



2026 Acts Affecting Criminal Justice and Public Safety

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Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts and special acts) significantly affecting criminal justice and public safety enacted during the 2026 regular legislative session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting First Responders, are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the [General Assembly's website](#) or the Connecticut State Library.

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Controlled Substances and Other Regulated Products

Business Posing Immediate Threat to Public Health and Safety

Existing law allows municipalities to take certain actions if a business poses an “immediate threat to public health and safety.” They may prohibit the business from operating in the municipality and seek a court order directing the municipality’s chief law enforcement officer to take possession and control of any related merchandise from the business, including any cannabis, cannabis product, cigarette, tobacco, or tobacco product; any merchandise associated with those items; and any proceeds from them. A new law additionally allows the court to direct the officer to summarily close the business and seal the premises. It also broadens the circumstances under which a municipality may prohibit a business from operating ([PA 26-8](#), § 53, effective October 1, 2026).

E-Cigarette Dealer Registrations

A provision in a new law expands the requirements for e-cigarette dealer registrations and the circumstances in which the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) may deny a registration, including limiting new registrations submitted on or after January 1, 2027, so that there is only one dealer for every 2,500 residents of a town. The new law also authorizes the DCP commissioner to impose a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 for each electronic nicotine delivery system or vapor product sold in violation of the registration law and requires them to be deemed a common nuisance, and subjects them to police seizure ([PA 26-100](#), § 33, effective January 1, 2027).

Statewide Cannabis, Hemp, and Controlled Substances Enforcement Board

This session, the legislature renamed the “Statewide Cannabis and Hemp Enforcement Policy Board” as the “Statewide Cannabis, Hemp, and Controlled Substances Enforcement Board.” It correspondingly expanded the purposes of the board’s quarterly meetings to include identifying areas of need and enforcement opportunities for controlled substance sales and examining developments in national trends and best practices for controlled substance enforcement. The new law also allows the board to discuss areas of need and enforcement opportunities about illegal cannabis and controlled substance sales in an executive session, which are exempt from Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) disclosure ([PA 26-8](#), § 13, as amended by [PA 26-100](#), § 48, both effective October 1, 2026).

THC Levels

Prior law prohibited cannabis establishments from selling to consumers (1) cannabis plant material (other than the flower) with a total THC concentration over 35% on a dry-weight basis or (2) cannabis products (including concentrates) with a total THC concentration over 70% on a dry-weight

basis. A new law eliminates these THC caps for the other cannabis plant material and concentrates. It also allows edible cannabis products to have a variance in THC reflecting testing method uncertainty of up to +/- 10% of existing law's five milligram limit ([PA 26-8](#), § 79, as amended by [PA 26-100](#), § 54, both effective October 1, 2026).

Crimes and Penalties

Beverage Container Redemption Violations

This year, the legislature passed a new law increasing the beverage container redemption law's (bottle bill) fine ranges, for first, second, and third or subsequent offenses respectively, from \$50 to \$100, \$100 to \$200, and \$250 to \$500; to \$500 to \$750, \$750 to \$1,000, and \$2,000 or more. It also makes someone who violates the law three or more times guilty of a class A misdemeanor, which is generally punishable by up to 364 days in prison, a fine of up to \$2,000, or both.

Additionally, another new law prohibits willfully collecting or charging a refund value on beverage containers not purchased in Connecticut and make violations a class A misdemeanor, class B misdemeanor (punishable by up to six months in prison, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both), or class D felony (punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$5,000, or both) depending on the volume of containers involved ([PA 26-2](#), §§ 1 & 3, effective March 3, 2026, and [PA 26-148](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2026).

Election-Related Crimes

New legislation establishes several new criminal penalties related to elections. Specifically, the act makes it a class C felony (punishable by 1 to 10 years in prison, up to a \$10,000 fine, or both) for law enforcement to knowingly be within 250 feet of an elections site, with certain exceptions, or being within this perimeter to check voter qualifications. Those that violate these provisions must also be disenfranchised. Additionally, the act generally prohibits anyone from wearing a mask or covering within 250 feet of an elections site that obscures the person's face, head, or identity, and makes a violation a class D felony (punishable by up to five years in prison, up to a \$5,000 fine, or both).

The act also (1) extends existing penalties and relief for harassing a specific set of election workers so that they also apply to harassing assistant municipal clerks; (2) penalizes sharing voting tabulators or tabulator parts with unauthorized third parties; and (3) criminalizes tampering with absentee ballot drop boxes and related ballots ([PA 26-42](#), §§ 57-60, as amended by [PA 26-76](#), § 36, both effective July 1, 2026).

Female Genital Mutilation

A new law makes it a class D felony to perform female genital mutilation (FGM) on a minor. By law, a class D felony is punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$5,000, or both. It sets certain procedures and rules for a child FGM victims' testimony in these cases. The act also allows a child FGM victim to sue the person who performed FGM on her (including the victim's parent, when applicable) to recover compensatory or punitive damages or other relief the court considers appropriate. The victim may bring the lawsuit at any time until her 48th birthday ([PA 26-5](#), effective October 1, 2026, and the civil statute of limitations applies to cases filed on or after that date).

Gaming Penalties

New legislation expands the crime of cheating to include when a person, to gain an advantage for himself, herself, or another person:

1. intentionally attempts to change the results of a sports wager's outcome through a promise or offer of an advantage or benefit to another person or
2. solicits or accepts for himself, herself, or another person an advantage, benefit, or the promise or offer of one, with intent to change the results of a sports wager's outcome.

In both circumstances, the wager or the conduct must occur in Connecticut. The act makes this, as with most other forms of cheating, a class D felony (punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$5,000, or both).

This new legislation also specifies that the prohibition against allowing an underage person to open an account or place wagers applies to online casino gaming and online sports wagering. By law, a violation in a class C misdemeanor (punishable by up to three months in prison, a fine of up to \$500, or both) ([PA 26-82](#), §§ 2 & 3, effective upon passage, except the cheating provision takes effect October 1, 2026).

Hate Crimes Consolidation

A new law generally consolidates the various classes that existing law protects against crimes motivated by bias (for example, race, disability, or sexual orientation) into one protected social category for hate crimes. It also labels as specific hate crimes (1) certain crimes under prior law that were penalized as a hate crime if based on bigotry or bias, (2) crimes with enhanced penalties if motivated by bias, and (3) certain discriminatory practices under prior law. The act also allows the court to require a hate crime offender to participate in (1) a pretrial hate crimes diversion program as part of accelerated rehabilitation and (2) certain anti-bias programs as a condition of probation or conditional discharge.

The new law also extends the attorney general's authority to investigate hate crimes, take legal action, and seek relief to apply to all hate crimes under the act. It similarly expands the Hate Crimes Investigative Unit's duties to cover all hate crimes under the legislation. Lastly, it requires the Connecticut Sentencing Commission, in consultation with the State-Wide Hate Crimes Advisory Council, to review the state's hate crime laws to determine the appropriateness of the penalties and to report their findings and recommendations to the Judiciary Committee by January 1, 2027 ([PA 26-77](#), generally effective October 1, 2026).

Home Solicitation Sales Violations

New legislation reduces the penalty for violating the Home Solicitation Sales Act (HSSA) from a class C misdemeanor (punishable by up to three months in prison, a fine of up to \$500, or both) to a civil penalty of up to \$500 per violation. It also has numerous provisions about sellers of residential solar photovoltaic or energy storage systems and subjects certain conduct by them to HSSA and its penalties ([PA 26-16](#), generally effective October 1, 2026).

