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| APPLICATION FOR SEARCH WARRANT*(Criminal Procedure Rules, rr.47.26 & 47.28; section 8, Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984)* |
| See the notes for guidance (‘GN’) at the end of this form. Use this form **ONLY** for a search warrant application under **section 8 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)**.GN1 There are different forms for applications under (i) section 26, Theft Act 1968, (ii) section 23, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, (iii) section 2, Criminal Justice Act 1987, (iv) PACE Schedule 1, paragraph 12, (v) Terrorism Act 2000 Schedule 5, paragraph 11, (vi) section 352, Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, (vii) section 160, Extradition Act 2003 and (viii) other powers to which sections 15 and 16 of PACE apply.Application to a magistrates’ courtThis is an application by ……………………………………………...…….……… (name of applicant)of …………………………………………...…….……… (name of police force or investigating agency)Applicant’s address:GN2………………………………………...…….……………………………...…Email address: …………………………………………...…….………………………………………Phone: Mobile:**I am** **a constable** [ ]  or another person authorised to apply for a search warrantGN3 [ ]  |
| Arrangements for hearing the applicationI estimate that the court should allow …………….… (time) to read this application and …………….… (time) for the hearing.GN4I expect any warrant issued to be executed on ……..…. (planned date) at …... (planned time).GN4My application [does] [does not][[1]](#footnote-1) include confidential information in a separate document.GN4 |
| **1. Complete the boxes above and boxes 1 to 8 below.** If you use an electronic version of this form, the boxes will expand.GN1 If you use a paper version and need more space, you may attach extra sheets.2. Complete the declaration in box 9 and the authorisation in box 10.3. Attach the draft warrant(s) you are asking the court to issue.4. Send or deliver a copy of the completed form and draft warrant(s) to the court.GN4 You may send them by secure email. Make sure the court knows if the application is urgent. Your time estimates will help the court to allow enough time to prepare for the hearing.  |
| **1) The offence(s) under investigation.**GN5(a) What offence(s) are you investigating? Specify the legislation or other law which creates the offence.(b) If you are not a constable, what legislation allows you to make this application? |
| **2) The investigation.** What you need to explain will depend on the offence(s) under investigation.(a) What are you investigating?(b) Why do you believe that the offence(s) under investigation has/have been committed? |
| **3) Material sought.**GN6, 7, 8, 9 & 10(a) What are you looking for? Identify the material for which you want to search in as much detail as practicable.(b) If what you are looking for includes information that may be stored on an electronic device:(i) what device(s) or description(s) of device (e.g. server; desktop; laptop; tablet; mobile phone; removable storage; etc.) are you looking for? Give as much detail as practicable.(ii) why do you believe that the information for which you want to search is likely to be stored there?(c) Why do you believe that the material for which you want to search, including any information stored electronically, is likely to be of substantial value to the investigation? Material may be of substantial value by itself or together with other material.(d) Why do you believe that the material for which you want to search, including any information stored electronically, is likely to be relevant evidence? There may be nothing to add to the answer to (c) above.(e) If the material for which you want to search, including any information stored electronically, may consist of or include items subject to legal privilege, excluded material or special procedure material, what arrangements will you make to sift it? GN7, 8, 9 & 10 |
| 4) Premises to be searched which CAN be specified.GN11 Use this box if you are applying for a search warrant in respect of one set of premises which you can specify. If you are applying for warrants in respect of more than one set of premises which you can specify, use this box for the first set of premises then tick here [ ]  and complete the table at the end of this form for the others. You must attach a draft warrant for each set of premises that you specify. If you want to search other premises that you CANNOT specify, complete box 5 below as well.(a) Address or other description of the premises:(b) Why do you believe that the material you are looking for is on those premises?(c) At least one of the following four access conditions must apply. Tick to indicate which.[ ]  (i) it is not practicable to communicate with any person entitled to grant entry to the premises.[ ]  (ii) it is practicable to communicate with such a person but it is not practicable to communicate with any person entitled to grant access to the evidence sought.[ ]  (iii) entry to the premises will not be granted unless a warrant is produced.[ ]  (iv) the purpose of a search may be frustrated or seriously prejudiced unless a constable arriving at the premises can secure immediate entry to them.Explain why you believe that each condition you have ticked applies. Include:* the type of premises (e.g. commercial, residential) and the outcome of any previous search of the premises during the last year, and
* the expected occupier(s), whether any is suspected of involvement in the offence(s) under investigation, whether any has a criminal record, and whether special arrangements for any may be needed under PACE Code B and College of Policing guidance.
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| 5) Premises to be searched which CANNOT be specified. Use this box only if you are applying for a search warrant in respect of premises that you cannot specify and which are occupied or controlled by a person you can identify (an ‘all premises warrant’). You must satisfy the court that it is not reasonably practicable for you to specify all the premises occupied or controlled by that person. Use box 4 above and the table at the end of this form to specify as many sets of premises as you can.(a) Whose premises do you want to search? Name or describe the person in occupation or control of the premises.(b) Why do you believe that the material you are looking for is on the premises?(c) Why do you believe that, because of the particulars of the offence under investigation, it is necessary to search more premises than you can specify?(d) Why do you believe that it is not reasonably practicable to specify all the premises which might need to be searched? |
| 6) Search on more than one occasion. Use this box only if you are applying for the court’s authority to search premises on more than one occasion.(a) Which premises do you want to search on more than one occasion? List them.(b) Why is it necessary to search on more than one occasion in order to achieve the purpose for which the court issues the warrant?(c) How many times do you want to be able to search those premises? Specify any maximum number of occasions, or state ‘unlimited’. |
| 7) Search with additional persons. Use this box only if you are applying for the court’s authority to conduct the search with people who are not constables and who are not otherwise authorised by law to take part in searching for and seizing anything to which the warrant relates.(a) Which other persons do you want to take part in the search? Identify those people by function or description (e.g. scientists, IT experts, accountants). You do not need to identify anyone who will be present only as an observer.(b) Why do you want those people to take part in the search? |
| 8) Duty of disclosure.GN12 See also the declaration in box 9.Is there anything of which you are aware that might reasonably be considered capable of undermining any of the grounds of this application, or which for some other reason might affect the court’s decision? Include anything that reasonably might call into question the credibility of information you have received, and explain why you have decided that that information still can be relied upon. |
| 9) DeclarationTo the best of my knowledge and belief:(a) this application discloses all the information that is material to what the court must decide, including anything that might reasonably be considered capable of undermining any of the grounds of the application, and(b) the content of this application is true.I undertake to inform the court if information that might reasonably be considered capable of undermining any of the grounds of this application comes to my knowledge after a search warrant is issued but before the search takes place.Signed:GN1……………………...……………………………………….………………………… [applicant]Date: …………………………. Time: …………………………. |
| 10) AuthorisationI have reviewed this application.To the best of my knowledge and belief this application discloses all the information that is material to what the court must decide, including anything that might reasonably be considered capable of undermining any of its grounds,I am satisfied that making this application is a necessary and proportionate step to take in this investigation,I am satisfied that the applicant will be able to answer the court’s questions.I authorise the applicant to present this application to the court.Authorising officer’s name: ...………………………………..…………..…………………………………..…Rank or grade: ………………………………………..…………..…………………………………………..…Signed:GN1…………………….…………………………………….…………………… [authorising officer]Date: …………………………. Time: …………………………. |
| DecisionI heard this application today.The applicant satisfied me about his or her entitlement to make the application.The applicant confirmed on oath or affirmation the declaration in box 9.The applicant gave me additional information, the essence of which was:[[2]](#footnote-2)I [issued] [refused to issue] [a warrant] [warrants] because:[[3]](#footnote-3)Signed: ………………………………………..…………………………………………………………...…Name: ………………………………………..…………..…..… [Justice of the Peace] [District Judge (Magistrates’ Court)]Date: …………………………. Time: …………………………. |

