

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 14 (Senator Muse)
Judicial Proceedings

Criminal Procedure - Search Warrant Application - Copy Filed with State's Attorney

This bill requires a copy of an application for a search warrant to be filed with the State's Attorney or a deputy State's Attorney designated in writing by the State's Attorney for the county in which the search warrant is to be served prior to the execution of the search warrant.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Although the bill does not specify whether the District Court or State law enforcement bears the responsibility of delivering copies of search warrant applications, it is anticipated that the bill's requirements can be met with existing resources.

Local Effect: It is anticipated that the circuit courts or local law enforcement agencies can handle the bill's requirements with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A circuit court or District Court judge may issue a search warrant whenever it is made to appear to the judge that there is probable cause to believe that (1) a misdemeanor or felony is being committed by a person or in a building, apartment, premises, place, or thing within the jurisdiction of the judge; or (2) property subject to seizure is on the person or in or on the building, apartment, premises, place, or thing.

An application for a search warrant must be in (1) writing; (2) signed and sworn to by the applicant; and (3) accompanied by an affidavit that sets forth the basis for probable cause and contains facts within the personal knowledge of the affiant that there is probable cause.

A law enforcement officer may request, in an application for a search warrant, that a building, apartment, premises, place, or thing be searched without the officer having to provide notice of the officer's authority or purpose. To execute such a warrant (also referred to as a "no-knock" warrant), the officer must have a reasonable suspicion that, without the authorization, the property subject to search or seizure may be destroyed, disposed of, or secreted or the life or safety of the executing officer or another person may be in danger. This warrant authorizes the executing law enforcement officer to enter the building, apartment, premises, place, or to search a thing without giving notice of the officer's authority or purpose.

Any search and seizure made under the authority of a search warrant must be made within 15 calendar days after the day the warrant was issued. A search warrant is void after this 15-day period.

A judge who issues a search warrant must retain a copy of the warrant, application, and supporting affidavit. A judge may order a supporting affidavit to be sealed for up to 30 days under certain circumstances. The warrant, application, affidavit, and other supporting documentation may not be filed with the clerk of the court until the search warrant is returned executed. Generally, an executed search warrant must be returned to the issuing judge or a judge in the same circuit or district as promptly as possible or within 10 days after the date the warrant was executed. The judge to whom the warrant is returned must attach specified supporting documentation and file the papers with the clerk of the county in which the property was seized. The papers filed with the clerk must be sealed and may only be opened for inspection upon order of the court. The clerk must maintain a confidential index of search warrants. A warrant that is not executed within the 15-day time period must be promptly returned to the issuing judge, who may destroy it.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Office of the Public Defender, State's Attorneys' Association, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 22, 2010
mpc/kdm

Analysis by: Amy A. Devadas

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510