



Civil Evidence Act 1968

1968 CHAPTER 64

An Act to amend the law of evidence in relation to civil proceedings, and in respect of the privilege against self-incrimination to make corresponding amendments in relation to statutory powers of inspection or investigation. [25th October 1968]

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Act applied by [S.I. 1985/226](#), [rule 41](#)
Act applied (1.3.1994) by [S.I. 1994/288](#), [rule 16](#)
- C2** By [Criminal Justice Act 1991 \(c. 53, SIF 39:1\)](#), [S. 101\(1\)](#), [Sch. 12 para.23](#); [S.I. 1991/2208](#), [art. 2\(1\)](#), [Sch. 1](#) it is provided (14.10. 1991) that in relation to any time before the commencement of s. 70 of that 1991 Act (which came into force on 1.10.1992 by [S.I. 1992/333](#), [art. 2\(2\)](#), [Sch. 2](#)) references in any enactment amended by that 1991 Act, to youth courts shall be construed as references to juvenile courts.
- C3** Act applied (14.1.2008) by [The Solicitors \(Disciplinary Proceedings\) Rules 2007 \(S.I. 2007/3588\)](#), [rule 13](#) (with [rule 23](#))

Commencement Information

- I1** Act partly in force at Royal Assent see [s. 20\(4\)](#)

^{F1}PART I

HEARSAY EVIDENCE

Textual Amendments

- F1** Part I (Ss. 1-10) repealed (31.1.1997) by [1995 c. 38, s. 15\(2\)](#), [Sch. 2](#) (with ss. 1(3),6(4)(5),14) ; [S.I. 1996/3217](#), [art. 2](#)

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Civil Evidence Act 1968. (See end of Document for details)

PART II

MISCELLANEOUS AND GENERAL

Convictions, etc. as evidence in civil proceedings

11 Convictions as evidence in civil proceedings.

- (1) In any civil proceedings the fact that a person has been convicted of an offence by or before any court in the United Kingdom or [^{F8}of a service offence (anywhere)] shall (subject to subsection (3) below) be admissible in evidence for the purpose of proving, where to do so is relevant to any issue in those proceedings, that he committed that offence, whether he was so convicted upon a plea of guilty or otherwise and whether or not he is a party to the civil proceedings; but no conviction other than a subsisting one shall be admissible in evidence by virtue of this section.
- (2) In any civil proceedings in which by virtue of this section a person is proved to have been convicted of an offence by or before any court in the United Kingdom or [^{F9}of a service offence]—
 - (a) he shall be taken to have committed that offence unless the contrary is proved; and
 - (b) without prejudice to the reception of any other admissible evidence for the purpose of identifying the facts on which the conviction was based, the contents of any document which is admissible as evidence of the conviction, and the contents of the information, complaint, indictment or charge-sheet on which the person in question was convicted, shall be admissible in evidence for that purpose.
- (3) Nothing in this section shall prejudice the operation of section 13 of this Act or any other enactment whereby a conviction or a finding of fact in any criminal proceedings is for the purposes of any other proceedings made conclusive evidence of any fact.
- (4) Where in any civil proceedings the contents of any document are admissible in evidence by virtue of subsection (2) above, a copy of that document, or of the material part thereof, purporting to be certified or otherwise authenticated by or on behalf of the court or authority having custody of that document shall be admissible in evidence and shall be taken to be a true copy of that document or part unless the contrary is shown.
- (5) Nothing in any of the following enactments, that is to say—
 - (a) [^{F10}section 82 of the Sentencing Code] (under which a conviction leading to [^{F11} . . . discharge is to be disregarded except as therein mentioned);

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- [^{F12}(aa) section 187 of the Armed Forces Act 2006 (which makes similar provision in respect of service convictions);]
- (b) [^{F13}section 191 of the ^{M2}Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975] (which makes similar provision in respect of convictions on indictment in Scotland); and
- (c) section 8 of the ^{M3}Probation Act (Northern Ireland) 1950 (which corresponds to the said section 12) or any corresponding enactment of the Parliament of Northern Ireland for the time being in force,
- shall affect the operation of this section; and for the purposes of this section any order made by a court of summary jurisdiction in Scotland under [^{F13}section 383 or section 384 of the said Act of 1975] shall be treated as a conviction.

