

Table Summary: Buffer Zone Laws in Other States

SUMMARY

A buffer zone law, or “Halo Law”, establishes a protective perimeter around emergency personnel while they carry out their official duties. According to this law, an individual is prohibited from being within a certain distance of a first responder engaged in their lawful duties after receiving a verbal warning. A verbal warning is typically given when emergency personnel feel that a person intends to interfere with the first responder's official duties or is harassing or threatening the first responder with physical harm. Violators failing to comply with the verbal warning face a misdemeanor offense.

The table below summarizes recent legislation proposed in states seeking to establish buffer zone laws in their jurisdictions.

STATES' HALO LAWS & LEGISLATION COMPARISON TABLE

State Legislation	Emergency Personnel Covered	Buffer Zone	Fines/Fees	Terms Defined	Current status	Other Provisions
Florida SB 184 (2025)	Law enforcement officer Correctional probation officer Firefighter Emergency medical care provider	25 FT	Misdemeanor of the Second Degree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term of imprisonment not exceeding 60 days Fine of up to \$500 	Harass: to willfully engage in a course of conduct directed at a first responder which intentionally causes substantial emotional distress in that first responder and serves no legitimate purpose.	Enacted January 1, 2025	
Arizona HB 2319 (2022)	Law enforcement officer	8 FT	Class 3 Misdemeanor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term of imprisonment not exceeding 30 days Fine of up to \$500 One year probation 	Law Enforcement Activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Questioning a suspicious person. Conducting an arrest, issuing a summons or enforcing the law. Handling an emotionally disturbed or disorderly person who is exhibiting abnormal behavior. 	Was set to take effect Sept 2022, but blocked by Federal Court	Videorecording of a police encounter permitted on private property, by individuals not interfering with police actions, or individuals subject to a police stop.

<p>Indiana HB 1186 (2023) HB 1122 (2025)</p>	<p>Law enforcement officer</p>	<p>25 FT</p>	<p>Class C Misdemeanor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term of imprisonment not exceeding 60 days • Fine of up to \$500 	<p>Emergency Incident Area: area surrounding a structure, vehicle, property, or area that is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. defined by police or firefighters with markers; or 25 feet in all directions from the emergency incident; or 2. a specific distance less than 25 feet in all directions from the emergency incident that is articulated by a law enforcement officer. 	<p>HB1186: Enacted April 20, 2023 Blocked by US District Court</p> <p>HB1122: Enacted March 25, 2-25 Block upheld by 7th Cir. Court</p>	
<p>Louisiana HB 173 (2024)</p>	<p>Peace officer</p>	<p>25 FT</p>	<p>Term of imprisonment not exceeding 60 days</p> <p>Fine of up to \$500</p>	<p>Peace officer: commissioned police officers, sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, marshals, deputy marshals, correctional officers, constables, military police officers, wildlife enforcement agents, park wardens, livestock brand inspectors, forestry officers, attorney general investigators, district attorney investigators, inspector general investigators, probation and parole officers, security officers employed by the legislature, and security personnel employed by the Louisiana Supreme Court or by a Louisiana state court of appeal.</p>	<p>Enacted August 1, 2024</p> <p>Blocked by District Court January 2025</p>	<p>Law provides an affirmative defense if the defendant can establish that the lawful order or command was neither received nor understood by the defendant nor capable of being received or understood under the conditions and circumstances that existed at the time of the issuance of the order.</p>
<p>South Carolina SB 175 (2025)</p>	<p>First Responder</p>	<p>25 FT</p>	<p>Misdemeanor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term of imprisonment not exceeding 60 days • Fine of up to \$500 	<p>First responder: includes a firefighter, law enforcement officer, paramedic, emergency medical technician, or other individual with specialized training and skills who, in the course of his professional duties, responds to fire, medical, hazardous material, or other similar emergencies.</p>	<p>Died in process</p>	
<p>Massachusetts H. 2057 (2025)</p>	<p>First Responder</p>	<p>25 FT</p>	<p>First violation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine of up to \$1,000 <p>Subsequent violations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine of up to \$5,000 • Term of imprisonment not exceeding 1 year 	<p>First responder: any law enforcement officer, a paid, call, reserve or volunteer firefighter, a paid, call, reserve or volunteer emergency medical technician, or any other person whose usual and regular duties include rendering assistance at the scene of a crime, accident or other emergency.</p> <p>Harass: to willfully engage in a course of conduct directed at a first responder which intentionally causes substantial emotional distress in that first responder and serves no legitimate purpose.</p>	<p>Referred to Joint Committee on Judiciary on March 12, 2025</p>	

<p>Ohio <u>HB 20 (2025)</u></p>	<p>Emergency service responder</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Misdemeanor of the First Degree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term of imprisonment not exceeding 180 days • Fine of up to \$1000 	<p>Emergency service responder: any law enforcement officer, first responder, emergency medical technician-basic, emergency medical technician-intermediate, emergency medical technician-paramedic, firefighter, or volunteer firefighter.</p> <p>Warning: a verbal command made by an emergency service responder through which the emergency service responder does both of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) Commands a person to maintain the person's distance, to stay away, to back away, to not interfere, or another similar instruction; • (b) Communicates the verbal command in a manner such that a reasonable person would believe that the person must comply with the verbal command under the circumstances. 	<p>Referred to Senate Judiciary Committee on March 25, 2025</p>	<p>Introduced version of the bill provided a 14-foot barrier zone around emergency services responders, and a definition of "harass":</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. engage in conduct which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) is directed at an emergency service responder. (b) causes substantial emotional distress to the emergency service responder. (c) interferes with the emergency service responder lawfully performing a legal duty. 2. To interrupt, disrupt, hinder, impede, or interfere with an emergency service responder's ability to lawfully perform a legal duty.
<p>Tennessee <u>SB 30/HB 55</u></p>	<p>Law enforcement officer</p>	<p>25 FT</p>	<p>Class B Misdemeanor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months • Fine of up to \$500 	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Enacted July 1, 2025</p> <p>Lawsuit filed July 22, 2025 and case is currently ongoing</p>	<p>Bill provides an affirmative defense to a violation that the lawful order was not received or understood by the person and was not capable of being received or understood under the conditions and circumstances that existed at the time of the issuance of the order.</p>

<p>Illinois HB 5859 (2023-2024)</p>	<p>Peace officer Firefighter Emergency Medical Technician</p>	<p>14 FT</p>	<p>Class A Misdemeanor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term of imprisonment not exceeding 1 year • Minimum fine \$75, potentially up to \$2500 	<p>First responder: a peace officer, a firefighter, or an emergency medical technician.</p> <p>Harass: to engage in a course of conduct directed at a first responder which causes substantial emotional distress in that first responder.</p>	<p>Died in process</p>	
<p>Michigan HB 4323 (2023)</p>	<p>Law enforcement officer</p>	<p>21 FT</p>	<p>Misdemeanor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term of imprisonment not exceeding 90 days • Fine of up to \$600 		<p>Died in process</p>	<p>Bill creates a buffer zone around a law enforcement officer's parked patrol vehicle while an officer is on duty.</p> <p>Bill provides exceptions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals being detained, searched, or arrested • Individuals permitted to come within buffer zone • Individuals unknowingly traversing near/within buffer zone • When the patrol vehicle is parked in a location where no active investigation or law enforcement business is being conducted