

26102036D

1 **HOUSE BILL NO. 1029**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 14, 2026

4 *A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 19.2-72, 19.2-74, 19.2-76, and 19.2-76.2 of the Code of Virginia, relating to*  
5 *criminal complaint, warrant, summons, etc.; temporary sealing.*

6 Patron—Walker

7 Committee Referral Pending

8 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**9 **1. That §§ 19.2-72, 19.2-74, 19.2-76, and 19.2-76.2 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted**  
10 **as follows:**11 **§ 19.2-72. When it may issue; what to recite and require.**12 On complaint of a criminal offense to any officer authorized to issue criminal warrants he shall examine  
13 on oath the complainant and any other witnesses, or when such officer shall suspect that an offense  
14 punishable otherwise than by a fine has been committed he may, without formal complaint, issue a summons  
15 for witnesses and shall examine such witnesses. A written complaint shall be required if the complainant is  
16 not a law-enforcement officer; however a written complaint is required for a felony offense, regardless of  
17 whether the complainant is a law-enforcement officer. If no arrest warrant is issued in response to a written  
18 complaint made by such complainant, the written complaint shall be returned to the complainant. If upon  
19 such examination such officer finds that there is probable cause to believe the accused has committed an  
20 offense, such officer shall issue a warrant for his arrest, except that no magistrate may issue an arrest warrant  
21 for a felony offense upon the basis of a complaint by a person other than a law-enforcement officer or an  
22 animal control officer without prior authorization by the attorney for the Commonwealth or by a  
23 law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the alleged offense. The warrant shall (i) be directed to an  
24 appropriate officer or officers, (ii) name the accused or, if his name is unknown, set forth a description by  
25 which he can be identified with reasonable certainty, (iii) describe the offense charged with reasonable  
26 certainty, (iv) command that the accused be arrested and brought before a court of appropriate jurisdiction in  
27 the county, city or town in which the offense was allegedly committed, and (v) be signed by the issuing  
28 officer. If a warrant is issued for an offense in violation of any county, city, or town ordinance that is similar  
29 to any provision of this Code, the warrant shall reference the offense using both the citation corresponding to  
30 the county, city, or town ordinance and the specific provision of this Code. The warrant shall require the  
31 officer to whom it is directed to summon such witnesses as shall be therein named to appear and give  
32 evidence on the examination. But in a city or town having a police force, the warrant shall be directed "To  
33 any policeman, sheriff or his deputy sheriff of such city (or town)," and shall be executed by the policeman,  
34 sheriff or his deputy sheriff into whose hands it shall come or be delivered. A sheriff or his deputy may  
35 execute an arrest warrant throughout the county in which he serves and in any city or town surrounded  
36 thereby and effect an arrest in any city or town surrounded thereby as a result of a criminal act committed  
37 during the execution of such warrant. A jail officer as defined in § 53.1-1 employed at a regional jail or jail  
38 farm is authorized to execute a warrant of arrest upon an accused in his jail. The venue for the prosecution of  
39 such criminal act shall be the jurisdiction in which the offense occurred.40 Any complaint that accompanies a warrant issued pursuant to this section may be temporarily sealed for  
41 a specific period of time by the appropriate court upon application of the attorney for the Commonwealth for  
42 good cause shown in an ex parte hearing. Any individual arrested on or served with such warrant may move  
43 the appropriate court for the unsealing of such complaint. The burden of proof with respect to continued  
44 sealing shall be upon the Commonwealth.45 **§ 19.2-74. Issuance and service of summons in place of warrant in misdemeanor case; issuance of**  
46 **summons by special conservators of the peace.**47 A. 1. Whenever any person is detained by or is in the custody of an arresting officer for any violation  
48 committed in such officer's presence which offense is a violation of any county, city or town ordinance or of  
49 any provision of this Code punishable as a Class 1 or Class 2 misdemeanor or any other misdemeanor for  
50 which he may receive a jail sentence, except as otherwise provided in Title 46.2, or for offenses listed in  
51 subsection D of § 19.2-81, or an arrest on a warrant charging an offense for which a summons may be issued,  
52 and when specifically authorized by the judicial officer issuing the warrant, the arresting officer shall take the  
53 name and address of such person and issue a summons or otherwise notify him in writing to appear at a time  
54 and place to be specified in such summons or notice. Upon the giving by such person of his written promise  
55 to appear at such time and place, the officer shall forthwith release him from custody. However, if any such  
56 person shall fail or refuse to discontinue the unlawful act, the officer may proceed according to the provisions  
57  
58