Intentional Damage to Tangible Property

A new law expands the crimes of 1st and 2nd degree criminal mischief to include intentionally damaging certain tangible property of others, including public services and systems (such as utilities, transportation, communications, emergency response, and other state and municipal systems). Under existing law and the new law, both crimes require the person to have acted with no reasonable grounds to believe he or she had the right to do so. By law, 1st degree criminal mischief is a class D felony (punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$5,000, or both) and 2nd degree criminal mischief is a class A misdemeanor (punishable by up to 364 days in prison, a fine of up to \$2,000, or both) ([PA 26-100](#), §§ 63 & 64, effective October 1, 2026).

New Larceny Crimes

Two acts this session add three types of larceny to the general statutes. The new types are as follows:

1. digital defrauding, which is when someone creates and disseminates a visual representation or audio recording of another person when he or she knows or should have known that it is a digitally forged likeness, with the intent to financially injure that person;
2. fostering the sale of stolen property, which is generally when someone hosts, advertises, or helps sell stolen property, including online, when knowing or believing that the property was stolen; and
3. gift card crime, which is when someone, with intent to defraud (a) acquires or retains possession of a gift card or gift card redemption information without the card holder's,

issuer's, or seller's consent; (b) alters or tampers with a gift card or its packaging; or (c) devises a scheme to get a gift card or gift card information from a card holder, issuer, or seller through false or fraudulent means.

By law, the punishment for larceny depends on the value of the property taken ([PA 26-119](#) and [PA 26-130](#), § 2, both effective October 1, 2026).

Organized Retail Theft and Shoplifting

This session, the legislature (1) expanded the crime of organized retail theft by lengthening the time period, from 180 to 365 days, within which a person must reach the crime's \$2,000 threshold and (2) specified that someone is guilty of being an accessory to this crime by using certain online and electronic tools to receive, control, and dispose of the stolen property. In the same new law, it increased the maximum civil liability for punitive damages, from \$300 to \$1,000, for shoplifting certain goods or merchandise from a store or agricultural produce from real property ([PA 26-130](#), §§ 1 & 3, effective October 1, 2026).

Peace Officer Masking and Identification

Subject to certain exceptions, a new law (1) prohibits peace officers from wearing a facial covering or personal disguise when interacting with the public as part of their duties and (2) requires them to clearly identify themselves with a badge and name tag on their uniform when making a planned arrest or interacting with the public as part of official duties when authorized to make arrests. A violation of these provisions is a class D misdemeanor (punishable by up to 30 days in prison, a fine of up to \$250, or both) ([PA 26-14](#), § 6, effective upon passage).

Registration of Smaller Air Navigation Facilities

New legislation statutorily establishes a registration process for smaller air navigation facilities (such as airports and heliports) by (1) explicitly authorizing the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) to register facilities at which 36 or less combined aircraft landings and takeoffs are annually expected and (2) requiring that these facilities be registered with CAA before they are used or operated. (As under existing law, facilities above this threshold are subject to CAA's licensing procedure.)

The new legislation (1) makes it a class C misdemeanor (punishable by up to three months in prison, a fine of up to \$500, or both) to operate a facility in violation of the registration requirement and (2) applies this penalty to existing law's prohibition on operating a larger facility without CAA first approving and licensing it. It also increases the air navigation facility licensure and renewal fees from \$150 to \$300 ([PA 26-130](#), § 5, effective October 1, 2026).

Special Act Zoning Regulation Enforcement

This session, the legislature authorized municipalities that exercise zoning authority under a special act to enforce their regulations in the same way as municipalities that statutorily exercise zoning authority. These means of enforcement include, among others, asking the court (1) for an injunction; (2) to impose criminal penalties, including imprisonment; or (3) to impose a civil penalty of up to \$2,500 ([PA 26-9](#), effective October 1, 2026).

Striped Bass Fishing Violations

A new law (1) limits striped bass fishing to catch and release between December 1 and March 31 and (2) makes it an infraction to violate any regulation on striped bass taking. It imposes a fine of \$150 for a first offense, \$350 for a second offense, and \$500 for subsequent offenses. People fined must generally follow the law's procedure for infractions, but if a municipal law enforcement officer issues an infraction in Derby, Milford, Orange, Shelton, or Stratford, the fine is paid to the municipality where the infraction occurred ([PA 26-101](#), §§ 1 & 2, effective upon passage, except the catch and release fishing limitation is effective October 1, 2026).

Unlawful Dissemination of a Synthetically Created Intimate Image

In 2025, the legislature made it a crime to intentionally disseminate a synthetically created intimate image under certain circumstances. This session, the legislature (1) created a civil cause of action for someone harmed by the unlawful dissemination of such an image and (2) required covered platforms to have a process by which someone can have these images removed. Under the new legislation, the attorney general may sue platforms that fail to timely remove the images, including for civil penalties ([PA 26-55](#), effective October 1, 2026).

Unlicensed Health Facility Penalties

A new law imposes civil and criminal penalties for anyone who opens, manages, or operates a health care facility without a required Department of Public Health (DPH) license (or certificate for nursing facility management services). It authorizes a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 per day for this activity, and also generally makes it a class C misdemeanor (punishable by up to three months in prison) with a maximum \$2,000 daily fine. But the criminal penalty does not apply to (1) an institution that applied to renew its license within 60 days after the license lapsed, even if the application was incomplete when submitted, or (2) a regulated financial institution taking ownership of a facility after a foreclosure when the operator continues to occupy it ([PA 26-68](#), §§ 183 & 184, as amended by [PA 26-76](#), §§ 77 & 78, both effective October 1, 2026).

Wildfire-Related Violations

This year, the legislature passed a law to modify wildfire management practices in the state. Among other things, the law increases the range of criminal fines available for violating woodland and brushland closure and open-air fire restrictions following a gubernatorial proclamation, from between \$5 and \$100 to between \$500 and \$1,000 ([PA 26-124](#), § 14, effective October 1, 2026).

Criminal Procedure

Blood and Urine Test Results Timing

A new law eliminates a requirement that blood or urine test results be delivered to defendants within a certain timeframe for the tests to be admitted as evidence in court for driving under the influence, impaired boating, or impaired hunting prosecutions. Existing law sets several conditions that generally must be met to admit into evidence breath, blood, or urine tests indicating the amount of alcohol or drugs in a defendant's system. Under prior law, one condition was for a true copy of the test result report to be mailed or personally delivered to the defendant within 24 hours or by the end of the next regular business day after the result was known, whichever was later. The act narrows this condition to only apply to chemical tests of the defendant's breath ([PA 26-45](#), §§ 2 & 3, effective October 1, 2026).

Civil Offense Custody Actions

The legislature passed restrictions on peace officers detaining, arresting, or taking people into custody based on a civil offense in certain locations, including at state or municipal facilities (buildings the government owns, leases, occupies, controls, or uses for business), schools, hospitals and urgent care centers, places of worship, playgrounds, social service establishments, cemeteries, and places of disaster or emergency response. To do so, a peace officer must be acting in his or her official capacity and have a judicial warrant for the individual. This restriction applies to the facilities' or locations' buildings, their grounds, and garages or parking lots that are used as part of their operation ([PA 26-14](#), § 7, effective October 1, 2026).

