

PUBLIC ORDER, NORTHERN IRELAND

The Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 Direction given by the Secretary of State under section 7A

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland gives the following Direction in accordance with section 7A of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 (the “1998 Act”)¹.

Background

A person proposing to organise a parade or a parade-related protest must give notice of that proposal to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) in one of two ways. Notice may be left with a member of the PSNI not below the rank of sergeant at the police station nearest to the proposed starting place of the procession, or notice may be sent to the PSNI by “permitted electronic means”. Where a notice is sent by permitted electronic means, the signature on that notice must be a “permitted electronic signature”.²

A notice is sent by “permitted electronic means” if it is sent by a form of electronic communication, and in accordance with requirements, which are specified in a direction given by the Secretary of State, and if receipt of the notice is acknowledged in a manner specified in that direction. A “permitted electronic signature” is an electronic signature which complies with conditions or requirements specified in a direction given by the Secretary of State.³

Direction

Permitted electronic means

1. The form of communication which is specified for the purpose of section 7A(1)(a) of the 1998 Act is submission of the notice through the online notification portal which is located at <https://paradescommissionni.flexigrant.com>.⁴
2. The following requirements apply to the submission of a notice through that portal:
 - a. The notice may only be submitted by a person who is registered for an online account through that portal.

¹ The provisions relating to sending by permitted electronic means, including section 7A, were inserted into the 1998 Act by the Public Processions (Electronic Communication of Notices) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/235).

² Sections 6(1), (1A) and (4A), and 7(1), (1A) and (4A), of the 1998 Act.

³ Section 7A of the 1998 Act.

⁴ The portal may also be accessed by going to www.paradescommission.org and selecting the online notification link.

- b. Such registration will only be valid if the person:
 - i. Agrees to the Terms and Conditions and the Data Protection and Privacy Policy;
 - ii. Provides a name, a valid email address, a correspondence address and a contact telephone number;
 - iii. Activates the account by following the link sent to the valid email address provided; and
 - iv. Where the person is an organisation, provides the name, telephone number and home address of an identified individual in that organisation.
 - c. The person must select the policing area in which the parade or parade-related protest will be occurring.
 - d. The person must complete each required field (marked as “mandatory”) on the applicable notice, being either:
 - i. 11/1 Notice of Intention to Organise a Public Procession; or
 - ii. 11/3 Notice of Intention to Organise a Related Protest Meeting.
3. Receipt is acknowledged for the purpose of section 7A(1)(b) of the 1998 Act in accordance with (a) or (b) or both:
- a. On-screen confirmation following submission which includes:
 - i. A unique reference number for the parade or parade-related protest;
 - ii. Express acknowledgement of receipt of the notice by the PSNI;
 - iii. A warning that acknowledgement does not mean that the information required by the notice is complete or that the notice is valid;
 - iv. Information about how a notice may be amended;
 - v. A warning that the registered email address must be regularly monitored as queries may be directed to it; and
 - vi. A link to the Code of Conduct and a warning that the Parades Commission must take any breaches of it into account.
 - b. Confirmation by email to the person’s registered email account which includes:
 - i. A unique reference number for the parade or parade-related protest;
 - ii. Express acknowledgement of receipt of the notice by the PSNI;
 - iii. A warning that acknowledgement does not mean that the information required by the notice is complete or that the notice is valid;

- iv. Information about how a notice may be amended;
- v. A warning that the registered email address must be regularly monitored as queries may be directed to it; and
- vi. A link to the Code of Conduct and a warning that the Parades Commission must take any breaches of it into account.

Permitted electronic signature

4. The conditions or requirements specified in respect of an electronic signature for the purpose of section 7A(2) of the 1998 Act are:

- a. The signature must be incorporated into or otherwise logically associated with the notice sent through the online notification portal; and
- b. That notice must include the name, valid email address, correspondence address and contact telephone number of the person sending the notice through their online account (see paragraph 2(a)).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theresa Villiers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

22 March 2015

Theresa Villiers
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland