

CHAPTER 18

AN ACT concerning fleeing from law enforcement officers and amending N.J.S.2C:29-1 and N.J.S.2C:29-2.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. N.J.S.2C:29-1 is amended to read as follows:

Obstructing administration of law or other governmental function.

2C:29-1. Obstructing Administration of Law or Other Governmental Function. a. A person commits an offense if he purposely obstructs, impairs or perverts the administration of law or other governmental function or prevents or attempts to prevent a public servant from lawfully performing an official function by means of flight, intimidation, force, violence, or physical interference or obstacle, or by means of any independently unlawful act. This section does not apply to failure to perform a legal duty other than an official duty, or any other means of avoiding compliance with law without affirmative interference with governmental functions.

b. An offense under this section is a crime of the fourth degree if the actor obstructs the detection or investigation of a crime or the prosecution of a person for a crime, otherwise it is a disorderly persons offense.

2. N.J.S.2C:29-2 is amended to read as follows:

Resisting arrest, eluding officer.

2C:29-2. Resisting Arrest; Eluding Officer. a. (1) Except as provided in paragraph (3), a person is guilty of a disorderly persons offense if he purposely prevents or attempts to prevent a law enforcement officer from effecting an arrest. (2) Except as provided in paragraph (3), a person is guilty of a crime of the fourth degree if he, by flight, purposely prevents or attempts to prevent a law enforcement officer from effecting an arrest. (3) An offense under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection a. is a crime of the third degree if the person:

(a) Uses or threatens to use physical force or violence against the law enforcement officer or another; or

(b) Uses any other means to create a substantial risk of causing physical injury to the public servant or another.

It is not a defense to a prosecution under this subsection that the law enforcement officer was acting unlawfully in making the arrest, provided he was acting under color of his official authority and provided the law enforcement officer announces his intention to arrest prior to the resistance.

b. Any person, while operating a motor vehicle on any street or highway in this State or any vessel, as defined pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1995, c.401 (C.12:7-71), on the waters of this State, who knowingly flees or attempts to elude any police or law enforcement officer after having received any signal from such officer to bring the vehicle or vessel to a full stop commits a crime of the third degree; except that, a person is guilty of a crime of the second degree if the flight or attempt to elude creates a risk of death or injury to any person. For purposes of this subsection, there shall be a permissive inference that the flight or attempt to elude creates a risk of death or injury to any person if the person's conduct involves a violation of chapter 4 of Title 39 or chapter 7 of Title 12 of the Revised Statutes. In addition to the penalty prescribed under this subsection or any other section of law, the court shall order the suspension of that person's driver's license, or privilege to operate a vessel, whichever is appropriate, for a period of not less than six months or more than two years.

In the case of a person who is at the time of the imposition of sentence less than 17 years of age, the period of the suspension of driving privileges authorized herein, including a suspension of the privilege of operating a motorized bicycle, shall commence on the day the sentence is imposed and shall run for a period as fixed by the court. If the driving or vessel operating privilege of any person is under revocation, suspension, or postponement for a violation of any provision of this Title or Title 39 of the Revised Statutes at the time of any conviction or adjudication of delinquency for a violation of any offense defined in this chapter or chapter 36 of this Title, the revocation, suspension, or postponement period imposed herein shall commence as of the date of termination of the existing revocation, suspension, or postponement.

Upon conviction the court shall collect forthwith the New Jersey driver's licenses of the person and forward such license or licenses to the Director of the Division of Motor Vehicles along with a report indicating the first and last day of the suspension or postponement period imposed by the court pursuant to this section. If the court is for any reason unable to collect the license or licenses of the person, the court shall cause a report of the conviction or adjudication of delinquency to be filed with the director. That report shall include the complete name, address, date of birth, eye color, and sex of the person and shall indicate the first and last day of the suspension or postponement period imposed by the court pursuant to this section. The court shall inform the person orally and in writing that if the person is convicted of personally operating a motor vehicle or a vessel, whichever is appropriate, during the period of license suspension or postponement imposed pursuant to this section the person shall, upon conviction, be subject to the penalties set forth in R.S.39:3-40 or section 14 of P.L.1995, c.401 (C.12:7-83), whichever is appropriate. A person shall be required to acknowledge receipt of the written notice in writing. Failure to receive a written notice or failure to acknowledge in writing the receipt of a written notice shall not be a defense to a subsequent charge of violation of R.S.39:3-40 or section 14 of P.L.1995, c.401 (C.12:7-83), whichever is appropriate. If the person is the holder of a driver's or vessel operator's license from another jurisdiction, the court shall not collect the license but shall notify the director who shall notify the appropriate officials in the licensing jurisdiction. The court shall, however, in accordance with the provisions of this section, revoke the person's non-resident driving or vessel operating privileges, whichever is appropriate, in this State.

For the purposes of this subsection, it shall be a rebuttable presumption that the owner of a vehicle or vessel was the operator of the vehicle or vessel at the time of the offense.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved April 28, 2000.