



Public Order Act 1986

1986 CHAPTER 64

PART V

MISCELLANEOUS AND GENERAL

- 38 Contamination of or interference with goods with intention of causing public alarm or anxiety, etc.**
- (1) It is an offence for a person, with the intention—
- of causing public alarm or anxiety, or
 - of causing injury to members of the public consuming or using the goods, or
 - of causing economic loss to any person by reason of the goods being shunned by members of the public, or
 - of causing economic loss to any person by reason of steps taken to avoid any such alarm or anxiety, injury or loss,
- to contaminate or interfere with goods, or make it appear that goods have been contaminated or interfered with, or to place goods which have been contaminated or interfered with, or which appear to have been contaminated or interfered with, in a place where goods of that description are consumed, used, sold or otherwise supplied.
- (2) It is also an offence for a person, with any such intention as is mentioned in paragraph (a), (c) or (d) of subsection (1), to threaten that he or another will do, or to claim that he or another has done, any of the acts mentioned in that subsection.
- (3) It is an offence for a person to be in possession of any of the following articles with a view to the commission of an offence under subsection (1)—
- materials to be used for contaminating or interfering with goods or making it appear that goods have been contaminated or interfered with, or
 - goods which have been contaminated or interfered with, or which appear to have been contaminated or interfered with.
- (4) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable—
- on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years or a fine or both, or

Changes to legislation: Public Order Act 1986, Section 38 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 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

- (b) on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or both.
- (5) In this section “goods” includes substances whether natural or manufactured and whether or not incorporated in or mixed with other goods.
- (6) The reference in subsection (2) to a person claiming that certain acts have been committed does not include a person who in good faith reports or warns that such acts have been, or appear to have been, committed.

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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. 4B inserted by [2023 c. 47 s. 1](#)