

§ 19.2-201. Officers to give information of violation of penal laws to attorney for Commonwealth

A. As used in this section, "chief law-enforcement officer" means the Superintendent of State Police; any chief of police or sheriff responsible for law enforcement in the jurisdiction served by him; the head of any private police department that has been designated as a criminal justice agency by the Department of Criminal Justice Services as defined by § 9.1-101; the chief of any campus police department established pursuant to §§ 23.1-809 and 23.1-810; the chief of the Lynchburg Regional Airport police department established pursuant to § 15.2-1123.1; or director or chief executive of any agency or department employing law-enforcement officers as defined in § 9.1-101.

B. Every commissioner of the revenue, sheriff, constable or other officer shall promptly give information of the violation of any penal law to the attorney for the Commonwealth, who shall forthwith institute and prosecute all necessary and proper proceedings in such case, whether in the name of the Commonwealth or of a county or corporation, and may in such case issue or cause to be issued a summons for any witnesses he may deem material to give evidence before the court or grand jury. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, no attorney for the Commonwealth shall go before any grand jury except when duly sworn to testify as a witness, but he may advise the foreman of a regular grand jury or any member or members thereof in relation to the discharge of their duties.

C. Every chief law-enforcement officer shall provide to the attorney for the Commonwealth access to all records, including police reports, disciplinary records, and internal affairs investigations, relating to wrongful arrest or use of force complaints, or other complaints that a person has been deprived of the rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the laws of the United States and the Commonwealth made against a law-enforcement officer who is employed by the chief law-enforcement officer's agency. Access shall be granted to the attorney for the Commonwealth to such records whenever a law-enforcement officer is a potential witness in a pending criminal matter or criminal investigation related to the performance of his duties as a law enforcement officer.

The chief law-enforcement officer may redact any statements made by a law-enforcement officer employed by his agency or department during an internal affairs investigation that may incriminate such law-enforcement officer or be otherwise used to prosecute such law-enforcement officer. Any redactions made by the chief law-enforcement officer may be challenged by the attorney for the Commonwealth in an ex parte hearing before a circuit court judge.

Any information protected by the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act shall not be disclosed pursuant to this subsection.

Code 1950, § 19.1-156; 1960, c. 366; 1975, c. 495; 2020, Sp. Sess. I, c. 37.

The chapters of the acts of assembly referenced in the historical citation at the end of this

section(s) may not constitute a comprehensive list of such chapters and may exclude chapters whose provisions have expired.