

CHAPTER 525
Law Enforcement and Public Office

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CROSS REFERENCES

See sectional histories for similar State law
 Law enforcement officer defined - see GEN. OFF. 501.01(k)
 Misconduct at an emergency - see GEN. OFF. 509.05
 Making false alarms - see GEN. OFF. 509.07
 Personating an officer to defraud - see GEN. OFF. 545.16

525.01 DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Chapter:

(A) "Public official" means any elected or appointed officer, or employee, or agent of the State or any political subdivision thereof, whether in a temporary or permanent capacity, and including without limitation legislators, judges and law enforcement officers.

(B) "Public servant" means any of the following:

- (1) Any public official.
- (2) Any person performing ad hoc a governmental function, including without limitation a juror, member of a temporary commission, master, arbitrator, advisor or consultant.
- (3) A candidate for public office, whether or not he is elected or appointed to the office for which he is a candidate. A person is a candidate for purposes of this Subsection if he has been nominated according to law for

election or appointment to public office, or if he has filed a petition or petitions as required by law to have his name placed on the ballot in a primary, general or special election, or if he campaigns as a write-in candidate in any primary, general or special election.

(C) "Party official" means any person who holds an elective or appointive post in a political party in the United States or this State, by virtue of which he directs, conducts or participates in directing or conducting party affairs at any level of responsibility.

(D) "Official proceeding" means any proceeding before a legislative, judicial, administrative or other governmental agency or official authorized to take evidence under oath, and includes any proceeding before a referee, hearing examiner, commissioner, notary or other person taking testimony or a deposition in connection with an official proceeding.

(E) "Detention" means arrest, or confinement in any facility for custody of persons charged with or convicted of crime or alleged or found to be delinquent or unruly, or detention for extradition or deportation. Detention does not include supervision of probation or parole, nor constraint incidental to release on bail.

(F) "Detention facility" means any place used for the confinement of a person charged with or convicted of crime or alleged or found to be delinquent or unruly. (ORC 2921.01.)

525.02 FALSIFICATION.

(A) No person shall knowingly make a false statement, or knowingly swear or affirm the truth of a false statement previously made, when any of the following apply:

- (1) The statement is made in any official proceeding.
- (2) The statement is made with purpose to incriminate another.
- (3) The statement is made with purpose to mislead a public official in performing his official function.
- (4) The statement is made with purpose to secure the payment of worker's compensation, unemployment compensation, aid for aged, aid for the blind, aid for the permanently and totally disabled, aid to dependent children, general relief, retirement benefits or other benefits administered by a governmental agency or paid out of a public treasury.

- (5) The statement is made with purpose to secure the issuance by a governmental agency of a license, permit, authorization, certificate, registration or release.
- (6) The statement is sworn or affirmed before a notary public or other person empowered to administer oaths.
- (7) The statement is in writing on or in connection with a report or return which is required or authorized by law.
- (8) The statement is in writing, and is made with purpose to induce another to extend credit to or employ the offender, or to confer any degree, diploma, certificate of attainment, award of excellence or honor on the offender, or to extend to or bestow upon the offender any other valuable benefit or distinction, when the person to whom such statement is directed relies upon it to his detriment.

(B) It is no defense to a charge under Subsection (a)(4) hereof that the oath or affirmation was administered or taken in an irregular manner.

(C) Where contradictory statements relating to the same fact are made by the offender within the period of the statute of limitations for falsification, it is not necessary for the prosecution to prove which statement is false, but only that one or the other was false.

(D) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of falsification, a misdemeanor of the first degree. (ORC 2921.13.)

525.03 IMPERSONATION OF PEACE OFFICER OR PRIVATE POLICEMAN.

(A) As used in this Section:

- (1) "Peace officer" means a sheriff, deputy sheriff, marshal, deputy marshal, member of the organized police department of a municipal corporation or township constable who is employed by a political subdivision of this State, a State university law enforcement officer appointed under Ohio R.C. 3345.04, a member of a police force employee by a metropolitan housing authority under ORC 3735.31(D), an Ohio Veteran Home Policeman, appointed under ORC 5707.02, or a State highway patrolman and whose primary duties are to preserve the peace, to protect life and property and to enforce the laws, ordinances or regulations of the State or any of its political subdivisions.
- (2) "Private policeman" means any security guard, special policeman, private detective or other person who is privately employed in a police capacity.

