
STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

1979 No. 90

The Crown Court Rules (Northern Ireland) 1979

PART IV
INDICTMENTS

Material, etc, for indictments

19.—(1) An indictment shall be on durable paper, and may be produced by one of the following means, that is to say, printing, writing (which must be clear and legible) and typewriting otherwise than by means of a carbon, and may be produced partly by one of those means and partly by another or others of them.

(2) Each sheet on which an indictment is set out shall be 297 millimetres long and 210 millimetres wide, and if more than one sheet is required, the sheets shall be fastened together in book form.

(3) A proper margin not less than 25 millimetres wide shall be kept on the left-hand side of each sheet.

(4) An indictment shall not be open to objection by reason only of any failure to comply with this rule.

Form of an indictment

20. An indictment shall be in Form 3 in the schedule.

Joining of charges in one indictment

21. Charges for any offences may be joined in the same indictment if those charges are founded on the same facts or form or are a part of a series of offences of the same or a similar character.

Mode in which offences are to be charged

22.—(1) A description of the offence charged in an indictment or, where more than one offence is charged in an indictment, of each offence so charged shall be set out in the indictment in a separate paragraph called a count.

(2) A count of an indictment shall commence with a statement of the offence charged, called the statement of offence.

(3) The statement of offence shall describe the offence shortly in ordinary language, avoiding as far as possible the use of technical terms, and without necessarily stating all the essential elements of the offence, and, if the offence charged is one created by statute, shall contain a reference to the section of the statute creating the offence.

(4) After the statement of the offence, particulars of such offence shall be set out in ordinary language, in which the use of technical terms shall not be necessary :

Provided that where any rule of law or any statute limits the particulars of an offence which are required to be given in an indictment, nothing in this rule shall require any more particulars to be given than those so required.

(5) Where an indictment contains more than one count, the counts shall be numbered consecutively.

Provisions as to statutory offences

23.—(1) Where an enactment constituting an offence states the offence to be the doing or the omission to do any one of any different acts in the alternative, or the doing or the omission to do any act in any one of any different capacities, or with any one of any different intentions, or states any part of the offence in the alternative, the acts, omissions, capacities, or intentions or other matters stated in the alternative in the enactment may be stated in the alternative in the count charging the offence.

(2) It shall not be necessary, in any count charging a statutory offence, to negative any exception or exemption from or qualification to the operation of the statute creating the offence.

Description of property

24.—(1) The description of property in a count in an indictment shall be in ordinary language and such as to indicate with reasonable clearness the property referred to, and if the property is so described it shall not be necessary (except when required for the purpose of describing an offence depending on any special ownership of property or special value of property) to name the person to whom the property belongs or state the value of the property.

(2) Where property is vested in more than one person and the owners of the property are referred to in an indictment, it shall be sufficient to describe the property as owned by one of those persons by name with others, and if the persons owning the property are a body of persons with a collective name, such as “Trustees”, “Commissioners”, or “Club” or other such name, it shall be sufficient to use the collective name without naming any individual.

Description of persons

25. The description or designation in an indictment of the accused person or any other person to whom reference is made therein, shall be such as is reasonably sufficient to identify him, without necessarily stating his correct name or his abode, style, degree or occupation; and if, owing to the name of the person not being known, or for any other reason, it is impracticable or undesirable to give such a description or designation such description or designation shall be given as is reasonable in the circumstances, or such person may be described as “a person unknown”.

Description of document

26. Where it is necessary to refer any document or instrument in an indictment, it shall be sufficient to describe it by any name or designation by which it is usually known, or by the purport thereof, without setting out any copy thereof.

General rule as to description

27.—(1) Subject to any other provisions of these Rules, it shall be sufficient to describe in ordinary language any place, time, thing, matter, act or omission whatsoever to which it is necessary to refer in any indictment in such a manner as to indicate with reasonable clearness the place, time, thing, matter, act or omission referred to.

(2) Figures shall and abbreviations may be used in an indictment for expressing anything which is commonly expressed thereby.

Statement of intent

28. It shall not be necessary in stating any intent to defraud, deceive or injure to state an intent to defraud, deceive or injure any particular person where the statute creating the offence does not make an intent to defraud, deceive or injure a particular person an essential ingredient of the offence.

Averment of previous conviction

29. Any averment of a previous conviction of an offence shall be made at the end of the indictment by means of a statement that the person accused has been previously convicted of an offence at a certain time and place without stating the particulars of the offence.

