

# [News story: IP \(Unjustified Threats\) Act comes into force](#)

From 1 October 2017, changes will be made to the law on unjustified threats of infringement

The new law on threats is clearer, consistent across all relevant IP rights, and will help businesses to avoid expensive litigation.

An unjustified threat is made when someone unfairly threatens someone else with legal action for infringing their intellectual property, when no infringement has actually taken place. These threats are costly and disruptive, drive customers away and stop businesses trading legitimately in goods and services.

## **The IP (Unjustified Threats) Act 2017 will:**

- help businesses negotiate fairly over IP disputes, and protect businesses who can be most harmed by unjustified threats
- make it clear what you can and can't say when approaching another business about an alleged infringement
- help IP owners and third parties understand when an approach is a threat
- encourage IP owners to approach the source of the alleged infringement, rather than customers or retailers
- encourage a culture of allowing businesses to "talk first", rather than head to court
- bring consistency and certainty across this complex area of IP law

## **Why did we make the changes?**

The law was complex, unclear, and inconsistent between the various IP rights involved. It made IP owners, particularly SMEs, reluctant to try and enforce their IP. It also made it difficult for businesses to make legitimate attempts to settle an IP dispute before going to court. The changes follow from detailed proposals put forward by the Law Commission for reform in this area of law.

Read our business guidance to find out more information on [unjustified threats](#) and how they affect the actions you can take.