



Jersey

CIVIL EVIDENCE (JERSEY) LAW 2003

Official Consolidated Version

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04.180

Showing the law from 11 January 2024 to Current



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Contents

Article

1	Interpretation	3
2	Application	3
3	Admissibility of hearsay evidence	4
4	Notice of proposal to adduce hearsay evidence	4
5	Power to call witness for cross-examination on hearsay statement	4
6	Considerations relevant to weighing of hearsay evidence	5
7	Competence and credibility	5
8	Previous statements of witnesses	6
9	Evidence admissible at customary law	6
9A	Withdrawal of privilege against incrimination of self or spouse or civil partner in proceedings relating to intellectual property	7
10	Proof of statements contained in documents	8
11	Proof of records of business or public authority	9
12	Rules of Court	9
13	Savings	10
14	Citation	10

ENDNOTES 11

Table of Legislation History	11
Table of Renumbered Provisions	11
Table of Endnote References	11



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CIVIL EVIDENCE (JERSEY) LAW 2003

A **LAW** to provide for the admissibility of hearsay evidence and the proof of certain documentary evidence in civil proceedings; and for connected purposes.

Commencement [[see endnotes](#)]

1 Interpretation

In this Law –

“civil proceedings” means civil proceedings before any court;

“court” means any tribunal in relation to which the strict rules of evidence apply, whether as a matter of law or by agreement of the parties;

“document” means anything in which information of any description is recorded, and “copy”, in relation to a document, means anything onto which information recorded in the document has been copied, by whatever means and whether directly or indirectly;

“hearsay” means a statement made otherwise than by a person while giving oral evidence in the proceedings which is tendered as evidence of the matters stated, and references to hearsay include hearsay of whatever degree;

“oral evidence” includes evidence which, by reason of a defect of speech or hearing, a person called as a witness gives in writing or by signs;

“original statement”, in relation to hearsay evidence, means the underlying statement (if any) by –

- (a) in the case of evidence of fact, a person having personal knowledge of that fact; or
- (b) in the case of evidence of opinion, the person whose opinion it is;

“statement” means any representation of fact or opinion, however made.

2 Application

- (1) Subject to paragraph (2) this Law applies to any civil proceedings begun on or after 1st February 2005.

- (2) This Law shall apply to civil proceedings begun before 1st February 2005 if –
 - (a) the parties to those proceedings so agree; and
 - (b) the court so consents.

3 Admissibility of hearsay evidence

- (1) Evidence shall not be excluded on the ground that it is hearsay.
- (2) Nothing in this Law affects the admissibility of evidence admissible apart from this Article.
- (3) Articles 4 to 8 do not apply to hearsay evidence admissible apart from this Article even if it may also be admissible by virtue of this Article.

4 Notice of proposal to adduce hearsay evidence

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this Article, a party proposing to adduce hearsay evidence in civil proceedings shall give to the other party or parties to those proceedings –
 - (a) such notice (if any) of that proposal; and
 - (b) where so requested, such particulars of or relating to the evidence, as is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances to enable that party or parties to deal with matters arising from the fact that evidence is hearsay.
- (2) Rules of Court may –
 - (a) specify classes of proceedings or evidence in relation to which paragraph (1) does not apply; and
 - (b) make provision as to the manner in which (including the time within which) the duties imposed by that paragraph are to be complied with in the cases where it does apply.
- (3) The parties to the proceedings may exclude paragraph (1) by agreement and a party may waive any requirement for notice to be given to him or her.
- (4) A failure to comply with paragraph (1), or with Rules of Court under paragraph (2)(b), does not affect the admissibility of the evidence but the court may take into account such failure –
 - (a) in considering the exercise of its powers with respect to the course of proceedings and costs; and
 - (b) as a matter adversely affecting the weight to be given to the evidence in accordance with Article 6.

