



City of Columbus

Office of City Clerk
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Legislation Text

File #: 1455-2022, **Version:** 1

The purpose of this ordinance is to enact new Chapter 1916 in the Columbus City Codes, pertaining to identification of division of police officers while on duty.

Since the protests surrounding the murder of George Floyd in Summer 2020, as well as increases in violent crime, City Council has worked with Mayor Ginther, the Department of Public Safety, and the Columbus Division of Police on reimagining public safety in the City of Columbus. Council and the administration have introduced several new programs and policies to modernize police functions and decrease violence. In response to numerous complaints regarding police misconduct during protest events, criminal and administrative investigations were launched into these events. Many of these incidents were too difficult to investigate given the inability to identify parties involved. The Division of Police has enacted several reforms since, including the purchase of new body worn cameras that can be affixed to uniforms worn by police specifically during such events.

In addition, Council is introducing this new Chapter of City Code, which will mandate the affixing of officer names and badge numbers to alternative uniforms, as well as reaffirming the current police directives to have officers identifiable while on duty, with very limited exceptions. It also mandates the need for officers to identify themselves to members of the public, with limited exceptions. This will allow future investigations to hold the proper individuals accountable, while also protecting police officers from misidentification in criminal, civil, and administrative cases. With these and other initiatives, Council continues to work with City partners to modernize law enforcement and improve our accountability and response to the residents of Columbus.

To enact new Chapter 1916 of the Columbus City Codes, pertaining to identification of police officers while on duty.

WHEREAS, since the protests surrounding the murder of George Floyd in Summer 2020, as well as increases in violent crime, City Council has worked with Mayor Ginther, the Department of Public Safety, and the Columbus Division of Police on reimagining public safety in the City of Columbus; and

WHEREAS, Council and the administration have introduced several new programs and policies to modernize police functions and decrease violence; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this ordinance is to enact new Chapter 1916 in the Columbus City Codes, pertaining to identification of division of police officers while on duty; and

WHEREAS, Council and the administration will continue these efforts to improve the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City of Columbus; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That new chapter 1916 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby enacted, reading as follows:

Chapter 1916 - DISPLAY OF BADGE NUMBERS AND IDENTIFICATION

Section 1916.01 - Display of badge numbers and identification

Division of police officers shall display their names and badge numbers on their uniforms while on duty. If officers are wearing alternative uniforms or riot gear, or are on duty at a protest or riot, their names and badge numbers shall be affixed to their uniform or helmets and be clearly visible to the public.

Section 1916.02 - Exemption

Division of police officers are exempt from the provisions of section 1916.01 if they are in plain clothes, exercising their authority under law while performing undercover or investigative activities, or are off duty. Officers while serving in an Investigative-Tactical (InTac) unit are exempt from displaying their names on their uniforms but shall display their badge number.

Section 1916.03 - Identification to the public

Division of police officers shall give their name and badge number to any person upon request, unless there exists any imminent or probable threats to the officer or other persons at the time of the request. Officers in plain clothes shall give their name and badge number upon request once they have identified themselves as officers of the division of police, with the same aforementioned exceptions.

Section 1916.04 - Penalty

Any division of police officer that violates any section of this chapter may be subject to disciplinary action as provided by the division of police, department of public safety, or any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

SECTION 2. That to allow the Division of Police sufficient time to purchase the necessary supplies to comply with these provisions, SECTIONS 1 and 2 shall take effect and be in full force from and after January 1, 2023.

SECTION 3. That the remainder of this Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.