



Newsletter
Summer Edition 2025



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

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New Laws
Take Effect
This Summer



2025-2026

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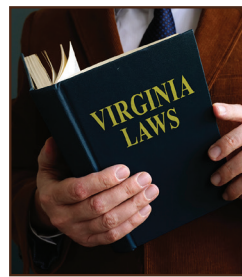
Sheriff Darrell L. Hodges
Cumberland County

Sheriff Eric B. Hess
Fluvanna County

Sheriff John A. Beauchamp
Northumberland County

Executive Director

John W. Jones



NEW LAWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

We wanted to make you and other VSI members aware of new laws that take effect on July 1, 2025, which are related to law enforcement, victims' rights, and public safety. These bills were passed by the 2025 General Assembly session and signed into law by Governor Glenn Youngkin.

HB1549 makes it a class 1 misdemeanor for any person to knowingly authorize the operation of a motor vehicle by a minor who he knows has no operator's license or learner's permit or who has a learner's permit but who knows would operate such motor vehicle in violation of certain limitations on operating a motor vehicle with a learner's permit if such violation results in a motor vehicle accident that causes death or injury to any person.

HB2123 provides that a court may issue a permanent protective order in a case of family abuse for a specified period of time up to a maximum of four years, where a permanent protective order has been issued against the same person within the last ten years. Current law allows such protective orders to be issued for a specified period of time up to a maximum of two years and extended for a period of time not longer than two years.

HB2116 allows individuals with nonapparent disabilities to voluntarily indicate their condition on their license or ID. This allows for the voluntary indication of a disability that can impair communication on a motor vehicle registration.

HB2501 requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to develop and implement a program for envelopes for use by drivers diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, to provide to a law enforcement officer to ease communication during a traffic stop or at the scene of a traffic accident.

HB1946/SB1060 prohibits any person younger than 21 years of age from possessing any retail tobacco or hemp product intended for smoking, with certain exceptions. The bill provides that any such product purchased or possessed by a person younger than 21 years of age shall be deemed contraband and may be seized and destroyed by a law enforcement officer. The bill also provides that seizure shall be the sole penalty for a violation of such prohibition.

SB1271 clarifies that for crimes involving communicating in writing a threat to kill or do bodily injury, regardless of whether the person who is the object of such threat actually receives such threat, such writing includes an email, a text message, or a message or post on any social media platform. The bill also makes it a class 6 felony to verbally threaten to fire a gun on school property, a school bus, or at a school sponsored event.

HB2256 increases from \$1,500 to \$3,000 the property damage threshold at which law enforcement is required to forward a written report of a motor vehicle accident to the DMV.

HB2475 extends seat belt requirement to all vehicle occupants. The current law is limited to front seat occupants.

We Want to Hear from You ...

✍ 901 East Byrd Street
Suite 1301
Richmond, VA 23219

☎ (804) 225-7152

✉ vsavsi@virginiasheriffs.org

Find Us On Social Media:

✕ twitter.com/VSIInstitute

f www.facebook.com/vasheriffsinstitute

VSI CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CLASS OF '25

VSI recognized and presented participants of the 2025 Certification Program a certificate of completion at the Spring Conference in May. The Certification Program is offered by VSI to recognize the continued individual professional development of Virginia sheriffs and deputies. This year 25 individuals successfully completed the program, along with 8 who have earned recertification.

Certification through this voluntary program provides recognition of a sheriff or deputy's commitment to excellence and advancement of public safety as a profession.



NEW LAW MAKES MAIL THEFT A FELONY



Have you ever had a mail package stolen from your porch or mailbox? Now a new bill (SB939) passed in the 2025 General Assembly makes mail theft a Class 6 felony in Virginia.

The law also targets the theft of United States Postal Service (USPS) keys and the vandalism of mail receptacles. Depending on their offenses, the accused could spend up to five years in prison.

The bill was introduced in response to a recent increase in mail theft incidents that occurred in Central Virginia. Mail theft has become a pervasive issue in Virginia, with the state experiencing a 50% higher rate of package theft compared to the national average. In 2024 alone, over half a million Virginians reported at least one instance of package theft within a three-month period.

These crimes often involve the theft of personal checks, which can be “washed” and rewritten, leading to significant financial losses and identity theft. In Richmond, incidents have ranged from mail being stolen directly from post offices to mail carriers being robbed at gunpoint.

As mail theft continues to threaten the security of personal information and financial assets, Virginia’s commitment to addressing this issue reflects a broader effort to protect its residents and uphold the integrity of the postal system. This bill passed the General Assembly with bipartisan support.