DNA Collection From Offenders

New legislation makes several changes to the law mandating DNA collection from offenders convicted of felonies, criminal offenses against minors, non-violent sexual crimes, or sexually violent crimes. For those who have (1) been sentenced to the custody of the Department of Correction (DOC) and (2) not had a blood or other biological sample taken after they were arrested, prior law required they provide a sample of sufficient quality for DNA analysis before being released from custody. The act instead requires that this sampling be done within six months after

sentencing. It imposes similar six-month requirements for samples taken from certain other offenders convicted of these crimes ([PA 26-45](#), § 4, effective October 1, 2026).

Relatedly, the act requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) commissioner to study “lawfully owed DNA,” which is a DNA sample obtained under the above collection-mandate law and report to the legislature, with any recommendations, by July 1, 2027 ([PA 26-45](#), § 5, effective July 1, 2026).

Electronic Notice to Bail Bond Agents

A provision in the annual court operations act allows the notice the court gives about a bond forfeiture to a bond’s surety, including an insurer, about an arrestee’s failure to appear in court to be sent electronically, instead of only in writing ([PA 26-92](#), §§ 26 & 27, effective October 1, 2026).

Inspector General Use of Force Investigations

A new law changes when the inspector general must investigate a peace officer’s use of physical force on someone that results in the person’s death or the death of a person in custody by (1) limiting the investigations to deaths that occur in physical custody and (2) requiring an investigation when the officer is any federal law enforcement officer. By law, the inspector general must prosecute cases involving unjustifiable use of force. Similarly, it limits these use of force investigations to deaths occurring in DOC’s physical custody, rather than any custody (such as the legal custody of someone on parole).

Among other things, the new law also (1) requires investigators to have unrestricted access to the scene and to collect evidence and the inspector general’s post-investigation report to recommend actions for the law enforcement agency involved and (2) allows the inspector general to issue a report on the death of someone in DOC’s physical custody, which may include recommended actions for DOC to take ([PA 26-14](#), §§ 3-5, effective upon passage).

Post-Conviction DNA Evidence Testing

New legislation expands the time frame in which someone sentenced to prison may file a post-conviction petition for DNA testing of evidence, allowing this not just while the person is incarcerated but also while on probation or parole or otherwise under correctional jurisdiction or supervision after the prison term has ended. It also codifies existing practice by specifying that the denial of this kind of petition is a final judgment that can be appealed ([PA 26-130](#), § 8, effective October 1, 2026).

Pretrial Diversionary Program for People With Psychiatric Disabilities and Certain Veterans

State law provides a supervised diversionary program for people with psychiatric disabilities and veterans with mental health conditions who are accused of nonserious crimes. To participate in the program, a prospective participant must have his or her mental health condition assessed and a provision in the annual court operations act requires that if the applicant lives outside of Connecticut, he or she must return to the state for the assessment. The act also requires, for supervision and monitoring purposes, program participants to be classified based on the level of risk they pose to the community ([PA 26-92](#), § 12, effective October 1, 2026).

Sex Offender Registration

New legislation makes various changes to laws on sex offender registration, including those on address verification and registration violations. Regarding address verification requirements, the new law creates a requirement for (1) registrants to submit proof of residency to DESPP within at least 75 days and up to a maximum of 90 days after the initial registration date and (2) DESPP to mail the address verification form only to registrants who fail to timely submit the residency proof. It applies these same requirements to subsequent address verifications which, by law, are required every 90 days.

For those prosecuted for noncompliance with the registration requirements, the new legislation creates an affirmative defense that (1) circumstances beyond the person's control prevented compliance; (2) the person did not create the circumstances; and (3) the person became compliant within 20 business days after the circumstances ended ([PA 26-96](#), effective October 1, 2026).

Victim Notification and Statement

A new law requires (1) the court to allow crime victims to make a statement for the record before any proceedings to dismiss or nolle (prosecutor chooses to not prosecute) a charge for specified offenses (certain sexual assault crimes, for example) and (2) prosecutors to notify victims before sentencing or a plea agreement if the victim gives their up-to-date contact information, instead of a stamped, self-addressed postcard ([PA 26-130](#), § 9, effective January 1, 2027).

Victim Services' Payments

A provision in the annual court operations act expands the circumstances under which crime victims may be compensated for personal injury, including emotional harm. Previously, eligible "emotional harm" was mental or emotional impairment directly attributed to a threat of physical injury or death. Under the act, it also includes impairment from intentional or knowing actions that

would reasonably cause someone to fear for their safety ([PA 26-92](#), § 20, effective October 1, 2026).

Department of Correction

Absentee Ballot Application Assistance

By law, anyone helping a voter complete their absentee ballot application must sign it and print their name, residential address, and telephone number on it. Additionally, there are procedures for DOC employees to distribute, collect, and return absentee ballot applications for incarcerated voters who have voting rights. A new law specifies that DOC employees who help these voters with their applications must instead provide the employing facility's address and telephone number instead of their own ([PA 26-42](#), § 4, effective upon passage).

Confidential Crisis Hotline

This session the legislature passed a requirement for the DOC commissioner, by October 1, 2026, to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for a confidential crisis hotline so that correction officers and incarcerated people can report incidents of sexual violence. The RFP's results must be reported, along with any appropriations request, to the Appropriations, Government Oversight, and Judiciary committees by January 1, 2027.

Additionally, the commissioner must revise DOC's policy on using confidential crisis hotlines to report these violence incidents and post it on the department's website by December 1, 2026. The policy must ensure free access to the hotline and that it is confidential, without being supervised by or needing permission from a DOC employee to use it ([PA 26-70](#), §§ 12 & 13, effective July 1, 2026, for the RFP, and October 1, 2026, for the policy revision).

Correction Ombuds Investigations

A new law makes several changes to the correction ombuds' investigation process and related matters. For example, it (1) removes the condition that incarcerated people must have pursued an internal grievance procedure before the ombuds may discuss an incident with them and (2) allows the ombuds to use state-issued cell phones while performing official duties at correctional facilities. In cases where the ombuds determines that a complaint investigation is unwarranted, the new law exempts the complaint and the ombuds' written decision not to investigate from FOIA and prohibits them from being disclosed without the complainant's consent. It also requires the ombuds to annually report on how many complaints he did not investigate and a summary of the reasons why for each one ([PA 26-40](#), § 1, as amended by [PA 26-130](#), § 17, both effective upon passage).

Health Care for Incarcerated Individuals

The legislature passed several measures aimed at improving health care for people incarcerated in DOC facilities. For example, the new laws require DOC to:

1. provide health care to incarcerated people for free and cancel any outstanding fees or other costs;
2. implement an electronic health records system (within available bond authorizations) that allows for care requests to be made electronically;
3. take steps to ensure continuity of medications upon a person's intake; and
4. along with a new Correction Medical and Health Commission, (a) publish a quarterly scorecard with medical staffing-related information and (b) develop a health services staffing shortage contingency plan for each correctional facility.