[^{F14}(7) In this section—

“service offence” has the same meaning as in the Armed Forces Act 2006;
“conviction” includes anything that under section 376(1) and (2) of that Act is to be treated as a conviction, and “convicted” is to be read accordingly.]

Textual Amendments

- F8** Words in s. 11(1) substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378(1), 383(2), [Sch. 16 para. 51\(2\)](#); S.I. 2009/812, [art. 3](#) (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, [art. 4](#)
- F9** Words in s. 11(2) substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378(1), 383(2), [Sch. 16 para. 51\(3\)](#); S.I. 2009/812, [art. 3](#) (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, [art. 4](#)
- F10** Words in s. 11(5)(a) substituted (1.12.2020) by [Sentencing Act 2020 \(c. 17\)](#), s. 416(1), [Sch. 24 para. 20](#) (with [Sch. 27](#)); S.I. 2020/1236, [reg. 2](#)
- F11** Words in s. 11(5)(a) repealed (1.10.1992) by [Criminal Justice Act 1991 \(c. 53\)](#), SIF 39:1, ss. 100, 101(2), [Sch. 11 para. 5](#), [Sch. 13](#); S.I. 1992/333, [art. 2\(2\)](#), [Sch. 2](#)
- F12** S. 11(5)(aa) inserted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378(1), 383(2), [Sch. 16 para. 51\(4\)](#); S.I. 2009/812, [art. 3](#) (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, [art. 4](#)
- F13** Words substituted by virtue of [Interpretation Act 1889 \(c. 63\)](#), [s. 38\(1\)](#)
- F14** S. 11(7) substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) for s. 11(6) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378(1), 383(2), [Sch. 16 para. 51\(5\)](#); S.I. 2009/812, [art. 3](#) (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, [art. 4](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C12** S. 11 extended by [S.R. 1983/153](#), [art. 18](#) and S.I. 1983/887, [art. 18](#)
- C13** S. 11 extended by [Fair Trading Act 1973 \(c.41\)](#), [s. 36\(1\)](#)
S. 11 extended (20.6.2003) by [2002 c. 40](#), ss. 228(1)(a), 279; S.I. 2003/1397, [art. 2\(1\)](#), [Sch.](#)
- C14** S. 11 modified (24.4.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [The Armed Forces Act 2006 \(Transitional Provisions etc\) Order 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1059\)](#), arts. 1(2)(3), 205, [Sch. 1 para. 11\(1\)](#)
- C15** S. 11(5)(aa) modified (24.4.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [The Armed Forces Act 2006 \(Transitional Provisions etc\) Order 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1059\)](#), arts. 1(2)(3), 205, [Sch. 1 para. 11\(2\)](#)

Marginal Citations

- M2** 1975 c. 21.
M3 1950 c. 7 (N.I.)

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12 Findings of adultery and paternity as evidence in civil proceedings.

(1) In any civil proceedings—

(a) the fact that a person has been found guilty of adultery in any matrimonial proceedings; and

[^{F15}(b) the fact that a person has been found to be the father of a child in relevant proceedings before any court in England and Wales [^{F16}or Northern Ireland] or has been adjudged to be the father of a child in affiliation proceedings before any court in the United Kingdom;]

shall (subject to subsection (3) below) be admissible in evidence for the purpose of proving, where to do so is relevant to any issue in those civil proceedings, that he committed the adultery to which the finding relates or, as the case may be, is (or was) the father of that child, whether or not he offered any defence to the allegation of adultery or paternity and whether or not he is a party to the civil proceedings; but no finding or adjudication other than a subsisting one shall be admissible in evidence by virtue of this section.

(2) In any civil proceedings in which by virtue of this section a person is proved to have been found guilty of adultery as mentioned in subsection (1)(a) above or [^{F17}to have been found or adjudged] to be the father of a child as mentioned in subsection (1)(b) above—

(a) he shall be taken to have committed the adultery to which the finding relates or, as the case may be, to be (or have been) the father of that child, unless the contrary is proved; and

(b) without prejudice to the reception of any other admissible evidence for the purpose of identifying the facts on which the finding or adjudication was based, the contents of any document which was before the court, or which contains any pronouncement of the court, in the [^{F17}other proceedings] in question shall be admissible in evidence for that purpose.

