
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1997 No. 276

The Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997

PART VIII

REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF VEHICLES

Disposal of vehicles by a police officer

51.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (4), a police officer may, in such manner as he thinks fit, dispose of a vehicle which appears to him to be abandoned and which has been, or could at any time be, removed in pursuance of Article 48 or an order under Article 13 or 15.

(2) The time at which a vehicle may be disposed of by a police officer under paragraph (1) is as follows—

(a) in the case of a vehicle which in his opinion is in such condition that it ought to be destroyed^{F1} ..., any time in the course of or after its removal;

[^{F2}(b) in the case of a vehicle, not falling within sub-paragraph (a), which—

(i) does not display a licence (whether current or otherwise and whether or not the vehicle is required to display a licence), and

(ii) does not display any registration mark (whether indicating registration within or outside the United Kingdom),

any time in the course of or after its removal;]

(c) in any other case, any time after the police officer has taken reasonable steps to find the owner of the vehicle and either—

(i) the police officer has failed to find such a person; or

(ii) he has failed to comply with a notice served on him requiring him to remove the vehicle from the custody of a constable within 21 days from the day on which the notice was served [^{F3}or such other period as may be prescribed],

^{F4} ...

^{F5}(3)

(4) If, before a vehicle is disposed of under paragraph (1), the vehicle is claimed by a person who—

(a) satisfies the police officer that he is the owner of the vehicle; and

(b) pays the [^{F6} Policing Board] such sums as may reasonably have been incurred in respect of the removal and storage of the vehicle,

the police officer shall permit him to remove the vehicle from the custody of a constable.

(5) If, before the expiration of one year from the date on which a vehicle is sold in pursuance of this Article, any person satisfies the [^{F6} Policing Board] that at the time of the sale he was the owner

Changes to legislation: *The Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, Section 51 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 17 April 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) View outstanding changes*

of the vehicle, the^{F6} Policing Board] shall pay him any sum by which the proceeds of sale exceed the reasonable costs of the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle.

(6) If in the case of any vehicle it appears to the^{F6} Policing Board] that more than one person is or was the owner of the vehicle at the relevant time, such one of them as the^{F6} Policing Board] thinks fit shall be treated as the owner of the vehicle for the purposes of paragraphs (4) and (5).

(7) In this Article and Article 52—

“licence”, in relation to a vehicle, means a licence issued in respect of the vehicle under the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 [^{F7} (including a nil licence within the meaning of that Act)]or anything which appears to the Department or a police officer to be a corresponding licence in a country outside Northern Ireland;

“owner”, in relation to a vehicle which is the subject of a hiring agreement or hire-purchase agreement, includes the person entitled to possession of the vehicle under the agreement;

“police officer” means a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary not below the rank of Inspector.

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| F1 | Words in art. 51(2)(a) repealed (1.4.2012) by Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (c. 23), ss. 12(2), 78, Sch. 4 Pt. 1 ; S.R. 2012/13, art. 2(2), Sch. 2 (with art. 4) |
| F2 | Art. 51(2)(b) substituted (1.4.2012) by Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (c. 23), ss. 12(3), 78 ; S.R. 2012/13, art. 2(2), Sch. 2 (with art. 4) |
| F3 | Words in art. 51(2)(c)(ii) inserted (18.1.2012 for specified purposes, 1.4.2012 in so far as not already in operation) by Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (c. 23), ss. 12(4), 78 ; S.R. 2012/13, art. 2(1)(2), Sch. 1, Sch. 2 (with art. 4) |
| F4 | Words in art. 51(2) repealed (1.4.2012) by Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (c. 23), ss. 12(5), 78, Sch. 4 Pt. 1 ; S.R. 2012/13, art. 2(2), Sch. 2 (with art. 4) |
| F5 | Art. 51(3) repealed (1.4.2012) by Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (c. 23), ss. 12(6), 78, Sch. 4 Pt. 1 ; S.R. 2012/13, art. 2(2), Sch. 2 (with art. 4) |
| F6 | 2000 c.32 |
| F7 | Words in art. 51(7) inserted (1.4.2012) by Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (c. 23), ss. 12(7), 78 ; S.R. 2012/13, art. 2(2), Sch. 2 (with art. 4) |

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to :

- [Instrument am. \(prosp.\) by 1998 c. 32 s.74\(1\)Sch.4 para.23](#)