5 Power to call witness for cross-examination on hearsay statement

Rules of Court may provide that where a party adduces hearsay evidence of a statement made by a person and does not call that person as a witness, any other party to the proceedings may, with the leave of the court, call that person as a witness and cross-examine that person on the statement as if that person had been called by the first-mentioned party and as if the hearsay statement were that person's evidence in chief.

6 Considerations relevant to weighing of hearsay evidence

- (1) In estimating the weight (if any) to be given to hearsay evidence the court shall have regard to any circumstances from which any inference can reasonably be drawn as to the reliability or otherwise of the evidence.
- (2) Regard may be had, in particular, to the following –
 - (a) whether it would have been reasonable and practicable for the party by whom the evidence was adduced to have produced the maker of the original statement as a witness;
 - (b) whether the original statement was made contemporaneously with the occurrence or existence of the matters stated;
 - (c) whether the evidence involves multiple hearsay;
 - (d) whether any person involved had any motive to conceal or misrepresent matters;
 - (e) whether the original statement was an edited account, or was made in collaboration with another or for a particular purpose;
 - (f) whether the circumstances in which the evidence is adduced as hearsay are such as to suggest an attempt to prevent proper evaluation of its weight.

7 Competence and credibility

- (1) Hearsay evidence shall not be admitted if or to the extent that it is shown to consist of, or to be proved by means of, a statement made by a person who was not competent as a witness at the time he or she made the statement.
- (2) For the purposes of paragraph (1) –
 - (a) “not competent as a witness” means suffering from such mental or physical infirmity, or lack of understanding, as would render a person incompetent as a witness in civil proceedings; but
 - (b) a child shall be treated as competent as a witness if, in the opinion of the court the child understands that it is his or her duty to speak the truth and the child has sufficient understanding to justify his or her evidence being heard.
- (3) Where hearsay evidence is adduced and the maker of the original statement, or of any statement relied upon to prove another statement, is not called as a witness –
 - (a) evidence which, if he or she had been so called, would be admissible for the purpose of attacking or supporting his or her credibility as a witness is admissible for that purpose in the proceedings; and
 - (b) evidence tending to prove that, whether before or after he or she made the statement, he or she made any other statement inconsistent with it is admissible for the purpose of showing that he or she had contradicted himself or herself.
- (4) Despite paragraph (3), evidence may not be given of any matter of which, if the maker of the original statement, or of any statement relied upon to prove another statement, had been called as a witness and had denied that matter in cross-examination, evidence could not have been adduced by the cross-examining party.

8 Previous statements of witnesses

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this Article, the provisions of this Law as to hearsay evidence apply equally (but with any necessary modifications) in relation to a previous statement made by a person called as a witness in the proceedings.
- (2) A party who has called or intends to call a person as a witness in civil proceedings may not in those proceedings adduce evidence of a previous statement made by that person, except –
 - (a) with the leave of the court; or
 - (b) for the purpose of rebutting a suggestion that his or her evidence has been fabricated.
- (3) Paragraph (2) shall not be construed as preventing a written statement of oral evidence which a party to the proceedings intends to lead, from being adopted by a witness in giving evidence or treated as his or her evidence.
- (4) Where any enactment or rule of law makes provision as to –
 - (a) how far a witness may be discredited by the party producing the witness;
 - (b) the proof of contradictory statements made by a witness; and
 - (c) cross-examination as to previous statements in writing,this Law does not authorize the adducing of evidence of a previous inconsistent or contradictory statement otherwise than in accordance with such enactment or rule.
- (5) Paragraph (4) is without prejudice to any provision made by Rules of Court under Article 5.
- (6) Nothing in this Law affects any rule of law as to the circumstances in which, where a person called as a witness is cross-examined on a document used by the person to refresh his or her memory, that document may be made evidence in the proceedings.
- (7) Nothing in this Article shall be construed as preventing a statement of any description referred to in this Article from being admissible by virtue of Article 3 as evidence of the matters stated.