Among other things, the acts also:

1. require certain pre-sentence investigation reports to include an appendix about the defendant's medical and prescription history;
2. require the correction ombuds to hire a correction mental health care clinician to help incarcerated people with things like service access and medication management;
3. authorize DOC to arrange for breast cancer screening, diagnostic, and treatment services for women in DOC custody at licensed health care institutions that are closer to the correctional facility than the UConn Health Center; and
4. create a program for student loan reimbursement grants, within available bond authorizations, to nurses and certain social workers who work at DOC facilities ([PA 26-40](#), as amended by [PA 26-130](#), §§ 6, 7 & 17; [PA 26-76](#), § 60; and [PA 26-117](#); various effective dates).

Inmate Trust Fund Account Balance Disbursement

A provision in the annual court operations act requires DOC to disburse the remaining balance in a person's Inmate Trust Fund account upon the person's release or by mail within two weeks after the release if it did not have enough notice of the release date ([PA 26-92](#), § 32, effective July 1, 2026).

Prison Rape Elimination Standard

A new law requires the state's executive branch agencies and political subdivisions that incarcerate or detain adult or juvenile offenders to, within available appropriations, comply with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) in effect as of January 1, 2024. Prior law required them to,

within available appropriations, adopt and comply with the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission's recommended standards to prevent, detect, deter, and respond to sexual assault incidents, among other things. The new law has substantially similar standards and, among other things, additionally (1) specifies that staff and facilities or agency heads must send a copy of any sexual assault report or complaint to the Office of the Correction Ombuds, and (2) adds a duty to intervene and access to immediate and ongoing sexual assault crisis services as two new standards.

The new law also requires the DOC commissioner to adopt regulations to implement the PREA standards by January 1, 2027. DOC must also annually report to the Judiciary Committee on (1) staff training about PREA compliance, (2) the number and types of reported sexual assault against incarcerated people or DOC staff, and (3) the number of reports investigated and their outcomes. It also expands the Office of the Correction Ombuds' provided services to include reviewing sexual assault reports and complaints ([PA 26-10](#), effective July 1, 2026).

Domestic and Family Violence and Child Safety

Children's Residential Placement

Provisions in new legislation largely aimed at combatting human trafficking in the state concern the safety of residential placements for children. First, they set policy, plan, and security measure requirements for Department of Children and Families (DCF)-licensed congregate care residence operators. They also specify that the child advocate's responsibility for reviewing where children are placed by a state agency or department includes reviewing Specialized Trauma-Informed Treatment Assessment and Reunification (STTAR) Enhancement Plan homes, which are in a short-term program for children DCF removes from their homes due to high-risk situations ([PA 26-70](#), §§ 6 & 7, effective July 1, 2026, for the child advocate's authority, and October 1, 2026, for the congregate care residence operator requirements).

Criminal Protective Orders

Legislation passed this session requires a Superior Court, if it does not issue a standing criminal protective order against someone convicted, or found not guilty due to mental disease or defect, of a family violence crime, to state its reasons for not doing so on the record ([PA 26-32](#), effective October 1, 2026).

Family Violence Response and Intervention Units

A provision in the annual court operations act requires the judicial branch to inform DCF about progress on, and compliance with, court-ordered intervention and services when there are open

cases in both the branch's family violence intervention unit and DCF. The act also consolidates and broadens the law's authorized disclosures related to defendants' supervision and service needs ([PA 26-92](#), § 5, effective July 1, 2026).

Multidisciplinary Teams for Children

A provision in a new law requires, instead of allows, DCF and the state's attorneys to set up multidisciplinary teams to, among other things, review cases, coordinate intervention and prevention, and ensure treatment of abused, neglected, or trafficked children. These teams include various professionals and their purposes are to protect these children and their families and coordinate on investigations of alleged abuse, neglect, and trafficking ([PA 26-70](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2026).

Notification of Child Care Employee Child Abuse Registrants

New legislation requires child care providers to notify the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) if they have knowledge that a worker at their facility is listed on the child abuse and neglect registry. Specifically, licensed child care centers and group homes must notify OEC if the owner, conductor, operator, maintainer, or employee is placed on the child abuse and neglect registry, and failure to disclose knowledge of registry placement is subject to the same disciplinary measures as knowledge of criminal convictions. The act makes similar requirements for family child care homes ([PA 26-105](#), §§ 4 & 6, effective July 1, 2026).

Protective Supervision Custody Arrangements

By law, when the court decides in a commitment or custody proceeding that a child's or youth's care should be assigned to someone other than his or her parent, parents, or former guardian, the court must order specific steps that must be taken to help return the child or youth to the parent's custody. If the court orders placement with the parent under DCF protective supervision (meaning that DCF oversees the arrangement and the court sets conditions), new legislation similarly requires the order to specify steps that must be taken to keep a child or youth in the parent's custody ([PA 26-92](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2026).

Emergency Preparedness and Response

Deploying Behavioral Health Professionals After Mass Shootings

A new law requires the DESPP commissioner to coordinate with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) commissioner, in addition to the DPH commissioner as under existing law, when deploying grief counselors and mental health professionals to provide mental health services to mass shooting victims' family members and other people with a close

association to them. By law, these deployments are made to (1) local community outreach groups in and around the impacted area and (2) any school or higher education institution where a mass shooting victim or perpetrator was enrolled ([PA 26-38](#), § 3, effective upon passage).

Electric Generation and Storage Facilities

New legislation requires Siting Council certificate holders for electric generation or electric storage facilities to (1) report major and minor incidents to the council and (2) designate an emergency contact person for the facility. Major incidents include events that require emergency shutoff due to hazardous conditions, require emergency services personnel to respond, or cause an injury requiring hospitalization. Minor incidents are unanticipated or unplanned shutdowns that do not require emergency services personnel to respond. The Siting Council must start annually reporting to the Energy and Technology Committee on incident reports by July 1, 2028. The act also (1) allows the Siting Council to require that applicants provide emergency services training specific to the proposed facility to local firefighters or other emergency services personnel and (2) requires the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to convene a working group to review processes on resuming energy generation services after a service shutoff ([PA 26-127](#), §§ 12-14, effective October 1, 2026).

Extreme Weather Protocols

A new law requires DESPP's Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to develop guidance on (1) extreme hot and cold weather protocols that may include weather factors that will prompt the state and municipalities to open cooling and warming centers statewide and (2) improvements to public communication when these protocols are activated. It must do this by January 1, 2027, and in consultation with the governor's office; the Office of Policy and Management (OPM); municipal leaders; the Department of Housing (DOH), DMHAS, and Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioners; United Way of Connecticut's 2-1-1 Infoline program; and the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness. Additionally by this date, DOH must consult with DMHAS and DSS on ways of improving outreach to unhoused individuals during extreme hot and cold weather events based on an evaluation conducted by DOH and those who provide services to these individuals ([PA 26-13](#), § 32, effective October 1, 2026).

Fire Protection

This session, the legislature passed new legislation with various provisions on fire protection. Among other things, it requires (1) municipalities to establish local fire protection plans; (2) the state fire administrator to review and rate these plans at least every five years after the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (CFPC) develops review standards; and (3) generally, municipalities to provide fire protection if fire protection services in the municipality are

discontinued or disrupted. Relatedly, it requires CFPC to recommend minimum standards for firefighter safety and emergency response protocols, and permits it to create a standard protocol for reviewing local fire protection plans.

The new legislation also creates the Connecticut Fire program for a framework by which the state may help municipalities. It additionally requires (1) DESPP to establish and maintain a system to collect computer-aided dispatch data from municipalities and a registry that identifies the fire chief of each municipality and fire district in the state and (2) the comptroller, in consultation with DESPP, to establish, maintain, and update a registry of Connecticut's career and volunteer firefighters ([PA 26-144](#), various effective dates).