**List of specified premises to be searched.** See box 4. Use the table on this and the next page if you are applying for the issue of warrants in respect of more than one specified set of premises.

**In column (a)**, give the address or other description of the premises. **In column (b)**, explain why you believe the material you are looking for is on those premises.

The four access conditions are listed in box 4. **In column (c)**, indicate which applies. Explain why you believe each condition you have indicated applies.

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| **(a) Address or description of premises** | **(b) Reasons for believing material is on those premises** | **(c) Reasons for believing access condition(s) met** |
| (1) |  |  |
| (2) |  |  |
| (3) |  |  |
| (4) |  |  |
| **(a) Address or description of premises** | **(b) Reasons for believing material is on those premises** | **(c) Reasons for believing access condition(s) met** |
| (5) |  |  |
| (6) |  |  |
| (7) |  |  |
| (8) |  |  |
| (9) |  |  |

**Notes for guidance**

**Before you fill in this form**, read PACE Code B[[4]](#footnote-4) and the College of Policing guidance[[5]](#footnote-5).

**1. Use of this form**

Use this form ONLY for an application for a search warrant under section 8, Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE). This form collects the information required by that section of that Act. There are different forms for applications under (i) section 26, Theft Act 1968, (ii) section 23, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, (iii) section 2, Criminal Justice Act 1987, (iv) PACE Schedule 1, paragraph 12, (v) Terrorism Act 2000 Schedule 5, paragraph 11, (vi) section 352, Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, (vii) section 160, Extradition Act 2003 and (viii) other powers to which sections 15 and 16 of PACE apply.

