

TOWNSHIP OF VERNON

ORDINANCE #25-14

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A NEW CHAPTER IN THE CODE OF VERNON TOWNSHIP, PART I ADMINISTRATIVE LEGISLATION CHAPTER 2 ENTITLED, "RESTRICTED AREAS TO SAFEGUARD THE PUBLIC AND CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT RECORDS FROM DISCLOSURE"

WHEREAS, Vernon Township recognizes the importance of the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 6, of the New Jersey Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township acknowledges that as a matter of public policy, the rights afforded by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 6, of the New Jersey Constitution are not unlimited; and

WHEREAS, the rights afforded by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 6, of the New Jersey Constitution are subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township officials and employees have a responsibility to maintain safety and safeguard public records that consist of confidential information; and

WHEREAS, to adequately comply with the New Jersey Open Public Records Act, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, and to comply with the statutorily defined responsibilities, the maintenance and custody of specific records are required; and

WHEREAS, municipal officials assigned this responsibility include, but are not limited to the Municipal Clerk, Police Chief, Chief Financial Officer, Tax Collector, Tax Assessor, Municipal Court Administrator, Municipal Prosecutor, Public Defender, Municipal Court Judge, Construction Official, Superintendent of Public Works, Fire Official, Board of Health Secretary/Registrar, DPW Director, Township Administrator, Fire Chief, Recreation Director, Senior Center Director and Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the responsibility for public safety and the maintenance and safeguarding of the public and records, reports, documents and information in municipal offices may not be available for immediate public view since they may contain personal information, phone numbers, social security numbers, dates of birth and other confidential information; and

WHEREAS, securing these records maintains the integrity of this information and when an Open Public Records Act request is received, it is determined that a requestor is entitled to the records, the records can be released individually and redacted as required by law; and

WHEREAS, it is not expected that municipal employees will physically intervene to protect a record or resident, and by creating secure areas with clear signage will help deter people from risk to their person or collecting records which they are not entitled to receive without following the process required by the Open Public Records Act.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, and State of New Jersey as follows:

SECTION 1. Part I, Administrative Legislation, of the Revised Ordinances of Vernon Township is hereby amended and supplemented by the addition of the following:

Chapter 2. Restricted Areas to Safeguard the Public and Confidential or Exempt Records from Disclosure (§2-1 - §2-3)

§2-1 Restricted Areas.

For the exception of public reception spaces: (1) the Municipal and Township Police Department office areas and police operational areas in Vernon Township Municipal Hall, 21 Church St., Vernon New Jersey; (2) the Department of Public Works building and garage area, 21 Church St., Vernon New Jersey; (3) Fire Department offices and operational areas at, 535 Route 515, Vernon New Jersey, 813 Canistear Road, Vernon New Jersey, Highland Lakes, 88 Route 94, Vernon New Jersey, McAfee, and 13 Lake Wallkill Road, Sussex New Jersey; (4) the Senior Center offices, 21 Church St., Vernon New Jersey; have been secured and such areas and offices are not open to the public for the purpose of protecting documents, digital data and other written, copied or printed materials that are not subject to the Open Public Records Act, which may include, but are not limited to, personally identifiable information that is protected by the Statutes of the State of New Jersey and the Federal laws of the United States.

§2-2 Signage.

Vernon Township shall be required to post signs outside of offices or operational areas which read the following, but not limited, to the following wording: "Restricted Area", "Authorized Employees Only", "Recording or Photography is Strictly Prohibited", and "Violators are Subject to Criminal Prosecution". Any variation of the above language shall all include, "Violators are Subject to Criminal Prosecution".

§2-3 Violations.

Persons that trespass at these posted, protected offices and areas may be subject to prosecution under N.J.S.A. 2C-18-3.

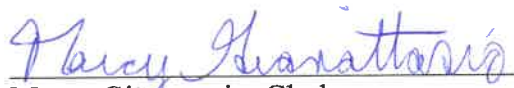
SECTION 2. All Ordinances of Vernon Township which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed as to the extent of such inconsistency.

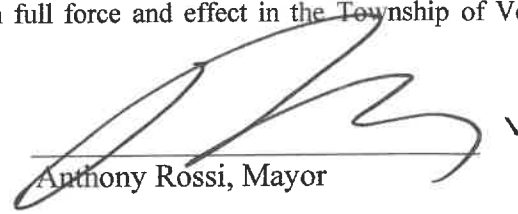
SECTION 3. If any section, subsection, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such a decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

SECTION 4. This Ordinance shall take effect as provided by law.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the above Ordinance was introduced and passed on first reading at the Meeting of the Township Council held on September 22, 2025, and the same came up for final passage and was adopted at the Meeting of the Township Council held on October 16, 2025 at which time all persons interested were given an opportunity to be heard. The above ordinance will be in full force and effect in the Township of Vernon according to law.


 Marcy Gianattasio, Clerk
 Township of Vernon


 Anthony Rossi, Mayor

Township of Vernon

INTRODUCED: September 22, 2025

NAME	M	S	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Buccieri, N.		X	X			
DeBenedetto, J.	X		X			
Higgins, W.			X			
Sparta, B.			X			
Rizzuto, P.			X			

ADOPTED: October 16, 2025

NAME	M	S	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Buccieri, N.	X		X			
DeBenedetto, J.						X
Higgins, W.			X			
Sparta, B.		X	X			
Rizzuto, P.			X			