

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1152
Judiciary

(Delegate Williams)

Department of State Police - Special Police Officers - Study

This bill requires the Department of State Police (DSP) to study and make recommendations on the employment and use of special police officers (SPOs), including (1) the commissioning process; (2) employment requirements; (3) SPO operations, training, and equipment; (4) the jurisdiction of SPOs; and (5) regulatory oversight to suspend or revoke the commission of SPOs. In conducting the study, DSP must survey and document the licensing of and regulatory requirements for SPOs and the equivalent in surrounding states and analyze best practices for the use of SPOs by public and private employers in the State and surrounding states by considering (1) the number of SPOs in the State and surrounding states; (2) mandated training for SPOs, including firearms training; (3) the impact of the use of SPOs on public safety; and (4) recorded complaints. In carrying out the study, DSP must consult with specified entities. By December 1, 2026, DSP must submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements can be handled using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local government finances are not anticipated to be materially affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: In carrying out the study, DSP must consult with (1) SPOs; (2) employers of SPOs, including local or county governments that employ SPOs; (3) a representative of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association; (4) a representative of the Maryland Sheriffs' Association; (5) a representative of the DSP Licensing Division; (6) a representative of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association; (7) a representative of the Office of the Secretary of State; and (8) a representative of a security training academy that provides training for SPOs.

Current Law: The Governor may appoint and deputize an individual as a SPO; however, each SPO is deemed to be an employee of the entity that requested the appointment. Such a commission is granted arrest powers, but the scope of each commission is limited to the property cited in the commission, unless the SPO is in active pursuit for the purpose of immediate apprehension. An SPO appointed by the Governor may:

- arrest individuals who trespass or commit offenses on the property described in the application for the commission;
- exercise the powers of a police officer on that property;
- exercise the powers of a police officer in a county or municipality in connection with the care, custody, and protection of other property of the entity that requested the appointment of the SPO or other property, real or personal, for which the entity has assumed an obligation to maintain or protect; and
- direct and control traffic on public highways and roads in the immediate vicinity of the property in order to facilitate the orderly movement of traffic to and from the property, if approved in advance.

An SPO may make an arrest or issue a traffic citation for a violation of the Maryland Vehicle Law or any other State or local traffic law or regulation only if the SPO (1) has a probationary or permanent appointment as a security officer or is a member of an industrial police force and (2) has completed the basic training course for police officers as established by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC). With specified exceptions, an SPO applicant for an initial commission must complete a training course approved by the Secretary of State Police, in consultation with MPTSC, consisting of at least 80 hours of instruction, as specified. Before submitting an application for renewal, an SPO must complete 12 hours of in-service training approved by the Secretary in consultation with MPTSC.

The application fee for an SPO commission is \$100. An initial commission expires three years after the date of issuance and is renewable for a three-year term under specified conditions. The renewal fee is \$60.

The following entities are authorized to apply for the appointment of SPO for the following purposes:

- a municipality, county, or other governmental body of the State, in order to protect property owned, leased, or regularly used by the governmental body or any of its units;
- another state, or subdivision or unit of another state, that has an interest in property located wholly or partly in this State, in order to protect the property;
- a college, university, or public school system in the State, in order to protect its property or students;
- a person that exists and functions for a legal business purpose, in order to protect its business property; or
- a person that holds a valid license as a security guard agency under Title 19, Subtitle 3 of the Business Occupations and Professions Article, in order to protect property owned or leased by its clients.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Frederick, Montgomery, and Somerset counties; City of Frederick; Maryland Municipal League; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/lgc

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