State Civil Preparedness Plan and Program and Local Emergency Operations Plans

New legislation requires any state civil preparedness plan and program prepared on or after July 1, 2027, to have provisions on targeted violence and terrorism prevention. It allows local emergency operations plans to include the same and eliminates a requirement that plans submitted on or after January 1, 2025, have a domestic terrorism prevention strategy. Under the act, "targeted violence" is a premeditated act of violence (1) directed at an individual, group of individuals, event, or location, regardless of motive, and (2) typically not done to further, or in connection with, other criminal activity ([PA 26-45](#), §§ 16-18, effective July 1, 2026).

Youth Camp Emergency Notification Systems

A new law requires every OEC-licensed youth camp to provide, verify, and update OEC (when appropriate) with their contact information, including name, address, and telephone number. It also requires OEC to share this information, in a memorandum of understanding or other agreement, with DESPP for use in an emergency notification system that notifies the camps about emergencies (such as a fire; criminal act; or act of nature, like an earthquake or hurricane) that occur in a youth camp's vicinity or that may endanger the safety or wellbeing of the children at the camp ([PA 26-105](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2026).

Firearms and Weapons

Destruction of Risk Protection Order Items

A new law extends, generally from one year to two years, the length of the existing prohibition against DESPP and local police departments destroying firearms, deadly weapons, and ammunition held under a risk protection order. The act also requires, at least 90 days before destroying the

items, that their owner be notified in writing of the date they will be destroyed ([PA 26-45](#), § 11, effective October 1, 2026).

Electronic Defense Weapons

A new law prohibits professional bondsmen, surety bail bond agents, and bail enforcement agents from carrying an electronic defense weapon (for example, a stun gun) unless they get a special permit from DESPP. Under the act, to get the special permit they must prove that they successfully completed a DESPP commissioner-approved course on safely using the weapon. To renew these permits, the act requires permit holders to successfully complete an annual safety refresher course ([PA 26-45](#), § 13, effective October 1, 2026).

Gun Law Changes

This session, the legislature made various changes in the state's gun (firearm) laws, including the following:

1. generally making it a class D felony (punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$5,000, or both) to knowingly import into Connecticut or knowingly advertise, sell, offer, or expose for sale a convertible pistol manufactured on or after October 1, 2026;
2. prohibiting anyone without a local dealer permit from (a) advertising, selling, or delivering unfinished frames or unfinished lower receivers; (b) offering or exposing them for sale or delivery; or (c) possessing them with the intent to deliver them or sell them at retail;
3. explicitly allowing anyone to deliver or surrender any firearm or ammunition they have to DESPP or a local police department, which must then hold them for at least 14 days, up to a maximum of one year; and
4. requiring local handgun permitting authorities to refund \$70 to applicants if the authority does not act within statutorily established timeframes ([PA 26-41](#) and [PA 26-68](#), §§ 162 & 163, generally effective October 1, 2026).

Probate Court Petition for Relief From Federal Firearms Disability

Under a new law, if someone is under a federal firearms disability due to an in-state mental health adjudication or commitment but does not live in Connecticut, the person may petition the probate court that ordered the decision to restore his or her firearm rights ([PA 26-87](#), § 2, effective January 1, 2027).

Fireworks and Explosives

Fireworks and Special Effects Displays

A new law conditions certificates of competency to handle or fire certain fireworks and special effects displays on applicants submitting to state and national criminal history record checks and providing evidence of good moral character and competence in the control and handling of the respective devices. Additionally, the act specifies that fireworks certificates of competency are not transferable and eliminates the authority of local fire marshals to suspend or revoke a fireworks permit ([PA 26-45](#), §§ 9 & 10, effective October 1, 2026).

Reporting Burn-Related Injuries and Deaths, Smoke Inhalation-Related Deaths, and Injuries From Fireworks or Explosives

Starting January 1, 2027, a new law requires DPH to annually report to the state fire marshal's office on (1) all burn injuries and injuries from fireworks or explosives, (2) any death from those injuries or smoke inhalation, and (3) any death to which those injuries or smoke inhalation contributed. It requires the state fire marshal's office to annually give the legislature and each local fire marshal a statistical abstract of these injuries and deaths.

The new law also eliminates requirements for attending physicians, health care institution directors (and their designees), and health care providers to report on treatment for certain burn injuries and any injury from using fireworks. Previously, they had to immediately call the local fire marshal of the jurisdiction where the incident that caused the burn occurred and submit a within report 48 hours to the state fire marshal's office ([PA 26-110](#), §§ 3 & 7, effective October 1, 2026).

Human Trafficking

Hotels and Lodgings and Human Trafficking

A new law requires, beginning January 1, 2027, owners or operators of hotels, motels, inns, or similar lodgings to annually register with DCP. As of that same date, it authorizes DCP to examine and enter locations to access owner or operator records to ensure compliance with certain laws on guest recordkeeping, employee training on human trafficking, hourly or less than 12-hour discounts, and human trafficking notice posting. It allows DCP to impose a civil penalty for violating these laws and increases the existing penalty for failing to properly post a notice about services available to human trafficking victims ([PA 26-98](#), effective October 1, 2026).

State Agency and Law Enforcement Training

This session, the legislature passed a new law with several provisions aimed at combating human trafficking in the state, including new training requirements for certain state employees and law enforcement. Among other things, it requires within available appropriations:

1. DCF employees and contracted service providers who have regular contact with children as part of their work to be regularly trained on identifying and reporting human trafficking,
2. the judicial branch's chief court administrator to train certain employees on trafficking, and
3. DCF to help the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) develop training for law enforcement on the trafficking.

POST and municipal police departments must also incorporate certain information about human trafficking in their basic or review training programs ([PA 26-70](#), §§ 3-5, 10 & 11, various effective dates).

State Prevention Efforts

A new law largely aimed at combatting human trafficking broadens OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division responsibilities to include advising and helping coordinate trafficking prevention efforts. It requires the division to evaluate state agency and law enforcement coordination of related efforts and develop a plan for coordinating them. The new law separately requires the creation of a subcommittee on human trafficking prevention and response to implement certain recommendations on the state's response to trafficking ([PA 26-70](#), §§ 1, 8 & 14, effective July 1, 2026).

Trafficking in Persons Council

A provision in a new law increases the membership of the Trafficking in Persons Council by adding the Secretary of the State or her designee ([PA 26-70](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2026).

Juvenile Justice

Risk and Needs Assessment

By law, a child arrested for a delinquent act must generally be brought to court within five business days after their arrest. At that time, prior law allowed the court to consider whether the child should be assessed for services if it found probable cause to believe that he or she committed the acts alleged. Instead, new legislation specifically allows the court to order a risk and needs assessment to determine if the child would benefit from services. This assessment must generally be confidential ([PA 26-92](#), § 14, effective October 1, 2026).

Transfer of Education Records

A new law requires DCF, instead of the judicial branch, to notify the local or regional board of education when a child is placed in a juvenile residential center. State law already requires DCF to ask for the transfer of school records for students placed in juvenile justice facilities or who are incarcerated ([PA 26-92](#), § 16, effective January 1, 2027).