9 Evidence admissible at customary law

- (1) The rule of law whereby in civil proceedings an admission adverse to a party to the proceedings, whether made by that party or by another person, may be given in evidence against that party for the purpose of proving any fact stated in the admission is superseded.
- (2) Any rule of law whereby in civil proceedings –
 - (a) published works dealing with matters of a public nature (for example, histories, scientific works, dictionaries and maps) are admissible as evidence of facts of a public nature stated in them;
 - (b) public documents (for example, public registers, and returns made under public authority with respect to matters of public interest) are admissible as evidence of facts stated in them; or
 - (c) records (for example, Acts of Court, treaties and commissions) are admissible as evidence of facts stated in them,

shall continue to have effect.

- (3) Any rule of law whereby in civil proceedings –
 - (a) evidence of a person's reputation is admissible for the purpose of proving the person's good or bad character; or
 - (b) evidence of reputation or family tradition is admissible –
 - (i) for the purpose of proving or disproving pedigree or the existence of a marriage, or
 - (ii) for the purpose of proving or disproving the existence of any public or general right or of identifying any person or thing,

shall continue to have effect in so far as it authorizes the court to treat such evidence as proving or disproving that matter.

- (4) Where any rule referred to in paragraph (3) applies, reputation or family tradition shall be treated for the purposes of this Law as a fact and not as a statement or multiplicity of statements about the matter in question.
- (5) The words in which a rule of law mentioned in this Article is described are intended only to identify the rule and shall not be construed as altering it in any way.

9A Withdrawal of privilege against incrimination of self or spouse or civil partner in proceedings relating to intellectual property¹

- (1) Notwithstanding Article 9(1), in any proceedings to which this paragraph applies a person shall not be excused, by reason that to do so would tend to expose that person, or his or her spouse or civil partner, to proceedings for a related offence or for the recovery of a related penalty –
 - (a) from answering any questions put to that person in the first-mentioned proceedings; or
 - (b) from complying with any order made in those proceedings.²
- (2) Paragraph (1) applies to the following civil proceedings in the Royal Court, namely –
 - (a) proceedings for infringement of rights pertaining to any intellectual property or for passing off;
 - (b) proceedings brought to obtain disclosure of information relating to any infringement of such rights or to any passing off; and
 - (c) proceedings brought to prevent any apprehended infringement of such rights or any apprehended passing off,

where those proceedings began on or after the day this Article came into force.

- (3) Subject to paragraph (4), no statement or admission made by a person –
 - (a) in answering a question put to him in any proceedings to which paragraph (1) applies; or
 - (b) in complying with any order made in any such proceedings,

shall, in proceedings for any related offence or for the recovery of any related penalty, be admissible in evidence against that person or (unless they married after the making of the statement or admission) against the spouse of that person.

(4) Nothing in paragraph (3) shall render any statement or admission made by a person as there mentioned inadmissible in evidence against that person in proceedings for perjury or contempt of court.

(5) In this Article –

“intellectual property” means –

- (a) any patent, trade mark or registered design;
- (b) copyright, within the meaning of Part 1 of the [Intellectual Property \(Unregistered Rights\) \(Jersey\) Law 2011](#); and
- (c) any right conferred by Part 2, 3, 4 or 5 of the [Intellectual Property \(Unregistered Rights\) \(Jersey\) Law 2011](#) that is equivalent to copyright;
- (d) performers’ protection;
- (e) design right, within the meaning of Part 7 of the [Intellectual Property \(Unregistered Rights\) \(Jersey\) Law 2011](#),

and any other technical or commercial information or other intellectual property;

“related offence”, in relation to any proceedings to which paragraph (1) applies, means –

- (a) in the case of proceedings within paragraph (2)(a) or (b) –
 - (i) any offence committed by or in the course of the infringement or passing off to which those proceedings relate, or
 - (ii) any offence not within sub-paragraph (i) committed in connection with that infringement or passing off, being an offence involving fraud or dishonesty;
- (b) in the case of proceedings within paragraph (2)(c), any offence revealed by the facts on which the plaintiff relies in those proceedings;

“related penalty”, in relation to any proceedings to which paragraph (1) applies means –

- (a) in the case of proceedings within paragraph (2)(a) or (b), any penalty incurred in respect of anything done or omitted in connection with the infringement or passing off to which those proceedings relate;
 - (b) in the case of proceedings within paragraph (2)(c), any penalty incurred in respect of any act or omission revealed by the facts on which the plaintiff relies in those proceedings.
- (6) Any reference in this Article to civil proceedings in the Royal Court of any description includes a reference to proceedings on appeal arising out of such proceedings.

