



NEWSLETTER

SUMMER EDITION 2022



John W. Jones
Executive Director
901 East Byrd Street, Suite 1301
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 225-7152



NEW LAWS TAKE EFFECT THIS SUMMER

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2022-2023

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John W. Jones

We Want to Hear from You ...

✍ 901 East Byrd Street
Suite 1301
Richmond, VA 23219

☎ (804) 225-7152 phone

📠 (804) 225-7162 fax

✉ vsavsi@virginiasheriffs.org

LEARN ABOUT NEW LAWS TAKING EFFECT

The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI) monitors all legislation that impacts the office of the sheriff. VSI would like to touch on a few key pieces of legislation regarding public safety taking effect in July:

- **SB186** (Farm placard bill) – requires that farm placards be registered with DMV.
- **HB451** (Stalking bill) – changes venue requirements, so that stalking can be prosecuted where the communication is received, even if sent from out of state.
- **SB36** – puts back into place the requirement for school officials to report to law enforcement sexual assault and other crimes on school property.
- **HB740** – makes the tampering of a vehicle for the purpose of taking a catalytic converter a felony.
- **HB632** – allows law enforcement to stop and enforce vehicles with excessively loud exhaust.
- **SB758** (Switchblade bill) – reverses a long-time ban on possession of a switchblade. The bill simply removes switchblades from a list of weapons Virginians are banned from possessing or selling.
- **SB777** (“Carolina Squat” truck bill) – bans modified “Carolina Squat” vehicles — which are any “passenger car or pickup or panel truck” that’s been modified to raise the front bumper four inches or higher than the rear bumper — from Virginia roadways.

REPORT SHOWS 2021 ONE OF DEADLIEST YEARS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT



According to preliminary data compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), as of December 31, 2021, 458 federal, state, tribal, and local law enforcement officers died in the line-of-duty in 2021. This is an increase of 55% from the 295 officers killed during the same period last year and is the highest total line-of-duty officer deaths since 1930 when there were 312 fatalities.

COVID-19-related fatalities accounted for the single highest cause of death among law enforcement officers. There were a

reported 301 COVID-19-related deaths in 2021 at the time of the report’s release.

The unofficial figure is projected to be much higher given that there are cases where it cannot be determined whether there was direct contact with a COVID-positive individual while performing in their official capacity.

According to NLEOMF’s report, traffic-related deaths increased from 2020. Of particular concern were “struck-by incidents,” which is when officers are hit by other vehicles while standing outside of their patrol vehicles, either investigating crashes or assisting motorists.

Firearms-related fatalities saw a spike last year. Law enforcement officers killed in ambush style related attacks in 2021 also increased.

Last year, there were seven law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in Virginia.

NATIONAL TRAFFIC AWARENESS MONTH



August has been designated U.S. National Traffic Awareness Month. This is an opportunity for drivers to be aware of decisions they can make on the roads to ensure their safety and that of pedestrians and other drivers.

With the recent dramatic spike in pedestrian and vehicle-related deaths, August is an

important month for drivers and pedestrians to reflect on the importance of paying attention to the road and following all traffic rules. The best thing you can do to help ensure your safety and those around you is to be aware.

To stay safe in traffic, remember to: check your mirrors and blind spots, use your turn signal, avoid speeding, and leave adequate space between your vehicle and others.

2022 VSI CERTIFICATION CLASS

VSI congratulates the 2022 class of the VSI Certification Program. Certificates of completion were awarded at the spring conference. In addition, three members achieved recertification this year.

The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute offers the Certification Program to recognize the continued individual professional development of Virginia sheriffs and deputies. Certification through this voluntary program provides recognition of a sheriff or deputy's commitment to excellence, life-long learning, and advancement of public safety as a profession.

Sheriffs and deputies serving in Amherst County and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia carry immense responsibilities as the guardians of their communities, providing effective public safety services balanced with the fair and equitable treatment of every individual they encounter.

IF YOU SEE AN UNATTENDED CHILD IN A HOT CAR

In 2015, Virginia passed a law that provides civil immunity for anyone who forcibly enters a vehicle to remove an unattended minor at risk of serious bodily injury or death. The one caveat in the law is that **you must call 911** before breaking into the vehicle if it is feasible under the circumstances.

However, if you see an unattended animal in distress in a car, be aware that only law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel and animal control officers are able to break into the car and not be held liable, and specifically, the law only protects unattended companion animals.

As a reminder, even with windows cracked, it only takes a few minutes for a car to heat up.



