



Insolvency Act 1986

1986 CHAPTER 45

PART IV

WINDING UP OF COMPANIES REGISTERED UNDER THE COMPANIES ACTS

CHAPTER VII

LIQUIDATORS

Release of liquidator

173 Release (voluntary winding up).

- (1) This section applies with respect to the release of the liquidator of a company which is being wound up voluntarily.
- (2) A person who has ceased to be a liquidator shall have his release with effect from the following time, that is to say—
 - [^{F1}(a) in the following cases, the time at which notice is given to the registrar of companies in accordance with the rules that the person has ceased to hold office—
 - (i) the person has been removed from office by a general meeting of the company,
 - (ii) the person has been removed from office by a decision of the company's creditors and the company's creditors have not decided against his release,
 - (iii) the person has died;
 - (b) in the following cases, such time as the Secretary of State may, on the application of the person, determine—
 - (i) the person has been removed from office by a decision of the company's creditors and the company's creditors have decided against his release,

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- (ii) the person has been removed from office by the court,
 - (iii) the person has vacated office under section 171(4);]
 - (c) in the case of a person who has resigned, such time as may be prescribed;
 - (d) in the case of a person who has vacated office under subsection [F²(6)] of section 171, the time at which he vacated office;
 - [F³(e) in the case of a person who has vacated office under section 171(7)—
 - (i) if any of the company's creditors objected to the person's release before the end of the period for so objecting prescribed by the rules, such time as the Secretary of State may, on an application by that person, determine, and
 - (ii) otherwise, the time at which the person vacated office.]
 - [F⁴(2A) Where the person is removed from office by a decision of the company's creditors, any decision of the company's creditors as to whether the person should have his release must be made by a qualifying decision procedure.]
 - (3) In the application of subsection (2) to the winding up of a company registered in Scotland, the references to a determination by the Secretary of State as to the time from which a person who has ceased to be liquidator shall have his release are to be read as references to such a determination by the Accountant of Court.
 - (4) Where a liquidator has his release under subsection (2), he is, with effect from the time specified in that subsection, discharged from all liability both in respect of acts or omissions of his in the winding up and otherwise in relation to his conduct as liquidator.
- But nothing in this section prevents the exercise, in relation to a person who has had his release under subsection (2), of the court's powers under section 212 of this Act (summary remedy against delinquent directors, liquidators, etc.).

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 173(2)(a)(b) substituted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force, 6.4.2019 for S. in so far as not already in force) by [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\), s. 164\(1\), Sch. 9 para. 44\(2\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3); S.I. 2019/816, reg. 4(c) (with reg. 5)
- F2** Word in s. 173(2)(d) substituted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force, 6.4.2019 for S. in so far as not already in force) by [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\), s. 164\(1\), Sch. 9 para. 44\(3\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3); S.I. 2019/816, reg. 4(c) (with reg. 5)
- F3** S. 173(2)(e) substituted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force, 6.4.2019 for S. in so far as not already in force) by [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\), s. 164\(1\), Sch. 9 para. 44\(4\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3); S.I. 2019/816, reg. 4(c) (with reg. 5)
- F4** S. 173(2A) inserted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force, 6.4.2019 for S. in so far as not already in force) by [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\), s. 164\(1\), Sch. 9 para. 44\(5\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3); S.I. 2019/816, reg. 4(c) (with reg. 5)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** [S. 173](#) applied (with modifications) (4.1.2024) by S.I. 2021/716, Sch. 1 para. 3 (as amended by [The Payment and Electronic Money Institution Insolvency \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023 \(S.I. 2023/1399\)](#), regs. 1(2), 20)

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- C2** S. 173(2)(a) amended (1.7.1999) by 1998 c. 46, s. 125, **Sch. 8 para. 23(4)(5)**, (with s. 126(3)-(11); S.I. 1998/3178, **arts. 2, 3** (as amended (28.6.2016) by **The Building Societies (Floating Charges and Other Provisions) Order 2016** (S.I. 2016/679), arts. 1(1), **6**)
- C3** S. 173(2) modified (S.) (6.4.2001) by S.S.I. 2001/128, reg. 4(2), **Sch. 3**
S. 173 applied (with modifications) (S.) (6.4.2001) by S.S.I. 2001/128, reg. 4(1), **Sch. 2**

