



# Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

## 1984 CHAPTER 27

### PART VI

#### SPEED LIMITS

#### **81 General speed limit for restricted roads.**

- (1) It shall not be lawful for a person to drive a motor vehicle on a restricted road at a speed exceeding 30 miles per hour.
- (2) The Ministers acting jointly may by order made by statutory instrument and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament increase or reduce the rate of speed fixed by subsection (1) above, either as originally enacted or as varied under this subsection.

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

- C1** S. 81 modified (1.7.1999) by [S.I. 1999/672, art. 5, Sch. 2](#)
- C2** S. 81(2) amended (1.7.1999) by [S.I. 1999/1750, art. 4, Sch. 3](#); [S.I. 1998/3178, art. 3](#)  
S. 81(2): transfer of functions (27.12.1999) by [S.I. 1999/3143, art. 2\(1\)](#)

#### **82 What roads are restricted roads.**

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section and of section 84(3) of this Act, a road is a restricted road for the purposes of section 81 of this Act if <sup>[F1]</sup>— (a) there is provided on it a system of <sup>[F2]</sup>street<sup>[F2]</sup>carriageway] lighting furnished by means of lamps placed not more than <sup>[F3]</sup>200 yards<sup>[F3]</sup>185 metres] apart <sup>[F4]</sup>; and  
(b) the road is of a classification or type specified for the purposes of this subsection in regulations made by the Secretary of State.]
- (2) A direction may be given—
  - (a) that a specified road which is a restricted road for the purposes of section 81 of this Act shall cease to be a restricted road for those purposes, or

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- (b) that a specified road which is not a restricted road for those purposes shall become a restricted road for those purposes.
- (3) Where, by a notice published as mentioned in section 1(4) of this Act, a date has been or is declared to be the date on which a part of a special road is open for use as a special road, that part of the road shall not be a restricted road for the purposes of section 81 of this Act or (if the date so declared is a date after the commencement of this section) shall not be a restricted road for those purposes on or after that date.

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** “—(a)” inserted (S.) by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), ss. 128(1), 157(3), Sch. 7 paras. 2(a), 5
- F2** Word “carriageway” substituted (S.) for word “street” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), ss. 128(1), 157(3), Sch. 7 paras. 2(b), 5
- F3** Words “185 metres” substituted (S.) for words “200 yards” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), ss. 128(1), 157(3), Sch. 7 paras. 2(c), 5
- F4** Words inserted (S.) by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), ss. 128(1), 157(3), Sch. 7 paras. 2(d), 5

### 83 Provisions as to directions under s. 82(2)

- (1) Any direction under section 82(2) of this Act in respect of a [<sup>F5</sup>trunk road][<sup>F5</sup>road managed and maintained by him] shall be given by means of an order made by the Secretary of State after giving public notice of his intention to make an order.
- (2) Any such direction in respect of a road which is not [<sup>F6</sup>a trunk road][<sup>F6</sup>managed and maintained by the Secretary of State] shall, subject to Parts I to III of Schedule 9 to this Act, be given by means of an order made by the local authority.
- (3) Section 68(1)(c) of this Act shall apply to any order made under subsection (2) above.

#### Textual Amendments

- F5** Words “road” to “him” substituted (S.) for words “trunk road” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), s. 128(1), [Sch. 9 para. 93\(33\)\(a\)](#)
- F6** Words “managed” to “State” substituted (S.) for words “a trunk road” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), s. 128(1), [Sch. 9 para. 93\(33\)\(b\)](#)

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

- C3** Ss. 83(2), 84 restricted by [Local Government Act 1985 \(c. 51, SIF 81:1\)](#), ss. 1, 2, 8(2), [Sch. 5 para. 6\(3\)](#)
- C4** Ss. 83(2), 84 restricted by [Local Government Act 1985 \(c. 51, SIF 81:1\)](#), s. 8(2), [Sch. 5 para. 12](#)

### 84 Speed limits on roads other than restricted roads.

- (1) An order made under this subsection as respects any road may prohibit, either generally or during periods specified in the order, the driving of motor vehicles on that road at a speed exceeding that specified in the order.

