

# HOUSE BILL 477

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CF SB 383

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By: **Delegate Pippy**

Introduced and read first time: January 15, 2021

Assigned to: Judiciary

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Committee Report: Favorable

House action: Adopted

Read second time: February 26, 2021

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Court Order to Use a Cell Site Simulator or Obtain Location Information From**  
3 **an Electronic Device – Procedures**

4 FOR the purpose of providing the ways in which an application for a certain court order  
5 may be submitted to a judge; providing the ways in which an applicant for a certain  
6 court order and a judge may converse about a certain court order application;  
7 providing the ways in which a judge may issue a certain court order; and generally  
8 relating to court orders to use cell site simulators or obtain location information from  
9 electronic devices.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
11 Article – Criminal Procedure  
12 Section 1–203.1  
13 Annotated Code of Maryland  
14 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Criminal Procedure**

18 1–203.1.

19 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (2) “Cell site simulator” means a device that mimics a cell tower and  
2 captures identifying information of electronic devices in the range of the device.

3 (3) “Court” means the District Court or a circuit court having jurisdiction  
4 over the crime being investigated, regardless of the location of the electronic device from  
5 which location information is sought.

6 (4) (i) “Electronic device” means a device that enables access to or use  
7 of an electronic communication service, as defined in § 10–401 of the Courts Article, a  
8 remote computing service, as defined in § 10–4A–01(c) of the Courts Article, or a geographic  
9 location information service.

10 (ii) “Electronic device” does not include:

11 1. an automatic identification system installed on a vessel in  
12 accordance with Title 33, Part 164.46 of the Code of Federal Regulations; or

13 2. a vessel monitoring system (VMS) or a VMS unit installed  
14 on board a vessel for vessel monitoring in accordance with Title 50, Part 648 of the Code of  
15 Federal Regulations.

16 (5) “Exigent circumstances” means an emergency or other judicially  
17 recognized exception to constitutional warrant requirements.

18 (6) “Location information” means real–time or present information  
19 concerning the geographic location of an electronic device that is generated by or derived  
20 from the operation of that device.

21 (7) “Location information service” means a global positioning service or  
22 other mapping, locational, or directional information service.

23 (8) “Owner” means a person or an entity having the legal title, claim, or  
24 right to an electronic device.

25 (9) “Service provider” means the provider of an electronic communication  
26 service, a remote computing service, or any location information service.

27 (10) “User” means a person that uses or possesses an electronic device.

28 (b) (1) A court may issue an order authorizing or directing a law enforcement  
29 officer to use a cell site simulator or obtain location information from an electronic device  
30 after determining from an application described in paragraph (2) of this subsection that  
31 there is probable cause to believe that:

32 (i) a misdemeanor or felony has been, is being, or will be committed  
33 by the owner or user of the electronic device or by the individual about whom location

1 information is being sought; and

2 (ii) the information sought by the cell site simulator or the location  
3 information being sought:

4 1. is evidence of, or will lead to evidence of, the misdemeanor  
5 or felony being investigated; or

6 2. will lead to the apprehension of an individual for whom an  
7 arrest warrant has been previously issued.

8 (2) An application for an order under this section shall be:

9 (i) in writing;

10 (ii) signed and sworn to by the applicant; and

11 (iii) accompanied by an affidavit that:

12 1. sets forth the basis for probable cause as described in  
13 paragraph (1) of this subsection; and

14 2. contains facts within the personal knowledge of the  
15 affiant.

