

ODCE Information Notice I/2010/2

Printing of Directors' Names on Company Letterhead

Section 196, Companies Act 1963 requires that details of directors be printed on all business letters on or in which the company name appears. The details required are:

- The present Christian name, or the initials thereof, and present surname; and
- Any former Christian names and surnames; and
- The nationality, if not Irish

As part of the government initiative to reduce the administrative burden on business, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Innovation commissioned a study to identify the sources of that burden. Among its conclusions, this study indicated that businesses can incur significant administrative costs where directors are either appointed to, or resign from the boards of companies in circumstances where significant stocks of pre-printed company stationery having been purchased.

Accordingly, the ODCE wishes to advise companies as follows.

There is no legal obligation for the directors' names to be pre-printed on company stationery. In addition, while such information must be legible, there are no rules as to the format, font or size of the text, as long as such text is legible.

Therefore, for most companies, there should be available technological solutions to overcome any potential administrative costs that may be incurred should there be a change to the composition of the board. In particular, company stationery can be ordered without any directors' names printed, but these may be subsequently added when such stationery is used. For example, when printing letters, use may be made of the footer available in electronic word processing programmes such as Microsoft Word. Directors' names can be placed in the footer, where they will then be printed when the letter is printed, and can be easily amended without any need to dispose of stationery.

Of course, companies may also choose to implement other alternatives, such as placing labels on each letter covering the original directors' names with the revised list, or blanking out the name of a director who has resigned from the company.

These simple measures it is hoped can save Irish companies unnecessary expense in the loss of company stationery which has incorrect directors' names printed.

Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement

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