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- (2) The power to make an order under subsection (1) above shall be exercisable by an authority after giving public notice of their intention to make an order under that subsection; and the authority having that power—
  - (a) as respects a [<sup>F7</sup>trunk road][<sup>F7</sup>road for which he is the roads authority], shall be the Secretary of State, and
  - (b) as respects any other road, subject to Parts I to III of Schedule 9 to this Act, shall be the local authority.
- (3) While an order under subsection (1) above is in force as respects a road, that road shall not be a restricted road for the purposes of section 81 of this Act.
- (4) This section does not apply to any part of a special road which is open for use as a special road.
- (5) Section 68(1)(c) of this Act shall apply to any order made under subsection (1) above.

#### Textual Amendments

- F7** Words “road” to “authority” substituted (S.) for words “trunk road” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984](#) (c. 54, SIF 108), s. 128(1), [Sch. 9 para. 93\(34\)](#)

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

- C5** Ss. 83(2), 84 restricted by [Local Government Act 1985](#) (c. 51, SIF 81:1), ss. 1, 2, 8(2), [Sch. 5 para. 6\(3\)](#)
- C6** Ss. 83(2), 84 restricted by [Local Government Act 1985](#) (c. 51, SIF 81:1), s. 8(2), [Sch. 5 para. 12](#)

## 85 Traffic signs for indicating speed restrictions.

- (1) For the purpose of securing that adequate guidance is given to drivers of motor vehicles as to whether any, and if so what, limit of speed is to be observed on any road, it shall be the duty of the Secretary of State, in the case of a [<sup>F8</sup>trunk road][<sup>F8</sup>road managed and maintained by him], to erect and maintain the prescribed traffic signs in such positions as may be requisite for that purpose.
- (2) In the case of any road which is not [<sup>F9</sup>a trunk road][<sup>F9</sup>so managed and maintained], it shall be the duty of the local authority—
  - (a) to erect and maintain the prescribed traffic signs in such positions as may be requisite in order to give effect to general or other directions given by the Secretary of State for the purpose mentioned in subsection (1) above, and
  - (b) to alter or remove traffic signs as may be requisite in order to give effect to such directions, either in consequence of the making of an order by the Secretary of State or otherwise.
- (3) If a local authority makes default in executing any works required for the performance of the duty imposed on them by subsection (2) above, the Secretary of State may himself execute the works; and the expense incurred by him in doing so shall be recoverable by him from the local authority and, in England or Wales, shall be so recoverable summarily as a civil debt.
- (4) Where no system of [<sup>F10</sup>street][<sup>F10</sup>carriageway] lighting furnished by means of lamps placed not more than [<sup>F11</sup>200 yards][<sup>F11</sup>185 metres] apart is provided on a road, but a limit of speed is to be observed on the road, a person shall not be convicted of driving a

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motor vehicle on the road at a speed exceeding the limit unless the limit is indicated by means of such traffic signs as are mentioned in subsection (1) or subsection (2) above.

- (5) In any proceedings for a contravention of section 81 of this Act, where the proceedings relate to driving on a road provided with such a system of [<sup>F12</sup>street][<sup>F12</sup>carriageway] lighting as is specified in subsection (4) above, evidence of the absence of traffic signs displayed in pursuance of this section to indicate that the road is not a restricted road for the purposes of that section shall be evidence that the road is a restricted road for those purposes.
- [<sup>F13</sup>(5A) In any proceedings for a contravention of section 81 of this Act, a certificate of an officer of the Secretary of State that a road is of a specified classification or type shall be sufficient evidence of the facts certified; and a document purporting to be such a certificate and to be signed by such an officer shall be deemed to be such a certificate unless the contrary is shown.]
- (6) Where by regulations made under section 17(2) of this Act a limit of speed is to be observed, then, if it is to be observed—
- (a) on all special roads, or
  - (b) on all special roads provided for the use of particular classes of traffic, or
  - (c) on all special roads other than special roads of such description as may be specified in the regulations, or
  - (d) as mentioned in paragraph (a), (b) or (c) above except for such lengths of special road as may be so specified,
- this section shall not apply in relation to that limit (but without prejudice to its application in relation to any lower limit of maximum speed or, as the case may be, any higher limit of minimum speed, required by any such regulations to be observed on any specified length of any specified special road).
- (7) The power to give general directions under subsection (2) above shall be exercisable by statutory instrument.