DON'T LET SCAMMERS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU

This summer, scammers aren't taking a break. Any Virginian can fall victim to a scam. That is why we wanted to remind you about the several key steps you can take to protect yourself from scammers:

- It bears repeating: if the offer seems too good to be true, it probably is
- Never pay fees or taxes in advance for "winnings"
- A genuine business will never threaten or pressure you to act immediately
- If you can't find information about the person or business online, it is probably a scam
- Never hand out personal information or wire money to someone you don't know
- Be suspicious if the correspondence you receive is full of grammatical errors or poor production values
- If there is no physical address and your contacts won't give you one, then it's a scam
- Never give someone else remote access to your computer

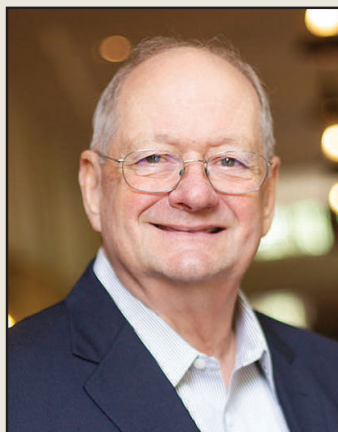
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

August 2, 2022 is National Night Out, a day meant to increase awareness about police programs in communities, such as drug prevention, town watch, neighborhood watch, and other anti-crime efforts.

According to the National Night Out's official website, "millions of neighbors take part in National Night Out across thousands of communities from all fifty states, U.S. territories and military bases.

If you'd like to know if your area is taking part in this important crime prevention event, I urge you to contact your sheriff's office.

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM VSI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOHN W. JONES



On behalf of all of us at the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, I hope you and your family are busy enjoying your summer in the Commonwealth of Virginia. While summertime brings lots of opportunity to explore our state's beaches and parks, and enjoy outdoor activities, it also brings some extra risks.

Whether you are working or playing outside in the summer, anybody not accustomed to the heat is at risk for a heat-related illness. Take steps to protect yourself: Wear appropriate clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat, take frequent water breaks, apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15, and never leave kids or pets unattended in a vehicle.

Summer is also a time when opportunist thieves seek out property left unattended and unsecured, such as bicycles, lawn items, garden tools, car keys, to name a few. So please, ensure your property is secured, especially overnight, and remember to close and lock your windows and doors. It just takes a second for a thief to steal something which has been left lying unattended, and by taking a few moments to ensure property is secure you can significantly reduce the risk of falling victim to such as crime.

I want you to know it is my privilege to serve as Executive Director of VSI, and I urge you to contact your sheriff's office if you have any questions about the subjects we discuss in this issue of the *VSI Newsletter*, or if you have any other concerns about crime prevention or public safety efforts in your community.

No sheriff's office can operate effectively without the support and cooperation of the people it serves. That is why I am so grateful for your continued support of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute!

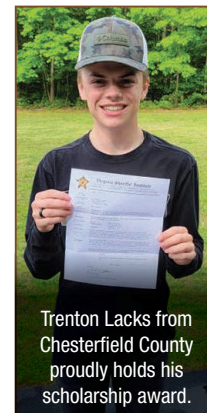
Sincerely,



John W. Jones, Executive Director
Virginia Sheriffs' Institute
901 East Byrd Street, Suite 1301
Richmond, Virginia 23219

VIRGINIA SHERIFFS ANNOUNCE 2022 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

With the help of supporters like you, VSI secures the critical funding needed to continue providing desperately needed scholarships to Virginia citizens to pursue criminal justice degrees — a great source of pride for us all and a vital step in ensuring our safety. VSI is the only organization in Virginia helping the state's law enforcement students with criminal justice scholarships.



Trenton Lacks from Chesterfield County proudly holds his scholarship award.

One of our most recent scholarship award recipients is Trenton C. Lacks, of Chesterfield County, Virginia. Trenton is planning on attending Liberty University where he will be pursuing a course of study in criminal justice.

We are very pleased to announce that 56 scholarships were awarded to deserving students across the Commonwealth pursuing a career in law enforcement, thanks to the generosity of citizen supporters like you.

Full-time students are awarded \$1,000 scholarships; part-time students are awarded \$500 scholarships. That is an impressive \$55,000 going toward education costs for some great young people that will benefit everyone in our state. Your support is the reason we have had such tremendous success of our scholarship program year after year!

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The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute solicits articles and comments from associate members of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute for inclusion in this newsletter. Articles and comments should be directed to: John W. Jones, Executive Director, Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, 901 East Byrd Street, Suite 1301, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or phone (804) 225-7152.