



Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006

2006 CHAPTER 36

PART 2

REGULATION OF RADIO SPECTRUM

CHAPTER 4

ENFORCEMENT

Unauthorised use etc

35 Unauthorised use etc of wireless telegraphy station or apparatus

- (1) A person commits an offence if he contravenes section 8.
- (2) A person who commits an offence under this section consisting in the establishment or use of a wireless telegraphy station, or the installation or use of wireless telegraphy apparatus, for the purpose of making a broadcast is liable—
 - (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [^{F1}the general limit in a magistrates' court] or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.
- (3) In the application of subsection (2) to Scotland or Northern Ireland the reference to 12 months is to be read as a reference to six months.
- (4) A person who commits an offence under this section consisting in the installation or use of receiving apparatus is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
- (5) A person who commits an offence under this section other than one falling within subsection (2) or (4) is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 51 weeks or to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to both.

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(6) In the application of subsection (5) to Scotland or Northern Ireland the reference to 51 weeks is to be read as a reference to six months.

(7) In this section “broadcast” has the same meaning as in Part 5.

Textual Amendments

F1 Words in s. 35(2)(a) substituted (7.2.2023 at 12.00 p.m.) by [The Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 \(Magistrates’ Court Sentencing Powers\) Regulations 2023 \(S.I. 2023/149\)](#), regs. 1(2), 2(1), **Sch. Pt. 1**

36 Keeping available for unauthorised use

(1) A person who has a wireless telegraphy station or wireless telegraphy apparatus in his possession or under his control commits an offence if—

- (a) he intends to use it in contravention of section 8; or
- (b) he knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, that another person intends to use it in contravention of that section.

(2) A person who commits an offence under this section where the relevant contravention of section 8 would constitute an offence to which section 35(2) applies is liable—

- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [^{F2}the general limit in a magistrates’ court] or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both;
- (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.

(3) In the application of subsection (2) to Scotland or Northern Ireland the reference to 12 months is to be read as a reference to six months.

(4) A person who commits an offence under this section in relation to receiving apparatus is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(5) A person who commits an offence under this section other than one falling within subsection (2) or (4) is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 51 weeks or to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to both.

(6) In the application of subsection (5) to Scotland or Northern Ireland the reference to 51 weeks is to be read as a reference to six months.

Textual Amendments

F2 Words in s. 36(2)(a) substituted (7.2.2023 at 12.00 p.m.) by [The Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 \(Magistrates’ Court Sentencing Powers\) Regulations 2023 \(S.I. 2023/149\)](#), regs. 1(2), 2(1), **Sch. Pt. 1**

37 Allowing premises to be used for unlawful broadcasting

(1) A person who is in charge of premises that are used for unlawful broadcasting commits an offence if—

- (a) he knowingly causes or permits the premises to be so used; or

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- (b) he has reasonable cause to believe that the premises are being so used but fails to take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances of the case to prevent them from being so used.
- (2) A person who commits an offence under this section is liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [^{F3}the general limit in a magistrates’ court] or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.
- (3) In the application of subsection (2) to Scotland or Northern Ireland the reference to 12 months is to be read as a reference to six months.
- (4) For the purposes of this section a person is in charge of premises if—
- (a) he is the owner or occupier of the premises; or
 - (b) he has, or acts or assists in, the management or control of the premises.
- (5) For the purposes of this section premises are used for unlawful broadcasting if they are used—
- (a) for making an unlawful broadcast; or
 - (b) for sending signals for the operation or control of apparatus used for the purpose of making an unlawful broadcast from another place.
- (6) For the purposes of this section a broadcast is unlawful if—
- (a) it is made by means of the use of a wireless telegraphy station or wireless telegraphy apparatus in contravention of section 8; or
 - (b) the making of the broadcast contravenes a provision of Part 5.
- (7) In this section—
- “broadcast” has the same meaning as in Part 5;
 - “premises” includes any place and, in particular, includes—
- (a) a vehicle, ship or aircraft; and
 - (b) a structure or other object (whether movable or not, and whether on land or not).