#### Textual Amendments

- F8** Words “road” to “him” substituted (S.) for words “trunk road” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), s. 128(1), [Sch. 9 para. 93\(35\)\(a\)](#)
- F9** Words “so managed and maintained” substituted (S.) for words “a trunk road” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), s. 128(1), [Sch. 9 para. 93\(35\)\(b\)](#)
- F10** Word “carriageway” substituted (S.) for word “street” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), s. 128(1), [Sch. 7 paras. 3\(a\), 5](#)
- F11** Words “185 metres” substituted (S.) for words “200 yards” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), ss. 128(1), 157(3), [Sch. 7 paras. 3\(a\), 5](#)
- F12** Word “carriageway” substituted (S.) for word “street” by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), ss. 128(1), 157(3), [Sch. 7 paras. 3\(b\), 5](#)
- F13** [S. 85\(5A\)](#) inserted (S.) by [Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(c. 54, SIF 108\)](#), ss. 128(1), 157(3), [Sch. 7 paras. 3\(c\), 5](#)

## 86 Speed limits for particular classes of vehicles.

- (1) It shall not be lawful for a person to drive a motor vehicle of any class on a road at a speed greater than the speed specified in Schedule 6 to this Act as the maximum speed in relation to a vehicle of that class.

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- (2) Subject to subsections (4) and (5) below, the Secretary of State may by regulations vary, subject to such conditions as may be specified in the regulations, the provisions of that Schedule.
- (3) Regulations under this section may make different provision as respects the same class of vehicles in different circumstances.
- (4) For the purposes of this section and of any regulations made under it, a part of a road which has not been declared, by a notice published as mentioned in section 1(4) of this Act, to be open for use as a special road on a date before the commencement of this Act shall not be deemed to be a special road until the date which is declared by such a notice to be the date on which it is open for such use.
- (5) The Secretary of State shall not have power under this section to vary the speed limit imposed by section 81 of this Act.
- (6) The Secretary of State shall not have power under this section to impose a speed limit, as respects driving on roads which are not restricted roads for the purposes of section 81 of this Act, on a vehicle which—
  - (a) is constructed solely for the carriage of passengers and their effects;
  - (b) is not adapted to carry more than 8 passengers exclusive of the driver;
  - (c) is neither a heavy motor car nor an invalid carriage;
  - (d) is not drawing a trailer; and
  - (e) is fitted with pneumatic tyres on all its wheels.

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

C7 S. 86 excluded by [Road Traffic Act 1988 \(c. 52, SIF 107:1\)](#), s. 186(6)

**87 Exemption of fire brigade, ambulance and police vehicles from speed limits.**

No statutory provision imposing a speed limit on motor vehicles shall apply to any vehicle on an occasion when it is being used for fire brigade, ambulance or police purposes, if the observance of that provision would be likely to hinder the use of the vehicle for the purpose for which it is being used on that occasion.

**88 Temporary speed limits.**

- (1) Where it appears to the Secretary of State desirable to do so in the interests of safety or for the purpose of facilitating the movement of traffic, he may, after giving public notice of his intention to do so, by order prohibit, for a period not exceeding 18 months, the driving of motor vehicles—
  - (a) on all roads, or on all roads in any area specified in the order, or on all roads of any class so specified, or on all roads other than roads of any class so specified, or on any road so specified, at a speed greater than that specified in the order, or
  - (b) on any road specified in the order, at a speed less than the speed specified in the order, subject to such exceptions as may be so specified.
- (2) Any prohibition imposed by an order under subsection (1) above may be so imposed either generally, or at times, on days or during periods specified in the order; but the

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provisions of any such order shall not, except in so far as may be provided by the order, affect the provisions of sections 81 to 84 of this Act.

