



Companies Act 2006

2006 CHAPTER 46

PART 10

A COMPANY'S DIRECTORS

CHAPTER 7

DIRECTORS' LIABILITIES

Provision protecting directors from liability

232 Provisions protecting directors from liability

- (1) Any provision that purports to exempt a director of a company (to any extent) from any liability that would otherwise attach to him in connection with any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the company is void.
- (2) Any provision by which a company directly or indirectly provides an indemnity (to any extent) for a director of the company, or of an associated company, against any liability attaching to him in connection with any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the company of which he is a director is void, except as permitted by—
 - (a) section 233 (provision of insurance),
 - (b) section 234 (qualifying third party indemnity provision), or
 - (c) section 235 (qualifying pension scheme indemnity provision).
- (3) This section applies to any provision, whether contained in a company's articles or in any contract with the company or otherwise.
- (4) Nothing in this section prevents a company's articles from making such provision as has previously been lawful for dealing with conflicts of interest.

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

233 Provision of insurance

Section 232(2) (voidness of provisions for indemnifying directors) does not prevent a company from purchasing and maintaining for a director of the company, or of an associated company, insurance against any such liability as is mentioned in that subsection.

234 Qualifying third party indemnity provision

(1) Section 232(2) (voidness of provisions for indemnifying directors) does not apply to qualifying third party indemnity provision.

(2) Third party indemnity provision means provision for indemnity against liability incurred by the director to a person other than the company or an associated company.

Such provision is qualifying third party indemnity provision if the following requirements are met.

(3) The provision must not provide any indemnity against—

- (a) any liability of the director to pay—
 - (i) a fine imposed in criminal proceedings, or
 - (ii) a sum payable to a regulatory authority by way of a penalty in respect of non-compliance with any requirement of a regulatory nature (however arising); or
- (b) any liability incurred by the director—
 - (i) in defending criminal proceedings in which he is convicted, or
 - (ii) in defending civil proceedings brought by the company, or an associated company, in which judgment is given against him, or
 - (iii) in connection with an application for relief (see subsection (6)) in which the court refuses to grant him relief.

(4) The references in subsection (3)(b) to a conviction, judgment or refusal of relief are to the final decision in the proceedings.

(5) For this purpose—

- (a) a conviction, judgment or refusal of relief becomes final—
 - (i) if not appealed against, at the end of the period for bringing an appeal, or
 - (ii) if appealed against, at the time when the appeal (or any further appeal) is disposed of; and
- (b) an appeal is disposed of—
 - (i) if it is determined and the period for bringing any further appeal has ended, or
 - (ii) if it is abandoned or otherwise ceases to have effect.

(6) The reference in subsection (3)(b)(iii) to an application for relief is to an application for relief under—

- section 661(3) or (4) (power of court to grant relief in case of acquisition of shares by innocent nominee), or
- section 1157 (general power of court to grant relief in case of honest and reasonable conduct).

235 Qualifying pension scheme indemnity provision

- (1) Section 232(2) (voidness of provisions for indemnifying directors) does not apply to qualifying pension scheme indemnity provision.
- (2) Pension scheme indemnity provision means provision indemnifying a director of a company that is a trustee of an occupational pension scheme against liability incurred in connection with the company's activities as trustee of the scheme.

Such provision is qualifying pension scheme indemnity provision if the following requirements are met.

- (3) The provision must not provide any indemnity against—
 - (a) any liability of the director to pay—
 - (i) a fine imposed in criminal proceedings, or
 - (ii) a sum payable to a regulatory authority by way of a penalty in respect of non-compliance with any requirement of a regulatory nature (however arising); or
 - (b) any liability incurred by the director in defending criminal proceedings in which he is convicted.
- (4) The reference in subsection (3)(b) to a conviction is to the final decision in the proceedings.
- (5) For this purpose—
 - (a) a conviction becomes final—
 - (i) if not appealed against, at the end of the period for bringing an appeal, or
 - (ii) if appealed against, at the time when the appeal (or any further appeal) is disposed of; and
 - (b) an appeal is disposed of—
 - (i) if it is determined and the period for bringing any further appeal has ended, or
 - (ii) if it is abandoned or otherwise ceases to have effect.
- (6) In this section “occupational pension scheme” means an occupational pension scheme as defined in section 150(5) of the Finance Act 2004 (c. 12) that is established under a trust.