Textual Amendments

F3 Words in s. 37(2)(a) substituted (7.2.2023 at 12.00 p.m.) by [The Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 \(Magistrates’ Court Sentencing Powers\) Regulations 2023 \(S.I. 2023/149\)](#), regs. 1(2), 2(1), **Sch. Pt. 1**

38 Facilitating unauthorised broadcasting

- (1) This section applies in the case of a broadcasting station from which unauthorised broadcasts are made.
- (2) A person commits an offence if—
- (a) he participates in the management, financing, operation or day-to-day running of the broadcasting station knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that unauthorised broadcasts are made by the station;
 - (b) he supplies, instals, repairs or maintains wireless telegraphy apparatus or any other item knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe—

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- (i) that the apparatus or other item is to be, or is, used for the purpose of facilitating the operation or day-to-day running of the broadcasting station, and
 - (ii) that unauthorised broadcasts are made by the station;
 - (c) he renders any other service to a person knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe—
 - (i) that the rendering of the service to the person will facilitate the operation or day-to-day running of the broadcasting station, and
 - (ii) that unauthorised broadcasts are made by the station;
 - (d) he supplies a film or sound recording knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that an unauthorised broadcast of it is to be made by the broadcasting station;
 - (e) he makes a literary, dramatic or musical work knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that an unauthorised broadcast of it is to be made by the broadcasting station;
 - (f) he makes an artistic work knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that an unauthorised broadcast including that work is to be made by the broadcasting station;
 - (g) he participates in an unauthorised broadcast made by the broadcasting station knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that unauthorised broadcasts are made by the station;
 - (h) he advertises, or invites another to advertise, by means of an unauthorised broadcast made by the broadcasting station knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that unauthorised broadcasts are made by the station;
 - (i) he publishes the times or other details of unauthorised broadcasts made by the broadcasting station, or (otherwise than by publishing such details) publishes an advertisement of matter calculated to promote the station (whether directly or indirectly), knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that unauthorised broadcasts are made by the station.
- (3) For the purposes of this section a person participates in a broadcast only if he is actually present—
- (a) as an announcer;
 - (b) as a performer or one of the performers concerned in an entertainment given; or
 - (c) as the deliverer of a speech.
- (4) The cases in which a person is to be taken for the purposes of this section as advertising by means of a broadcast include any case in which he causes or allows it to be stated, suggested or implied that entertainment included in the broadcast—
- (a) has been supplied by him; or
 - (b) is provided wholly or partly at his expense.
- (5) In proceedings for an offence under this section consisting in supplying a thing or rendering a service, it is a defence for the defendant to prove that he was obliged, under or by virtue of any enactment, to supply the thing or render the service.
- (6) A person who commits an offence under this section is liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [^{F4}the general limit in a magistrates' court] or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both;

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- (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.
- (7) In the application of subsection (6) to Scotland or Northern Ireland the reference to 12 months is to be read as a reference to six months.
- (8) In this section—
 - “broadcast” has the same meaning as in Part 5;
 - “broadcasting station” means a business or other operation (whether or not in the nature of a commercial venture) that is engaged in the making of broadcasts;
 - “unauthorised broadcast” means a broadcast made by means of the use of a wireless telegraphy station or wireless telegraphy apparatus in contravention of section 8.

Textual Amendments

F4 Words in s. 38(6)(a) substituted (7.2.2023 at 12.00 p.m.) by [The Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 \(Magistrates’ Court Sentencing Powers\) Regulations 2023 \(S.I. 2023/149\)](#), regs. 1(2), 2(1), **Sch. Pt. 1**

Procedures for contraventions

39 Contravention of terms, etc

- (1) Where OFCOM determine that there are reasonable grounds for believing that a person is contravening, or has contravened—
 - (a) a term, provision or limitation of a wireless telegraphy licence, or
 - (b) a term, provision or limitation of an exemption under section 8(3),they may give that person a notification under this section.
- (2) A notification under this section—
 - (a) sets out the determination made by OFCOM;
 - (b) specifies the term, provision or limitation, and the contravention, in respect of which that determination has been made; and
 - (c) specifies the period during which the person notified has an opportunity of [^{F5}making representations].