(3) Nothing in this section shall prejudice the operation of any enactment whereby a finding of fact in any matrimonial or affiliation proceedings is for the purposes of any other proceedings made conclusive evidence of any fact.

(4) Subsection (4) of section 11 of this Act shall apply for the purposes of this section as if the reference to subsection (2) were a reference to subsection (2) of this section.

(5) In this section—

“matrimonial proceedings ” means any matrimonial cause in the High Court or [^{F18} family] court in England and Wales or in the High Court in Northern Ireland, any consistorial action in Scotland, or any appeal arising out of any such cause or action;

[^{F19} “ relevant proceedings ” means—

^{F20}(a)

(b) proceedings under the Children Act 1989;

(c) proceedings which would have been relevant proceedings for the purposes of this section in the form in which it was in force before the passing of the Children Act 1989.]

^{F21}(d)

[^{F22}(e) proceedings which are relevant proceedings as defined in section 8(5) of the Civil Evidence Act (Northern Ireland) 1971

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“ affiliation proceedings ” means, in relation to Scotland, any action of affiliation and aliment;
and in this subsection “ consistorial action ” does not include an action of aliment only between husband and wife raised in the Court of Session or an action of interim aliment raised in the sheriff court.]

Textual Amendments

- F15** Words substituted by Family Law Reform Act 1987 (c. 42, SIF 49:7), ss. 29(1)(2), 33(2), Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6
- F16** Words in s.12(1)(b) inserted (4.11.1996) by S.I. 1995/756, art. 6(a); S.R. 1996/297, art. 3
- F17** Words substituted by Family Law Reform Act 1987 (c. 42, SIF 49:7), ss. 29(3), 33(2), Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6
- F18** Word in s. 12(5) substituted (22.4.2014) by Crime and Courts Act 2013 (c. 22), s. 61(3), Sch. 10 para. 17; S.I. 2014/954, art. 2(d) (with art. 3) (with transitional provisions and savings in S.I. 2014/956, arts. 3-11)
- F19** Definition of “relevant proceedings” substituted (14.10.1991) by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 76:1), s. 116, Sch. 16 para. 2(1); S.I. 1992/1883, art. 3, Sch.
- F20** Words in s. 12(5) omitted (1.4.2015) by virtue of The Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014 (Consequential Amendments) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/914), art. 1(2), Sch. para. 15 (with arts. 1(3), 3)
- F21** S. 12(5)(d) repealed (1.4.2001) by 2000 c. 19, s. 85, Sch. 9 Pt. IX (with s. 83(6)); S.I. 2001/774, art. 2
- F22** S. 12(5)(e) added (4.11.1996) by S.I. 1995/756, art. 6(b); S.R. 1996/297, art. 3

13 Conclusiveness of convictions for purposes of defamation actions.

- (1) In an action for libel or slander in which the question whether [^{F23}the plaintiff] did or did not commit a criminal offence is relevant to an issue arising in the action, proof that, at the time when that issue falls to be determined, [^{F23}he] stands convicted of that offence shall be conclusive evidence that he committed that offence; and his conviction thereof shall be admissible in evidence accordingly.
- (2) In any such action as aforesaid in which by virtue of this section [^{F23} the plaintiff] is proved to have been convicted of an offence, the contents of any document which is admissible as evidence of the conviction, and the contents of the information, complaint, indictment or charge-sheet on which [^{F23}he] was convicted, shall, without prejudice to the reception of any other admissible evidence for the purpose of identifying the facts on which the conviction was based, be admissible in evidence for the purpose of identifying those facts.
- [^{F24}(2A) In the case of an action for libel or slander in which there is more than one plaintiff—
- the references in subsections (1) and (2) above to the plaintiff shall be construed as references to any of the plaintiffs, and
 - proof that any of the plaintiffs stands convicted of an offence shall be conclusive evidence that he committed that offence so far as that fact is relevant to any issue arising in relation to his cause of action or that of any other plaintiff.]
- (3) For the purposes of this section a person shall be taken to stand convicted of an offence if but only if there subsists against him a conviction of that offence by or before a court in the United Kingdom or [^{F25}(in the case of a service offence) a conviction (anywhere) of that service offence]^{F25}.

