions are that—

- (a) the person claiming satisfies the custodian that he was the owner of the vehicle at the time it was disposed of; and
- (b) the claim is made before the end of the period of one year beginning with the date on which the vehicle was disposed of.

(3) The sum payable under paragraph (1) shall be calculated by deducting from the proceeds of sale the prescribed charges for the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle.

PART IV VOUCHERS

Issue of vouchers

16.—(1) This regulation applies where a surety payment has been made in respect of a vehicle under either—

- (a) regulation 6(3)(b); or
- (b) regulation 13(2)(c)(ii).

(2) Where this regulation applies a voucher shall be issued in respect of the surety payment to the person making the payment by an authorised person, in a case falling within paragraph (1)(a), or by the custodian, in a case falling within paragraph (1)(b).

(3) Where a voucher is so issued section 29(1) of the 1994 Act shall not apply as regards the vehicle concerned if it is used or kept on a public road without a vehicle licence being in force for it at any time during the period of 24 hours beginning with the time when the voucher was issued.

(4) Neither an authorised person nor a custodian shall issue a voucher unless they have been furnished with information as to the identity of the owner of the vehicle.

(5) A voucher shall contain the following information—

- (a) the registration mark of the vehicle concerned;
- (b) the date and time of day when the vehicle was released from the immobilisation device or, as the case may be, possession of it was taken;
- (c) the name and address of the owner or assumed owner;
- (d) the amount paid and the means by which it was paid;
- (e) the name and address of the person procuring the release of the vehicle or, as the case may be, taking possession of it;
- (f) particulars as to how a refund may be obtained in accordance with paragraph (6).

(6) The owner of a vehicle as respects which a voucher has been issued under this regulation shall be entitled to a refund of the amount of the surety payment represented by the voucher if —

- (a) within the period of 15 days beginning with the date on which the voucher was issued, the voucher is surrendered to a person authorised to issue vouchers or a custodian; and
- (b) a valid vehicle licence for the vehicle whose registration mark is given in the voucher is produced at the same time.

(7) Where a voucher is issued on receipt of a cheque which is subsequently dishonoured—

- (a) the voucher shall be void;

- (b) the person to whom the voucher is issued shall be required to deliver it up; and
- (c) no refund shall be payable under paragraph (6).

Offences relating to vouchers

17.—(1) Where a person who, in connection with—

- (a) obtaining a voucher under regulation 16, or
- (b) obtaining a refund of any sum in respect of which a voucher was issued,

makes a declaration which to his knowledge is either false or in any material respect misleading, he is guilty of an offence.

(2) A person is guilty of an offence if he forges, fraudulently alters, fraudulently uses or fraudulently lends a voucher or fraudulently allows a voucher to be used by another person.

(3) A person guilty of an offence under paragraph (1) or (2) is liable—

- (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum, and
- (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.

PART V DISPUTES

Disputes

18.—(1) This regulation applies to a dispute which has arisen because —

- (a) a person (“the claimant”), in order to secure the release or to obtain possession of a vehicle, has paid a charge in accordance with regulation 6 or 13 and alleges that the charge (“the disputed charge”) should be refunded to him on the ground that, at the time the vehicle was immobilised,—
 - (i) a vehicle licence was in force for the vehicle; or
 - (ii) any of the circumstances specified in regulation 7(2) applied to the vehicle; and
- (b) the person to whom the disputed charge was paid refuses to refund the charge.

(2) The claimant under a dispute to which this regulation applies may appeal against the refusal of a refund by sending, to the authorised person at the address given for this purpose in the statement under regulation 13(3), written representations stating the grounds on which a refund is claimed.

(3) The authorised person to whom the appeal is made may disregard any representations which are received by him after the end of the period of 28 days beginning with the date on which the vehicle was released or, as the case may be, on which possession was taken of it.

(4) The authorised person shall consider any representations duly made and any evidence provided in support of them and notify the claimant whether or not he accepts that either of the grounds mentioned in paragraph (1)(a) have been established and—

- (a) if the authorised person notifies the claimant that one of those grounds has been established, the Secretary of State shall refund the disputed charge;
- (b) if the authorised person rejects the appeal he shall so inform the claimant and at the same time notify him of his right to appeal to a magistrates' court under paragraph (5).

(5) A claimant, who has appealed to an authorised person under paragraph (2), may on complaint make a further appeal to a magistrates' court—

- (a) if his appeal under paragraph (2) has been rejected under paragraph (4) and the further appeal is made within 28 days of his being served with notification to that effect under paragraph (4)(b); or
 - (b) if the authorised person has not notified him of the outcome of his appeal in accordance with paragraph (4) and 56 days have elapsed since he appealed,
- and, if the court finds that either of the grounds mentioned in paragraph (1)(a) have been established, it shall order the Secretary of State to refund the disputed charge.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State for Transport

20th January 1996

Steven Norris
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Department of Transport