16 **(3) AN APPLICATION FOR A COURT ORDER UNDER THIS SECTION MAY**  
17 **BE SUBMITTED TO A JUDGE:**

18 **(I) BY IN-PERSON DELIVERY OF THE APPLICATION, THE**  
19 **AFFIDAVIT, AND A PROPOSED COURT ORDER;**

20 **(II) BY SECURE FAX, IF A COMPLETE AND PRINTABLE IMAGE OF**  
21 **THE APPLICATION, THE AFFIDAVIT, AND A PROPOSED COURT ORDER ARE**  
22 **SUBMITTED; OR**

23 **(III) BY SECURE ELECTRONIC MAIL, IF A COMPLETE AND**  
24 **PRINTABLE IMAGE OF THE APPLICATION, THE AFFIDAVIT, AND A PROPOSED COURT**  
25 **ORDER ARE SUBMITTED.**

26 **(4) THE APPLICANT AND THE JUDGE MAY CONVERSE ABOUT THE**  
27 **COURT ORDER APPLICATION:**

28 **(I) IN PERSON;**

29 **(II) VIA TELEPHONE; OR**

1 (III) VIA VIDEO.

2 (5) THE JUDGE MAY ISSUE THE COURT ORDER:

3 (I) BY SIGNING THE COURT ORDER, INDICATING THE DATE AND  
4 TIME OF ISSUANCE ON THE COURT ORDER, AND PHYSICALLY DELIVERING THE  
5 SIGNED AND DATED COURT ORDER, THE APPLICATION, AND THE AFFIDAVIT TO THE  
6 APPLICANT;

7 (II) BY SIGNING THE COURT ORDER, WRITING THE DATE AND  
8 TIME OF ISSUANCE ON THE COURT ORDER, AND SENDING COMPLETE AND  
9 PRINTABLE IMAGES OF THE SIGNED AND DATED COURT ORDER, THE APPLICATION,  
10 AND THE AFFIDAVIT TO THE APPLICANT BY SECURE FAX; OR

11 (III) BY SIGNING THE COURT ORDER, EITHER ELECTRONICALLY  
12 OR IN WRITING, INDICATING THE DATE AND TIME OF ISSUANCE ON THE COURT  
13 ORDER, AND SENDING COMPLETE AND PRINTABLE IMAGES OF THE SIGNED AND  
14 DATED COURT ORDER, THE APPLICATION, AND THE AFFIDAVIT TO THE APPLICANT  
15 BY SECURE ELECTRONIC MAIL.

16 [(3)] (6) An order to obtain location information issued under this section  
17 shall:

18 (i) name or describe with reasonable particularity:

19 1. the type of electronic device associated with the location  
20 information being sought;

21 2. the user of the electronic device, if known, or the  
22 identifying number of the electronic device about which location information is sought;

23 3. the owner, if known and if the owner is a person or an  
24 entity other than the user, of the electronic device;

25 4. the grounds for obtaining the location information; and

26 5. the name of the applicant on whose application the order  
27 was issued;

28 (ii) authorize the executing law enforcement officer to obtain the  
29 location information without giving notice to the owner or user of the electronic device or  
30 to the individual about whom the location information is being sought for the duration of  
31 the order;

1 (iii) specify the period of time for which location information is  
2 authorized to be obtained; and

3 (iv) if applicable, order the service provider to:

4 1. disclose to the executing law enforcement officer the  
5 location information associated with the electronic device for the period of time authorized;  
6 and

7 2. refrain from notifying the user, owner, or any other person  
8 of the disclosure of location information for as long as the notice under subsection (d) of this  
9 section is delayed.

10 **[(4)] (7)** An order authorizing use of a cell site simulator issued under this  
11 section shall:

12 (i) name or describe with reasonable particularity:

13 1. the type of electronic device associated with the use of the  
14 cell site simulator;

15 2. the user of the electronic device, if known, or the  
16 identifying number of the electronic device;

17 3. the owner of the electronic device, if known, and whether  
18 the owner is a person or an entity other than the user;

19 4. the grounds for using the cell site simulator; and

20 5. the name of the applicant on whose application the order  
21 was issued;

22 (ii) authorize the executing law enforcement officer to use a cell site  
23 simulator without giving notice to the owner or user of the electronic device or to the  
24 individual about whom information is being sought for the duration of the order;

25 (iii) specify the period of time for which use of a cell site simulator is  
26 authorized;

27 (iv) require that any third-party or nontarget data be permanently  
28 destroyed on the expiration of the order;

29 (v) require that no content data be obtained;

30 (vi) restrict the investigative use of any third-party or nontarget  
31 data without further court order; and

1 (vii) require that a copy of the application and order be provided in  
2 discovery.

