

1 S.208

2 Introduced by Senators Hashim, Baruth, Ram Hinsdale, Bongartz, Chittenden,
3 Gulick, Hardy, Harrison, Lyons, Perchlik, Vyhovsky, Watson
4 and White

5 Referred to Committee on Judiciary

6 Date: January 6, 2026

7 Subject: Internal security and public safety; Vermont Criminal Justice Council;
8 general provisions; standards for law enforcement identification

9 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require
10 standards for law enforcement to identify themselves. Specifically, this bill
11 proposes that all local, state, and federal law enforcement officers clearly
12 identify themselves by name or badge number. Additionally, this bill proposes
13 to prohibit masks or personal disguises with certain exceptions for potentially
14 hazardous situations and deployments.

15 An act relating to standards for law enforcement identification

16 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

17 ~~Sec. 1. 20 V.S.A. § 2272 is added to read:~~

18 ~~§ 2272. STANDARDS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT IDENTIFICATION~~

1 ~~(a) Legislative intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly to exercise~~
2 ~~the power granted to Vermont by the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution~~
3 ~~to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents and law enforcement~~
4 ~~officers present in the State by codifying standards for law enforcement~~
5 ~~identification.~~

6 (b) Definitions. As used in this section:

7 (1) “Law enforcement agency” has the same meaning as in section
8 2351a of this title.

9 (2) “Law enforcement officer” has the same meaning as in section
10 2351a of this title and includes any officer of a federal law enforcement
11 agency or any person acting on behalf of a local, state, or federal law
12 enforcement agency.

13 (c) Identification requirements.

14 (1) A law enforcement officer shall be clearly identified by the officer’s
15 name or badge number, or both, on the officer’s uniform.

16 (2) A law enforcement officer shall not wear any mark or personal
17 disguise while interacting with the public in the performance of the officer’s
18 duties.

19 (3) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this subsection, a law
20 enforcement officer may wear:

21 ~~(1) a medical grade mask that is surgical,~~

1 ~~(B) an N95 respirator designed to prevent the transmission of~~
2 ~~airborne diseases;~~

3 ~~(C) a mask designed to protect against exposure to smoke during a~~
4 ~~fire-involved situation;~~

5 ~~(D) a mask necessary to perform duties during a water rescue~~
6 ~~operation;~~

7 ~~(E) a mask related to protection against exposure to biological or~~
8 ~~chemical agents during an incident where these agents may be present; or~~

9 ~~(F) a mask designed to protect against exposure to cold during a~~
10 ~~declared weather emergency.~~

11 ~~(4) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this subsection, the following is~~
12 ~~permitted:~~

13 ~~(A) Tactical Services Unit (TSU) team officers may use gear~~
14 ~~necessary to protect their faces from physical harm while performing TSU~~
15 ~~responsibilities.~~

16 ~~(B) Law enforcement officers who participate in active undercover~~
17 ~~drug-related operations or assignments may use a personal disguise when~~
18 ~~necessary to perform such operations or assignments.~~

19 ~~(d) Penalty. A law enforcement officer who violates subsection (c) of this~~
20 ~~section shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00 or lose the officer's~~
21 ~~professional licensure or certification, if applicable, or both.~~

1 ~~SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE~~

2 ~~This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.~~

Sec. 1. 20 V.S.A. § 2373 is added to read:

§ 2373. STANDARDS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT IDENTIFICATION

(a) Legislative intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly to exercise the power of Vermont, as recognized by the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents and law enforcement officers present in the State by codifying standards for law enforcement identification.

(b) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Law enforcement agency” has the same meaning as in section 2351a of this title.

(2) “Law enforcement officer” has the same meaning as in section 2351a of this title and includes any officer of a federal law enforcement agency or any person acting on behalf of a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency.

(c) Identification requirements.

(1) A law enforcement officer shall be clearly identified by:

(A) the officer’s name or the officer’s unique radio or badge number visibly displayed on the officer’s person; and

(B) the officer’s agency visibly displayed on the officer’s person.

(2) A law enforcement officer shall not wear any mask or personal disguise while interacting in person with the public in the performance of the officer’s duties.

(3) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this subsection, a law enforcement officer may wear:

(A) an N95 respirator or medical grade mask worn with the intent to prevent the transmission of airborne diseases;

(B) a mask designed to protect against exposure to smoke during a fire-involved situation;

(C) a mask necessary to perform duties during a water rescue operation;

(D) a mask related to protection against exposure to biological or chemical agents during an incident where these agents may be present; or

(E) a mask designed to protect against exposure to cold between December 1 and April 1 when the National Weather Service is forecasting a duration of cold weather at or below -10 degrees Fahrenheit, which includes wind chill.

(4) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this subsection, the following is permitted:

(A) Tactical Services Unit (TSU) team officers may use gear necessary to protect their faces from physical harm while performing TSU responsibilities.

(B) Law enforcement officers working with or in conjunction with the Vermont Drug Task Force who participate in active undercover drug-related operations or assignments may use a personal disguise when necessary to perform such operations or assignments.

(C) Law enforcement officers who participate in active undercover investigations relating to child sexual exploitation may use a personal disguise when necessary to perform such investigations.

(d) Statewide policy. On or before January 1, 2027, the Vermont Criminal Justice Council shall establish a statewide policy governing the standards for law enforcement identification applicable to Vermont law enforcement agencies to ensure consistent statewide application of the standards.

(e) Penalty. A law enforcement officer who violates subsection (c) of this section shall be:

(1) for a first offense, assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000.00; and

(2) for a second offense and subsequent offense, assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$2,500.00.

Sec. 2. 4 V.S.A. § 1102 is amended to read:

§ 1102. JUDICIAL BUREAU; JURISDICTION

(a) The Judicial Bureau is created within the Judicial Branch under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

(b) The Judicial Bureau shall have jurisdiction of the following matters:

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(37) Violations of 20 V.S.A. § 2373(c)(1) and (2), relating to standards for law enforcement identification.

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Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.