

WHAT'S NEW IN THE 2025-2026 EDITION

The last several years have brought many changes in the criminal law, and they have kept us busy with updates to bring you the most recent law of Virginia Criminal Offenses and Defenses. Between legislative changes and a slew of new important cases, we are pleased to offer the 2025-2026 edition of Virginia Criminal Offenses and Defenses, which we hope you will find useful.

Highlights include the newest rulings from the Supreme Court of Virginia and Court of Appeals regarding felony hit-and-run, brandishing and discharge of a firearm, unauthorized use of a vehicle, violation of a protective order, forgery, computer fraud, child neglect, summary contempt, sex trafficking, the law of attempt, and more.

On the legislative side, the 2025 session of the Virginia General Assembly resulted in a number of important legislative changes, ranging from new restrictions on police interrogation of juveniles, to the addition of forced labor as a type of human trafficking, to the new crime of mail theft and amendments to the crime of sexting, to (finally) recognizing improper driving as a lesser included offense of reckless driving in a jury trial—and this is but a partial list. We thank the Virginia Indigent Defense Commission, in particular Alison Powers, for sharing with us a summary of new legislation from the 2025 legislative session, which made our work much easier.

Each year, Virginia's substantive criminal law changes in important ways, and our aim is to help you get up to speed in the most efficient way possible.

We'll see you in court!

Ron Bacigal and Corinna Lain