

CHAPTER 808

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Referred to in [§101.24](#), [170.7](#), [321J.10](#), [455B.103](#), [462A.14A](#), [462A.14D](#), [602.1614](#), [602.6405](#), [801.1](#), [809A.12](#), [915.42](#)

See [R.Cr.P. 2.12](#), [2.36](#)

For student search restrictions, see [chapter 808A](#)

Electronic search warrant procedure, see [Iowa Ct.R., ch 14](#)

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808.1 Definitions.

For purposes of [this chapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “*Affidavit*” means a written declaration or statement of fact made under oath, or legally sufficient affirmation, submitted in person or by electronic submission before any person authorized to administer oaths within or without the state.

2. “*Electronic*” or “*electronically*” means relating to technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, telephonic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities. For governmental agencies, this may include alternate software to exchange electronic records with the court’s electronic document management system.

3. “*Electronic submission*” means the process by which a person may electronically submit an application for a search warrant and any supporting documents to the court for review or other court action.

4. “*Search warrant*” means an order in writing, in the name of the state, signed by a magistrate, and directed to a peace officer commanding the officer to search a person, premises, or thing, issued pursuant to the requirements of [section 808.3](#), or to place, track, monitor, or remove a global positioning device, issued pursuant to the requirements of [section 808.4A](#).

[C51, §3291; R60, §5024; C73, §4629; C97, §5545; C24, 27, 31, §13418; C35, §13441-g1; C39, §13441.01; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §751.1; C79, 81, §808.1]

[2014 Acts, ch 1083, §1](#); [2017 Acts, ch 37, §2, 3, 9](#)

Affidavits, see [§622.85](#); [R.Cr.P. 2.36](#)

808.2 Authorization.

A search warrant may be issued:

1. For property which has been obtained in violation of law.
2. For property, the possession of which is unlawful.
3. For property used or possessed with the intent to be used as the means of committing a public offense or concealed to prevent an offense from being discovered.
4. For any other property relevant and material as evidence in a criminal prosecution.

[C51, §3292; R60, §5025; C73, §4630; C97, §5546; C24, 27, 31, §13419; C35, §13441-g3; C39, §13441.03; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §751.3; C79, 81, §808.2]

808.3 Application for search warrant.

1. *a.* A person may make application for the issuance of a search warrant by submitting before a magistrate a written application, supported by the person’s oath or affirmation, which includes facts, information, and circumstances tending to establish sufficient grounds

for granting the application, and probable cause for believing that the grounds exist. The application shall describe the person, place, or thing to be searched and the property to be seized with sufficient specificity to enable an independent reasonable person with reasonable effort to ascertain and identify the person, place, or thing.

b. The search warrant application and any supporting documents may be submitted to the magistrate in person or by electronic submission. If a search warrant is submitted by electronic submission, the magistrate may use electronic means to contact the person submitting the application and supporting documents to confirm the identity of the person, and may administer the person's oath or affirmation and accept the person's sworn testimony by electronic means, subject to the processes and procedures established by the judicial branch.

2. If the magistrate issues the search warrant, the magistrate shall endorse on the application the name and address of all persons upon whose sworn testimony the magistrate relied to issue the warrant together with the abstract of each witness' testimony, or the witness' affidavit. However, if the grounds for issuance are supplied by an informant, the magistrate shall identify only the peace officer to whom the information was given. The application or sworn testimony supplied in support of the application must establish the credibility of the informant or the credibility of the information given by the informant. The magistrate may in the magistrate's discretion require that a witness upon whom the applicant relies for information appear personally and be examined concerning the information.

[C51, §2722; R60, §1565, 4364; C73, §1544, 1545, 4027; C97, §2413, 2414, 4963; S13, §4965-b, 5007-a; SS15, §2413; C24, 27, 31, §1578, 1968, 1969, 13200, 13211; C35, §13441-g4; C39, §13441.04; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §751.4; C79, 81, §808.3]

[85 Acts, ch 39, §1](#); [98 Acts, ch 1117, §1](#); [2017 Acts, ch 37, §4, 9](#)

Referred to in [§321J.10](#), [462A.14D](#), [808.1](#)

Forms, see [R.Cr.P. 2.36](#)

808.4 Issuance.

Upon a finding of probable cause for grounds to issue a search warrant, the magistrate shall issue a warrant, signed by the magistrate with the magistrate's name of office, directed to any peace officer, commanding that peace officer forthwith to search the named person, place, or thing within the state for the property specified, and to file with the magistrate or clerk of the district court, a written inventory itemizing all seized property. The warrant may be issued electronically, subject to the processes and procedures established by the judicial branch, and if so, the peace officer shall cause a printed copy of the warrant to be made for service of process.

[C51, §2722, 3294 – 3296; R60, §1565, 4364, 5027 – 5029; C73, §1544, 4027, 4632 – 4634; C97, §2413, 4963, 5548 – 5550; S13, §5007-a; SS15, §2413; C24, 27, 31, §1578, 1970, 13200, 13421, 13423; C35, §13441-g5; C39, §13441.05; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §751.5; C79, 81, §808.4]

[2017 Acts, ch 37, §5, 9](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1062, §1](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1154, §31](#)

Forms, see [R.Cr.P. 2.36](#)

808.4A Application for search warrant — global positioning device — issuance.

1. A peace officer may make a written application to a magistrate for the issuance of a search warrant to authorize the placement, tracking, monitoring, or removal of a global positioning device, supported by a peace officer's oath or affirmation, which includes facts, information, and circumstances tending to establish sufficient grounds for granting the peace officer's application, and probable cause for believing the grounds exist.

2. a. The application shall describe the person, place, or thing to be tracked or monitored by a global positioning device, or the removal of such a device from a person, place, or thing with sufficient specificity to enable an independent reasonable person with reasonable effort to ascertain and identify the person, place, or thing. If the magistrate issues the search warrant, the magistrate shall endorse on the application the name and address of all persons upon whose sworn testimony the magistrate relied to issue the warrant together with the abstract of each witness' testimony, or the witness' affidavit. However, if the grounds for issuance are supplied by an informant, the magistrate shall identify only the peace officer to

whom the information was given. The application or sworn testimony supplied in support of the application must establish the credibility of the informant or the credibility of the information given by the informant. The magistrate may in the magistrate's discretion require that a witness upon whom the applicant relies for the information appear personally and be examined concerning the information.

b. The search warrant application and any supporting documents may be submitted to the magistrate in person or by electronic submission. If a search warrant is submitted by electronic submission, the magistrate may use electronic means to contact the person submitting the application and supporting documents to confirm the identity of the person, and may administer the person's oath or affirmation and accept the person's sworn testimony by electronic means, subject to the processes and procedures established by the judicial branch.

3. Upon a finding of probable cause to issue such a warrant, the magistrate shall issue a warrant, signed by the magistrate with the magistrate's name of office, directed to any peace officer, commanding that the peace officer place, track, monitor, or remove the global positioning device.

[2014 Acts, ch 1083, §2; 2017 Acts, ch 37, §6, 9](#)

Referred to in §808.1

808.5 Execution.

A search warrant may be executed by any peace officer. No persons other than those authorized by [this section](#) shall execute search warrants except in aid of those so authorized and on such authorized person's request, the authorized person being present and acting. The warrant may be executed in the daytime or in the nighttime. The warrant, when executed, shall be forthwith returned to the issuing magistrate. Where the property to be seized has been, or is susceptible of being, removed from the officer's jurisdiction, the officer executing the warrant may pursue it and search for property designated in the warrant.

[C51, §3297; R60, §1565, 5032, 5035; C73, §1544, 4637, 4640; C97, §2413, 5552, 5555; S13, §5007-a; SS15, §2413, 2415; C24, 27, 31, §1578, 1970, 1971, 13425, 13428; C35, §13441-g7, -g8; C39, **§13441.07, 13441.08**; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §751.7, 751.8; C79, 81, §808.5]

808.6 Forcible execution.

1. The officer may break into any structure or vehicle where reasonably necessary to execute the warrant if, after notice of this authority and purpose the officer's admittance has not been immediately authorized. The officer may use reasonable force to enter a structure or vehicle to execute a search warrant without notice of the officer's authority and purpose in the case of vacated or abandoned structures or vehicles.

2. The officer executing a search warrant may break restraints when necessary for the officer's own liberation or to effect the release of a person who has entered a place to aid the officer.

[C51, §3298; R60, §5033, 5034; C73, §4638, 4639; C97, §5553, 5554; C24, 27, 31, §13426, 13427; C35, §13441-g9, -g10; C39, **§13441.09, 13441.10**; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §751.9, 751.10; C79, 81, §808.6]

[2018 Acts, ch 1041, §127](#)

808.7 Detention and search of persons on premises.

In the execution of a search warrant the person executing the same may reasonably detain and search any person or thing in the place at the time for any of the following reasons:

1. To protect the searcher from attack.
2. To prevent the disposal or concealment of any property subject to seizure described in the warrant.
3. To remove any item which is capable of causing bodily harm that the person may use to resist arrest or effect an escape.

[C79, 81, §808.7]

808.8 Return.

A search warrant shall be executed within ten days from its date; failure to execute within that period shall void the warrant. Property seized and its containers, if any, shall be safely kept by the officer, and incident thereto:

1. Upon such seizure the officer shall furnish an itemized receipt for such property to the person from whom taken or in whose possession it was found, if such person can be located, or a copy of the inventory may be left on the premises searched.

2. The officer must file, with the officer's return, a complete inventory of the property taken with the magistrate or clerk of the district court, including a sworn statement that it is accurate to the best of the officer's knowledge. The magistrate or clerk of the district court must, if requested, deliver a copy of the inventory of seized property to the person from whose possession it was taken and to the applicant for the warrant.

[C51, §3299 – 3302; R60, §1565, 5036 – 5039; C73, §1544, 4641 – 4644; C97, §2413, 2415, 5556 – 5559; SS15, §2413, 2415; C24, 27, 31, §1581, 1971, 13429 – 13432; C35, §13441-g12-15; C39, §13441.12 – 13441.15; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §751.12 – 751.15; C79, 81, §808.8]

2017 Acts, ch 37, §7, 9; 2020 Acts, ch 1121, §114, 115

Forms, see R.Cr.P. 2.36

808.9 Safekeeping of seized property.

Property of an evidentiary nature seized in the execution of a search warrant shall be safely kept, subject to the orders of any court having jurisdiction to try any offense involved therewith, so long as reasonably necessary to enable its production at trials. The disposition of such property shall be in accordance with [chapter 809](#).

[R60, §5048; C73, §4653; C97, §5568; C24, 27, 31, §13441; C35, §13441-g36; C39, §13441.36; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §751.36; C79, 81, §808.9]

Referred to in [§321J.10](#), [462A.14D](#)

808.10 Maliciously suing out a warrant — officer exceeding authority.

Whoever maliciously and without just cause procures a search warrant to be issued and executed is guilty of a serious misdemeanor. Anyone who, in executing a search warrant, willfully exceeds the person's authority, or exercises it with unnecessary severity, is guilty of a serious misdemeanor.

[C51, §3308; R60, §5045, 5046; C73, §4650, 4651; C97, §5565, 5566; C24, 27, 31, §13438, 13439; C35, §13441-g38, -g39; C39, §13441.38, 13441.39; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §751.38, 751.39; C79, 81, §808.10]

808.11 Transmission of documents to district court clerk.

The magistrate who has issued a search warrant shall attach to the warrant a copy of the return, inventory, if the inventory has not already been filed with the clerk of the district court, and all other documents in connection therewith and shall file them with the clerk of the district court for the county in which the property was seized.