- ^{F6}(3)
- ^{F6}(4)
- ^{F6}(5)
- ^{F6}(6)
- ^{F6}(7)
- ^{F6}(8)

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Textual Amendments

- F5** Words in s. 39(2)(c) substituted (26.5.2011) by [The Electronic Communications and Wireless Telegraphy Regulations 2011 \(S.I. 2011/1210\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 13(a)** (with Sch. 3 para. 2)
- F6** S. 39(3)-(8) omitted (26.5.2011) by virtue of [The Electronic Communications and Wireless Telegraphy Regulations 2011 \(S.I. 2011/1210\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 13(b)** (with Sch. 3 para. 2)

^{F7}40 Repeated contravention

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Textual Amendments

- F7** S. 40 omitted (26.5.2011) by virtue of [The Electronic Communications and Wireless Telegraphy Regulations 2011 \(S.I. 2011/1210\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14** (with Sch. 3 para. 2)

41 Procedure for prosecutions

- (1) This section applies to proceedings against a person (“the defendant”) for an offence under section 35 consisting in the contravention of—
 - (a) the terms, provisions or limitations of a wireless telegraphy licence; or
 - (b) the terms, provisions or limitations of an exemption under section 8(3).
- (2) Proceedings to which this section applies are not to be brought unless, before they are brought, OFCOM have—
 - (a) given the defendant a notification under section 39 in respect of the contravention to which the proceedings relate; and
 - (b) considered any representations about the matters notified which were made by the defendant within the period allowed under that section.
- (3) Proceedings to which this section applies are not to be brought against a person in respect of a contravention if—
 - (a) it is a contravention to which a notification given to that person under section 39 relates; and
 - (b) that person has, during the period [^{F8}specified under section 39(2)(c) for making representations] , complied with the notified term, provision or limitation.
- (4) Subsection (2) does not apply where OFCOM have certified that it would be inappropriate to follow the procedure in section 39 because of an immediate risk of—
 - (a) a serious threat to the safety of the public, to public health or to national security; or
 - (b) serious economic or operational problems for persons (other than the defendant) who—
 - (i) use wireless telegraphy stations or wireless telegraphy apparatus; ^{F9}...
 - (ii) are communications providers or make associated facilities available. [^{F10};or
 - (iii) are other users of the radio spectrum.]
- (5) Where—

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- (a) proceedings to which this section applies are as a result of subsection (4) brought without a notification having been given to the defendant, and
- (b) the defendant is convicted in those proceedings of the offence under section 35,

the court, in determining how to deal with that person, must have regard, in particular, to the matters specified in subsection (6).

(6) The matters are—

- (a) whether the defendant has ceased to be in contravention of the terms, provisions or limitations in question and (if so) when; and
- (b) any steps taken by the defendant (whether before or after the commencement of the proceedings) for securing compliance with the obligations imposed on him by virtue of those terms, provisions or limitations.

(7) Where—

- (a) OFCOM give a notification under section 39 in respect of a contravention, and
- (b) that notification is given before the end of six months after the day of the contravention,

the time for the bringing of proceedings for a summary offence in respect of that contravention shall be extended until the end of six months from the end of the period [F11 specified under section 39(2)(c).]

[F12(8) For further provision about prosecutions see section 107.]

