



Ohio Revised Code

Section 177.02 Complaint that alleges that organized criminal activity has occurred in county.

Effective: April 9, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 366

(A)(1) As used in this section, "cargo theft" means the unlawful taking of any cargo including goods, chattels, money, or baggage that constitutes a commercial shipment of freight moving in any of the following:

(a) Commerce;

(b) A pipeline system;

(c) A railroad car;

(d) A motor truck or other vehicle;

(e) A tank or storage facility;

(f) A station house, platform, or depot;

(g) A vessel or wharf;

(h) An aircraft, airport terminal, airport, aircraft terminal, or air navigation facility;

(i) An intermodal container, intermodal chassis, trailer, container freight station, warehouse, freight distribution facility, or freight consolidation facility.

(2) Any person may file with the organized crime investigations commission a complaint that alleges that organized criminal activity has occurred in a county. A person who files a complaint under this division also may file with the commission information relative to the complaint.



(B)(1) Upon the filing of a complaint under division (A) of this section or upon its own initiative, the commission may establish an organized crime task force to investigate organized criminal activity in a single county or in two or more counties if it determines, based upon the complaint filed and the information relative to it or based upon any information that it may have received, that there is reason to believe that organized criminal activity has occurred and continues to occur in that county or in each of those counties. The commission shall not establish an organized crime task force to investigate organized criminal activity in any single county unless it makes the determination required under this division relative to that county and shall not establish an organized crime task force to investigate organized criminal activity in two or more counties unless it makes the determination required under this division relative to each of those counties. The commission, at any time, may terminate an organized crime task force it has established under this section.

(2) An organized retail theft task force is established within the commission to investigate organized retail theft activity, including cargo theft. The task force may investigate based on any complaint filed or information the task force receives that gives reason to believe organized retail theft has occurred and continues to occur in one or more counties.

(3) The task force director and members of the organized retail theft task force shall be appointed in the same manner as an organized crime task force under division (C) of this section.

(C)(1) If the commission establishes an organized crime task force to investigate organized criminal activity in a single county or in two or more counties pursuant to division (B) of this section, the commission initially shall appoint a task force director to directly supervise the investigation. The task force director shall be either the sheriff or a deputy sheriff of any county in the state, the chief law enforcement officer or a member of a law enforcement agency of any municipal corporation or township in the state, or an agent of the bureau of criminal identification and investigation. No person shall be appointed as task force director without the person's consent and, if applicable, the consent of the person's employing sheriff or law enforcement agency or of the superintendent of the bureau of criminal identification and investigation if the person is an employee of the bureau. Upon appointment of a task force director, the commission shall meet with the director and establish the scope and limits of the investigation to be conducted by the task force and the size of the task force investigatory staff to be appointed by the task force director. The commission, at any time, may remove a task force director appointed under this division and may replace any director so removed



according to the guidelines for the initial appointment of a director.

(2) A task force director appointed under this section shall assemble a task force investigatory staff, of a size determined by the commission and the director, to conduct the investigation. Unless it appears to the commission and the director, based upon the complaint filed and any information relative to it or based upon any information that the commission may have received, that there is reason to believe that the office of the prosecuting attorney of the county or one of the counties served by the task force is implicated in the organized criminal activity to be investigated, one member of the investigatory staff shall be the prosecuting attorney or an assistant prosecuting attorney of the county or one of the counties served by the task force. If a prosecuting attorney or assistant prosecuting attorney is not a participating member of the task force, the office of the attorney general shall provide legal assistance to the task force upon request. Each of the other members of the investigatory staff shall be either the sheriff or a deputy sheriff of any county in the state, the chief law enforcement officer or a member of a law enforcement agency of any municipal corporation or township in the state, or an agent of the bureau of criminal identification and investigation. No person shall be appointed to the investigatory staff without the person's consent and, if applicable, the consent of the person's employing sheriff or law enforcement agency or the superintendent of the bureau of criminal identification and investigation if the person is an employee of the bureau. To the extent possible, the investigatory staff shall be composed of persons familiar with investigatory techniques that generally would be utilized in an investigation of organized criminal activity. To the extent practicable, the investigatory staff shall be assembled in such a manner that numerous law enforcement agencies within the county or the counties served by the task force are represented on the investigatory staff. The investigatory staff shall be assembled in such a manner that at least one sheriff, deputy sheriff, municipal corporation law enforcement officer, or township law enforcement officer from each of the counties served by the task force is represented on the investigatory staff. A task force director, at any time, may remove any member of the investigatory staff the task force director has assembled under this division and may replace any member so removed according to the guidelines for the initial assembly of the investigatory staff.

(3) The commission may provide an organized crime task force established under this section with technical and clerical employees and with equipment necessary to efficiently conduct its investigation into organized criminal activity.



(4) Upon the establishment of a task force, the commission shall issue to the task force director and each member of the task force investigatory staff appropriate credentials stating the person's identity, position, and authority.

(D)(1) A task force investigatory staff, during the period of the investigation for which it is assembled, is responsible only to the task force director and shall operate under the direction and control of the task force director. Any necessary and actual expenses incurred by a task force director or investigatory staff, including any such expenses incurred for food, lodging, or travel, and any other necessary and actual expenses of an investigation into organized criminal activity conducted by a task force, shall be paid by the commission.

(2) For purposes of workers' compensation and the allocation of liability for any death, injury, or damage they may cause in the performance of their duties, a task force director and investigatory staff, during the period of the investigation for which the task force is assembled, shall be considered to be employees of the commission and of the state.

(3) For purposes of compensation, pension or indemnity fund rights, and other rights and benefits to which they may be entitled, a task force director and investigatory staff, during the period of the performance of their duties as director and investigatory staff, shall be considered to be performing their duties in their normal capacity as prosecuting attorney, assistant prosecuting attorney, sheriff, deputy sheriff, chief law enforcement officer or member of a law enforcement agency of a municipal corporation or township, or agent of the bureau of criminal identification and investigation.

(4) The commission may reimburse a political subdivision for any costs incurred under division (D)(3) of this section resulting from the payment of any compensation, rights, or benefits as described in that division from the organized crime commission fund created in section 177.011 of the Revised Code. Reimbursement related to service on an organized crime task force shall derive from the funding described in division (A)(1) of that section. Reimbursement related to service on the organized retail theft task force shall derive from the funding described in division (A)(2) of that section.

(E) Except as provided in this division, upon the establishment of a task force, the commission shall provide the prosecuting attorney of each of the counties served by the task force with written notice



that the task force has been established to investigate organized criminal activity in that county. Such notice shall not be provided to a prosecuting attorney if it appears to the commission, based upon the complaint filed and any information relative to it or based upon any information that the commission may have received, that there is reason to believe that the office of that prosecuting attorney is implicated in the organized criminal activity to be investigated.

(F) The filing of a complaint alleging organized criminal activity, the establishment of an organized crime task force, the appointment of a task force director and the identity of the task force director, the assembly of an investigatory staff and the identity of its members, the conduct of an investigation into organized criminal activity, and the identity of any person who is being or is expected to be investigated by the task force shall be kept confidential by the commission and its director and employees, and by the task force and its director, investigatory staff, and employees until an indictment is returned or a criminal action or proceeding is initiated in a court of proper jurisdiction.

(G) For purposes of divisions (C) and (E) of this section, the office of a prosecuting attorney shall be considered as being implicated in organized criminal activity only if the prosecuting attorney, one or more of the prosecuting attorney's assistants, or one or more of the prosecuting attorney's employees has committed or attempted or conspired to commit, is committing or attempting or conspiring to commit, or has engaged in or is engaging in complicity in the commission of, organized criminal activity.