

CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

TITLE 1. CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

CHAPTER 57B. CONFIDENTIALITY OF IDENTIFYING INFORMATION OF FAMILY
VIOLENCE VICTIMS

Text of article effective until January 01, 2021

Art. 57B.01. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Name" means the legal name of a person.

(2) "Pseudonym" means a set of initials or a fictitious name chosen by a victim to designate the victim in all public files and records concerning the offense, including police summary reports, press releases, and records of judicial proceedings.

(3) "Public servant" has the meaning assigned by Subsection (a), Section 1.07, Penal Code.

(4) "Victim" means a person who is the subject of:

(A) an offense that allegedly constitutes family violence, as defined by Section 71.004, Family Code; or

(B) an offense that is part of the same criminal episode, as defined by Section 3.01, Penal Code, as an offense described by Paragraph (A).

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1295 (S.B. 74), Sec. 3, eff. June 15, 2007.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 469 (H.B. 4173), Sec. 3.01, eff. January 1, 2021.

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Art. 57B.02. CONFIDENTIALITY OF FILES AND RECORDS. (a) The office of the attorney general shall develop and distribute to all law enforcement agencies of the state a pseudonym form to record the name, address, telephone number, and pseudonym of a victim.

(b) A victim may choose a pseudonym to be used instead of the victim's name to designate the victim in all public files and records concerning the offense, including police summary reports, press releases, and records of judicial proceedings. A victim who

elects to use a pseudonym as provided by this article must complete a pseudonym form developed under this article and return the form to the law enforcement agency investigating the offense.

(c) A victim who completes and returns a pseudonym form to the law enforcement agency investigating the offense may not be required to disclose the victim's name, address, and telephone number in connection with the investigation or prosecution of the offense.

(d) A completed and returned pseudonym form is confidential and may not be disclosed to any person other than a defendant in the case or the defendant's attorney, except on an order of a court of competent jurisdiction. The court finding required by Subsection (g) is not required to disclose the confidential pseudonym form to the defendant in the case or to the defendant's attorney.

(e) If a victim completes and returns a pseudonym form to a law enforcement agency under this article, the law enforcement agency receiving the form shall:

(1) remove the victim's name and substitute the pseudonym for the name on all reports, files, and records in the agency's possession;

(2) notify the attorney for the state of the pseudonym and that the victim has elected to be designated by the pseudonym; and

(3) maintain the form in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the information contained on the form.

(f) An attorney for the state who receives notice that a victim has elected to be designated by a pseudonym shall ensure that the victim is designated by the pseudonym in all legal proceedings concerning the offense.

(g) A court of competent jurisdiction may order the disclosure of a victim's name, address, and telephone number only if the court finds that the information is essential in the trial of the defendant for the offense or the identity of the victim is in issue.

(h) Except as required or permitted by other law or by court order, a public servant or other person who has access to or obtains the name, address, telephone number, or other identifying

information of a victim younger than 17 years of age may not release or disclose the identifying information to any person who is not assisting in the investigation, prosecution, or defense of the case. This subsection does not apply to the release or disclosure of a victim's identifying information by:

(1) the victim; or

(2) the victim's parent, conservator, or guardian, unless the victim's parent, conservator, or guardian allegedly committed the offense described by Article 57B.01(4).

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1295 (S.B. 74), Sec. 3, eff. June 15, 2007.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 469 (H.B. 4173), Sec. 3.01, eff. January 1, 2021.

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Art. 57B.03. OFFENSE. (a) A public servant with access to the name, address, or telephone number of a victim 17 years of age or older who has chosen a pseudonym under this chapter commits an offense if the public servant knowingly discloses the name, address, or telephone number of the victim to any person who is not assisting in the investigation or prosecution of the offense or to any person other than the defendant, the defendant's attorney, or the person specified in the order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(b) Unless the disclosure is required or permitted by other law, a public servant or other person commits an offense if the person:

(1) has access to or obtains the name, address, or telephone number of a victim younger than 17 years of age; and

(2) knowingly discloses the name, address, or telephone number of the victim to any person who is not assisting in the investigation or prosecution of the offense or to any person other than the defendant, the defendant's attorney, or a person specified in an order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(c) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under Subsection (b) that the actor is:

(1) the victim; or

(2) the victim's parent, conservator, or guardian, unless the victim's parent, conservator, or guardian allegedly committed the offense described by Article 57B.01(4).

(d) An offense under this article is a Class C misdemeanor. Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1295 (S.B. 74), Sec. 3, eff. June 15, 2007.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 469 (H.B. 4173), Sec. 3.01, eff. January 1, 2021.

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Art. 57B.04. APPLICABILITY OF CHAPTER TO DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES. Nothing in this chapter requires the Department of Family and Protective Services to use a pseudonym in a department report, file, or record relating to the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child or adult who may also be the subject of an offense described by Article 57B.01(4). To the extent permitted by law, the Department of Family and Protective Services and a department employee, as necessary in performing department duties, may disclose the name of a victim who elects to use a pseudonym under this chapter.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1295 (S.B. 74), Sec. 3, eff. June 15, 2007.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 469 (H.B. 4173), Sec. 3.01, eff. January 1, 2021.

Text of article effective until January 01, 2021

Art. 57B.05. APPLICABILITY OF CHAPTER TO POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS. Nothing in this chapter requires a political subdivision to use a pseudonym in a report, file, or record that is not:

(1) intended for distribution to the public; or

(2) the subject of an open records request under Chapter 552, Government Code.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1295 (S.B. [74](#)), Sec. 3,
eff. June 15, 2007.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 469 (H.B. [4173](#)), Sec. 3.01,
eff. January 1, 2021.