Textual Amendments

- F8** Words in s. 41(3)(b) substituted (27.6.2017) by [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\), ss. 13\(3\)\(a\)](#), 118(2) (with s. 13(4))
- F9** Word in s. 41(4)(b) omitted (26.5.2011) by virtue of [The Electronic Communications and Wireless Telegraphy Regulations 2011 \(S.I. 2011/1210\)](#), reg. 1(2), [Sch. 2 para. 15\(a\)](#) (with Sch. 3 para. 2)
- F10** S. 41(4)(b)(iii) and word inserted (26.5.2011) by [The Electronic Communications and Wireless Telegraphy Regulations 2011 \(S.I. 2011/1210\)](#), reg. 1(2), [Sch. 2 para. 15\(b\)](#) (with Sch. 3 para. 2)
- F11** Words in s. 41(7) substituted (27.6.2017) by [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\), ss. 13\(3\)\(b\)](#), 118(2) (with s. 13(4))
- F12** S. 41(8) substituted (27.6.2017) by [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\), ss. 13\(3\)\(c\)](#), 118(2) (with s. 13(4))

42 Special procedure for contraventions by [F13 holders of wireless telegraphy licences]

(1) OFCOM may impose a penalty on a person if—

- (a) that person is or has been in contravention in any respect of the terms, provisions or limitations of a [F14 wireless telegraphy] licence;
- [F15](b)
- (c) OFCOM have notified that person that it appears to them that those terms, provisions or limitations have been contravened in that respect; and
- (d) that contravention is not one in respect of which proceedings for an offence under this Chapter have been brought against that person.

(2) Where OFCOM impose a penalty on a person under this section, they must—

- (a) notify that person of that decision and of their reasons for that decision; and

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- (b) in that notification, fix a reasonable period after it is given as the period within which the penalty is to be paid.
- (3) A penalty imposed under this section—
 - (a) must be paid to OFCOM; and
 - (b) if not paid within the period fixed by them, is to be recoverable by them accordingly.
- (4) No proceedings for an offence under this Chapter may be commenced against a person in respect of a contravention in respect of which a penalty has been imposed by OFCOM under this section.
- (5) A licence is a general multiplex licence, in relation to the time of a contravention, if—
 - (a) it is a wireless telegraphy licence containing terms, provisions or limitations as a result of which the services for the purposes of which the use of the licensed station or apparatus is authorised are confined to, or are allowed to include, one or more multiplex services; and
 - (b) at that time, there is no licence under Part 1 or 2 of the Broadcasting Act 1996 (c. 55) in force in respect of a multiplex service to be broadcast using that station or apparatus.
- (6) “Multiplex service” means—
 - (a) a service for broadcasting for general reception consisting in the packaging together of two or more services that are provided for inclusion together in that service by a combination of the relevant information in digital form; or
 - (b) a service provided with a view to its being a service falling within paragraph (a) but in the case of which only one service is for the time being comprised in digital form in what is provided.
- [^{F16}(7) A contravention is a “relevant multiplex contravention” for the purposes of section 43 if—
 - (a) it is a contravention of terms, provisions or limitations of a general multiplex licence, and
 - (b) the contravention relates only to terms, provisions or limitations that fall within section 9(4)(b) or (c).]

Textual Amendments

- F13** Words in s. 42 heading substituted (27.6.2017) by [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(4)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))
- F14** Words in s. 42(1)(a) substituted (27.6.2017) by [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(2)(a)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))
- F15** S. 42(1)(b) omitted (27.6.2017) by virtue of [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(2)(b)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))
- F16** S. 42(7) inserted (27.6.2017) by [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(3)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))

43 Amount of penalty under section 42

- (1) The amount of a penalty imposed under section 42 [^{F17}for a relevant multiplex contravention (see subsection (7) of that section)] is to be such amount as OFCOM think fit.

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(2) But the amount of the penalty may not exceed the greater of—

- (a) £250,000; and
- (b) 5 per cent. of the relevant amount of gross revenue.