INTRODUCED

HB1029

59 of § 19.2-82.

60 Anything in this section to the contrary notwithstanding, if any person is believed by the arresting officer  
61 to be likely to disregard a summons issued under the provisions of this subsection, or if any person is  
62 reasonably believed by the arresting officer to be likely to cause harm to himself or to any other person, a  
63 magistrate or other issuing authority having jurisdiction shall proceed according to the provisions of  
64 § 19.2-82.

65 2. Whenever any person is detained by or is in the custody of an arresting officer for a violation of any  
66 county, city, or town ordinance or of any provision of this Code, punishable as a Class 3 or Class 4  
67 misdemeanor or any other misdemeanor for which he cannot receive a jail sentence, except as otherwise  
68 provided in Title 46.2, or to the offense of public drunkenness as defined in § 18.2-388, the arresting officer  
69 shall take the name and address of such person and issue a summons or otherwise notify him in writing to  
70 appear at a time and place to be specified in such summons or notice. Upon the giving of such person of his  
71 written promise to appear at such time and place, the officer shall forthwith release him from custody.  
72 However, if any such person shall fail or refuse to discontinue the unlawful act, the officer may proceed  
73 according to the provisions of § 19.2-82.

74 3. Unless otherwise authorized by law, any person so summoned shall not be held in custody after the  
75 issuance of such summons for the purpose of complying with the requirements of Chapter 23 (§ 19.2-387 et  
76 seq.). Reports to the Central Criminal Records Exchange concerning such persons shall be made pursuant to  
77 subdivision A 2 of § 19.2-390 and subsection C of § 19.2-390.

78 Any person refusing to give such written promise to appear under the provisions of this section shall be  
79 taken immediately by the arresting or other police officer before a magistrate or other issuing authority  
80 having jurisdiction, who shall proceed according to provisions of § 19.2-82.

81 Any person who willfully violates his written promise to appear, given in accordance with this section,  
82 shall be treated in accordance with the provisions of § 19.2-128, regardless of the disposition of, and in  
83 addition to, the charge upon which he was originally arrested.

84 Any person charged with committing any violation of § 18.2-407 may be arrested and immediately  
85 brought before a magistrate who shall proceed as provided in § 19.2-82.

86 B. Conservators of the peace appointed under Chapter 2 (§ 19.2-12 et seq.) may issue summonses  
87 pursuant to this section, if such officers are in uniform or displaying a badge of office. On application, the  
88 chief law-enforcement officer of the county or city shall supply each officer with a supply of summons forms,  
89 for which such officer shall account pursuant to regulation of such chief law-enforcement officer.

90 C. The summons used by a law-enforcement officer pursuant to this section shall be in form the same as  
91 the uniform summons for motor vehicle law violations as prescribed pursuant to § 46.2-388. If the summons  
92 is issued for an offense in violation of any county, city, or town ordinance that is similar to any provision of  
93 this Code, the summons shall reference the offense using both the citation corresponding to the county, city,  
94 or town ordinance and the specific provision of this Code.

