



Companies House

— *for the record* —

Newspaper Libel and Registration Act

August 2003

Newspaper Libel and Registration Act

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This is a guide only and should be read with the relevant legislation.

Introduction

This booklet explains what you need to do to register a newspaper.

If you are considering registering a newspaper, you should refer to the legislation governing the registration of newspapers or seek legal advice.

You will find the relevant law in the Newspaper Libel and Registration Act 1881.

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CHAPTER 1

Newspaper registration

1. Who should register?

The proprietor(s) of a newspaper published in England or Wales (or Northern Ireland) must register certain details with the Registrar of Companies in Cardiff (or Belfast). However, registration is not required if the newspaper:

- is owned by a company incorporated under the Companies Act 1985, or under one of its predecessors (or corresponding Northern Ireland Acts);
- is, or will be, published at intervals exceeding 26 days;
- is, or will be, issued free of charge (unless it consists mainly of advertisements - see below).

2. What is a newspaper?

Section 1 of the Act defines a 'newspaper' as any paper containing public news, intelligence, or occurrences, or any remarks or observations therein printed for sale, and published in England or Northern Ireland periodically, or in parts or numbers at intervals not exceeding 26 days between the publication of any two papers, parts or numbers.

Also any paper printed in order to be dispersed, and made public weekly or more

frequently, or at intervals not exceeding 26 days, containing only or principally advertisements.

3. How do I register?

Complete [Form NLR1](#) and send it to the Registrar of Companies at Cardiff (or Belfast) together with the registration fee of 50p (but also refer to the next paragraphs).

Usually the names of all the proprietors must be registered but, where it would be inconvenient to register all the names, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry can authorise the registration of one or more 'representative proprietors' instead. This may be, for example, where there are a large number of proprietors or where the proprietors are not present in the UK.

If you want to register a newspaper on this basis, you should write to the Registrar setting out the reasons that make it inconvenient to register the names of all the proprietors. You should also give information to show that the proposed representatives are well able to meet any claims that may arise for libel or otherwise in connection with the management of the newspaper. If a registration is made on this basis, the registration fee is £1.

Form NLR1 can be obtained from the Registrar in Cardiff or Belfast - addresses are shown under [Further Information](#).

4. What other documents have to be filed?

None on registration, but a return on Form NLR1 has to be filed annually in July. A filing fee of 25p is payable on this return, or 50p if there has been a change either in the proprietors or in the name of the publication. The Registrar sends a blank return to each registered newspaper shortly before the due date.

If there is any change of registered proprietors at any other time of year, this should be notified on [Form NLR2](#). This form can be obtained from the Registrar in Cardiff or Belfast - addresses are shown under [Further Information](#).

5. How are fees paid?

Cheques or Postal Orders should be made payable to 'Companies House' and sent with the form(s) to the relevant address shown in [chapter 2](#).

6. What if the newspaper ceases publication?

If a newspaper ceases publication, or becomes the property of a company - see [question 2](#) - you should notify the Registrar. No fee is payable.

7. Do any other details have to be published?

Irrespective of registration under this Act, the business name used by a publisher who is not:

- a registered company trading under its corporate name;
- an individual trading under his/her own name; or
- a partnership trading in the true names of all the partners;

is subject to the restrictions on names imposed by the Business Names Act 1985 (see our guidance booklet, '[Business Names](#)' for more information). The proprietors of such businesses are also required to disclose their identities under the same Act.

8. Is the name of the newspaper protected?

Registration under the Act does not protect the name of the newspaper; any number of registrations could be made using the same name. A name may be protected by registering it as a trade mark. Further details may be obtained from the Trade Marks Registry of the Patent Office on:

E-mail: enquiries@patent.gov.uk

Website: www.patent.gov.uk

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CHAPTER 2

Further information

1. Where can returns be inspected?

Returns of newspapers currently registered under the Act may be inspected at Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff CF14 3UZ. They may also be inspected by giving two days' notice at the London Search Room, Companies House, 21 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3XD (all enquiries Tel: 0870 3333636).

Similar arrangements apply to Northern Ireland where any enquiries should be addressed to the Registrar of Companies, Department of Economic Development, 64 Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4JX (Tel 02890 234488).

2. Where do I get forms and guidance booklets?

This is one of a series of Companies House booklets which provide a simple guide to the Companies Act.

[Statutory forms](#) and [guidance booklets](#) are available, free of charge from Companies House. The quickest way to get them is through this website or by telephoning 0870

3333636.

If you prefer you can write to our stationery sections in [Cardiff](#) or [Edinburgh](#).

Forms can also be obtained from legal stationers, accountants, solicitors and company formation agents - addresses in business phone books.

3. How do I send information to the Registrar?

You may deliver documents to the Registrar by hand (personally or by courier), including outside office hours, bank holidays and weekends to Cardiff, London and Edinburgh.

You may also send documents by post or by the Hays Document Exchange service (DX). If you send documents, please address them to:

For companies incorporated in England & Wales:

The Registrar of Companies
Companies House
Crown Way
Cardiff CF14 3UZ

DX33050 Cardiff

For companies incorporated in Scotland:

The Registrar of Companies
Companies House
37 Castle Terrace
Edinburgh EH1 2EB

DX ED235 Edinburgh 1

We will only acknowledge receipt of documents at Companies if you provide a stamped addressed envelope.

Please note: Companies House does not accept accounts or any other statutory documents by fax.

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