

New Laws in Local Jurisdictions



ATTORNEYS

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A number of new laws went into effect in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia as of July 1, 2015. These include the following:

In Virginia:

- Employers are no longer permitted to require workers or job applicants to disclose their social media usernames or passwords, nor can they require employees to “friend” them on Facebook;
- Police must obtain a warrant to use drones in an investigation;
- Uber, Lyft and other ridesharing companies must conduct criminal and sex offender background checks on all drivers as well as compiling a driving history report. These companies must pay a one-time \$100,000 licensing fee and annual renew fees of \$60,000;
- Colleges must report sexual violence to law enforcement when an investigation begins and make a note on the transcripts of students who are suspended or expelled for those crimes;
- Virginia Railway Express has raised fares, with some riders paying up to 45 cents more per trip;
- Drivers can now cross the double yellow lines to pass pedestrians and cyclists, but may be ticketed for following bicycles, motorized wheelchairs or other non-cars too closely;
- Virginia will now grant civil immunity to anyone who breaks into a car to save a child as long as the person has first tried to call 911;
- Mothers may now breast-feed in public;
- Restaurants are now required to follow training standards on food allergy awareness and safety;
- Veterans may receive credit for military training courses that relate to their college coursework requirements.

In Maryland:

- Drivers will pay lower tolls on some state roads and bridges. The toll to cross the Bay Bridge has been reduced from \$6 to \$4. The E-Z Pass holder discount has increased from 10 percent to 25 percent for the Baltimore Harbor and Fort McHenry tunnels, the Francis Scott Key Bridge and the Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge;
- The so-called “rain tax,” which was a stormwater remediation fee for property owners, has been repealed;

- The gas tax has increased from 2 percent to 3 percent, adding about 2 cents per gallon;
- Ridesharing companies like Uber will be regulated by the Maryland Public Service Commission, which will require drivers to be fingerprinted;
- The minimum wage has gone from \$8 to \$8.25. It is set to rise to \$8.75 in 2016, \$9.25 in 2017 and \$10.10 in 2018.

In the District:

- The minimum wage has risen to \$10.50 and will be increased to \$11.50 next July.