



# THE STATUTES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

## DEFAMATION ACT 1957

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# Defamation Act 1957

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An Act relating to libel and slander and other malicious falsehoods.

[6 May 1965]

### **Short title**

1. This Act is the Defamation Act 1957.

## **Interpretation**

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires —

“broadcasting by means of telecommunication” means publication for general reception by means of telecommunication;

“newspaper” means any paper containing public news or observations thereon or consisting wholly or mainly of advertisements which is printed for sale and is published in Singapore either periodically or in parts or numbers at intervals not exceeding 36 days;

“telecommunication” means any system for the transmission, emission or reception of signs, signals, writings, images and sounds of all kinds by means of radiowaves, wire, cable or other electromagnetic systems;

“words” includes pictures, visual images, gestures and other methods of signifying meaning.

## **Broadcast statements**

3. For the purposes of the law of libel and slander, the broadcasting of words by means of telecommunication shall be treated as publication in a permanent form.

## **Slander of women**

4. Words spoken and published which impute unchastity or adultery to any woman or girl shall not require special damage to render them actionable.

## **Slander affecting official, professional or business reputation**

5. In an action for slander in respect of words calculated to disparage the plaintiff in any office, profession, calling, trade or business held or carried on by him at the time of the publication, it shall not be necessary to allege or prove special damage whether or not the words are spoken of the plaintiff in the way of his office, profession, calling, trade or business.

**Slander of title, etc.**

**6.**—(1) In any action for slander of title, slander of goods or other malicious falsehood, it shall not be necessary to allege or prove special damage —

- (a) if the words upon which the action is founded are calculated to cause pecuniary damage to the plaintiff and are published in writing or other permanent form; or
- (b) if the said words are calculated to cause pecuniary damage to the plaintiff in respect of any office, profession, calling, trade or business held or carried on by him at the time of the publication.

(2) Section 3 applies for the purposes of this section as it applies for the purposes of the law of libel and slander.

**Unintentional defamation**

**7.**—(1) A person who has published words alleged to be defamatory of another person may, if he claims that the words were published by him innocently in relation to that other person, make an offer of amends under this section; and in any such case —

- (a) if the offer is accepted by the party aggrieved and is duly performed, no proceedings for libel or slander shall be taken or continued by that party against the person making the offer in respect of the publication in question (but without prejudice to any cause of action against any other person jointly responsible for that publication);
- (b) if the offer is not accepted by the party aggrieved, then, except as otherwise provided by this section, it shall be a defence, in any proceedings by him for libel or slander against the person making the offer in respect of the publication in question, to prove that the words complained of were published by the defendant or were published by the defendant innocently in relation to the plaintiff and that the offer was made as soon as practicable after the defendant received notice that they were or might be defamatory of the plaintiff, and has not been withdrawn.