Law Enforcement

Collaboration With Social Workers

A new law requires POST to add to its guidance to law enforcement units with recommendations of how police officers may collaborate with social workers. Beginning October 1, 2026, the act requires the guidance to include (1) the potential impact of this collaboration and (2) instances where it may or may not be feasible, including when a social worker may respond to a call for help or accompany a police officer on certain calls ([PA 26-130](#), § 10, effective upon passage).

Relatedly, provisions in two other new acts change the law requiring DESPP, in consultation with POST, to establish a social work and law enforcement project at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU). One extends, from January 1, 2026, to January 1, 2027, the date by which DESPP must enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with SCSU and specifies the MOU must be for at least \$850,000 and address project expansion and support. The other act requires an annual report, starting by January 1, 2027, to the legislature on the project's status and associated expenditures ([PA 26-68](#), § 484, effective July 1, 2026, and [PA 26-76](#), § 106, effective upon passage).

CRISIS Initiative Expansion

A new law requires the State Police, in conjunction with DMHAS, to expand the Connection to Recovery through Intervention, Support and Initiating Services (CRISIS) Initiative pilot program throughout the state by January 1, 2027. This expanded program must at least include the pilot program's components that require state police officer training, coordination between state police officers and mental health professionals, and referrals to mental health services facilities ([PA 26-12](#), § 14, effective upon passage).

Hiring Restrictions

A new law expands the prohibition on hiring police officers who were dismissed for malfeasance or serious misconduct that called into question their fitness to serve as an officer or resigned or retired during an investigation for this conduct, by applying it to "peace officers" who were dismissed, resigned, or retired in this way. Under the act's definition of "peace officer," the

prohibition now also applies to federal law enforcement officers and other state employees like state or judicial marshals and certain correctional employees ([PA 26-14](#), § 12, effective upon passage).

Liability for Actions

The legislature passed a new law with several provisions related to peace officer liability. First, it creates an individual cause of action, including against a federal or state officer or employee, for alleged civil rights violations. It also expands the attorney general's authority to investigate, intervene, or bring an action for civil rights violations.

The new law also makes federal law enforcement agencies liable under certain circumstances when their officers interfere with someone taking a photo, digital still, or video image of them or another officer performing their duties. It also limits the circumstances under which a federal officer, employee, or agent has immunity when prosecuted for an offense based on an action taken under color of law ([PA 26-14](#), §§ 1, 2, 10 & 11, effective upon passage).

Recruitment and Retention Benefits

This session, the legislature enacted several new laws with provisions on law enforcement recruitment and retention. For example, an omnibus act on workforce development and working conditions establishes a task force to study recruitment and retention issues for public safety personnel, including the feasibility and fiscal impact of providing tuition waivers, mortgage assistance, and tax credits ([PA 26-12](#), § 73, effective upon passage). This same act requires UConn to create a recruitment and retention program for its special police forces and fire department, which must have salary schedules and an education benefit ([PA 26-12](#), §§ 41-43, effective upon passage). And it gives a limited number of tuition waivers for certain first responders (including police officers) at CT State and Connecticut State Colleges and Universities ([PA 26-12](#), §§ 65-71, various effective dates).

For more information on these provisions, as well as other acts with recruitment or employment-based benefit provisions for law enforcement or other first responders, see [2026 Acts Affecting First Responders](#).

State Marshals

Another new law makes various changes related to state marshals, including creating new processes and requirements for the State Marshal Commission to follow when filling state marshal vacancies and examining and recruiting new state marshals in each county, including establishing an interview committee and setting candidate training and swearing-in requirements. It also

increases officers' (including state marshals) maximum flat rate and hourly fees for serving and executing residential and commercial evictions and foreclosure ejectments by \$50, to \$150 and \$150 per hour, respectively ([PA 26-80](#), effective October 1, 2026).

Training Requirements and Facilities

Several new laws make changes related to law enforcement training and facilities. For example, a new law prohibits POST from waiving the existing basic training program requirements for peace officers unless they give evidence of satisfactorily completing a substantially equivalent training or education program with at least 480 training hours ([PA 26-14](#), § 9, effective upon passage).

Another new law replaces police officer training curricula on interacting with people who have mental or physical disabilities or are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, with new criteria POST must develop by March 1, 2027 ([PA 26-1](#), § 60, effective upon passage). And another act requires that a prospective police training center on crime scene processing, forensic evidence, and criminal investigations (1) be located at any Connecticut State Colleges and Universities institution, rather than specifically at Central Connecticut State University and (2) have an associated MOU completed by January 1, 2027 ([PA 26-45](#), § 19, effective July 1, 2026).

For more information on these laws, as well as other acts with training requirements for law enforcement or other first responders, see [2026 Acts Affecting First Responders](#).

Reports, Studies, Task Forces, and Working Groups

Code Official Career Pathway Working Group

A new law requires the state fire marshal to convene a working group to study the code official career pathway, including analyzing any needed statutory or regulatory changes to make it more accessible to enter this career pathway in the state. The group's findings and recommendations are due to the Public Safety and Security Committee and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner by January 1, 2027 ([PA 26-110](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

Companion Animal Placement Study

A new law requires the agriculture commissioner, in consultation with the Office of Victim Services, to study and report to the Environment Committee by January 1, 2027, on how the need for companion animal placement affects domestic violence victims. The study must (1) include currently available placement resources; (2) identify at least one contact person for victims who need to place their companion animal in another person's care due to a domestic violence situation; and (3) examine the feasibility of establishing a phone number or other electronic

communications line accessible 24 hours a day for victims who need placements ([PA 26-112](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

Consumer Fraud Working Group

This session, the legislature took steps to study consumer fraud and how to protect against it. A new law sets up a working group composed of state officials and stakeholders, including members representing banks, credit unions, consumers, and seniors, and charges the group with studying the issue and reporting back to the Banking Committee by January 1, 2027 ([PA 26-51](#), § 3, effective upon passage).

Domestic Violence Case Code Plan

The legislature passed an act requiring the chief court administrator, in consultation with certain other individuals, to develop a plan for implementing and using uniform statewide case identification codes for domestic violence cases that are in electronic data systems of case files that the judicial branch, the Division of Criminal Justice, and DESPP maintain. The Judiciary and Public Safety and Security committees must receive the plan and an associated report by July 1, 2027 ([SA 26-8](#), effective upon passage).

Habeas Corpus Task Force Report Extension

A new provision extends by one year, until January 1, 2028, the deadline for the habeas corpus procedures task force to submit its report to the Judiciary Committee. This task force is reviewing the habeas corpus procedures used by the federal government and other states. It must make recommendations, including best practices, on timely reviewing and adjudicating habeas corpus claims and standards for handling repeated claims ([PA 26-92](#), § 30, effective upon passage).

Removal of Children From Out-of-Home Placements Study

A new law requires DCF and the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) to study ways to improve department policies and practices on immediately removing children from DCF out-of-home placements if they become a victim of physical or sexual assault occurring in, or because of, the placement. DCF and OCA must report on the study's findings and associated recommendations to the Committee on Children by January 1, 2027 ([PA 26-26](#), § 20, effective upon passage).

Risk-Based Residential Fire Inspection Pilot Program and Working Group

A new law requires the state fire marshal to create, by January 1, 2027, and within available appropriations, a two-year risk-based residential fire inspection pilot program to improve the

scheduling, documentation, and prioritization of fire inspections of residential buildings designed to be occupied by more than two families. It also establishes a working group to advise her on the pilot program ([PA 26-100](#), §§ 60 & 61, effective upon passage, except the pilot program is effective July 1, 2026).