If an electronic version of this form is used, instead of a signature it may be authenticated electronically (e.g. by sending it from an email address recognisable to the recipient): see Criminal Procedure Rules, rule 5.3. Forms for use with the Rules are at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/criminal-procedure-rules-forms#other-proceedings>.

**2. Applicant’s contact details**

The court may need to contact the applicant urgently. In choosing the address and telephone number(s) to give, applicants should be aware that details entered in this application form may be disclosed in subsequent legal proceedings, unless the court orders them to be withheld.

**3. Status of the applicant**

The applicant must satisfy the court about his or her entitlement to make the application. Officers of some other investigating authorities can apply for and execute warrants to enter, search and seize as if they were constables, under the legislation which applies to them. Examples include members of the National Crime Agency designated with the powers of a constable, and officers of HM Revenue and Customs.

**4. Making an application; time estimate; hearing**

An application must be made to the court address for the applicant’s area given by HM Courts and Tribunals Service, unless it is one that must be heard by the Chief Magistrate.

Electronic service of the application, by email to a secure inbox, is more secure than paper and is strongly preferred. Use a format (for example Word, rather than pdf) that allows you to complete or amend the application and which allows the court to amend the draft warrant if required.

If the application includes details that you think should be withheld in any subsequent legal proceedings, set out those details in a separate document marked as confidential to the court and in that document explain why you think that those details ought not be seen by anyone other than the court: see rules 5.10(9) and 47.26(4) of the Criminal Procedure Rules.

If an application is very sensitive, special arrangements can be made. Consult the justices’ legal adviser.

The court needs a realistic estimate of how long to allow for reading and hearing the application. A straightforward application to search one set of premises usually will need about 30 minutes. If in doubt, consult the justices’ legal adviser.

To help assess the urgency of the application compared with others, the court also needs to know when it is expected that the warrant will be executed.

The hearing will usually take place by telephone: see Criminal Procedure Rules, rule 47.25(2). The justices’ legal adviser will give you the telephone number and a secure code when you apply. The conversation may be recorded.

At the hearing the applicant will be required to take an oath or affirm: see Criminal Procedure Rules, rule 47.25(4).

**5. The offence(s) under investigation**

Section 8 of PACE[[6]](#footnote-6) applies where the investigation is into an indictable offence. An offence may be indictable under legislation or at common law. Section 8 of PACE also applies where the investigation is into a summary offence under the Immigration Act 1971 which is a ‘relevant offence’ as defined in section 28D(4) of that Act (e.g. illegal entry into the UK, contrary to section 24 of the 1971 Act).

**6. The material sought (see also guidance notes 7, 8, 9 & 10)**

The applicant must explain what the search is for in as much detail as practicable. A corresponding description must be entered in the draft warrant for the court (and the applicant must take care that the words used in the warrant can be understood without reference to the rest of the application).

The search may be unlawful if the warrant does not sufficiently identify the material for which it authorises search, or if it leaves the identification of that material to the discretion of those who conduct the search.

For the purposes of section 8 of PACE, ‘relevant evidence’, in relation to an offence, means anything that would be admissible in evidence at a trial for the offence.

Powers to seize additional material beyond the scope of the warrant are given by section 19 of PACE and section 50 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.

**7. Legal privilege**

Under sections 8 and 10 of PACE, the court cannot issue a warrant to search for items subject to legal privilege. Unless the items in question are held with the intention of furthering a criminal purpose, those items are:

 (a) communications between a professional legal adviser and his client or any person representing his client made in connection with the giving of legal advice to the client;

 (b) communications between a professional legal adviser and his client or any person representing his client or between such an adviser or his client or any such representative and any other person made in connection with or in contemplation of legal proceedings and for the purposes of such proceedings; and

 (c) items enclosed with or referred to in such communications and made—

 (i) in connection with the giving of legal advice; or

 (ii) in connection with or in contemplation of legal proceedings and for the purposes of such proceedings,

 when they are in the possession of a person who is entitled to possession of them.

**8. Excluded material**

Under sections 8, 11, 12 & 13 of PACE, the court cannot issue a warrant to search for excluded material. ‘Excluded material’ means:

 (a) personal records which a person has acquired or created in the course of any trade, business, profession or other occupation or for the purposes of any paid or unpaid office and which that person holds in confidence;

 (b) human tissue or tissue fluid which has been taken for the purposes of diagnosis or medical treatment and which a person holds in confidence;

 (c) journalistic material which a person holds in confidence and which consists—

 (i) of documents; or

 (ii) of records other than documents.

‘Personal records’ means documentary and other records concerning an individual (whether living or dead) who can be identified from them and relating—

 (a) to that person’s physical or mental health;

 (b) to spiritual counselling or assistance given or to be given to that person; or

 (c) to counselling or assistance given or to be given to that person, for the purposes of his or her personal welfare, by any voluntary organisation or by any individual who—

 (i) by reason of office or occupation has responsibilities for that welfare; or

 (ii) by reason of an order of a court has responsibilities for that person’s supervision.

