# WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §16b-3-19

**§16B-3-19. Hospital police departments; appointment of hospital police officers; qualifications; authority; compensation and removal; law-enforcement grants; limitations on liability and when immune from liability.**

(a) The governing board of a hospital licensed under §16B-3-2 of this code may establish a hospital police department and appoint qualified individuals to serve as hospital police officers upon any premises owned or leased by the hospital and under the jurisdiction of the governing board, subject to the conditions and restrictions established in this section.

(1) A person who fulfills the certification requirements for law-enforcement officers under §30-29-5 of this code is considered qualified for appointment as a hospital police officer.

(2) A retired police officer may qualify for appointment as a hospital police officer if he or she meets the certification requirements under §30-29-5 of this code.

(3) Before performing duties as a hospital police officer in any county, a person shall qualify as is required of county police officers by:

(A) Taking and filing an oath of office as required by §6-1-1 *et seq*. of this code; and

(B) Posting an official bond as required by §6-2-1 *et seq*. of this code.

(b) A hospital police officer may carry a gun and any other dangerous weapon while on duty if the officer fulfills the certification requirement for law-enforcement officers under §30-29-5 of this code.

(c) It is the duty of a hospital police officer to preserve law and order:

(1) On the premises under the jurisdiction of the governing board and its affiliated properties; and

(2) On any street, road, or thoroughfare, except controlled access highways, immediately adjacent to or passing through the premises under the jurisdiction of the governing board, to which the officer is assigned by the chief executive officer or his or her designee: *Provided*, That a hospital police officer may only enforce the provisions of §17C-1-1 *et seq*. of this code upon request of a local law-enforcement agency.

(A) For the purposes of this subdivision, the hospital police officer is a law-enforcement officer pursuant to the provisions of §30-29-1 *et seq*. of this code;

(B) The hospital police officer has and may exercise all the powers and authority of a law-enforcement officer as to offenses committed within the area assigned;

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(C) The hospital police officer is subject to all the requirements and responsibilities of a law-enforcement officer;

(D) Authority assigned pursuant to this subdivision does not supersede in any way the authority or duty of other law-enforcement officers to preserve law and order on such hospital premises;

(E) Hospital police officers may assist a local law-enforcement agency on public highways. The assistance may be provided to control traffic in and around premises owned by the state or political subdivision when:

(i) Traffic is generated as a result of activities or events conducted or sponsored by the hospital; and

(ii) The assistance has been requested by the local law-enforcement agency;

(F) Hospital police officers may assist a local law-enforcement agency in any location under the agency's jurisdiction at the specific request of the agency; and

(G) Hospital police officers shall enforce the general policies and procedures of the hospital as established by the chief executive officer or his or her designee.

(d) The salary of a hospital police officer is paid by the employing hospital's governing board. The hospital shall furnish each hospital police officer with a firearm and an official uniform to be worn while on duty. The hospital shall furnish, and require each officer while on duty to wear, a shield with the appropriate inscription and to carry credentials certifying the person's identity and authority as a hospital police officer.

(e) The governing board of the employing hospital may at its pleasure revoke the authority of any hospital police officer and such officers serve at the will and pleasure of the governing board. The chief executive officer of the hospital or his or her designee shall report the termination of employment of a hospital police officer by filing a notice to that effect in the office of the clerk of each county in which the hospital police officer's oath of office was filed.

(f) For the purpose of hospital police officers appointed and established in this section, the civil service provisions of §8-14-1 *et seq*. of this code and the investigation and interrogation provisions of §8-14A-1 *et seq*. of this code shall not apply.

(g) A hospital police officer shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability unless one of the following applies:

(1) His or her acts or omissions were manifestly outside the scope of employment or official responsibilities;

(2) His or her acts or omissions were with malicious purpose, in bad faith, or in a wanton or reckless manner; or

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(3) Liability is expressly imposed upon the hospital police officer by any other provision of this code.

(h) A hospital police officer shall be trained in crisis de-escalation techniques consistent with the goals and objectives of this section: *Provided*, That within 180 days of beginning work as a hospital police officer, the employing hospital shall provide crisis management training to a hospital police officer through a program approved by the Law-Enforcement Professional Standards Subcommittee established by §30-29-2 of this code.

(i) A hospital with a police department is immune from liability if a loss or claim results from civil disobedience, riot, insurrection, or rebellion.

(j) Nothing in this section may be construed as creating a duty of a governing board of a hospital to establish a hospital police department.

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