Towing Roadside Safety Working Group

A new law requires the Public Safety and Security Committee chairs to convene a working group to study roadside safety concerns associated with wreckers and towing and recovery professionals, including evaluating what color and type of lights should be allowed on wreckers. The working group must submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the committee by January 1, 2027 ([SA 26-26](#), effective upon passage).

Roadway and User Safety

Dynamic Part-Time Lanes (Flex Lanes)

A new law authorizes the Office of the State Traffic Administration to temporarily designate any highway lane or shoulder for certain specified uses to control and manage traffic (a “dynamic part-time lane,” also known as a flex lane), including, among other things, (1) as a high occupancy vehicle, dedicated bus rapid transit, or emergency vehicle lane; (2) to redirect an opposing lane into a one-way lane; or (3) as needed for the state’s highway system to function.

Relatedly, the new law restricts motor vehicle operation in flex lanes based on the lane’s designated use. For example, a flex lane actively dedicated for emergency vehicles is limited to these operators or other motor vehicle operators obeying a law enforcement officer’s direction. It also allows (1) the transportation department to establish a program to operate flex lane control systems (automated enforcement systems) and (2) any municipality operating a bus in a flex lane to participate in this program if it adopts an ordinance meeting certain requirements.

The new law additionally sets various conditions, requirements, and procedures for operating a flex lane control system, issuing tickets and enforcing violations, and collecting and retaining data ([PA 26-63](#), §§ 5-11 & 13, generally effective January 1, 2027).

Passenger Restrictions for Youth Instruction Permit Holders

Under a new law, 16- and 17-year-old learner’s permit holders may have their sibling as a passenger during driving instruction if the sibling also holds a learner’s permit. By law, learner’s permit holders may drive only if they have a licensed driver (age 20 or older with at least four years of licensure) riding with and instructing them. Under prior law, these permit holders could only have

their parents or legal guardians as a passenger during instruction ([PA 26-24](#), § 17, effective October 1, 2026).

Requirements for TNCs

New legislation changes the laws on Transportation Network Companies (TNCs, such as Uber and Lyft) by generally requiring them to implement certain rider and driver safety measures. Among other things, it increases the frequency of criminal history records checks for drivers and requires TNCs to (1) provide certain safety features to riders and notify them about these features; (2) when drivers are offered a prearranged ride, note whether the requesting rider is verified by the company; (3) adopt, maintain, and enforce a service animal nondiscrimination policy; and (4) provide an annual training on sexual assault prevention and driver education, which they must require each driver to complete ([PA 26-63](#), §§ 17-21, generally effective January 1, 2027).

Towed Vehicle Portal

A new law requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), starting January 1, 2027, to have an electronic portal on its website, available 24 hours a day, to help the public figure out if their vehicle was towed, and if so, where it is stored. Under the new law, towing companies, garage owners, police departments, and parking authorities must upload vehicle information to the portal in accordance with the new law and DMV policy ([PA 26-24](#), § 29, effective July 1, 2026).

Vehicle Lights

The law generally requires a permit to use colored or flashing lights on motor vehicles or equipment. This session, the legislature passed two acts that changes who may use certain lights on vehicles.

The first allows the DMV commissioner to issue permits for organ transport vehicles to use any combination of steady or flashing blue, red, yellow, or white lights. The second removes a restriction that only allows police officers and DMV inspectors to use steady red, blue, or red and blue, lights, visible from the vehicle's front. This act also allows certain fire and EMS personnel and certain constables who already can use flashing blue or red lights to also use steady lights in those colors ([PA 26-147](#) and [PA 26-144](#), § 13, effective October 1, 2026).

School Safety

Armed Security Guards

Under a new law, former parole officers meeting certain qualifications may provide armed security services in public schools. Prior law limited these positions to sworn members of local police

departments and qualified retired police officers. The new law subjects former parole officers to the same annual training requirements that other retired officers must complete to qualify.

Existing law requires that retired police officers and parole officers must have retired or left service in good standing to be hired as an armed security guard. The new law specifies that this means the officer's employment did not end due to disciplinary action, while under investigation, or while a disciplinary action was pending. It also specifies that retired police cannot provide security services if they are prohibited from being hired as a police officer due to being dismissed for malfeasance or other serious misconduct or resigning while under investigation ([PA 26-139](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2026).

Crisis Response Drills

A new law establishes protocols for school crises response drills to ensure they are designed to prevent emotional harm and support psychological safety while improving preparedness. Among other things, it:

1. prohibits active assailant simulations or simulated violence when students are present (but staff and first responders may do them outside of school hours);
2. requires the Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Prevention at Western Connecticut State University, in collaboration with DESPP, to develop standard terminology and definitions for conducting and reviewing drills, methods for evaluating drills, and guidance for crisis responses and crisis debriefing;
3. addresses education and communication between school personnel, students, and parents about the nature and purpose of crises response drills; and
4. requires school boards, if requested to do so, to provide school community members with any part of the school's security and safety plan that is not prohibited from disclosure under FOIA ([PA 26-1](#), §§ 44-47, effective July 1, 2026).

Misconduct of Prospective School Employees

A new law makes various changes to the laws on disclosing certain misconduct-related information during the hiring process of a prospective school employee who will have contact with children. The law (1) expands what applicants, current and former employers, and the State Department of Education (SDE) must disclose to include allegations currently under investigation; (2) requires disclosing, in the applicant's written statement or certain employer submissions whether the applicant was or is facing an allegation involving the injury or risk of injury to, or impairing the morals of, a minor; (3) generally allows school operators to ask the State Board of Education whether SDE was notified by a former employer that an applicant is under investigation or was

disciplined for abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct; and (4) makes similar provisions for applicants who are contractors ([PA 26-139](#), §§ 11-13, effective July 1, 2026).

School Mapping Data Services Grants

Beginning with FY 27, a new law allows DESPP to, annually and within available appropriations, administer a program to provide grants to municipalities and municipal police departments for services to give school mapping data that meets the act's requirements. By October 1, 2026, DESPP must create grant eligibility criteria, develop application forms and deadlines, and post a description of the program on its website. The act also requires DESPP, starting by January 1, 2028, to annually report on the program to the Public Safety and Security Committee ([PA 26-116](#), effective July 1, 2026).

School Resource Officers

By law, each school board that assigns a school resource officer to its schools must have a MOU with a local law enforcement agency that outlines the officer's role and responsibility. New legislation sets a deadline of January 1, 2027, for school boards to meet the requirements in existing law to (1) post the MOUs online and (2) have information in the MOUs on the officer's daily interactions with students and staff and graduated discipline response models. It also requires these MOUs to be updated at least every three years ([PA 26-1](#), § 34, effective July 1, 2026).

Transportation-Related Violations

Boating Restrictions

This session, the legislature made several changes to state boating laws, including, among other things:

1. generally prohibiting people from sitting or standing on, or hanging their legs over, a boat's gunwale (top edge or rim) while it is underway;
2. prohibiting personal watercraft (such as jet skis) and jetted articulated vessel owners from knowingly allowing anyone to operate their boat without having the state-issued certificate to do so;
3. requiring owners of unregistered boats (generally smaller boats like kayaks) to attach their contact information to the boat before entering Connecticut waters;
4. increasing the fines that generally may be imposed for abandoning a boat, from between \$300-\$500 to between \$750-\$1,000; and

5. allowing state and municipal law enforcement agencies to recover a broader range of costs for removing abandoned boats, such as legal or court costs ([PA 26-60](#), effective upon passage).

