STATE OF NEW YORK

10621

IN ASSEMBLY

March 13, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. O'PHARROW -- read once and referred to the Committee on Codes

AN ACT to amend the penal law, in relation to establishing a fifteen-foot safety buffer zone around first responders engaged in the performance of their official duties

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The penal law is amended by adding a new section 240.80 to read as follows:

§ 240.80 Interference with first responders; safety buffer zone.

1. A person is guilty of interference with first responders when such person:

(a) knowingly approaches or remains within the fifteen-foot safety buffer zone surrounding a first responder engaged in the lawful performance of official duties;

(b) has been given a verbal warning by the first responder to remain outside of the safety buffer zone; and

(c) knowingly and willfully fails to comply with such warning and remains within or approaches the safety buffer zone with intent to impede, threaten, harass, or otherwise interfere with the performance of such first responder's duties.

2. For the purposes of this section:

(a) "First responder" shall mean a police officer, peace officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician, paramedic, or other emergency medical services provider engaged in the lawful performance of official duties.

(b) "Safety buffer zone" shall mean an area within fifteen feet of a first responder engaged in the lawful performance of such duties.

3. Nothing in this section shall be construed to:

(a) prohibit or restrict the lawful recording, photographing, or observing of first responders, provided that such activity occurs outside the fifteen-foot safety buffer zone and does not otherwise interfere with official duties; or

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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(b) apply to a person seeking emergency assistance, providing aid, or otherwise complying with lawful instructions from a first responder.

Interference with first responders is a class B misdemeanor.

§ 2. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.