



# Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937

1937 CHAPTER 59 1 Edw 8 and 1 Geo 6

## 1 Prohibition of films involving cruelty to animals.

- (1) No person shall exhibit to the public, or supply to any person for public exhibition (whether by him or by another person), any cinematograph film (whether produced in Great Britain or elsewhere) if in connection with the production of the film any scene represented in the film was organised or directed in such a way as to involve the cruel infliction of pain or terror on any animal or the cruel goading of any animal to fury.
- (2) In any proceedings brought under this Act in respect of any film, the court may (without prejudice to any other mode of proof) infer from the film as exhibited to the public or supplied for public exhibition, as the case may be, that a scene represented in the film as so exhibited or supplied was organised or directed in such a way as to involve the cruel infliction of pain or terror on an animal or the cruel goading of an animal to fury, but (whether the court draws such an inference or not) it shall be a defence for the defendant to prove that he believed, and had reasonable cause to believe, that no scene so represented was so organised or directed.
- (3) Any person contravening the provisions of this section shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding [<sup>F1</sup>level 3 on the standard scale], or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or to both such fine and such imprisonment.
- (4) For the purposes of this Act—
  - (a) a cinematograph film shall be deemed to be exhibited to the public when, and only when, it is exhibited in a place to which for the time being members of the general public as such have access, whether on payment of money or otherwise, and the expression “public exhibition” shall be construed accordingly; and
  - [<sup>F2</sup>(b) in relation to England and Wales, the expression “animal” means a “protected animal” within the meaning of the Animal Welfare Act 2006.]
  - [<sup>F3</sup>; and
  - (c) in relation to Scotland, the expression “animal” means a protected animal within the meaning of section 17 of the [Animal Health and Welfare \(Scotland\) Act 2006 \(asp 11\)\]](#)

---

**Changes to legislation:** Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937, Section 1 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 23 May 2023. 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

---

---

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** Words substituted by virtue of (E.W.) Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), **s. 46** and (S) Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 (c. 21, SIF 39:1), **s. 289G**
- F2** S. 1(4)(b) substituted (27.3.2007 for W., 6.4.2007 for E.) by Animal Welfare Act 2006 (c. 45), s. 68(3), **Sch. 3 para. 2** (with ss. 1(2), 58(1), 59, 60); S.I. 2007/499, art. 2(2)(1); S.I. 2007/1030, art. 2(1)(1)
- F3** S. 1(4)(c) and word inserted (S.) (3.11.2006) by The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 (Consequential Provisions) Order 2006 (S.S.I. 2006/536), art. 1, **Sch. 1 para. 2(3)**
- 

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 1(3) has effect (S.) (1.4.1996) as if the maximum fine there mentioned were a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale by virtue of 1995 c. 40, ss. 3, 7(2), Sch. 1 para. 3(1), **Sch. 2 Pt. II**

**Changes to legislation:**

Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937, Section 1 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 23 May 2023. 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.

[View outstanding changes](#)

**Changes and effects yet to be applied to :**

- s. 1(3) words substituted by [2003 c. 44 Sch. 26 para. 9](#)