

New Virginia Laws Effective This Summer: What You Need to Know

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Virginia's gas tax is set [to increase](#) on July 1, and that isn't the only new law that will take effect this summer.

One of the legal changes is the implementation of a full ban on expanded polystyrene food containers. The ban applies to any food vendor that sells takeaway food, including restaurants, grocery stores, and catering trucks. Schools will also be prevented from using the containers, which are often called Styrofoam.

Last year, a similar ban was applied to large chains and food vendors that have more than 20 locations in the state. The latest update applies the same policies to all vendors. "EPS isn't the best choice for people or the environment," the state's Department of Environmental Quality wrote. "It's time to learn about and plan for alternatives."

Merchants note that other takeout containers are more expensive than polystyrene, and that those expenses will make it more difficult for them to remain in business. "My wife was looking for different containers, and the prices were actually double the price," the owner of a food truck [told 13 News](#) in Norfolk.

"Localities may grant food vendors up to one year exemption for the EPS ban if they can demonstrate compliance with the ban would impose undue economic hardship," the [state said](#). "Food vendors granted an exemption can reapply to the locality before the exemption expires. Localities may then grant an additional exemption to vendors continuing to demonstrate the ban imposes undue economic hardship."

Another new law, the Clean Slate Act, will allow those convicted of misdemeanors and some low-level felonies to have their criminal records sealed if they have maintained [a clean criminal record](#) for seven years. The change could affect as many as 100,000 people, but the onus will be on the convicted people, who will need to proactively apply for the change.

Jobseekers will have more information with the enactment of a [wage transparency bill](#). Advertisers will be required to disclose salary ranges as part of their job postings, so applicants will have a better idea of what a potential job pays. Potential employers will also be prevented from asking former employers what an applicant made in a former job.

Judges will also be allowed to install speed-governing technology in vehicles driven by [certain repeat offenders](#) as a way to prevent reckless driving, and landlords will have to wait 14 days before they [can evict people](#) for not paying rent. The current requirement is a five-day waiting period.

The highest-profile legal change of the year is up in the air as July 1 arrives. Washington County Circuit Judge Jeffrey Campbell blocked the Virginia State Police from enforcing a law that bans the sale, purchase, manufacture, and transfer of high-capacity semi-automatic weapons and magazines that hold more than 15 rounds.

“Because the newly enacted firearms ban and magazine ban would likely run afoul of the protections of the Second Amendment with respect to the types of firearms and components the plaintiffs possess as enunciated in both *Heller* and *Bruen*, I find that the plaintiffs are likely to prevail on the merits of their claims,” [the judge wrote](#).

Virginia Attorney General Jay Jones has promised to appeal the decision. The state Supreme Court is also expected to weigh in.