‘Journalistic material’ means material acquired or created for the purposes of journalism, but only if it is in the possession of a person who acquired or created it for those purposes (including a person who receives it from someone who intends that the recipient shall use it for those purposes).

A person holds material other than journalistic material in confidence if that person holds it subject to an express or implied undertaking to hold it in confidence, or subject to a restriction on disclosure or an obligation of secrecy contained in an Act.

A person holds journalistic material in confidence if that person holds it subject to any such undertaking, restriction or obligation, and it has been continuously held (by one or more persons) subject to such an undertaking, restriction or obligation since it was first acquired or created for the purposes of journalism.

**9. Special procedure material**

Under sections 8 & 14 of PACE, the court cannot issue a warrant to search for special procedure material. ‘Special procedure material’ means (a) journalistic material which is not excluded material, and (b) material which is not subject to legal privilege, and which is not excluded material, but which is in the possession of a person who—

 (a) acquired or created it in the course of any trade, business, profession or other occupation or for the purpose of any paid or unpaid office; and

 (b) holds it subject—

 (i) to an express or implied undertaking to hold it in confidence; or

 (ii) to a restriction on disclosure or an obligation of secrecy contained in any enactment, including an enactment contained in an Act passed after PACE.

Material created by an employee in the course of employment, or by a company on behalf of an associated company, is special procedure material only if it would have been such material had the employer, or the associated company, created it.

**10. Other powers to seize and sift**

Under section 19 of PACE:[[7]](#footnote-7)

1. a constable who is lawfully on any premises may seize anything which the constable has reasonable grounds for believing has been obtained in consequence of the commission of an offence, or which is evidence in relation to an offence which the constable is investigating or any other offence, and in either case it is necessary to seize it to prevent it being concealed, lost, damaged, altered or destroyed.
2. a constable may require any information which is stored in any electronic form and is accessible from the premises to be produced in a form in which it can be taken away and in which it is visible and legible or from which it can readily be produced in a visible and legible form.
3. no power of seizure conferred on a constable under any enactment authorises the seizure of an item which the constable exercising the power has reasonable grounds for believing to be subject to legal privilege.

Under section 50 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001,[[8]](#footnote-8) if a person executing a search warrant (a) finds something which he or she has reasonable grounds to believe may be, or may contain, something for which that person has authority to search under the warrant, and (b) it is not reasonably practicable there and then to determine whether that is so; then that person can seize so much of what he or she has found as it is necessary to remove to enable that to be determined.

Under that same section, if such a person (a) finds something which he or she would be entitled to seize under the warrant but for its being comprised in something which he or she is not entitled to seize, and (b) it is not reasonably practicable there and then to separate the seizable property from the other property, then that person can seize both the seizable and the other property.

**11. Premises to be searched**

The applicant must describe the premises in as much detail as needed to define the geographical extent of the search authorised by the court. A corresponding description must be entered in the draft warrant for the court. If only part of a building is to be searched, a plan may be helpful. If you are applying for warrants in respect of more than one set of specified premises you must attach a draft warrant for each.

A vehicle on premises that you are authorised to search (on a driveway or in a garage, for example) can be searched in the same way as anything else on those premises. If you want to search a vehicle parked nearby (in the street, for example) you can apply for a warrant to search it as separate premises. Under section 23 of PACE[[9]](#footnote-9) the definition of ‘premises’ includes any vehicle and any movable structure. Use box 4 or the table at the end of the form if you can specify the vehicle(s) you want to search (for example, by registration number or other description). Use box 5 if you cannot specify a vehicle or vehicles you want to search and include an explanation of how you will establish that the person whom you identify in box 5 has control of the vehicle(s) (it might be by that person’s possession of the vehicle keys, for example).

**12. Duty of disclosure**

Information that might undermine any of the grounds of the application must be included in the application, or the court’s authority for the search may be ineffective. The court will not necessarily refuse to issue a warrant in every case in which there is information that undermines the grounds of the application.

The applicant must identify for the court information that comes from a source that cannot be tested (for example, a report from an anonymous informant), and must explain why that information is thought to be credible. Sensitive information may be set out in a separate document: Criminal Procedure Rules, rule 47.26(4) (and see guidance note 4 above).

The applicant must inform the court if there is anything else that might influence the court’s decision to issue a warrant and which is not the subject of any other question in this application form. This may include whether there is any unusual feature of the investigation or of any potential prosecution – for example, might the investigation result in a private prosecution?

October 2021

1. Delete as applicable. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Delete if not applicable. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Delete as applicable, and give brief reasons for your decision. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903811/pace-code-b-2013.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/investigations/investigative-strategies/search-powers-and-obtaining-and-executing-search-warrants/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/section/8>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/section/19>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2001/16/section/50>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/section/23>. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)