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- (3) "Impersonate" means to act the part of, assume the identity of, wear the uniform or any part of the uniform of or display the identification of a particular person or of a member of a class of persons with purpose to make another person believe that the actor is that particular person or is a member of that class of persons.
- (B) No person shall impersonate a peace officer or a private policeman.
- (C) No person, by impersonating a peace officer or a private policeman, shall arrest or detain any person, search any person or search the property of any person.
- (D) No person, with purpose to commit or facilitate the commission of an offense, shall impersonate a peace officer, a private policeman or an officer, agent or employee of the State or the Municipality.
- (E) It is an affirmative defense to a charge under Subsection (B) hereof that the impersonation of the peace officer was for a lawful purpose.
- (F) Whoever violates Subsection (B) hereof is guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree. Whoever violates Subsections (c) or (d) hereof is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, provided that the purpose of a violation of Subsection (d) hereof is not to commit or facilitate the commission of a felony. (ORC 2921.51.)

525.04 COMPOUNDING A CRIME.

- (A) No person shall knowingly demand, accept or agree to accept anything of value in consideration of abandoning or agreeing to abandon a pending criminal prosecution.
- (B) It is an affirmative defense to a charge under this Section when both of the following apply:
- (1) The pending prosecution involved is for violation of Sections 545.05, 545.09 or 545.10(b)(2), or Ohio R.C. 2913.02, 2913.11 or 2913.21(B)(2), of which the actor under this Section was the victim.
 - (2) The thing of value demanded, accepted or agreed to be accepted, in consideration of abandoning or agreeing to abandon the prosecution, did not exceed an amount which the actor reasonably believed due him as restitution for the loss caused him by the offense.

(C) When a prosecuting witness abandons or agrees to abandon a prosecution under Subsection (b) hereof, such abandonment or agreement in no way binds the State or Municipality to abandoning the prosecution.

(D) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of compounding a crime, a misdemeanor of the first degree. (ORC 2921.21.)

525.05 REPORTING FELONY; MEDICAL PERSONNEL TO REPORT GUNSHOT, STABBING AND BURN INJURIES

(A) No person, knowing that a felony has been or is being committed, shall knowingly fail to report such information to law enforcement authorities.

(B) Except for conditions that are within the scope of subsection (E), no physician, limited practitioner, nurse or person giving aid to a sick or injured person, shall negligently fail to report to law enforcement authorities any gunshot or stab wound treated or observed by him, any serious physical harm to persons that he knows or has reasonable cause to believe resulted from an offense of violence.

(C) No person who discovers the body or acquires the first knowledge of the death of any person shall fail to report the death immediately to any physician whom the person knows to be treating the deceased for a condition from which death at such time would not be unexpected, or to a law enforcement officer, ambulance service, emergency squad or the County Coroner in the County in which the body is discovered, the death is believed to have occurred or knowledge concerning the death is obtained.

(D) No person shall fail to provide upon request of the person to whom he has made a report required by Subsection (C) hereof, or to any law enforcement officer who has reasonable cause to assert the authority to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death, any facts within his knowledge that may have a bearing on the investigation of the death.

- (E)(1) As used in this division, "burn injury" means any of the following:
- (a) Second or third degree burns;
 - (b) any burns to the upper respiratory tract of laryngeal edema due to the inhalation of super heated air;
 - (c) any burn injury or wound that may result in death;

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- (2) No physician, nurse, or limited practitioner who, outside a hospital, sanitarium, or other medical facility, attends or treats a person who has sustained a burn injury inflicted by an explosion or other incendiary device, or that shows evidence of having been inflicted in a violent, malicious or criminal manner, shall fail to report the burn injury immediately to the local law enforcement authorities.
 - (3) No manager, superintendent, or other person in charge of a hospital, sanitarium, or other medical facility in which a person is attended or treated for any burn injury inflicted by an explosion or other incendiary device, or that shows evidence of having been inflicted in a violent, malicious or criminal manner, shall fail to report the burn injury immediately to the local law enforcement authorities.
 - (4) No person who is required to report any burn injury under division (E)(2) or (3) of this section shall fail to file, within three working days after attending or treating the victim, a written report of the burn injury with the office of the state fire marshal. The report shall be made on a form provided by the state fire marshal.
 - (5) Anyone participating in the making of reports under division (E) of this section or anyone participating in a judicial proceeding resulting from the reports shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability that otherwise might be incurred or imposed as a result of such actions. Notwithstanding section 4731.22 of the Ohio Revised Code, the physician-patient relationship is not a ground for excluding evidence regarding a person's burn injury or the cause of the burn injury in any judicial proceeding resulting from a report submitted pursuant to division (E) of this Section.
- (F) Subsection (A) or (D) hereof does not require disclosure of information, when any of the following applies:
- (1) The information is privileged by reason of the relationship between attorney and client, doctor and patient, licensed psychologist or licensed school psychologist and client, clergyman or rabbi or minister or priest and any person communicating information confidentially to him, for a religious counseling purpose in this professional character, or husband and wife.

