

Extract from Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

77. Power of local authority to direct unauthorised campers to leave land.

(1) If it appears to a local authority that persons are for the time being residing in a vehicle or vehicles within that authority's area—

- (a) on any land forming part of a highway;
- (b) on any other unoccupied land; or
- (c) on any occupied land without the consent of the occupier,

the authority may give a direction that those persons and any others with them are to leave the land and remove the vehicle or vehicles and any other property they have with them on the land.

(2) Notice of a direction under subsection (1) must be served on the persons to whom the direction applies, but it shall be sufficient for this purpose for the direction to specify the land and (except where the direction applies to only one person) to be addressed to all occupants of the vehicles on the land, without naming them.

(3) If a person knowing that a direction under subsection (1) above has been given which applies to him—

- (a) fails, as soon as practicable, to leave the land or remove from the land any vehicle or other property which is the subject of the direction, or
- (b) having removed any such vehicle or property again enters the land with a vehicle within the period of three months beginning with the day on which the direction was given,

he commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(4) A direction under subsection (1) operates to require persons who re-enter the land within the said period with vehicles or other property to leave and remove the vehicles or other property as it operates in relation to the persons and vehicles or other property on the land when the direction was given.

(5) In proceedings for an offence under this section it is a defence for the accused to show that his failure to leave or to remove the vehicle or other property as soon as practicable or his re-entry with a vehicle was due to illness, mechanical breakdown or other immediate emergency.

(6) In this section—

- “land” means land in the open air;
- “local authority” means—

- (a) in Greater London, a London borough or the Common Council of the City of London;
- (b) in England outside Greater London, a county council, a district council or the Council of the Isles of Scilly;
- (c) in Wales, a county council or a county borough council;

- “occupier” is entitled to possession of the land by virtue of an estate or interest held by him;
- “vehicle” includes—
 - (a) any vehicle, whether or not it is in a fit state for use on roads, and includes any body, with or without wheels, appearing to have formed part of such a vehicle, and any load carried by, and anything attached to, such a vehicle; and
 - (b) a caravan as defined in section 29(1) of the **M1** Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960;

and a person may be regarded for the purposes of this section as residing on any land notwithstanding that he has a home elsewhere.

(7) Until 1st April 1996, in this section “local authority” means, in Wales, a county council or a district council.

78. Orders for removal of persons and their vehicles unlawfully on land.

- (1) A magistrates’ court may, on a complaint made by a local authority, if satisfied that persons and vehicles in which they are residing are present on land within that authority’s area in contravention of a direction given under section 77, make an order requiring the removal of any vehicle or other property which is so present on the land and any person residing in it.
- (2) An order under this section may authorise the local authority to take such steps as are reasonably necessary to ensure that the order is complied with and, in particular, may authorise the authority, by its officers and servants—
 - (a) to enter upon the land specified in the order; and
 - (b) to take, in relation to any vehicle or property to be removed in pursuance of the order, such steps for securing entry and rendering it suitable for removal as may be so specified.
- (3) The local authority shall not enter upon any occupied land unless they have given to the owner and occupier at least 24 hours’ notice of their intention to do so, or unless after reasonable inquiries they are unable to ascertain their names and addresses.
- (4) A person who wilfully obstructs any person in the exercise of any power conferred on him by an order under this section commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
- (5) Where a complaint is made under this section, a summons issued by the court requiring the person or persons to whom it is directed to appear before the court to answer to the complaint may be directed—
 - (a) to the occupant of a particular vehicle on the land in question; or
 - (b) to all occupants of vehicles on the land in question, without naming him or them.
- (6) Section 55(2) of the **M1** Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980 (warrant for arrest of defendant failing to appear) does not apply to proceedings on a complaint made under this section.
- (7) Section 77(6) of this Act applies also for the interpretation of this section.