

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §6-3-1a

§6-3-1a. Deputy sheriff's reserve; purpose; appointment and qualifications of members; duties; equipment; attire; training; oath; bond; not employee of sheriff or county commission for certain purposes; limitation on liability.

(a) The sheriff of any county may, for the purposes set forth in this section, designate and appoint a deputy sheriff's reserve, hereinafter referred to as "reserve" or "reserves." A reserve may not be designated or created without the prior approval of the county commission for the establishment of the reserve.

(b) Each sheriff may appoint as members of the reserve bona fide citizens of the county who are of good moral character and who have not been convicted of a felony or other crime involving moral turpitude. Any person appointed shall serve at the will and pleasure of the sheriff and is not subject to the provisions of §7-14-1 et seq. seven of this code. A member of the reserve may not engage in any political activity or campaign involving the office of sheriff or from which activity or campaign the sheriff or candidates for sheriff appointing the member would directly benefit.

(c) Members of the reserves shall not serve as law-enforcement officers, nor carry firearms, except that a member of the reserves may carry a firearm approved by the sheriff while acting in the capacity as a reserve deputy sheriff solely for purpose of defense of self or others, if that member has:

(1) Obtained the written authorization of the sheriff;

(2) Been determined not to be prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law; and

(3) Successfully completed a firearms training and certification program equivalent to that provided to officers attending the entry level law-enforcement certification course provided at the West Virginia State Police Academy. The member must thereafter successfully complete an annual firearms qualification course equivalent to that required of certified law-enforcement officers as established by legislative rule. The department may reimburse the member for the cost of the training and requalification.

Members may carry other weapons, provided that the sheriff certifies in writing to the county commission that the reserve has met the special training requirements for the weapon as established by the Governor's Committee on Crime, Delinquency and Corrections. The Governor's Committee on Crime, Delinquency and Corrections may propose legislative rules for promulgation and emergency rules pursuant to the provisions of §29A-3-1 et seq. of this code to establish appropriate training standards. The reserves may be provided with radio communication equipment for the purpose of maintaining contact with the sheriff's

department or other law-enforcement agencies. The duties of the reserves shall be limited to crowd control or traffic control and direction within the county. In addition, the reserves may perform any other duties of a nonlaw-enforcement nature designated by the sheriff or by a deputy sheriff designated and appointed by the sheriff for that purpose: Provided, That a member of the reserves may not aid or assist any law-enforcement officer in enforcing the statutes and laws of this state in any labor trouble or dispute between employer and employee.

(d) Members of the reserves may be uniformed; however, if uniformed, the uniforms shall clearly differentiate these members from other law-enforcement deputy sheriffs.

(e) After appointment to the reserves, but prior to service each member of the reserves shall receive appropriate training and instruction in his or her functions and authority as well as the limitations of authority. In addition, each member of the reserves shall annually receive in-service training.

(f) Each member of the reserve shall take the same oath as prescribed by section five, article IV of the Constitution of the State of West Virginia, but the taking of the oath does not serve to make the member a public officer.

(g) The county commission of each county shall provide for the bonding and liability insurance of each member of the reserve.

(h) A member of the reserve is not an employee of either the sheriff or of the county commission for any purpose or purposes, including, but not limited to, the purposes of workers' compensation, civil service, unemployment compensation, public employees retirement, public employees insurance, or for any other purpose. A member of the reserves may not receive any compensation or pay for any services performed as a member, nor may a member use the designated uniform for any other similar work performed.

(i) Neither the county commission nor the sheriff is liable for any of the acts of any member of the reserves except in the case of gross negligence on the part of the county commission or sheriff in the appointment of the member or in the case of gross negligence on the part of either the sheriff or any of his or her deputies in directing any action on the part of the member.