Relatedly, a provision in the annual court operations act implements the existing requirement that lake authorities receive revenue from the fines they issue for boating violations. It requires the state to remit all the fines collected from these violations to the lake authority that issued the fine ([PA 26-92](#), § 28, effective October 1, 2026).

Distracted Driving

This session, the legislature made several changes to the state's distracted driving law, including:

1. updating and reorganizing it to reflect current device and vehicle technology and its use;
2. explicitly prohibiting driving while a video is visible to the driver in the normal driving position, regardless of whether the video is playing on a mobile electronic device, installed screen, or a similar device (with exceptions for things like GPS and back up cameras);
3. prohibiting (a) holding or supporting a mobile electronic device with any part of the body while driving and (b) failing to maintain a proper lookout; and
4. making it a reckless driving violation to drive in a highway work zone while engaged in any activity prohibited under the distracted driving law ([PA 26-63](#), §§ 31-34, and [PA 26-120](#), both effective October 1, 2026).

Failure to Stop for a School Bus

A new law requires the DMV commissioner, without a hearing, to issue a six-month suspension of the driver's license or operating privilege of someone who, for the third or subsequent time, violates the state's law on failing to stop for a school bus ([PA 26-95](#), effective October 1, 2026).

Governor's Travel Restriction

This session, the legislature increased the fine for violating a governor-issued travel restriction order to a maximum of \$250. Under prior law, violators were subject to an infraction ([PA 26-63](#), § 12, effective October 1, 2026).

Motor Vehicle Equipment Violation Fine Increase

A new law increases the fine, from \$150 to \$300, for violating certain existing requirements related to motor vehicle mechanical equipment, primarily involving mufflers and exhaust pipes (such as operating a motor vehicle with an improper muffler or installing or using a mechanical device that amplifies the vehicle's emitted noise). Under existing law, these violations are (1) processed

through the Centralized Infractions Bureau and (2) subject to a Special Transportation Fund surcharge of 50% of the fine ([PA 26-63](#), § 30, effective October 1, 2026).

Miscellaneous

Automated License Plate Readers

Starting October 1, 2026, a new law restricts law enforcement agencies, other public agencies, and private vendors under contract with them from using automated license plate reader (ALPR) systems or ALPR data, except for certain listed reasons. Among other things, it (1) sets a 21-day limit on how long agencies can keep this data unless certain conditions are met (such as its use in an active criminal investigation); (2) specifically prohibits several uses of ALPR systems or data, such as for investigating suspected immigration violations; (3) requires POST to adopt a model ALPR usage policy and DESPP to adopt related regulations for implementation by law enforcement agencies; and (4) sets provisions on enforcement, reporting, and related matters ([PA 26-14](#), §§ 13-15, as amended by [PA 26-76](#), § 46, both effective upon passage).

Building and Fire Code Inspection and Enforcement

The legislature passed several acts this session with changes to state building or fire code statutes. One new law imposes several elevator-related maintenance, repair, notice, and other duties on most residential building owners, including notifying tenants within 24 hours of an elevator first being reported as “inoperable.” It also (1) requires local building officials to investigate any complaint received about inoperable elevators and (2) authorizes DAS to impose a fine up to \$250 for a first offense or \$500 for subsequent offenses and take certain other enforcement actions to address violations ([PA 26-84](#), effective October 1, 2026).

A provision in another new law (1) authorizes the state fire marshal to issue, upon anyone’s request, official interpretations of the Fire Safety Code and (2) requires her to compile, index, and publish each code interpretation ([PA 26-110](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2026). A separate act makes identical changes to when the State Building Code, State Fire Prevention Code, and Fire Safety Code must be amended, making them due within two years after the first publication of respective nationally recognized model codes, except that no revisions are needed between the first publication of revisions to the respective 2024 and 2030 model codes ([PA 26-58](#), effective October 1, 2026).

For more information on these laws, as well as on other acts with provisions related to the state building or fire safety codes, see [2026 Acts Affecting Housing and Real Estate](#).

Cranes and Hoisting Equipment

New legislation makes several changes to the state's laws on cranes and hoisting equipment, including their regulation by DAS and the Examining Board for Crane Operators. Among other things, it changes the department's and board's investigative and enforcement authority, such as by allowing stop work orders to be issued, increasing the maximum civil penalty for violations, and expanding who the penalty can be applied against to include equipment owners' lessees and contractors ([PA 26-12](#), §§ 18-24, effective October 1, 2026).

DDS Former Employee Registry Access

A new law broadens access to the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) registry of former employees terminated or separated from employment due to substantiated abuse or neglect. Existing law requires DDS to make the registry available to specified agencies, employers, and charitable organizations. The act additionally requires the registry to be made available to employers of service providers for those who get services or funding under the autism spectrum disorder Medicaid waiver ([PA 26-72](#), § 3, effective upon passage).

Insurance Coverage for Survivors of Volunteer Firefighters, State Marshals, Correction Officers, and Investigators

This year, the legislature passed a law that extends non-state public employer "partnership plan" health care coverage to the survivors of certain unpaid volunteer firefighters and requires non-state public employers to apply for partnership plan coverage for these survivors whether or not the first responder or unpaid volunteer firefighter was an employee of the non-state public employer at the time of death. It requires the non-state public employer the responder or firefighter provided services to at the time of death to apply for coverage.

The new law also requires the state comptroller, with approval from the attorney general and the insurance commissioner, to allow the surviving spouse and dependent children of a state marshal, correction officer, investigator, or unpaid volunteer firefighter to participate in the state employee health insurance plan ([PA 26-12](#), §§ 11 & 12, effective upon passage).

Judicial Branch Office of Information Privacy

This session, the legislature added certain federal judges who are Connecticut residents, and their household family members, to the list of individuals who can ask the judicial branch's Office of Information Privacy to direct public agencies to remove any specific personal information from the agencies' websites or social media, or to not publish it ([PA 26-92](#), § 31, effective July 1, 2026).

Municipal Fire Chief Appointments

A new law requires municipal fire departments to notify DESPP within 10 business days after they appoint a new or interim fire chief. The notice must be on a DESPP-prescribed form and include the appointee's name, appointment's effective date, department name, mailing and email address, mobile telephone number, dispatch contact number, and any other information DESPP deems necessary ([PA 26-45](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2026).

Security Officer Training and License Applications

A new law makes several changes related to security officers, including expanding who is eligible for training waivers. Specifically, it exempts the following people if they present proof that they completed training that is equivalent to the training required for a security officer license:

1. anyone currently employed, or separated from service in good standing within the past two years, as a DOC correction officer or parole officer, or judicial branch judicial marshal and
2. anyone who is separated from service in good standing within the past two years as a police officer and is not prohibited from being hired by a law enforcement unit (due to serious misconduct, for example).

Additionally, the act requires incomplete license applications to be completed within 10 calendar days if the DESPP commissioner notifies the applicant (or the security service employing the applicant who submitted the application) that an application is incomplete. For re-submissions, if the commissioner determines the application is still incomplete, he may, in his discretion, deny the application ([PA 26-45](#), § 12, effective October 1, 2026).

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