



Ohio Revised Code Section 2917.31 Inducing panic.

Effective: October 3, 2023

Legislation: House Bill 33

(A) No person shall cause the evacuation of any public place, or otherwise cause serious public inconvenience or alarm, by doing any of the following:

(1) Initiating or circulating a report or warning of an alleged or impending fire, explosion, crime, or other catastrophe, knowing that such report or warning is false;

(2) Threatening to commit any offense of violence;

(3) Committing any offense, with reckless disregard of the likelihood that its commission will cause serious public inconvenience or alarm.

(B) Division (A)(1) of this section does not apply to any person conducting an authorized fire or emergency drill.

(C)(1) Whoever violates this section is guilty of inducing panic.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in division (C)(3), (4), (5), (6), (7), or (8) of this section, inducing panic is a misdemeanor of the first degree.

(3) Except as otherwise provided in division (C)(4), (5), (6), (7), or (8) of this section, if a violation of this section results in physical harm to any person, inducing panic is a felony of the fourth degree.

(4) Except as otherwise provided in division (C)(5), (6), (7), or (8) of this section, if a violation of this section results in economic harm, the penalty shall be determined as follows:

(a) If the violation results in economic harm of one thousand dollars or more but less than seven thousand five hundred dollars and if division (C)(3) of this section does not apply, inducing panic is a felony of the fifth degree.



(b) If the violation results in economic harm of seven thousand five hundred dollars or more but less than one hundred fifty thousand dollars, inducing panic is a felony of the fourth degree.

(c) If the violation results in economic harm of one hundred fifty thousand dollars or more, inducing panic is a felony of the third degree.

(5) If the public place involved in a violation of division (A)(1) of this section is a school or an institution of higher education, inducing panic is a felony of the second degree.

(6) If the violation pertains to a purported, threatened, or actual use of a weapon of mass destruction, and except as otherwise provided in division (C)(5), (7), or (8) of this section, inducing panic is a felony of the fourth degree.

(7) If the violation pertains to a purported, threatened, or actual use of a weapon of mass destruction, and except as otherwise provided in division (C)(5) of this section, if a violation of this section results in physical harm to any person, inducing panic is a felony of the third degree.

(8) If the violation pertains to a purported, threatened, or actual use of a weapon of mass destruction, and except as otherwise provided in division (C)(5) of this section, if a violation of this section results in economic harm of one hundred thousand dollars or more, inducing panic is a felony of the third degree.

(D)(1) It is not a defense to a charge under this section that pertains to a purported or threatened use of a weapon of mass destruction that the offender did not possess or have the ability to use a weapon of mass destruction or that what was represented to be a weapon of mass destruction was not a weapon of mass destruction.

(2) Any act that is a violation of this section and any other section of the Revised Code may be prosecuted under this section, the other section, or both sections.

(E) As used in this section:



(1) "Economic harm" means any of the following:

(a) All direct, incidental, and consequential pecuniary harm suffered by a victim as a result of criminal conduct. "Economic harm" as described in this division includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

(i) All wages, salaries, or other compensation lost as a result of the criminal conduct;

(ii) The cost of all wages, salaries, or other compensation paid to employees for time those employees are prevented from working as a result of the criminal conduct;

(iii) The overhead costs incurred for the time that a business is shut down as a result of the criminal conduct;

(iv) The loss of value to tangible or intangible property that was damaged as a result of the criminal conduct.

(b) All costs incurred by the state or any political subdivision as a result of, or in making any response to, the criminal conduct that constituted the violation of this section or section 2917.32 of the Revised Code, including, but not limited to, all costs so incurred by any law enforcement officers, firefighters, rescue personnel, or emergency medical services personnel of the state or the political subdivision.

(2) "School" means any school operated by a board of education or any school for which the director of education and workforce prescribes minimum standards under section 3301.07 of the Revised Code, whether or not any instruction, extracurricular activities, or training provided by the school is being conducted at the time a violation of this section is committed.

(3) "Weapon of mass destruction" means any of the following:

(a) Any weapon that is designed or intended to cause death or serious physical harm through the release, dissemination, or impact of toxic or poisonous chemicals, or their precursors;



- (b) Any weapon involving a disease organism or biological agent;
- (c) Any weapon that is designed to release radiation or radioactivity at a level dangerous to human life;
- (d) Any of the following, except to the extent that the item or device in question is expressly excepted from the definition of "destructive device" pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 921(a)(4) and regulations issued under that section:
 - (i) Any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine, or similar device;
 - (ii) Any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any item or device into any item or device described in division (E)(3)(d)(i) of this section and from which an item or device described in that division may be readily assembled.
- (4) "Biological agent" has the same meaning as in section 2917.33 of the Revised Code.
- (5) "Emergency medical services personnel" has the same meaning as in section 2133.21 of the Revised Code.
- (6) "Institution of higher education" means any of the following:
 - (a) A state university or college as defined in division (A)(1) of section 3345.12 of the Revised Code, community college, state community college, university branch, or technical college;
 - (b) A private, nonprofit college, university or other post-secondary institution located in this state that possesses a certificate of authorization issued by the chancellor of higher education pursuant to Chapter 1713. of the Revised Code;
 - (c) A post-secondary institution with a certificate of registration issued by the state board of career colleges and schools under Chapter 3332. of the Revised Code.