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- (4) Subsections (4) to [F26(7)]^{F26} of section 11 of this Act shall apply for the purposes of this section as they apply for the purposes of that section, but as if in the said subsection (4) the reference to subsection (2) were a reference to subsection (2) of this section.
- (5) The foregoing provisions of this section shall apply for the purposes of any action begun after the passing of this Act, whenever the cause of action arose, but shall not apply for the purposes of any action begun before the passing of this Act or any appeal or other proceedings arising out of any such action.

Textual Amendments

- F23** Words in s. 13(1) substituted (4.9.1996) by 1996 c. 31, ss. 12(1), 19(1) (with s. 20(2))
- F24** S. 13 (2A) inserted (4.9.1996) by 1996 c. 31, ss. 12(1), 19(1) (with s. 20(2))
- F25** Words in s. 13(3) substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378(1), 383(2), [Sch. 16 para. 52\(a\)](#); S.I. 2009/812, [art. 3](#) (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, [art. 4](#)
- F26** Words in s. 13(4) substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378(1), 383(2), [Sch. 16 para. 52\(b\)](#); S.I. 2009/812, [art. 3](#) (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, [art. 4](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C16** S. 13 modified (24.4.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [The Armed Forces Act 2006 \(Transitional Provisions etc\) Order 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1059\)](#), arts. 1(2)(3), 205, [Sch. 1 para. 11\(1\)](#)

Privilege

14 Privilege against incrimination of self or spouse [F27 or civil partner] F27.

- (1) The right of a person in any legal proceedings other than criminal proceedings to refuse to answer any question or produce any document or thing if to do so would tend to expose that person to proceedings for an offence or for the recovery of a penalty—
- shall apply only as regards criminal offences under the law of any part of the United Kingdom and penalties provided for by such law; and
 - shall include a like right to refuse to answer any question or produce any document or thing if to do so would tend to expose the [F28 spouse or civil partner] F28 of that person to proceedings for any such criminal offence or for the recovery of any such penalty.
- (2) In so far as any existing enactment conferring (in whatever words) powers of inspection or investigation confers on a person (in whatever words) any right otherwise than in criminal proceedings to refuse to answer any question or give any evidence tending to incriminate that person, subsection (1) above shall apply to that right as it applies to the right described in that subsection; and every such existing enactment shall be construed accordingly.
- (3) In so far as any existing enactment provides (in whatever words) that in any proceedings other than criminal proceedings a person shall not be excused from answering any question or giving any evidence on the ground that to do so may incriminate that person, that enactment shall be construed as providing also that in such proceedings a person shall not be excused from answering any question or giving

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any evidence on the ground that to do so may incriminate the husband or wife of that person.

- (4) Where any existing enactment (however worded) that—
- (a) confers powers of inspection or investigation; or
 - (b) provides as mentioned in subsection (3) above,
- further provides (in whatever words) that any answer or evidence given by a person shall not be admissible in evidence against that person in any proceedings or class of proceedings (however described, and whether criminal or not), that enactment shall be construed as providing also that any answer or evidence given by that person shall not be admissible in evidence against the husband or wife of that person in the proceedings or class of proceedings in question.
- (5) In this section “existing enactment ” means any enactment passed before this Act; and the references to giving evidence are references to giving evidence in any manner, whether by furnishing information, making discovery, producing documents or otherwise.

Textual Amendments

- F27** Words in heading inserted (5.12.2005) by [Civil Partnership Act 2004 \(c. 33\)](#), ss. 261(1), 263, [Sch. 27 para. 30\(b\)](#); S.I. 2005/3175, [art. 2\(2\)](#) (subject to [art. 2\(3\)-\(5\)](#))
- F28** Words in s. 14(1)(b) substituted (5.12.2005) by [Civil Partnership Act 2004 \(c. 33\)](#), ss. 261(1), 263, [Sch. 27 para. 30\(a\)](#); S.I. 2005/3175, [art. 2\(2\)](#) (subject to [art. 2\(3\)-\(5\)](#))

