

# HAMPTON VA

## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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## Hampton's earlier curfew for youth: What does it mean for you and your family?

May 29, 2015 – Hampton made some adjustments to the curfew hours for minors. Here are a few key questions and answers about the change, which is now in effect:

**Q: Why was the curfew changed?**

A: To protect young people, who are more vulnerable to crime and peer pressure than adults at night, and who lack experience, perspective and judgment when it comes to recognizing and avoiding poor choices such as drugs, alcohol and crime.

**Q: What are the new curfew hours?**

A: Curfew starts at the same time – 10 p.m. – for youth under the age of 14. For those 14-17 years of age, curfew remains 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays but moves an hour earlier, to 10 p.m., Sunday through Thursday nights. One change was made to better align with the state code: Curfew will end at 6 a.m. daily, not 5 a.m.

**Q: What does the city hope to accomplish with the new curfew hours?**

A: To reinforce parental authority and home life and encourage parents to actively supervise their children.

**Q: Does this new curfew mean kids can't be on the streets after those hours?**

A: Generally, yes. They can't be walking on the streets, sidewalks, parks or other public places. They also can't be driving or in a parked car.

**Q: What are the exceptions?**

- They are with a parent or guardian.
- They are on an emergency errand or legitimate business directed by a parent or guardian.
- They are going to or from a job.
- They are attending an activity on the property of or sponsored by a city or state agency, a school or a religious group; or they are returning home from that activity.
- They are a volunteer firefighter or rescue squad member responding to an emergency.
- They are in a car traveling across states.

**Q: What about visiting a friend or going to the movies?**

A: A teen can be on private property after curfew, such as a friend's house or a movie theater. However, a parent or guardian must be present to pick them up when they exit.

**Q: If I'm driving home from work or a school function, can I stop for an errand?**

A: No. Unless it's an emergency errand directed by a parent, you must go straight home.

**Q: Isn't it really the parents' responsibility?**

A: Parents can also be charged. It is unlawful for any parent or guardian to allow a minor to be out in public after curfew without a parent or guardian.

**Q: What will happen to a teen if he or she is caught?**

A: Usually, the first action will be to call parents to determine if they know where the teen is and to validate a claim of employment or school activity. An officer could require a parent or guardian to pick up the teen. A summons could be issued.

**Q: So, what's the penalty for violating curfew, or allowing your teen to violate curfew?**

A: If a summons is issued, the case moves to juvenile court. Anyone found guilty of violating the ordinance (or giving a false name, address or phone number to law enforcement) can be found guilty of a class 4 misdemeanor. Minors could also be declared "in need of supervision," which gives the juvenile court system discretion in imposing conditions that could include participation in programs, community service, counseling and fines, to name some options.

**Q: Can I read the ordinance?**

A: Yes, the text is posted at <http://hampton.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3090>.

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