



Mental Health Act 1983

1983 CHAPTER 20

PART X

MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTARY

Miscellaneous provisions

138 Retaking of patients escaping from custody.

- (1) If any person who is in legal custody by virtue of section 137 above escapes, he may, subject to the provisions of this section, be retaken—
 - (a) in any case, by the person who had his custody immediately before the escape, or by any constable or [^{F1}approved mental health professional] ;
 - (b) if at the time of the escape he was liable to be detained in a hospital within the meaning of Part II of this Act, or subject to guardianship under this Act, [^{F2}or a community patient who was recalled to hospital under section 17E above,] by any other person who could take him into custody under section 18 above if he had absented himself without leave.
- (2) A person to whom paragraph (b) of subsection (1) above applies shall not be retaken under this section after the expiration of the period within which he could be retaken under section 18 above if he had absented himself without leave on the day of his escape unless he is subject to a restriction order under Part III of this Act or an order or direction having the same effect as such an order; and subsection (4) of the said section 18 shall apply with the necessary modifications accordingly.
- (3) A person who escapes while being taken to or detained in a place of safety under section 135 or 136 above shall not be retaken under this section after the expiration of the period of 72 hours beginning with the time when he escapes or the period during which he is liable to be so detained, whichever expires first.
- (4) This section, so far as it relates to the escape of a person liable to be detained in a hospital within the meaning of Part II of this Act, shall apply in relation to a person who escapes—

Status: Point in time view as at 03/11/2008. This version of this provision has been superseded.

Changes to legislation: Mental Health Act 1983, Section 138 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 19 January 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)

- (a) while being taken to or from such a hospital in pursuance of regulations under section 19 above, or of any order, direction or authorisation under Part III or VI of this Act (other than under section 35, 36, 38, 53, 83 or 85) or under section 123 above; or
- (b) while being taken to or detained in a place of safety in pursuance of an order under Part III of this Act (other than under section 35, 36 or 38 above) pending his admission to such a hospital,

as if he were liable to be detained in that hospital and, if he had not previously been received in that hospital, as if he had been so received.

- (5) In computing for the purposes of the power to give directions under section 37(4) above and for the purposes of sections 37(5) and 40(1) above the period of 28 days mentioned in those sections, no account shall be taken of any time during which the patient is at large and liable to be retaken by virtue of this section.
- (6) Section 21 above shall, with any necessary modifications, apply in relation to a patient who is at large and liable to be retaken by virtue of this section as it applies in relation to a patient who is absent without leave and references in that section to section 18 above shall be construed accordingly.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 138(1)(a) substituted (3.11.2008) by [Mental Health Act 2007 \(c. 12\), ss. 21, 56, Sch. 2 para. 10\(c\)](#) (with [Sch. 10](#)); [S.I. 2008/1900, art. 2\(d\)](#) (with [art. 3, Sch.](#)); [S.I. 2008/2561, art. 2\(b\)](#) (with [art. 3, Sch.](#))
- F2** Words in s. 138(1)(b) inserted (3.11.2008) by [Mental Health Act 2007 \(c. 12\), ss. 32, 56, Sch. 3 para. 32](#) (with [Sch. 10](#)); [S.I. 2008/1900, art. 2\(i\)](#) (with [art. 3, Sch.](#))

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 138 extended (E.W.) (1.1.1992) by [Criminal Procedure \(Insanity and Unfitness to Plead\) Act 1991 \(c. 25, SIF 39:1\), s. 6\(2\)](#); [S.I. 1991/2488, art.2](#)

Status:

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Changes to legislation:

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