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C17** S. 14(1) extended by [Weights and Measures Act 1985 \(c. 72, SIF 31\)](#), ss. [81\(4\)](#), 96(1) Sch. 11 para. 21(2)
- C18** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Automatic Discontinuous Totalisers\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1255\)](#), [reg. 31\(3\)](#)
- C19** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Automatic Rail-weighbridges\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1256\)](#), [reg. 32\(3\)](#)
- C20** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Automatic Catchweighers\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1257\)](#), [reg. 34\(3\)](#)
- C21** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Automatic Gravimetric Filling Instruments\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1258\)](#), {[reg. 32\(3\)](#)}
- C22** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Beltweighers\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1259\)](#), [reg. 32\(3\)](#)
- C23** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Capacity Serving Measures\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1264\)](#), [reg. 29\(3\)](#)
- C24** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Liquid Fuel and Lubricants\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1266\)](#), [reg. 31\(3\)](#)
- C25** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Material Measures of Length\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1267\)](#), [reg. 29\(3\)](#)
- C26** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Cold-water Meters\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1268\)](#), [reg. 31\(3\)](#)
- C27** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Liquid Fuel delivered from Road Tankers\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1269\)](#), [reg. 32\(3\)](#)
- C28** S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Active Electrical Energy Meters\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1679\)](#), [reg. 27\(3\)](#)
- C29** S. 14(1) extended (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Taximeters\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/2304\)](#), [reg. 25](#)

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C30 S. 14(1) applied (30.10.2006) by [The Measuring Instruments \(Gas Meters\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/2647\)](#), [reg 27\(3\)](#) (with [reg. 27\(1\)\(2\)](#))

15 **F29**

Textual Amendments

F29 S. 15 repealed by [Patents Act 1977 \(c. 37\)](#), [Sch. 6](#)

16 Abolition of certain privileges.

- (1) The following rules of law are hereby abrogated except in relation to criminal proceedings, that is to say—
 - (a) the rule whereby, in any legal proceedings, a person cannot be compelled to answer any question or produce any document or thing if to do so would tend to expose him to a forfeiture; and
 - (b) the rule whereby, in any legal proceedings, a person other than a party to the proceedings cannot be compelled to produce any deed or other document relating to his title to any land.
- (2) The rule of law whereby, in any civil proceedings, a party to the proceedings cannot be compelled to produce any document relating solely to his own case and in no way tending to impeach that case or support the case of any opposing party is hereby abrogated.
- (3) Section 3 of the Evidence (Amendment) Act 1853 ^{M4} (which provides that a husband or wife shall not be compellable to disclose any communication made to him or her by his or her spouse during the marriage) shall cease to have effect except in relation to criminal proceedings.
- (4) In section 43(1) of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1965 ^{M5} (under which the evidence of a husband or wife is admissible in any proceedings to prove that marital intercourse did or did not take place between them at any period, but a husband or wife is not compellable in any proceedings to give evidence of the matters aforesaid), the words from “but a husband or wife ” to the end of the subsection shall cease to have effect except in relation to criminal proceedings.
- (5) A witness in any proceedings instituted in consequence of adultery, whether a party to the proceedings or not, shall not be excused from answering any question by reason that it tends to show that he or she has been guilty of adultery; and accordingly the proviso to section 3 of the ^{M6}Evidence Further Amendment Act 1869 and, in section 43(2) of the ^{M7}Matrimonial Causes Act 1965, the words from “but ” to the end of the subsection shall cease to have effect.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C31 The text of s. 16(3)(4), 20(2) is in the form in which it was originally enacted: it was not reproduced in Statutes in Force and does not reflect any amendments or repeals which may have been made prior to 1.2.1991.

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Marginal Citations

- M4 1853 c. 83
- M5 1965 c. 72
- M6 1869 c. 68.
- M7 1965 c. 72.

17 Consequential amendments relating to privilege.

(1) In relation to England and Wales—

- (a) ^{F30}
- (b) section 8(5) of the ^{M8}Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 (which provides that, subject as there mentioned, no person shall be compelled for the purposes of an investigation under that Act to give evidence or produce any document which he could not be compelled to give or produce in proceedings before the High Court) shall have effect as if before the word “proceedings ” there were inserted the word “civil ”;

and so far as it applies to England and Wales, any other existing enactment, however framed or worded, which in relation to any tribunal, investigation or inquiry (however described) confers on persons required to answer questions or give evidence any privilege described by reference to the privileges of witnesses in proceedings before any court shall, unless the contrary intention appears, be construed as referring to the privileges of witnesses in civil proceedings before that court.

(2) ^{F31}

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of subsections (2) to (4) of section 14 of this Act, the enactments mentioned in the Schedule to this Act shall have effect subject to the amendments provided for by that Schedule (being verbal amendments to bring those enactments into conformity with the provisions of that section).

