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Sunday Trading



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Under the Sunday Trading Act 1994 the limits on shop opening hours are:

Small shops (under 280 sq m/3,000 sq ft)

- no restrictions on opening

Large shops (over 280 sq m/3,000 sq ft)

- Monday to Saturday - no restrictions
- Sunday - opening for six continual hours only, between 10am and 6pm
- Easter Sunday - closed

In addition to regulating opening by large shops on Sunday, the Sunday Trading Act 1994 prohibits large shops from opening on Easter Sunday.

The Christmas Day (Trading) Act 2004 came into force in 2004. The act prohibits large shops (over 280 sq m/3,000 sq ft) from opening on Christmas Day.

Large shops in England and Wales are no longer required to give prior written notification to the local authority of their Sunday opening hours or change in these hours.

What goods can be sold on a Sunday?

The Sunday Trading Act 1994 regulates shop opening hours. It does not regulate the sale of particular goods. The 1994 Act removed a number of anomalies which existed under the Sunday trading provisions of the Shops Act 1950, which prohibited the sale of some goods but not other, often similar, goods. Sale of certain goods, such as alcohol, is subject to separate legislation.

What are the rules governing alcohol sales on a Sunday?

Neither the sale of alcohol nor shops whose trade or business consists wholly or mainly of the sale of alcohol are regulated by the Sunday Trading Act 1994. They are regulated by separate legislation under the [Licensing Act 2003](#).

How does Sunday Trading Act affect street markets, car boot sales etc?

The Sunday Trading Act 1994 regulates shop opening hours. It does not regulate street markets or car boot sales. These are subject to separate local planning legislation.

Why are large garden centres not able to open on Easter Sunday?

This was considered by Parliament in 1994 during the passage of the Sunday Trading Bill. An

amendment proposing that large garden centres should be exempt from closing on Easter Sunday was defeated on a free vote in both Houses.

Why is there special protection for Sunday working in shops?

The protections in the Sunday Trading Act 1994 reflected the fact that the conditions of shop workers were being changed by legislation. The law had created new circumstances for employees which were contrary to their previous expectations. These provisions were consolidated into the Employment Rights Act 1996, whereby shop workers (other than those employed to work solely on Sundays) have the right to refuse to work on Sundays.

For more information, please see the [GOV.uk website](#)

Potential changes to Sunday Trading law

The Government are proposing changes to devolve the control of Sunday Trading hours to local government. They undertook a [consultation](#) which ended on 16 September 2015. The responses are currently being assessed.

If the proposed measures are introduced, local government would be able to extend Sunday trading in their respective jurisdictions. No proposals have been made to amend the existing limitations to trade on Christmas Day or Easter Sunday.

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