



## Ohio Revised Code

### Section 5119.08 Appointing special police officers for institutions.

Effective: September 30, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 96

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(A) As used in this section, "felony" has the same meaning as in section 109.511 of the Revised Code.

(B)(1) Subject to division (C) of this section, upon the recommendation of the director of behavioral health, the managing officer of an institution under the jurisdiction of the department of behavioral health may designate one or more employees to be special police officers of the department. The special police officers shall take an oath of office, wear the badge of office, and give bond for the proper and faithful discharge of their duties in an amount that the director requires.

(2) In accordance with section 109.77 of the Revised Code, the special police officers shall be required to complete successfully a peace officer basic training program approved by the Ohio peace officer training commission and to be certified by the commission. The cost of the training shall be paid by the department of behavioral health.

(3) Special police officers, on the premises of institutions under the jurisdiction of the department of behavioral health and subject to the rules of the department, shall protect the property of the institutions and the persons and property of patients in the institutions, suppress riots, disturbances, and breaches of the peace, and enforce the laws of the state and the rules of the department for the preservation of good order. They may arrest any person without a warrant and detain the person until a warrant can be obtained under the circumstances described in division (F) of section 2935.03 of the Revised Code.

(C)(1) The managing officer of an institution under the jurisdiction of the department of behavioral health shall not designate an employee as a special police officer of the department pursuant to division (B)(1) of this section on a permanent basis, on a temporary basis, for a probationary term, or on other than a permanent basis if the employee previously has been convicted of or has pleaded guilty to a felony.



(2)(a) The managing officer of an institution under the jurisdiction of the department of behavioral health shall terminate the employment as a special police officer of the department of an employee designated as a special police officer under division (B)(1) of this section if that employee does either of the following:

(i) Pleads guilty to a felony;

(ii) Pleads guilty to a misdemeanor pursuant to a negotiated plea agreement as provided in division (D) of section 2929.43 of the Revised Code in which the employee agrees to surrender the certificate awarded to that employee under section 109.77 of the Revised Code.

(b) The managing officer shall suspend from employment as a special police officer of the department an employee designated as a special police officer under division (B)(1) of this section if that employee is convicted, after trial, of a felony. If the special police officer files an appeal from that conviction and the conviction is upheld by the highest court to which the appeal is taken or if the special police officer does not file a timely appeal, the managing officer shall terminate the employment of that special police officer. If the special police officer files an appeal that results in that special police officer's acquittal of the felony or conviction of a misdemeanor, or in the dismissal of the felony charge against that special police officer, the managing officer shall reinstate that special police officer. A special police officer of the department who is reinstated under division (C)(2)(b) of this section shall not receive any back pay unless that special police officer's conviction of the felony was reversed on appeal, or the felony charge was dismissed, because the court found insufficient evidence to convict the special police officer of the felony.

(3) Division (C) of this section does not apply regarding an offense that was committed prior to January 1, 1997.

(4) The suspension from employment, or the termination of the employment, of a special police officer under division (C)(2) of this section shall be in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements.