

**§ 231. Civil disorders**

(a)(1) Whoever teaches or demonstrates to any other person the use, application, or making of any firearm or explosive or incendiary device, or technique capable of causing injury or death to persons, knowing or having reason to know or intending that the same will be unlawfully employed for use in, or in furtherance of, a civil disorder which may in any way or degree obstruct, delay, or adversely affect commerce or the movement of any article or commodity in commerce or the conduct or performance of any federally protected function; or

(2) Whoever transports or manufactures for transportation in commerce any firearm, or explosive or incendiary device, knowing or having reason to know or intending that the same will be used unlawfully in furtherance of a civil disorder; or

(3) Whoever commits or attempts to commit any act to obstruct, impede, or interfere with any fireman or law enforcement officer lawfully engaged in the lawful performance of his official duties incident to and during the commission of a civil disorder which in any way or degree obstructs, delays, or adversely affects commerce or the movement of any article or commodity in commerce or the conduct or performance of any federally protected function—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(b) Nothing contained in this section shall make unlawful any act of any law enforcement officer which is performed in the lawful performance of his official duties.

(Added Pub. L. 90-284, title X, §1002(a), Apr. 11, 1968, 82 Stat. 90; amended Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(L), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

**AMENDMENTS**

1994—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$10,000” in concluding par.

**SHORT TITLE**

Pub. L. 90-284, title X, §1001, Apr. 11, 1968, 82 Stat. 90, provided that: “This title [enacting this chapter] may be cited as the ‘Civil Obedience Act of 1968’.”

**§ 232. Definitions**

For purposes of this chapter:

(1) The term “civil disorder” means any public disturbance involving acts of violence by assemblages of three or more persons, which causes an immediate danger of or results in damage or injury to the property or person of any other individual.

(2) The term “commerce” means commerce (A) between any State or the District of Columbia and any place outside thereof; (B) between points within any State or the District of Columbia, but through any place outside thereof; or (C) wholly within the District of Columbia.

(3) The term “federally protected function” means any function, operation, or action carried out, under the laws of the United States, by any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States or by an officer or employee thereof; and such term shall specifically include,

but not be limited to, the collection and distribution of the United States mails.

(4) The term “firearm” means any weapon which is designed to or may readily be converted to expel any projectile by the action of an explosive; or the frame or receiver of any such weapon.

(5) The term “explosive or incendiary device” means (A) dynamite and all other forms of high explosives, (B) any explosive bomb, grenade, missile, or similar device, and (C) any incendiary bomb or grenade, fire bomb, or similar device, including any device which (i) consists of or includes a breakable container including a flammable liquid or compound, and a wick composed of any material which, when ignited, is capable of igniting such flammable liquid or compound, and (ii) can be carried or thrown by one individual acting alone.

(6) The term “fireman” means any member of a fire department (including a volunteer fire department) of any State, any political subdivision of a State, or the District of Columbia.

(7) The term “law enforcement officer” means any officer or employee of the United States, any State, any political subdivision of a State, or the District of Columbia, while engaged in the enforcement or prosecution of any of the criminal laws of the United States, a State, any political subdivision of a State, or the District of Columbia; and such term shall specifically include members of the National Guard (as defined in section 101 of title 10), members of the organized militia of any State, or territory of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the District of Columbia not included within the National Guard (as defined in section 101 of title 10), and members of the Armed Forces of the United States, while engaged in suppressing acts of violence or restoring law and order during a civil disorder.

(8) The term “State” includes a State of the United States, and any commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States.

(Added Pub. L. 90-284, title X, §1002(a), Apr. 11, 1968, 82 Stat. 91; amended Pub. L. 101-647, title XII, §1205(a), Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 4830; Pub. L. 102-484, div. A, title X, §1051(b)(1), Oct. 23, 1992, 106 Stat. 2498.)

**AMENDMENTS**

1992—Par. (7). Pub. L. 102-484 substituted “members of the National Guard (as defined in section 101 of title 10),” for “; but shall not be limited to, members of the National Guard, as defined in section 101(9) of title 10, United States Code,” and “not included within the National Guard (as defined in section 101 of title 10),” for “; not included within the definition of National Guard as defined by such section 101(9),”.

1990—Par. (8). Pub. L. 101-647 added par. (8).

**§ 233. Preemption**

Nothing contained in this chapter shall be construed as indicating an intent on the part of Congress to occupy the field in which any provisions of the chapter operate to the exclusion of State or local laws on the same subject matter, nor shall any provision of this chapter be construed to invalidate any provision of State law unless such provision is inconsistent with any of the purposes of this chapter or any provision thereof.