[C79, 81, §808.11]

2017 Acts, ch 37, §8, 9

808.12 Detention and search in theft of library materials and shoplifting.

1. Persons concealing property as set forth in [section 711.3B](#) or [714.5](#), may be detained and searched by a peace officer, person employed in a facility containing library materials, merchant, or merchant's employee, provided that the detention is for a reasonable length of time and that the search is conducted in a reasonable manner by a person of the same sex and according to [subsection 2 of this section](#).

2. No search of the person under [this section](#) shall be conducted by any person other than someone acting under the direction of a peace officer except where permission of the one to be searched has first been obtained.

3. The detention or search under [this section](#) by a peace officer, person employed in a facility containing library materials, merchant, or merchant's employee does not render the person liable, in a criminal or civil action, for false arrest or false imprisonment provided

the person conducting the search or detention had reasonable grounds to believe the person detained or searched had concealed or was attempting to conceal property as set forth in [section 711.3B](#) or [714.5](#).

[C62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §709.22 – 709.24; C79, 81, §808.12]

[2010 Acts, ch 1125, §3](#); [2019 Acts, ch 140, §5](#)

Referred to in [§714.5](#)

808.13 Confidentiality.

All information filed with the court for the purpose of securing a warrant for a search, including but not limited to an application and affidavits, shall be a confidential record until such time as a peace officer has executed the warrant and has made return thereon. During the period of time that information is confidential it shall be sealed by the court, and the information contained therein shall not be disseminated to any person other than a peace officer, magistrate, court employee, an employee of the department of corrections, if authorized by the director of the department of corrections, an employee of a judicial district department of correctional services, if authorized by the director of the judicial district department of correctional services, or a probation officer employed by the United States, acting pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §3602, in the course of official duties.

[C79, 81, §808.13]

[2021 Acts, ch 11, §4](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1017, §2](#)

Confidentiality of arrest warrant information, see [§804.29](#)

808.14 Administrative warrants.

The courts and other appropriate agencies of the judicial branch of the government of this state may issue administrative search warrants, in accordance with the statutory and common law requirements for the issuance of such warrants, to all governmental agencies or bodies expressly or impliedly provided with statutory or constitutional home rule authority for inspections to the extent necessary for the agency or body to carry out such authority, to be executed or otherwise carried out by an officer or employee of the agency or body.

[85 Acts, ch 38, §1](#)

Referred to in [§99F.6](#), [135.141](#), [162.10B](#), [162.10C](#), [421.9](#), [453B.11](#), [657A.1A](#)

808.15 Unmanned aerial vehicle — information — admissibility.

Information obtained as a result of the use of an unmanned aerial vehicle is not admissible as evidence in a criminal or civil proceeding, unless the information is obtained pursuant to the authority of a search warrant, or unless the information is otherwise obtained in a manner that is consistent with state and federal law.

[2014 Acts, ch 1111, §2](#)

808.16 Exception to search warrant requirement — garbage searches.

1. It is the public policy of this state that a person has no reasonable expectation of privacy in garbage placed outside of the person's residence for waste collection in a publicly accessible area.

2. A city or county shall only adopt an ordinance or a regulation concerning waste management and sanitation for the purposes of promoting public health and cleanliness. An ordinance or a regulation adopted by a city or county shall not be construed by a person to create a reasonable expectation of privacy in garbage placed outside of the person's residence for waste collection in a publicly accessible area.

3. Garbage placed outside of a person's residence for waste collection in a publicly accessible area shall be deemed abandoned property and shall not be considered to be constitutionally protected papers or effects of the person.

4. A peace officer may conduct a search and may seize garbage placed outside of a person's residence for waste collection in a publicly accessible area without making an application for a search warrant.

[2022 Acts, ch 1022, §1](#)