- (2) The information would tend to incriminate a member of the actor immediate family.
 - (3) Disclosure of the information would amount to revealing a news source privileged under Ohio R.C. 2739.04 or 2739.12.
 - (4) Disclosure of the information would amount to disclosure by an ordained clergyman of an organized religious body of confidential communication made to him in his capacity as such by a person seeking his aid or counsel.
 - (5) Disclosure would amount to revealing information acquired by the actor in the course of his duties in connection with a bona fide program of treatment or services for drug dependent persons or persons in danger of drug dependence, which program is maintained or conducted by a hospital, clinic, person, agency or organization registered pursuant to Ohio R.C. 5122.51.
 - (6) Disclosure would amount to revealing information acquired by the actor in the course of his duties in connection with a bona fide program for providing counseling services to victims of crimes that are violations of Ohio R.C. 2907.02, 2907.05 or 2907.12. As used in this division "counseling services" includes services provided in an informal setting by a person who, by education or experience, is competent to provide such services.
- (G) No disclosure of information pursuant to this Section gives rise to any liability or recrimination for a breach of privilege or confidence.
- (H) Whoever violates Subsection (A) or (B) hereof is guilty of failure to report a crime. Violation of Subsection (A) hereof is a misdemeanor of the fourth degree. Violation of Subsection (B) hereof is a misdemeanor of the second degree.
- (I) Whoever violates Subsection (C) or (D) hereof is guilty of failure to report knowledge of a death, a misdemeanor of the fourth degree. (ORC 2921.22.)
- (J) (1) Whoever negligently violates subsection (E) hereof is guilty of a minor misdemeanor.
- (2) Whoever knowingly violates subsection (E) hereof is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree. (ORC 2921.22)

525.06 FAILURE TO AID A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.

(A) No person shall negligently fail or refuse to aid a law enforcement officer, when called upon for assistance in preventing or halting the commission of an offense, or in apprehending or detaining an offender, when such aid can be given without a substantial risk of physical harm to the person giving it.

(B) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of failure to aid a law enforcement officer, a minor misdemeanor. (ORC 2921.23.)

525.07 OBSTRUCTING OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

(A) No person, without privilege to do so and with purpose to prevent, obstruct or delay the performance by a public official of any authorized act within his official capacity, shall do any act which hampers or impedes a public official in the performance of his lawful duties.

(B) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of obstructing official business, a misdemeanor of the second degree.
(ORC 2921.31.)

525.08 OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE.

(A) No person, with purpose to hinder the discovery, apprehension, prosecution, conviction or punishment of another for a misdemeanor, or to assist another to benefit from the commission of a misdemeanor, shall do any of the following:

- (1) Harbor or conceal such other person.
- (2) Provide such other person with money, transportation, a weapon, a disguise or other means of avoiding discovery or apprehension.
- (3) Warn such other person of impending discovery or apprehension.
- (4) Destroy or conceal physical evidence of the misdemeanor, or induce any person to withhold testimony or information or to elude legal process summoning him to testify or supply evidence.
- (5) Communicate false information to any person.

(b) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of obstructing justice, a misdemeanor of the first degree. (ORC 2921.32.)

525.09 RESISTING ARREST.

(A) No person, recklessly or by force, shall resist or interfere with a lawful arrest of himself or another.

(B) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of resisting arrest, a misdemeanor of the second degree. (ORC 2921.33.)

525.10 HAVING AN UNLAWFUL INTEREST IN A PUBLIC CONTRACT.

(A) No public official shall knowingly do any of the following:

- (1) During his term of office or within one (1) year thereafter, occupy any position of profit in the prosecution of a public contract authorized by him or by a legislative body, commission or board of which he was a member at the time of authorization and not let by competitive bidding, or let by competitive bidding in which his is not the lowest and best bid.
- (2) Have an interest in the profits or benefits of a public contract entered into by or for the use of the Municipality or governmental agency or instrumentality with which he is connected.
- (3) Have an interest in the profits or benefits of a public contract which is not let by competitive bidding when required by law, and which involves more than One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00).

(B) In the absence of bribery or a purpose to defraud, a public servant, member his family or any of his associates shall not be considered as having an interest in a public contract when all of the following apply:

- (1) The interest of such person is limited to owning or controlling shares of the corporation, or being a creditor of the corporation or other organization, which is the contractor on the public contract involved, or which is the issuer of the security in which public funds are invested.
- (2) The shares owned or controlled by such person do not exceed five (5) percent of the outstanding shares of the corporation, and the amount due such person as creditor does not exceed five (5) percent of the total indebtedness of the corporation or other organization.

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- (3) Such person, prior to the time the public contract is entered into, files with the Municipality or governmental agency or instrumentality involved, an affidavit giving his exact status in connection with the corporation or other organization.