(4) Subsection (5) of section 14 of this Act shall apply for the purposes of this section as it applies for the purposes of that section.

Textual Amendments

- F30** S. 17(1)(a) repealed (7.6.2005) by [Inquiries Act 2005 \(c. 12\)](#), ss. 49(2), 51, [Sch. 3](#) (with ss. 44, 50); [S.I. 2005/1432](#), [art. 2](#)
- F31** S. 17(2) repealed by [Evidence \(Proceedings in Other Jurisdictions\) Act 1975 \(c. 34\)](#), [Sch. 2](#)

Marginal Citations

- M8 1967 c. 13.

General

18 General interpretation, and savings.

(1) In this Act “civil proceedings ” includes, in addition to civil proceedings in any of the ordinary courts of law—

- (a) civil proceedings before any other tribunal, being proceedings in relation to which the strict rules of evidence apply; and

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(b) an arbitration or reference, whether under an enactment or not, but does not include civil proceedings in relation to which the strict rules of evidence do not apply.

(2) In this Act—

“court ” does not include a [^{F32}service court]^{F32}, and, in relation to an arbitration or reference, means the arbitrator or umpire and, in relation to proceedings before a tribunal (not being one of the ordinary courts of law), means the tribunal;

“legal proceedings ” includes an arbitration or reference, whether under an enactment or not;

and for the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that in this Act, and in any amendment made by this Act in any other enactment, references to a person’s husband or wife do not include references to a person who is no longer married to that person.

[^{F33}(2A) In subsection (2) “service court” means the Court Martial, the Summary Appeal Court, the Service Civilian Court, the Court Martial Appeal Court or the Supreme Court on an appeal brought from the Court Martial Appeal Court.]

^{F33}(3) Any reference in this Act to any other enactment is a reference thereto as amended, and includes a reference thereto as applied, by or under any other enactment.

(4) Nothing in this Act shall prejudice the operation of any enactment which provides (in whatever words) that any answer or evidence given by a person in specified circumstances shall not be admissible in evidence against him or some other person in any proceedings or class of proceedings (however described).

In this subsection the reference to giving evidence is a reference to giving evidence in any manner, whether by furnishing information, making discovery, producing documents or otherwise.

(5) Nothing in this Act shall prejudice—

- (a) any power of a court, in any legal proceedings, to exclude evidence (whether by preventing questions from being put or otherwise) at its discretion; or
- (b) the operation of any agreement (whenever made) between the parties to any legal proceedings as to the evidence which is to be admissible (whether generally or for any particular purpose) in those proceedings.

(6) It is hereby declared that where, by reason of any defect of speech or hearing from which he is suffering, a person called as a witness in any legal proceedings gives his evidence in writing or by signs, that evidence is to be treated for the purposes of this Act as being given orally.

Textual Amendments

F32 Words in s. 18(2) substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\), ss. 378\(1\), 383\(2\), Sch. 16 para. 53\(a\); S.I. 2009/812, art. 3](#) (with transitional provisions in [S.I. 2009/1059](#)); [S.I. 2009/1167, art. 4](#)

F33 [S. 18\(2A\)](#) inserted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\), ss. 378\(1\), 383\(2\), Sch. 16 para. 53\(b\); S.I. 2009/812, art. 3](#) (with transitional provisions in [S.I. 2009/1059](#)); [S.I. 2009/1167, art. 4](#)

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19 F34

Textual Amendments

F34 S. 19 repealed by [Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 \(c. 36\)](#), **Sch. 6 Pt. I**

20 Short title, repeals, extent and commencement.

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Civil Evidence Act 1968.
- (2) Sections 1, 2, 6(1) (except the words from “‘Proceedings’ ” to “‘references’ ”) and 6(2) (b) of the Evidence Act 1938 ^{M9} are hereby repealed.
- (3) This Act shall not extend to Scotland or, . . . ^{F35} to Northern Ireland.
- (4) The following provisions of this Act, namely sections 13 to 19, this section (except subsection (2)) and the Schedule, shall come into force on the day this Act is passed, and the other provisions of this Act shall come into force on such day as the Lord Chancellor may by order made by statutory instrument appoint; and different days may be so appointed for different purposes of this Act or for the same purposes in relation to different courts or proceedings or otherwise in relation to different circumstances.

