

Limitation Act 1980

1980 CHAPTER 58

PART I

ORDINARY TIME LIMITS FOR DIFFERENT CLASSES OF ACTION

Actions founded on tort

2 Time limit for actions founded on tort.

An action founded on tort shall not be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the cause of action accrued.

3 Time limit in case of successive conversions and extinction of title of owner of converted goods.

- (1) Where any cause of action in respect of the conversion of a chattel has accrued to any person and, before he recovers possession of the chattel, a further conversion takes place, no action shall be brought in respect of the further conversion after the expiration of six years from the accrual of the cause of action in respect of the original conversion.
- (2) Where any such cause of action has accrued to any person and the period prescribed for bringing that action has expired and he has not during that period recovered possession of the chattel, the title of that person to the chattel shall be extinguished.

4 Special time limit in case of theft.

- (1) The right of any person from whom a chattel is stolen to bring an action in respect of the theft shall not be subject to the time limits under sections 2 and 3(1) of this Act, but if his title to the chattel is extinguished under section 3(2) of this Act he may not bring an action in respect of a theft preceding the loss of his title, unless the theft in question preceded the conversion from which time began to run for the purposes of section 3(2).
- (2) Subsection (1) above shall apply to any conversion related to the theft of a chattel as it applies to the theft of a chattel; and, except as provided below, every conversion

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following the theft of a chattel before the person from whom it is stolen recovers possession of it shall be regarded for the purposes of this section as related to the theft.

If anyone purchases the stolen chattel in good faith neither the purchase nor any conversion following it shall be regarded as related to the theft.

- (3) Any cause of action accruing in respect of the theft or any conversion related to the theft of a chattel to any person from whom the chattel is stolen shall be disregarded for the purpose of applying section 3(1) or (2) of this Act to his case.
- (4) Where in any action brought in respect of the conversion of a chattel it is proved that the chattel was stolen from the plaintiff or anyone through whom he claims it shall be presumed that any conversion following the theft is related to the theft unless the contrary is shown.
- (5) In this section “theft” includes—
- (a) any conduct outside England and Wales which would be theft if committed in England and Wales; and
 - [^{F1}(b) obtaining any chattel (in England and Wales or elsewhere) by—
 - (i) blackmail (within the meaning of section 21 of the Theft Act 1968), or
 - (ii) fraud (within the meaning of the Fraud Act 2006);]
 and references in this section to a chattel being “stolen” shall be construed accordingly.

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 4(5)(b) substituted (15.1.2007) by [Fraud Act 2006 \(c. 35\)](#), ss. 14(1), 15(1), [Sch. 1 para. 18](#) (with [Sch. 2 para. 8](#)); [S.I. 2006/3200](#), [art. 2](#)

[^{F2}4A Time limit for actions for defamation or malicious falsehood.

The time limit under section 2 of this Act shall not apply to an action for—

- (a) libel or slander, or
- (b) slander of title, slander of goods or other malicious falsehood,

but no such action shall be brought after the expiration of one year from the date on which the cause of action accrued.]

Textual Amendments

- F2** S. 4A (which was inserted by [1985 c. 61](#), ss. 57(2), 69(5), [Sch. 9 para. 14](#)) substituted (4.9.1996) by [1996 c. 31](#), [ss. 5\(2\)\(6\)](#), 19 (with s. 20(2))

Changes to legislation:

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

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

- s. 10A inserted by [2018 c. 18 Sch. para. 9](#)
- s. 11B inserted by [2018 c. 18 Sch. para. 11](#)
- s. 14(1B) inserted by [2018 c. 18 Sch. para. 13\(4\)](#)
- s. 32(4B) inserted by [2018 c. 18 Sch. para. 15\(3\)](#)
- s. 33(1B) inserted by [2018 c. 18 Sch. para. 16\(3\)](#)
- s. 33B(1)(g)-(i) inserted by [S.I. 2020/1139 reg. 3\(2\)\(f\)](#)
- s. 33B(1)(da) inserted by [S.I. 2020/1139 reg. 3\(2\)\(d\)](#)