

Virginia

Title 18, Chapter 8, Sections 2-372 to 2-379

- [Definition](#)
- [Obscene items](#)
- [Production, publication, sale, possession, etc... of obscene items](#)
- [Obscene exhibitions and performances](#)
- [Advertising obscene items or performances](#)
- [Placard, posters, bills, etc.](#)
- [Coercing acceptance of obscenity](#)
- [Employing or permitting minors to assist in offense](#)

Virginia

Title 18, Chapter 8, Sections 2-372 to 2-379

§ 18.2-372. "Obscene" defined.

The word "obscene" where it appears in this article shall mean that which, considered as a whole, has as its dominant theme or purpose an appeal to the prurient interest in sex, that is, a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, excretory functions or products thereof or sadomasochistic abuse, and which goes substantially beyond customary limits of candor in description or representation of such matters and which, taken as a whole, does not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

(Code 1950, § 18.1-227; 1960, c. 233; 1975, cc. 14, 15.)

§ 18.2-373. Obscene items enumerated.

Obscene items shall include:

- (1) Any obscene book;
- (2) Any obscene leaflet, pamphlet, magazine, booklet, picture, painting, bumper sticker, drawing, photograph, film, negative, slide, motion picture, videotape recording;
- (3) Any obscene figure, object, article, instrument, novelty device, or recording or transcription used or intended to be used in disseminating any obscene song, ballad, words, or sounds; or
- (4) Any obscene writing, picture or similar visual representation, or sound recording, stored in an electronic or other medium retrievable in a perceivable form.

(Code 1950, § 18.1-229; 1960, c. 233; 1975, cc. 14, 15; 1981, c. 293; 1989, c. 546; 2000, c. 1009.)

§ 18.2-374. Production, publication, sale, possession, etc., of obscene items.

It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to:

- (1) Prepare any obscene item for the purposes of sale or distribution; or
- (2) Print, copy, manufacture, produce, or reproduce any obscene item for purposes of sale or distribution; or
- (3) Publish, sell, rent, lend, transport in intrastate commerce, or distribute or exhibit any obscene item, or offer to do any of these things; or
- (4) Have in his possession with intent to sell, rent, lend, transport, or distribute any obscene item. Possession in public or in a public place of any obscene item as defined in this article shall be deemed prima facie evidence of a violation of this section.

For the purposes of this section, "distribute" shall mean delivery in person, by mail, messenger or by any other means by which obscene items as defined in this article may pass from one person, firm or corporation to another.

(Code 1950, § 18.1-228; 1960, c. 233; 1962, c. 289; 1970, c. 204; 1975, cc. 14, 15.)

§ 18.2-375. Obscene exhibitions and performances.

It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to:

(1) Produce, promote, prepare, present, manage, direct, carry on or participate in, any obscene exhibitions or performances, including the exhibition or performance of any obscene motion picture, play, drama, show, entertainment, exposition, tableau or scene; provided, that no employee of any person or legal entity operating a theatre, garden, building, structure, room or place which presents such obscene exhibition or performance shall be subject to prosecution under this section if the employee is not the manager of the theatre or an officer of such entity, and has no financial interest in such theatre other than receiving salary and wages; or

(2) Own, lease or manage any theatre, garden, building, structure, room or place and lease, let, lend or permit such theatre, garden, building, structure, room or place to be used for the purpose of presenting such obscene exhibition or performance or to fail to post prominently therein the name and address of a person resident in the locality who is the manager of such theatre, garden, building, structure, room or place.

(Code 1950, § 18.1-230; 1960, c. 233; 1971, Ex. Sess., c. 191; 1975, cc. 14, 15.)

§ 18.2-376. Advertising, etc., obscene items, exhibitions or performances.

It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to prepare, print, publish, or circulate, or cause to be prepared, printed, published or circulated, any notice or advertisement of any obscene item proscribed in § [18.2-373](#), or of any obscene performance or exhibition proscribed in § [18.2-375](#), stating or indicating where such obscene item, exhibition, or performance may be purchased, obtained, seen or heard.

(Code 1950, § 18.1-231; 1960, c. 233; 1975, cc. 14, 15.)

§ 18.2-377. Placards, posters, bills, etc.

It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to expose, place, display, post up, exhibit, paint, print, or mark, or cause to be exposed, placed, displayed, posted, exhibited, painted, printed or marked, in or on any building, structure, billboard, wall or fence, or on any street, or in or upon any public place, any placard, poster, banner, bill, writing, or picture which is obscene, or which advertises or promotes any obscene item proscribed in § [18.2-373](#) or any obscene exhibition or performance proscribed in § [18.2-375](#), or knowingly to permit the same to be displayed on property belonging to or controlled by him.

(Code 1950, § 18.1-232; 1960, c. 233; 1975, cc. 14, 15.)

§ 18.2-378. Coercing acceptance of obscene articles or publications.

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, association or corporation, as a condition to any sale, allocation, consignment or delivery for resale of any paper, magazine, book, periodical or publication to require that the purchaser or consignee receive for resale any other article, book, or other publication which is obscene; nor shall any person, firm, association or corporation deny or threaten to deny any franchise or impose or threaten to impose any penalty, financial or otherwise, by reason of the failure or refusal of any person to accept such articles, books, or publications, or by reason of the return thereof.

(Code 1950, § 18.1-233; 1960, c. 233; 1975, cc. 14, 15.)

§ 18.2-379. Employing or permitting minor to assist in offense under article.

It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to hire, employ, use or permit any minor to do or assist in doing any act or thing constituting an offense under this article.

(Code 1950, § 18.1-234; 1960, c. 233; 1975, cc. 14, 15.)