Textual Amendments

F35 Words repealed by [Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 \(c. 36\)](#), **Sch. 6 Pt. I**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C32 The text of s. 16(3)(4), 20(2) is in the form in which it was originally enacted: it was not reproduced in Statutes in Force and does not reflect any amendments or repeals which may have been made prior to 1.2.1991.
- C33 Power of appointment conferred by s. 20(4) partly exercised: [S.I. 1968/1734](#), 1969/1104 and 1970/18

Marginal Citations

M9 1938 c. 28

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Civil Evidence Act 1968. (See end of Document for details)

SCHEDULE

Section 17.

CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C34 Schedule: Power to continue certain provisions conferred by [Social Security \(Consequential Provisions\) Act 1992 \(c. 6\)](#), ss. 5, 7(2), **Sch. 3**, Pt. II, para. 15

Act amended	Amendment
The Hop (Prevention of Frauds) Act 1866 (29 & 30 Vict. c. 37)	. . . F36
The Explosive Substances Act 1883 (46 & 47 Vict. c. 3)	In section 6(2) (answers to be inadmissible against person giving them), for the word “himself” there shall be substituted the words “that witness or the husband or wife of that witness”, after the word “him”, where it first occurs, there shall be inserted the words “or her”, and for the words “against him” there shall be substituted the words “against that person or the husband or wife of that person”
F37	F37
...	...
[^{F38} The Borrowing (Control and Guarantees) Act 1946 (9 & 10 Geo. 6. c. 58)]	. . . [^{F38} “ ” “ ”.]
The Representation of the People Act 1949 (12, 13 & 14 Geo. 6. c. 68)	. . . F39
The Baking Industry (Hours of Work) Act 1954 (2 & 3 Eliz. 2. c. 57)	. . . F40
The Wages Councils Act 1959 7 & 8 Eliz. 2. c. 69	. . . F41
The Factories Act 1961 (9 & 10 Eliz. 2. c. 34)	In section 146(1)(f) (privilege against self-incrimination), after the word “himself” there shall be inserted the words “or, in the case of a person who is married, his or her wife or husband”.
The Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963 (c. 41)	In section 53(1)(d) (answers to be inadmissible against the person giving them), for the words “against him” there shall be substituted the words “against that person or the husband or wife of that person”.
The National Insurance Act 1965 (1965 c. 51)	. . . F42

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Civil Evidence Act 1968. (See end of Document for details)

The National Insurance (Industrial Injuries Act 1965 (1965 c. 52)	. . . F42
The Selective Employment Payments Act 1966 (1966 c. 32)	In section 8(3) (privilege against self-incrimination), after the word “him ” there shall be added the words “or, in the case of a person who is married, his or her wife or husband ”.

Textual Amendments

- F36** Entry repealed by [Statute Law \(Repeals\) Act 1981 \(c.19\)](#), s.1(1), **Sch. 1 Pt.1**.
- F37** [Sch.](#): Entry relating to [Land Registration Act 1925](#) repealed (13.10.2003) by [2002 c. 9](#), ss. 135, 136(2), [Sch. 13](#) (with s. 129, [Sch. 12 para. 1](#)); S.I. 2003/1725, **art. 2**
- F38** [Schedule](#): entry relating to the [Borrowing \(Control and Guarantees\) Act 1946](#) repealed (11.2.1991) by [Government Trading Act 1990 \(c. 30, SIF 99:1\)](#), s. 4(2), **Sch. 2 Pt. I**; S.I. 1991/132, **art. 2**
- F39** Entry repealed by [Representation of the People Act 1983 \(c. 2 SIF 42\)](#), s.206, [Sch. 9](#)
- F40** Entry repealed by [Sex Discrimination Act 1986 \(c.59, SIF 106:1\)](#), s9(2), **Sch. Pt III**
- F41** Entry repealed by [Wages Councils Act 1979 \(c. 12, SIF 43:1\)](#), s. 31, [Sch. 5 para. 1](#), **Sch. 7**
- F42** [Schedule](#): entries repealed by [Social Security Act 1973 \(c. 38\)](#), **Sch. 28 Pt. I**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C35** The entries in the Schedule are in the form in which they were originally enacted: they were not reproduced in Statutes in Force and do not reflect any amendments or repeals which may have been made prior to 1.2.1991.

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Civil Evidence Act 1968.