

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend and reenact § 19.2-72 of the Code of Virginia, relating to written complaints; felony*
3 *offenses.*

4
5 Approved

[H 438]

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

7 **1. That § 19.2-72 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

8 **§ 19.2-72. When it may issue; what to recite and require.**

9 On complaint of a criminal offense to any officer authorized to issue criminal warrants he shall
10 examine on oath the complainant and any other witnesses, or when such officer shall suspect that an
11 offense punishable otherwise than by a fine has been committed he may, without formal complaint,
12 issue a summons for witnesses and shall examine such witnesses. A written complaint shall be required
13 if the complainant is not a law-enforcement officer; however, if no arrest warrant is issued in response
14 to a written complaint made by such complainant, the written complaint shall be returned to the
15 complainant. *A written complaint is required for a felony offense, regardless of whether the complainant*
16 *is a law-enforcement officer.* If upon such examination such officer finds that there is probable cause to
17 believe the accused has committed an offense, such officer shall issue a warrant for his arrest, except
18 that no magistrate may issue an arrest warrant for a felony offense upon the basis of a complaint by a
19 person other than a law-enforcement officer or an animal control officer without prior authorization by
20 the attorney for the Commonwealth or by a law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the alleged
21 offense. The warrant shall (i) be directed to an appropriate officer or officers, (ii) name the accused or,
22 if his name is unknown, set forth a description by which he can be identified with reasonable certainty,
23 (iii) describe the offense charged with reasonable certainty, (iv) command that the accused be arrested
24 and brought before a court of appropriate jurisdiction in the county, city or town in which the offense
25 was allegedly committed, and (v) be signed by the issuing officer. If a warrant is issued for an offense
26 in violation of any county, city, or town ordinance that is similar to any provision of this Code, the
27 warrant shall reference the offense using both the citation corresponding to the county, city, or town
28 ordinance and the specific provision of this Code. The warrant shall require the officer to whom it is
29 directed to summon such witnesses as shall be therein named to appear and give evidence on the
30 examination. But in a city or town having a police force, the warrant shall be directed "To any
31 policeman, sheriff or his deputy sheriff of such city (or town)," and shall be executed by the policeman,
32 sheriff or his deputy sheriff into whose hands it shall come or be delivered. A sheriff or his deputy may
33 execute an arrest warrant throughout the county in which he serves and in any city or town surrounded
34 thereby and effect an arrest in any city or town surrounded thereby as a result of a criminal act
35 committed during the execution of such warrant. A jail officer as defined in § 53.1-1 employed at a
36 regional jail or jail farm is authorized to execute a warrant of arrest upon an accused in his jail. The
37 venue for the prosecution of such criminal act shall be the jurisdiction in which the offense occurred.

ENROLLED

HB438ER