- (3) For the purposes of an order under subsection (1)(a) above, roads may be classified by reference to any circumstances appearing to the Secretary of State to be suitable for the purpose, including their character, the nature of the traffic to which they are suited or the traffic signs provided on them.
- (4) The provisions of any order under subsection (1) above may be continued, either indefinitely or for a specified period, by an order of the Secretary of State made by statutory instrument, which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.
- (5) Where by virtue of an order under this section a speed limit is to be observed, then—
  - (a) if it is to be observed on all roads, on all roads of any class specified in the order or on all roads other than roads of any class so specified, section 85 of this Act shall not apply in relation to that limit;
  - (b) if it is to be observed on all roads in any area and, at all points where roads lead into the area, is indicated as respects the area as a whole by means of such traffic signs as are mentioned in subsection (1) or subsection (2) of section 85 of this Act, the limit shall, for the purposes of subsection (4) of that section, be taken as so indicated with respect to all roads in the area.
- (6) This section does not apply to any part of a special road which is open for use as a special road.
- (7) If a person drives a motor vehicle on a road in contravention of an order under subsection (1)(b) above, he shall be guilty of an offence; but a person shall not be liable to be convicted of so driving solely on the evidence of one witness to the effect that, in the opinion of the witness, he was driving the vehicle at a speed less than that specified in the order.
- (8) The first order to be made under subsection (1)(b) above shall not be made until a draft of the order has been laid before Parliament and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament.

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

**C8** S. 88(1)(4) amended (1.7.1999) by [S.I. 1999/1750, art. 4, Sch. 3](#); [S.I. 1998/3178, art. 3](#)

**C9** S. 88(1)(a)(4): transfer of certain functions (16.6.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1563, art. 3, Sch.](#) (with [art. 9](#))

**89 Speeding offences generally.**

- (1) A person who drives a motor vehicle on a road at a speed exceeding a limit imposed by or under any enactment to which this section applies shall be guilty of an offence.
- (2) A person prosecuted for such an offence shall not be liable to be convicted solely on the evidence of one witness to the effect that, in the opinion of the witness, the person prosecuted was driving the vehicle at a speed exceeding a specified limit.
- (3) The enactments to which this section applies are—
  - (a) any enactment contained in this Act except section 17(2);
  - (b) section 2 of the <sup>M1</sup>Parks Regulation (Amendment) Act 1926; and

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- (c) any enactment not contained in this Act, but passed after 1st September 1960, whether before or after the passing of this Act.
- (4) If a person who employs other persons to drive motor vehicles on roads publishes or issues any time-table or schedule, or gives any directions, under which any journey, or any stage or part of any journey, is to be completed within some specified time, and it is not practicable in the circumstances of the case for that journey (or that stage or part of it) to be completed in the specified time without the commission of such an offence as is mentioned in subsection (1) above, the publication or issue of the time-table or schedule, or the giving of the directions, may be produced as prima facie evidence that the employer procured or (as the case may be) incited the persons employed by him to drive the vehicles to commit such an offence.

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

- C10** S. 89 applied (with modifications)(6.3.1992) by [Aberdeen Harbour Order Confirmation Act 1992 \(c. ii\), s. 1, Sch. s. 3\(2\)](#).  
S. 89 applied (6.3.1992) by [Aberdeen Harbour Order Confirmation Act 1992 \(c. ii\), s. 1, Sch. s. 3\(3\)](#).

**Marginal Citations**

- M1** [1926 c. 36\(46:2\)](#).

<sup>F14</sup>90 .....

**Textual Amendments**

- F14** S. 90 repealed by [Road Traffic \(Consequential Provisions\) Act 1988 \(c. 54, SIF 107:1\)](#), ss. 3, 5, Sch. 1 Pt. I, [Sch. 4 paras. 1–3](#)

**91 Interpretation of Part VI.**

In sections 83 to 85 of this Act “local authority”—

- (a) in relation to a road in Greater London, means [<sup>F15</sup>the council of the London borough or the Common Council of the City of London];
- (b) in relation to a road elsewhere in England and Wales, means the council of the county [<sup>F16</sup>or metropolitan district]; and
- (c) in relation to Scotland, means the local highway authority.

**Textual Amendments**

- F15** Words substituted by [Local Government Act 1985 \(c. 51, SIF 81:1\)](#), ss. 1, 2, 8(1), [Sch. 5 para. 4\(29\)\(a\)](#)
- F16** Words inserted by [Local Government Act 1985 \(c. 51, SIF 81:1\)](#), ss. 1, 2, 8(1), [Sch. 5 para. 4\(29\)\(b\)](#)

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