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STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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**1981 No. 154**

**Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981**

**PART V**

**REGULATION OF GOODS VEHICLES AND PUBLIC SERVICE  
VEHICLES, TOGETHER WITH THE DRIVERS OF SUCH VEHICLES,  
AND CONTROL OF LARGE PRIVATE PASSENGER VEHICLES**

Certification and regulation of goods vehicles

**Limitation of continuous hours of duty of drivers of goods vehicles**

**56**<sup>F1</sup>.—(1) No person shall drive, or cause or permit any person employed by him or subject to his order to drive, a goods vehicle—

- (a) for any continuous period longer than the number of hours prescribed for a continuous period of driving; or
- (b) for continuous periods in any period of 24 hours amounting in the aggregate to more than the number of hours prescribed for such continuous periods of driving; or
- (c) so that the driver has not at least the prescribed period for rest in any period of 24 hours calculated from the commencement of any period of driving; or
- (d) for continuous periods in any period of 7 days amounting in the aggregate to more than the number of hours prescribed for such continuous periods of driving; or
- (e) so that the driver has not at least the prescribed period of rest in any period of 7 days.

(2) For the purposes of this Article and of any regulations made under Article 58—

- (a) any two or more periods of time shall be deemed to be a continuous period unless separated by an interval of not less than half an hour in which the driver is able to obtain rest and refreshment;
- (b) any time spent by a driver on other work in connection with a vehicle or the load carried by the vehicle, shall be reckoned as time spent in driving;
- (c) any time spent in driving or resting outside Northern Ireland may be taken into account in calculating any period prescribed under paragraph (1).

(3) Any person who drives, or who causes or permits any person employed by him or subject to his orders to drive, a goods vehicle contrary to the domestic drivers' hours code shall be guilty of an offence under this Order.

(4) This Article shall not apply to motor vehicles used for fire brigade or ambulance purposes and a person shall not be liable to be convicted of an offence under this Article, if he proves that the contravention was due to unavoidable delay in the completion of the journey to which the offence alleged relates by reason of circumstances which he could not reasonably have foreseen.

(5) The Department may by regulations—

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**Changes to legislation:** Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, Section 56 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 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

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- (a) exempt from the provisions of this Article goods vehicles of such a class or description as may be specified in the regulations;
  - (b) provide that this Article shall apply to motor vehicles of such a class or description as may be so specified (not being goods vehicles) as it applies to goods vehicles;
  - (c) provide that this Article shall apply to goods vehicles of any class or description with such modifications as may be so specified;
  - (d) require drivers and employers of drivers to keep or to cause to be kept in such manner as may be so specified records with respect to such matters relevant to the provisions of this Article as may be so specified;
  - (e) require to be installed in vehicles of such classes or descriptions and in such manner and place as may be so specified, equipment of such type and manner as may be so specified, for recording information as to the use of the vehicle and impose duties on the owners and drivers of the vehicle with respect to the use and operation of the equipment;
  - (f) provide for the inspection of any records required to be kept or equipment to be installed under sub-paragraphs ( d ) and ( e ) respectively.
- (6) In this Order “the domestic drivers' hours code” means the provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2) (including those provisions as applied by Article 63) <sup>F2</sup>... and the provisions of any regulations made under paragraph (5) or made under Article 58 for purposes of those paragraphs.

**F1** mod. by SR 1981/199

**F2** Words in art. 56(6) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of [The Drivers Hours and Tachographs \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/596\)](#), regs. 1(3), 4; 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)

**Changes to legislation:**

Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, Section 56 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 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.

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

- Instrument amended by [1994 c. 22 s. 63Sch.3 para 17](#)
- Instrument rev. in Pt. by [1994 c. 22 s. 65Sch.5 Pt II](#)

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

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

- Sch. 1 Pt. 1 words inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 18\(2\)](#)
- Sch. 7 para. 6 repealed by [2010 c. 2 \(N.I.\) Sch. 4](#) (The amendment could not be applied as the relevant affected text is not available on [legislation.gov.](#))
- Sch. 7 para. 7 repealed by [2010 c. 2 \(N.I.\) Sch. 4](#) (The amendment could not be applied as the relevant affected text is not available on [legislation.gov.](#))
- art. 5(2ZA)-(2ZD) inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 16\(2\)\(a\)](#)
- art. 5(4A) inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 16\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- art. 5A inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 17\(2\)](#)
- art. 13(1)(c)(ia) words repealed by [S.I. 2007/916 \(N.I.\) Sch. 5 para. 4\(a\)\(ii\)Sch. 8 Pt. 5](#)
- art. 13B-13C inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 17\(3\)](#)
- art. 15ZA inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 18\(1\)\(c\)](#)
- art. 19D(1ZA)(1ZB) inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 17\(4\)\(b\)](#)
- art. 19AB19AC substituted for art. 19A 19B by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 19\(3\)](#)
- art. 31A(2A)-(2D) inserted (temp.) by [S.I. 2019/648 reg. 5\(2\)\(a\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Reg. 5 omitted immediately before IP completion day by virtue of [S.I. 2020/1393](#), regs. 1(2), 2(4))
- art. 31A(2C) words inserted in earlier amending provision [S.I. 2019/648](#), reg. 5(2)(a) by [S.I. 2020/818 Sch. 6 para. 39\(4\)\(a\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). [S.I. 2019/648](#), reg 5, which inserts art. 31A(2C) omitted (31.12.2020 immediately before IP completion day) by virtue of [S.I. 2020/1393](#), regs. 1(2), 2(4))
- art. 31A(3A)(3B) inserted (temp.) by [S.I. 2019/648 reg. 5\(2\)\(b\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Reg. 5 omitted immediately before IP completion day by virtue of [S.I. 2020/1393](#), regs. 1(2), 2(4))
- art. 31A(3B) words inserted in earlier amending provision [S.I. 2019/648](#), reg. 5(2)(b) by [S.I. 2020/818 Sch. 6 para. 39\(4\)\(b\)\(i\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). [S.I. 2019/648](#), reg 5, which inserts art. 31A(3B) omitted (31.12.2020 immediately before IP completion day) by virtue of [S.I. 2020/1393](#), regs. 1(2), 2(4))
- art. 31A(3B) words inserted in earlier amending provision [S.I. 2019/648](#), reg. 5(2)(b) by [S.I. 2020/818 Sch. 6 para. 39\(4\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). [S.I. 2019/648](#), reg 5, which inserts art. 31A(3B) omitted (31.12.2020 immediately before IP completion day) by virtue of [S.I. 2020/1393](#), regs. 1(2), 2(4))
- art. 174(2A)(da) inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 17\(5\)\(a\)\(i\)](#)
- art. 174(2AB) inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 17\(5\)\(b\)](#)
- art. 177(1)(ba) inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 19\(4\)\(b\)](#)
- art. 177(1A) inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 19\(4\)\(c\)](#)
- art. 177(3)(4) inserted by [2016 c. 11 \(N.I.\) s. 19\(4\)\(b\)](#)

- art.198 am. (prosp.) by 1997 c. 16 s.18Sch.3 paras.8(2)9
- art.198 am. (prosp.) by 1997 c. 16 s.18Sch.3 paras.8(2)9