

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY - 2025 SESSION

CHAPTER 531

An Act to amend and reenact § 16.1-263 of the Code of Virginia, relating to summonses of a juvenile; custody, visitation, and support proceedings.

[H 2115]

Approved March 24, 2025

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 16.1-263 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 16.1-263. Summonses.

A. After a petition has been filed, the court shall direct the issuance of summonses, one directed to the juvenile, if the juvenile is ~~twelve~~ 12 or more years of age, *except for juveniles whose custody, visitation, or support is a subject of controversy or requires determination pursuant to subdivision A 3 of § 16.1-241*, and another to at least one parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person standing in loco parentis, and such other persons as appear to the court to be proper or necessary parties to the proceedings.

After a petition has been filed in cases involving custody or visitation of a juvenile pursuant to subdivision A 3 of § 16.1-241, the court may direct the issuance of a summons to the juvenile for any hearing to adjudicate or dispose of such petition (i) on its own motion or (ii) upon request of any party to such petition.

After a petition has been filed in cases solely involving support of a juvenile pursuant to subdivision A 3 of § 16.1-241, the court may direct the issuance of a summons to the juvenile (a) on its own motion or (b) for good cause shown by the party requesting the issuance of such summons.

After a petition has been filed against an adult pursuant to subsection C or D of § 16.1-259, the court shall direct the issuance of a summons against the adult.

The summons shall require them to appear personally before the court at the time fixed to answer or testify as to the allegations of the petition. Where the custodian is summoned and such person is not a parent of the juvenile in question, a parent shall also be served with a summons. The court may direct that other proper or necessary parties to the proceedings be notified of the pendency of the case, the charge and the time and place for the hearing.

Any such summons shall be deemed a mandate of the court, and willful failure to obey its requirements shall subject any person guilty thereof to liability for punishment for contempt. Upon the failure of any person to appear as ordered in the summons, the court shall immediately issue an order for such person to show cause why he should not be held in contempt.

The parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person standing in loco parentis shall not be summoned to appear or be punished for failure to appear in cases of adults who are brought before the court pursuant to subsection C or D of § 16.1-259 unless such person is summoned as a witness.

B. The summons shall advise the parties of their right to counsel as provided in § 16.1-266. A copy of the petition shall accompany each summons for the initial proceedings. The summons shall include notice that in the event that the juvenile is committed to the Department or to a secure local facility, at least one parent or other person legally obligated to care for and support the juvenile may be required to pay a reasonable sum for treatment of the juvenile pursuant to § 16.1-290. Notice of subsequent proceedings shall be provided to all parties in interest. In all cases where a party is represented by counsel and counsel has been provided with a copy of the petition and due notice as to time, date, and place of the hearing, such action shall be deemed due notice to such party, unless such counsel has notified the court that he no longer represents such party.

C. The judge may endorse upon the summons an order directing a parent or parents, guardian, or other custodian having the custody or control of the juvenile to bring the juvenile to the hearing.

D. A party, other than the juvenile, may waive service of summons by written stipulation or by voluntary appearance at the hearing.

E. No such summons or notification shall be required if the judge shall certify on the record that (i) the identity of a parent or guardian is not reasonably ascertainable or (ii) in cases in which it is alleged that a juvenile has committed a delinquent act, crime, status offense, or traffic infraction or is in need of services or supervision, the location, or in the case of a parent or guardian located outside of the Commonwealth the location or mailing address, of a parent or guardian is not reasonably ascertainable. An affidavit of the mother that the identity of the father is not reasonably ascertainable shall be sufficient evidence of this fact, provided there is no other evidence before the court which would refute such an affidavit. In cases referred to in clause (ii), an affidavit of a law-enforcement officer or juvenile probation officer that the location of a parent or guardian is not reasonably ascertainable shall be sufficient evidence of this fact, provided that there is no other evidence before the court which would refute the affidavit.