174 Release (winding up by the court).

- (1) This section applies with respect to the release of the liquidator of a company which is being wound up by the court, or of a provisional liquidator.
- (2) Where the official receiver has ceased to be liquidator and a person becomes liquidator in his stead, the official receiver has his release with effect from the following time, that is to say—
 - (a) in a case where that person was nominated by [^{F5}the company's] creditors or contributories, or was appointed by the Secretary of State, the time at which the official receiver gives notice to the court that he has been replaced;
 - (b) in a case where that person is appointed by the court, such time as the court may determine.
- (3) If the official receiver while he is a liquidator gives notice to the Secretary of State that the winding up is for practical purposes complete, he has his release with effect from such time as the Secretary of State may determine.
- (4) A person other than the official receiver who has ceased to be a liquidator has his release with effect from the following time, that is to say—
 - [^{F6}(a) in the following cases, the time at which notice is given to the court in accordance with the rules that the person has ceased to hold office—
 - (i) the person has been removed from office by a decision of the company's creditors and the company's creditors have not decided against his release,
 - (ii) the person has died;
 - (b) in the following cases, such time as the Secretary of State may, on the application of the person, determine—
 - (i) the person has been removed from office by a decision of the company's creditors and the company's creditors have decided against his release;
 - (ii) the person has been removed from office by the court or the Secretary of State;
 - (iii) the person has vacated office under section 172(5) or (7);]
 - (c) in the case of a person who has resigned, such time as may be prescribed;
 - (d) in the case of a person who has vacated office under section 172(8)—
 - [^{F7}(i) if any of the company's creditors objected to the person's release before the end of the period for so objecting prescribed by the rules, such time as the Secretary of State may, on an application by that person, determine, and
 - (ii) otherwise, the time at which the person vacated office.]

[^{F8}(4ZA) Where the person is removed from office by a decision of the company's creditors, any decision of the company's creditors as to whether the person should have his release must be made by a qualifying decision procedure.]

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[^{F9}(4A) Where a winding-up order made by the court in England and Wales is rescinded, the person (whether the official receiver or another person) who is the liquidator of the company at the time the order is rescinded has his release with effect from such time as the court may determine.]

- (5) A person who has ceased to hold office as a provisional liquidator has his release with effect from such time as the court may, on an application by him, determine.
- (6) Where the official receiver or a liquidator or provisional liquidator has his release under this section, he is, with effect from the time specified in the preceding provisions of this section, discharged from all liability both in respect of acts or omissions of his in the winding up and otherwise in relation to his conduct as liquidator or provisional liquidator.

But nothing in this section prevents the exercise, in relation to a person who has had his release under this section, of the court's powers under section 212 (summary remedy against delinquent directors, liquidators, etc.).

- (7) In the application of this section to a case where the order for winding up has been made by the court in Scotland, the references to a determination by the Secretary of State as to the time from which a person who has ceased to be liquidator has his release are to such a determination by the Accountant of Court.

Textual Amendments

- F5** Words in s. 174(2)(a) substituted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force, 6.4.2019 for S. in so far as not already in force) by [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\)](#), s. 164(1), [Sch. 9 para. 45\(2\)\(a\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3); S.I. 2019/816, reg. 4(c) (with reg. 5)
- F6** S. 174(4)(a)(b) substituted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force, 6.4.2019 for S. in so far as not already in force) by [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\)](#), s. 164(1), [Sch. 9 para. 45\(3\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3); S.I. 2019/816, reg. 4(c) (with reg. 5)
- F7** S. 174(4)(d)(i)(ii) substituted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force, 6.4.2019 for S. in so far as not already in force) by [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\)](#), s. 164(1), [Sch. 9 para. 45\(4\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3); S.I. 2019/816, reg. 4(c) (with reg. 5)
- F8** S. 174(4ZA) inserted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force, 6.4.2019 for S. in so far as not already in force) by [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\)](#), s. 164(1), [Sch. 9 para. 45\(5\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3); S.I. 2019/816, reg. 4(c) (with reg. 5)
- F9** S. 174(4A) inserted (1.10.2015) by [Deregulation Act 2015 \(c. 20\)](#), s. 115(7), [Sch. 6 para. 10](#); S.I. 2015/1732, art. 2(e)(iii)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C4** S. 174 applied (with modifications) (1.12.1994) by S.I. 1994/2421, art. 8(3)(9), [Sch. 4 Pt. II para. 22](#)
 S. 174 applied (with modifications) (S.) (6.4.2001) by S.S.I. 2001/128, reg. 4(1), [Sch. 2](#)
- C5** S. 174 applied (with modifications) (6.6.2013) by [The Collective Investment in Transferable Securities \(Contractual Scheme\) Regulations 2013 \(S.I. 2013/1388\)](#), Pt. 3reg. 1, Sch. 2 paras. 3, [5 Table](#) (with reg. 24)

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

- Act amendment to earlier affecting provision S.I. 1986/1999, art. 3, Sch. 1 Pt. 2 by [S.I. 2017/1119 Sch. 3 para. 1](#)
- Act savings and transitional provisions for amendments by S.I. 2022/1166 by [S.I. 2022/1172 Regulations](#)

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 41HB(2) words substituted by [2018 c. 14 s. 1\(3\)\(b\)](#)