Saving for section 33(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968

30. Nothing in these Rules shall affect the provisions of subsection (3) of section 3 of the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968(1).

Presentment of an indictment

31. An indictment shall be deemed to have been presented when it has been received in the office of the chief clerk.

Time for presentment

32.—(1) Subject to paragraph 2 of this rule, an indictment shall be presented not later than 11 a.m. on the day prior to the arraignment of the person accused therein.

(2) The requirement contained in paragraph (1) of this rule may be waived if—

- (i) the accused consents to this course; and
- (ii) the court gives leave.

Substitution or amendment of an indictment

33. Subject to section 5 of the Indictments Act (Northern Ireland) 1945(2), no substituted or amended indictment shall be presented without prior leave of the court.

Procedure on application under section 2(2)(e) of the Grand Jury (Abolition) Act (Northern Ireland) 1969

34. Every application to a judge under paragraph (e) of section 2(2) of the Grand Jury (Abolition) Act (Northern Ireland) 1969(3) for leave to present an indictment shall—

- (i) be in writing and signed by the applicant or his solicitor;
- (ii) be accompanied by the indictment which it is proposed to present;
- (iii) unless the application is made by or on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland, be accompanied by an affidavit by the applicant, or, if the applicant is a corporation, by an affidavit by a director or officer of the corporation, that the statements contained in the application are, to the best of the deponent's knowledge, information and belief, true;

(1) 1968 c. 34 (N.I.).
(2) 1945 c. 16 (N.I.).
(3) 1969 c. 15 (N.I.).

- (iv) state whether or not any application has previously been made, whether there have been any committal proceedings, and the result of any such application or proceedings; and
- (v) be lodged in the office of the chief clerk eight days before the indictment is intended to be presented.

35.—(1) Where there have been no committal proceedings, the application shall—

- (a) state why it is desired to present an indictment without such proceedings;
- (b) be accompanied by copies of the statements of the witnesses intended to be examined on behalf of the prosecution; and
- (c) state that the evidence shown by these statements will be available at the trial and that the case disclosed by the statements, is to the best of the applicant's knowledge, information and belief, a true case.

(2) Where there have been committal proceedings and the magistrates' court has refused to commit the accused for trial, the application shall be accompanied by—

- (a) a copy of the depositions; and
- (b) the statements of any witnesses whom it is proposed to call so far as their evidence is not contained in the depositions;

and the application shall state that the evidence shown by the statements and (except so far as may be expressly stated to the contrary in the application) the evidence shown by the depositions will be available at the trial and that the case disclosed by the depositions and statements is, to the best of the applicant's knowledge, information and belief, a true case.

(3) Where the accused has been committed for trial, the application shall state why the application is made and shall be accompanied by copies of the statements of the witnesses intended to be examined on behalf of the prosecution, so far as the evidence shown in those statements is not contained in the depositions, and, unless the depositions have already been transmitted to the judge to whom the application is made, shall also be accompanied by a copy of the depositions; and the application shall state that the evidence shown by the said statements will be available at the trial and that the case disclosed by the depositions and the statements is, to the best of the applicant's knowledge, information and belief, a true case.

(4) Any requirement of this rule that an application should be accompanied by a copy of any depositions shall, as respects documents exhibited to those depositions, be satisfied if a copy of such parts only of the exhibits as are, in the opinion of the applicant, material accompanies the application and the application contains an express statement to that effect.

36.—(1) Unless the judge otherwise directs in any particular case, his decision on the application shall be signified in writing on the application without requiring the attendance before him of the applicant or any of the witnesses, and, if the judge thinks fit to require the attendance of the applicant or any of the witnesses, this attendance shall not be in open court.

(2) Unless the judge gives a direction to the contrary, where an applicant is required to attend as aforesaid, he may attend by a solicitor or by counsel.

37. It shall be the duty of any person having custody of any depositions to give to any person desiring to make an application for leave to present a bill of indictment against the person who was accused when those depositions were taken a reasonable opportunity to inspect the depositions and, if so required by him, to supply him, on payment of the appropriate fee, with copies of the depositions or any part thereof.

Duty to furnish copy of indictment

38.—(1) A person charged on indictment shall be supplied before arraignment by the chief clerk with a copy of the indictment free of charge.

(2) The cost of supplying a person charged on indictment with a copy of the indictment shall for the purposes of section 1 but not of section 2 of the Costs in Criminal Cases Act (Northern Ireland) 1968⁽⁴⁾ be treated as part of the costs of the prosecution.

(4) 1968 c. 10 (N.I.).