3 (c) (1) (i) The period of time during which a cell site simulator may be used  
4 or location information may be obtained under the authority of an order under subsection  
5 (b) of this section may not exceed 30 days unless extended as provided in paragraph (3) of  
6 this subsection.

7 (ii) Cell site simulator use shall begin or location information shall  
8 begin to be obtained by the executing law enforcement officer within 10 calendar days after  
9 the order is issued or, if applicable, the order shall be delivered to the service provider  
10 within 10 calendar days after the order is issued.

11 (2) If none of the events described in paragraph (1)(ii) of this subsection  
12 occurs within 10 calendar days of the issuance of the order, the order is void.

13 (3) (i) The authority to use a cell site simulator or obtain location  
14 information under the order may be extended beyond 30 calendar days on a finding of  
15 continuing probable cause.

16 (ii) An extension under this paragraph may not exceed an additional  
17 30 calendar days, unless the court finds continuing probable cause and determines that  
18 good cause exists for a longer extension.

19 (d) (1) Notice of the court's order shall be delivered to the user and, if known  
20 and if the owner is a person or an entity other than the user, the subscriber of the electronic  
21 device at issue.

22 (2) The notice shall:

23 (i) state the general nature of the law enforcement inquiry; and

24 (ii) inform the user or owner:

25 1. if applicable, that a cell site simulator was used or that  
26 location information maintained by the service provider was supplied to a law enforcement  
27 officer;

28 2. if applicable, of the identifying number associated with the  
29 electronic device;

30 3. of the dates during which the cell site simulator was used  
31 or for which the location information was supplied;

32 4. whether notification was delayed; and

33 5. which court authorized the order.

1           (3) Subject to paragraph (4) of this subsection, notice must be delivered  
2 within 10 calendar days after the expiration of the order.

3           (4) Notwithstanding any provision of the Maryland Rules or this subtitle,  
4 the court, on a finding of good cause, may order that the application, affidavit, and order be  
5 sealed and that the notification required under this section be delayed for a period of 30  
6 calendar days.

7           (5) A finding of good cause under paragraph (4) of this subsection may be  
8 established by evidence that:

9                   (i) the criminal investigation to which the affidavit is related is of a  
10 continuing nature and likely to yield further information that could be of use in prosecuting  
11 alleged criminal activities; and

12                   (ii) the failure to maintain the confidentiality of the investigation  
13 would:

14                                 1. jeopardize the use of information already obtained in the  
15 investigation;

16                                 2. impair the continuation of the investigation; or

17                                 3. jeopardize the safety of a source of information.

18           (6) A court may order that notification under this section be delayed beyond  
19 30 calendar days if:

20                   (i) a law enforcement officer provides continued evidence of a  
21 circumstance described in paragraph (5) of this subsection; and

22                   (ii) the court makes a finding of good cause based on evidence that  
23 notice should be further delayed to preserve the continuation of the investigation.

24           (e) (1) Discovery of the application, affidavit, order, and related documents, if  
25 any, is subject to the provisions of Maryland Rules 4–262 and 4–263.

26                   (2) Subject to paragraph (3) of this subsection, evidence obtained in  
27 violation of this section is subject to the exclusionary rule as judicially determined.

28                   (3) Under no circumstances is information collected on a nontarget device  
29 admissible in a criminal, civil, administrative, or other proceeding.

30           (f) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a law enforcement officer  
31 may use a cell site simulator or obtain location information for a period not to exceed 48  
32 hours:

1 (1) in exigent circumstances; or

2 (2) with the express consent of the user or owner of the electronic device.

3 (g) A person may not be held civilly liable for complying with this section by  
4 providing location information.

5 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
6 October 1, 2021.

Approved:

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Governor.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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President of the Senate.