95 *D. Any complaint that accompanies any warrant or summons issued pursuant to this section may be  
96 temporarily sealed for a specific period of time by the appropriate court upon application of the attorney for  
97 the Commonwealth for good cause shown in an ex parte hearing. Any individual arrested on or served with  
98 such warrant or summons may move the appropriate court for the unsealing of such complaint. The burden  
99 of proof with respect to continued sealing shall be upon the Commonwealth.*

100 **§ 19.2-76. Execution and return of warrant, capias or summons; arrest outside county or city where  
101 charge is to be tried.**

102 A law-enforcement officer may execute within his jurisdiction a warrant, capias, or summons issued  
103 anywhere in the Commonwealth. A jail officer, as defined in § 53.1-1, employed at a regional jail or jail farm  
104 may execute upon a person being held in his jail a warrant, capias, or summons issued anywhere in the  
105 Commonwealth. A warrant or capias shall be executed by the arrest of the accused, and a summons shall be  
106 executed by delivering a copy to the accused personally.

107 If the accused is a corporation, partnership, unincorporated association, or legal entity other than an  
108 individual, a summons may be executed by service on the entity in the same manner as provided in Title 8.01  
109 for service of process on that entity in a civil proceeding. However, if the summons is served on the entity by  
110 delivery to a registered agent or to any other agent who is not an officer, director, managing agent, or  
111 employee of the entity, such agent shall not be personally subject to penalty for failure to appear as provided  
112 in § 19.2-128, nor shall the agent be subject to punishment for contempt for failure to appear under his  
113 summons as provided in § 19.2-129.

114 The law-enforcement officer or jail officer executing a warrant or capias shall endorse the date of  
115 execution thereon and make return thereof to a judicial officer. The law-enforcement officer executing a  
116 summons shall endorse the date of execution thereon and make return thereof to the court to which the  
117 summons is returnable.

118 Whenever a person is arrested upon a warrant or capias in a county or city other than that in which the  
119 charge is to be tried, the law-enforcement officer or jail officer making the arrest shall either (i) bring the  
120 accused forthwith before a judicial officer in the locality where the arrest was made or where the charge is to

121 be tried or (ii) commit the accused to the custody of an officer from the county or city where the charge is to  
122 be tried who shall bring the accused forthwith before a judicial officer in the county or city in which the  
123 charge is to be tried. The judicial officer before whom the accused is brought shall immediately conduct a  
124 bail hearing and either admit the accused to bail or commit him to jail for transfer forthwith to the county or  
125 city where the charge is to be tried.

126 *Any complaint that accompanies any warrant, summons, or capias issued pursuant to this section may be  
127 temporarily sealed for a specific period of time by the appropriate court upon application of the attorney for  
128 the Commonwealth for good cause shown in an ex parte hearing. Any individual arrested on or served with  
129 such warrant, summons, or capias may move the appropriate court for the unsealing of such complaint. The  
130 burden of proof with respect to continued sealing shall be upon the Commonwealth.*

131 **§ 19.2-76.2. Mailing of summons in certain cases.**

132 Notwithstanding the provisions of § 19.2-76, whenever a summons for a violation of a county, city, or  
133 town parking ordinance is served in any county, city, or town it may be executed by mailing by first-class  
134 mail a copy thereof to the address of the owner of the vehicle as shown on the records of the Department of  
135 Motor Vehicles. In addition, whenever a summons for a violation of a county, city, or town trash ordinance  
136 punishable as a misdemeanor under § 15.2-901 is served in any county, city, or town, it may be executed by  
137 mailing a copy by first-class mail to the person who occupies the subject premises. If the person fail to appear  
138 on the date of return set out in the summons mailed pursuant to this section, the summons shall be executed in  
139 the manner set out in § 19.2-76.3 of this Code.

140 No proceedings for contempt or arrest of a person summoned by mailing shall be instituted for his failure  
141 to appear on the return date of the summons.

142 *Any complaint that accompanies any summons issued pursuant to this section may be temporarily sealed  
143 for a specific period of time by the appropriate court upon application of the attorney for the Commonwealth  
144 for good cause shown in an ex parte hearing. Any individual arrested on or served with such summons may  
145 move the appropriate court for the unsealing of such complaint. The burden of proof with respect to  
146 continued sealing shall be upon the Commonwealth.*