



NOTIFICATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 20 OF
THE PROTECTION OF LIFE DURING PREGNANCY ACT 2013

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1. Introduction

The Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013 was enacted on the 30th of July 2013 and commenced on 1st of January 2014. The purpose of this Act is to restate the general prohibition on abortion in Ireland while regulating access to lawful termination of pregnancy in accordance with the X case and the judgment in the European Court of Human Right in the *A, B and C v Ireland* case.

The Act achieves this objective in the following ways:

- by providing a clear criminal prohibition on abortion;
- by providing a sole exception to that prohibition – when there is a real and substantial risk to the life of the woman which can only be averted by a termination of pregnancy.

This exception applies only in three distinct and precise circumstances:

- when there is a real and substantial risk to the life of the woman arising from a physical illness – section 7 of the Act;
- when there is an immediate risk to the life of the woman arising from a physical illness – section 8 of the Act; or
- when there is a real and substantial risk to the life of the woman arising from suicide intent – section 9 of the Act.

The Act also creates procedures which apply to the lawful termination of pregnancy. The objectives of these procedures are to ensure that, where lawful termination of pregnancy is under consideration, the right to life of the unborn is respected where practicable, and, secondly, to ensure that a woman can ascertain by means of a clear process whether she requires this medical procedure or not.

2. Notification

Section 20 of the Act provides for a notification system in relation to all terminations of pregnancy carried out under the Act. Specifically, it requires that the Minister for Health be notified of each termination of pregnancy no later than 28 days after it has taken place, without disclosing the name of the woman.

The notifications are recorded in the form entitled “Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013 (Section 20) (Notifications) Regulations 2013” (Statutory Instrument no 546 of 2013). The following information is included in the form:

- Medical Council registration number of the medical practitioner who carried out the procedure;
- relevant section under the Act, i.e. section 7, 8 or 9, under which it was carried out;
- Medical Council registration numbers of the certifying doctors
- name of the appropriate institution where it was carried out or the name of the location if carried out elsewhere in an emergency;
- date when the procedure took place.

Section 20 also requires that the Minister will prepare a yearly report by 30th June on the notifications provided to him under section 20 in the previous calendar year and lay it before the Houses of the Oireachtas as soon as may be after preparing the report. The report will exclude any identifying information on the women or doctors involved.

3. Notification for terminations carried out between 1st January 2017 and 31st December 2017

The table below sets out information received by the Minister on the number of terminations carried out in 2017:

Section of the Act	Number of terminations
7 – risk from physical illness	8
8 – emergency from physical illness	5
9 – risk from suicide	2
Total	15