236 Qualifying indemnity provision to be disclosed in directors' report

- (1) This section requires disclosure in the directors' report of—
 - (a) qualifying third party indemnity provision, and
 - (b) qualifying pension scheme indemnity provision.

Such provision is referred to in this section as “qualifying indemnity provision”.

- (2) If when a directors' report is approved any qualifying indemnity provision (whether made by the company or otherwise) is in force for the benefit of one or more directors of the company, the report must state that such provision is in force.
- (3) If at any time during the financial year to which a directors' report relates any such provision was in force for the benefit of one or more persons who were then directors of the company, the report must state that such provision was in force.

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- (4) If when a directors' report is approved qualifying indemnity provision made by the company is in force for the benefit of one or more directors of an associated company, the report must state that such provision is in force.
- (5) If at any time during the financial year to which a directors' report relates any such provision was in force for the benefit of one or more persons who were then directors of an associated company, the report must state that such provision was in force.

237 Copy of qualifying indemnity provision to be available for inspection

- (1) This section has effect where qualifying indemnity provision is made for a director of a company, and applies—
 - (a) to the company of which he is a director (whether the provision is made by that company or an associated company), and
 - (b) where the provision is made by an associated company, to that company.
- (2) That company or, as the case may be, each of them must keep available for inspection—
 - (a) a copy of the qualifying indemnity provision, or
 - (b) if the provision is not in writing, a written memorandum setting out its terms.
- (3) The copy or memorandum must be kept available for inspection at—
 - (a) the company's registered office, or
 - (b) a place specified in regulations under section 1136.
- (4) The copy or memorandum must be retained by the company for at least one year from the date of termination or expiry of the provision and must be kept available for inspection during that time.
- (5) The company must give notice to the registrar—
 - (a) of the place at which the copy or memorandum is kept available for inspection, and
 - (b) of any change in that place,unless it has at all times been kept at the company's registered office.
- (6) If default is made in complying with subsection (2), (3) or (4), or default is made for 14 days in complying with subsection (5), an offence is committed by every officer of the company who is in default.
- (7) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale and, for continued contravention, a daily default fine not exceeding one-tenth of level 3 on the standard scale.
- (8) The provisions of this section apply to a variation of a qualifying indemnity provision as they apply to the original provision.
- (9) In this section "qualifying indemnity provision" means—
 - (a) qualifying third party indemnity provision, and
 - (b) qualifying pension scheme indemnity provision.

238 Right of member to inspect and request copy

- (1) Every copy or memorandum required to be kept by a company under section 237 must be open to inspection by any member of the company without charge.
- (2) Any member of the company is entitled, on request and on payment of such fee as may be prescribed, to be provided with a copy of any such copy or memorandum.

The copy must be provided within seven days after the request is received by the company.
- (3) If an inspection required under subsection (1) is refused, or default is made in complying with subsection (2), an offence is committed by every officer of the company who is in default.
- (4) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale and, for continued contravention, a daily default fine not exceeding one-tenth of level 3 on the standard scale.
- (5) In the case of any such refusal or default the court may by order compel an immediate inspection or, as the case may be, direct that the copy required be sent to the person requiring it.

Ratification of acts giving rise to liability

239 Ratification of acts of directors

- (1) This section applies to the ratification by a company of conduct by a director amounting to negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the company.
- (2) The decision of the company to ratify such conduct must be made by resolution of the members of the company.
- (3) Where the resolution is proposed as a written resolution neither the director (if a member of the company) nor any member connected with him is an eligible member.
- (4) Where the resolution is proposed at a meeting, it is passed only if the necessary majority is obtained disregarding votes in favour of the resolution by the director (if a member of the company) and any member connected with him.

This does not prevent the director or any such member from attending, being counted towards the quorum and taking part in the proceedings at any meeting at which the decision is considered.

- (5) For the purposes of this section—
 - (a) “conduct” includes acts and omissions;
 - (b) “director” includes a former director;
 - (c) a shadow director is treated as a director; and
 - (d) in section 252 (meaning of “connected person”), subsection (3) does not apply (exclusion of person who is himself a director).
- (6) Nothing in this section affects—
 - (a) the validity of a decision taken by unanimous consent of the members of the company, or

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- (b) any power of the directors to agree not to sue, or to settle or release a claim made by them on behalf of the company.
- (7) This section does not affect any other enactment or rule of law imposing additional requirements for valid ratification or any rule of law as to acts that are incapable of being ratified by the company.