[^{F18}(2A) The amount of a penalty imposed under section 42 for a contravention that is not a relevant multiplex contravention is to be such amount not exceeding 10 per cent of the relevant amount of gross revenue as OFCOM think—

- (a) appropriate; and
- (b) proportionate to the contravention in respect of which it is imposed.]

(3) In [^{F19}this section] “the relevant amount of gross revenue” means the amount specified in section 44.

(4) The Secretary of State may by order amend this section so as to substitute a different amount for the amount for the time being specified in subsection (2)(a).

(5) No order is to be made containing provision authorised by subsection (4) unless a draft of the order has been laid before Parliament and approved by a resolution of each House.

Textual Amendments

F17 Words in s. 43(1) inserted (27.6.2017) by [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(5)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))

F18 S. 43(2A) inserted (27.6.2017) by [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(6)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))

F19 Words in s. 43(3) substituted (27.6.2017) by [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(7)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))

^{F20}43A Special procedure for contraventions of certain provisions

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Textual Amendments

F20 S. 43A omitted (27.6.2017) by virtue of [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(8)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))

44 Relevant amount of gross revenue

(1) The relevant amount of gross revenue for the purposes of section 43^{F21} ..., in relation to a penalty imposed on a person, is—

- (a) where the last accounting period of that person which falls before the contravention was a period of 12 months, the relevant part of his gross revenue for that period; and
- (b) in any other case, the amount which, by making any appropriate apportionments or other adjustments of the relevant part of his gross revenue for the accounting period or periods mentioned in subsection (2), is computed to be the amount representing the annual rate for the relevant part of his gross revenue.

(2) The accounting period or periods referred to in subsection (1) are—

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- (a) every accounting period of his to end within the period of 12 months immediately preceding the contravention; and
 - (b) if there is no such accounting period, the accounting period of his which is current at the time of the contravention.
- (3) A reference to the relevant part of a person's gross revenue, in relation to a contravention of the terms, provisions or limitations of a licence, is a reference to so much of his gross revenue as is attributable to the provision of the service to which that licence relates.
- (4) For the purposes of this section—
- (a) the gross revenue of a person for a period, and
 - (b) the extent to which a part of a person's gross revenue is attributable to the provision of any service,
- is to be ascertained in accordance with such principles as may be set out in a statement made by OFCOM.
- (5) Such a statement may provide for the amount of a person's gross revenue for an accounting period that is current when the amount falls to be calculated to be taken to be the amount estimated by OFCOM, in accordance with the principles set out in the statement, to be the amount that will be his gross revenue for that period.
- (6) OFCOM may revise a statement made under subsection (4) from time to time.
- (7) A statement made or revised under this section may set out different principles for different cases.
- (8) Before making or revising a statement under this section, OFCOM must consult the Secretary of State and the Treasury.
- (9) OFCOM must—
- (a) publish the statement made under subsection (4) and every revision of it; and
 - (b) send a copy of the statement and of every such revision to the Secretary of State;
- and the Secretary of State must lay copies of the statement and of every such revision before each House of Parliament.
- (10) Sections 32 and 33 are to apply for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of a person's gross revenue for any period for the purposes of section 43^{F22}... and this section as they apply for the purpose of obtaining information for statistical purposes about matters relating to the establishment, installation or use by that person of a wireless telegraphy station or wireless telegraphy apparatus.
- (11) In this section—
- “accounting period”, in relation to a person, means a period in respect of which accounts of the undertaking carried on by him are prepared or, if one such period is comprised in another, whichever of those periods is or is closest to a 12 month period;
 - “gross revenue”, in relation to a person, means the gross revenue of an undertaking carried on by that person.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006, Chapter 4. (See end of Document for details)

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Textual Amendments

- F21** Words in s. 44(1) omitted (27.6.2017) by virtue of [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(9)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))
- F22** Words in s. 44(10) omitted (27.6.2017) by virtue of [Digital Economy Act 2017 \(c. 30\)](#), **ss. 9(9)**, 118(2) (with s. 9(13))

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006, Chapter 4.