To keep your mail safe, the USPS suggests the following:

- Removing your mail from your mailbox every day.
- Depositing outgoing mail at your local Post Office.
- Signing up for the USPS Informed Delivery program to receive daily emails to preview your incoming mail and packages.
- Placing a Hold Mail request at USPS.com for your address while you are on vacation or away from your residence.
- Starting a neighborhood watch program, and keeping an eye out for the mailboxes or packages left on porches in your area. If you see something that looks suspicious, call 911.



HONORING SMYTH COUNTY DEPUTY

On August 9, 2024, the Smyth County Sheriff’s Office — and the entire Commonwealth — suffered a devastating loss with the tragic death of Deputy Hunter Reedy. At just 27 years old, Deputy Reedy was killed in the line of duty during a routine traffic stop. His death shook his office, his community, and the extended family of Virginia law enforcement. He leaves behind a wife and three children.

Deputy Reedy had only recently completed his training at the Southwest Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy in April 2024. Though early in his career, he had already earned the admiration of his colleagues for his work ethic, dedication, and heart for public service. Smyth County Sheriff B.C. “Chip” Shuler called Deputy Reedy “an absolute hero.” In recognition of his service, the Virginia General Assembly and Governor Youngkin approved a bill that renamed a bridge in Smyth County in his memory. Now, every driver who crosses the Deputy Hunter D. Reedy Memorial Bridge on Route 11 is reminded of the courage and sacrifice that Deputy Reedy embodied.

DANGERS OF WORKING IN HEAT

As summer temperatures soar across Virginia, the men and women in law enforcement face a serious — and often overlooked — threat: extreme heat. Just like other outdoor workers, law enforcement officers are vulnerable to heat exhaustion and heat stroke, especially when wearing heavy gear like body armor and working long hours in the sun.

According to experts, any outdoor work in scorching temperatures can lead to dangerous symptoms including dizziness, confusion, nausea, and even collapse. If you must work outside in extreme heat, here are some tips:

- Drink water regularly, even if you don’t feel thirsty.
- Rest in shaded or air-conditioned areas when possible.
- Wear lightweight, breathable clothing.
- Be aware of symptoms like dizziness, nausea, or excessive sweating.
- If you are new to hot environments, increase exposure slowly over a week or two.

VSI STICKER/DECAL: OPT OUT OPTION

Many of you enjoy displaying our annual VSI stickers/decals. But for those who do not use them and would like to opt out of receiving them in your September renewal mailer, please check the box provided on the reply form or email us at vsavsi@virginiasheriffs.org.

A Message From VSI Executive Director John W. Jones



On behalf of all of us at the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI), I hope this message finds you well and enjoying everything that makes summer in Virginia so special — cookouts with family, long evenings on the porch, and maybe even a road trip or two across our beautiful Commonwealth.

I always appreciate the opportunity to connect with you through the *VSI Newsletter*. It is a chance for us to share important news, recognize the service and sacrifice of Virginia's sheriffs and deputies, and offer helpful reminders to keep you and your loved ones safe.

Summer brings plenty of sunshine — but also a few safety concerns. Whether you are working outdoors, exploring hiking trails, or just relaxing at home, we encourage you to stay alert, stay hydrated, and always look out for one another.

Of course, the goal of VSI is to support law enforcement and their tireless work fighting crime and promoting public safety. Thank you for being a strong partner in these efforts.

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 or concerns about crime prevention or public safety efforts in your community.

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

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

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.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VSI & VSA?

The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI) is the educational arm of the Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA) in which citizens, like yourself, are eligible to become members. The proceeds supporting the VSI are used exclusively for the many training and educational programs held each year and our annual scholarship program of which we are very proud. It is classified as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions to the VSI are tax deductible. Website: vasheriffsinstitute.org

The Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA) is an organization established to represent the interests of sheriffs and law enforcement before the General Assembly in Virginia. It is a professional trade association in which contributions are not tax deductible. It is classified as a 501(c)(6) organization. We send out appeals on their behalf twice a year. Website: vasheriff.org

VSI 2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

We are very pleased to announce that 65 scholarships were awarded to deserving students across the Commonwealth pursuing a career of service in law enforcement, thanks to the generosity of citizen supporters like you.

One of our most recent scholarship award recipients is Orlando T. Brown, of Nelson County, Virginia. Orlando is planning on attending Ferrum College where he will be pursuing a course of study in criminal justice.

Full-time students are awarded \$1,000 scholarships; part-time students are awarded \$500 scholarships. That is an impressive \$63,000 going toward education costs for some great people that will benefit everyone in our state. Your support is the reason we have had such tremendous success with our scholarship program year after year!

VSI is the only organization in Virginia helping the state's students with criminal justice scholarships.



Nelson County Sheriff and Deputies Present Scholarship