(C) This Section does not apply to a public contract in which a public servant, member of his family, or one of his business associates, has an interest, when all of the following apply:

- (1) The subject of the public contract is necessary supplies or services for the Municipality or governmental agency or instrumentality involved.
- (2) The supplies or services are unobtainable elsewhere for the same or lower cost, or are being furnished to the Municipality or governmental agency or instrumentality as part of a continuing course of dealing established prior to the public servant's becoming associated with the Municipality or governmental agency or instrumentality involved.
- (3) The treatment accorded the Municipality or governmental agency or instrumentality is either preferential to or the same as that accorded other customers or clients in similar transactions.
- (4) The entire transaction is conducted at arm's length, with full knowledge by the Municipality or governmental agency or instrumentality involved, of the interest of the public servant, and the public servant takes no part in the deliberations or decisions of the Municipality or governmental agency or instrumentality with respect to the public contract.

(D) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of having an unlawful interest in a public contract. Violation of this Section is a misdemeanor of the first degree.

(E) As used in this Section, "public contract" means any of the following:

- (1) The purchase or acquisition, or a contract for the purchase or acquisition of property or services by or for the use of the State or any of its political subdivisions, or any agency or instrumentality of either.
- (2) A contract for the design, construction, alteration, repair or maintenance of any public property. (ORC 2921.42.)

525.11 SOLICITING OR RECEIVING IMPROPER COMPENSATION.

(A) No public servant shall knowingly do either of the following:

- (1) Solicit or receive any compensation or fee other than as allowed by law, to perform his official duties.
- (2) Solicit or receive greater fees or costs than are allowed by law to perform his official duties.

(B) No public servant for his own personal use and no person for his own personal use or for the personal use of a public servant or party official, shall solicit or accept anything of value in consideration of either of the following:

- (1) Appointing or securing, maintaining or renewing the appointment of any person to any public office, employment or agency.
- (2) Preferring or maintaining the status of any public employee with respect to his compensation, duties, placement, location, promotion or other material aspects of his employment.

(C) No person for the benefit of a political party or a campaign committee, as defined in Ohio R.C. 3517.01 shall coerce any contribution, as defined in Ohio R.C. 3517.01, in consideration of either of the following:

- (1) Appointing or securing, maintaining or renewing the appointment of any person to any public office, employment or agency.
- (2) Preferring or maintaining the status of, any public employee with respect to his compensation, duties, placement, location, promotion or other material aspects of his employment.

(D) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of soliciting improper compensation, a misdemeanor of the first degree.

(E) A public servant who is convicted of a violation of this Section is disqualified from holding any public office, employment or position of trust in this State for a period of seven (7) years from the date of conviction.

(F) Nothing in Subsections (b) or (c) hereof shall prohibit any person from voluntarily contributing to such public servant, party official, political party, campaign committee or political committee. (ORC 2921.43.)

525.12 DERELICTION OF DUTY.

(A) No law enforcement officer shall negligently do any of the following:

- (1) Fail to serve a lawful warrant without delay.
- (2) Fail to prevent or halt the commission of an offense or to apprehend an offender, when it is in his power to do so alone or with available assistance.

(B) No law enforcement, ministerial or judicial officer shall negligently fail to perform a lawful duty in a criminal case or proceeding.

(C) No officer, having charge of a detention facility, shall negligently do any of the following:

- (1) Allow the detention facility to become littered or unsanitary.
- (2) Fail to provide persons confined in the detention facility with adequate food, clothing, bedding, shelter and medical attention.
- (3) Fail to control an unruly prisoner, or to prevent intimidation of or physical harm to a prisoner by another.
- (4) Allow a prisoner to escape.
- (5) Fail to observe any lawful and reasonable regulation for the management of the detention facility.

(D) No public official of the Municipality shall recklessly create a deficiency, incur a liability or expend a greater sum than is appropriated by the legislative authority of the Municipality for the use in any one (1) year of the department, agency or institution with which the public official is connected.

(E) No public servant shall recklessly fail to perform a duty expressly imposed by law with respect to his office, or recklessly do any act expressly forbidden by law with respect to his office.

(F) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of dereliction of duty, a misdemeanor of the second degree.
(ORC 2921.44.)

525.13 INTERFERING WITH CIVIL RIGHTS.

(A) No public servant, under color of his office, employment or authority, shall knowingly deprive, or conspire or attempt to deprive any person of a constitutional or statutory right.

(B) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of interfering with civil rights, a misdemeanor of the first degree.
(ORC 2921.45.)

**525.14 UNAUTHORIZED DISPLAY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
EMBLEMS ON MOTOR VEHICLES.**

(A) No person who is not entitled to do so shall knowingly display on a motor vehicle the emblem of a law enforcement agency or an organization of law enforcement officers.

(B) Whoever violates this Section is guilty of the unlawful display of the emblem of a law enforcement agency or an organization of law enforcement officers, a minor misdemeanor.
(ORC 2913.441.)

525.99 PENALTY.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: See Section 501.99 for penalties applicable to any misdemeanor classification.)