10 Proof of statements contained in documents

Where a statement contained in a document is admissible as evidence, it may be proved –

- (a) by the production of that document; or

- (b) whether or not that document is still in existence, by the production of a copy of that document (however many copies away from the original) or of the material part of it,

authenticated in such manner as the court may approve.

11 Proof of records of business or public authority

- (1) A document which is shown to form part of the records of a business or public authority may be received in evidence without further proof.
- (2) A document shall be taken to form part of the records of a business or public authority if there is produced to the court a certificate to that effect signed by an officer of the business or authority to which the records belong.
- (3) For the purposes of paragraph (2) –
- (a) a document purporting to be a certificate signed by an officer of a business or public authority shall be deemed to have been duly given by such an officer and signed by the officer; and
- (b) a certificate shall be treated as signed by a person if it purports to bear a facsimile of the person's signature.
- (4) The absence of an entry in the records of a business or public authority may be proved by affidavit of an officer of the business or authority to which the records belong.
- (5) The court may, having regard to the circumstances of the case, direct that all or any of the provisions of this Article do not apply in relation to a particular document or record, or description of documents or records.
- (6) In this Article –

“business” includes any activity regularly carried on over a period of time, whether for profit or not, by any body (whether corporate or not) or by an individual;

“officer” includes any person occupying a responsible position in relation to the relevant activities of the business or public authority or in relation to its records; and

“public authority” includes any public or parochial authority, statutory undertaking, States department and person holding office under the States or under His Majesty;

“records” means records in whatever form.³

12 Rules of Court

- (1) The power of the Royal Court to make Rules of Court under Article 13 of the [Royal Court \(Jersey\) Law 1948](#) shall include power to make such provision as may be necessary or expedient for carrying this Law into effect.
- (2) Rules of Court made for the purposes of this Law in relation to proceedings in the Royal Court shall apply to proceedings under the [Arbitration \(Jersey\) Law 1998](#) –
- (a) except in so far as their operation is excluded by agreement; and
- (b) subject to such modifications as may be appropriate.

- (3) Any question arising as to what modifications are appropriate shall be determined, in default of agreement, by the arbitrator.

13 Savings

- (1) Nothing in this Law affects the exclusion of evidence on grounds other than that it is hearsay, whether the evidence falls to be excluded in pursuance of any enactment or rule of law or for failure to comply with Rules of Court or an order of the court, or otherwise.
- (2) Nothing in this Law affects the proof of documents by means other than those specified in Article 10 or 11.

14 Citation

This Law may be cited as the Civil Evidence (Jersey) Law 2003.

ENDNOTES

Table of Legislation History

Legislation	Year and No	Commencement
Civil Evidence (Jersey) Law 2003	L.14/2003	1 February 2005 (R&O.2/2005)
Intellectual Property (Unregistered Rights) (Jersey) Law 2011	L.29/2011	18 December 2012 (R&O.148/2012)
Civil Partnership (Consequential Amendments) (Jersey) Regulations 2012	R&O.47/2012	18 December 2012

Table of Renumbered Provisions

Original	Current
1(1)	1
1(2) to (4)	Otiose, omitted

Table of Endnote References

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- ¹ Article 9A *inserted by L.29/2011, heading amended by R&O.47/2012*
- ² Article 9A(1) *amended by R&O.47/2012*
- ³ Article 11(6) *revised on 11 January 2024 by Law Revision Board item [2023/1](#)*