



MEDIA RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

Ohio Department of Public Safety • John Born, Director
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Unlicensed, armed security guard scheduled to appear in Toledo Court Tuesday

COLUMBUS - A Toledo man is scheduled to appear in court Tuesday on felony charges of working unlicensed as an armed security guard at local bars and after-hours clubs.

Franklin L. Harris, 46, faces two counts of providing security services without a license, a fifth-degree felony punishable by up to a year in prison. A preliminary hearing is set for Tuesday at 9 a.m. in Toledo Municipal Court, courtroom 3. Harris continued working without a license as an armed security guard, despite two prior misdemeanor convictions in the past 14 months for working unlicensed and a cease-and-desist order from the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS).

“Unlicensed security guards are a serious threat to public safety, especially when they are carrying firearms,” said Geoff Dutton, Executive Director of ODPS’ Private Investigator Security Guard Services. “Businesses and organizations should always verify a security guard provider is licensed. Unlicensed providers haven’t undergone a criminal background check, obtained liability insurance, or completed mandatory training to carry a firearm on duty – and, by working unlicensed, they are breaking the law.”

Unlicensed security guards also enable other illegal activity, including after-hours clubs that illegally sell alcohol and drugs. ODPS, which licenses and regulates security guards, first investigated Harris in 2014 after receiving complaints about him working at several bars where there had been shootings. He declined opportunities to apply for a license. Meanwhile, Harris continued to work at other bars and after-hours clubs targeted by police for illegal activity and for being neighborhood nuisances.

On March 18, 2015, Harris pleaded guilty to attempting to engage in security guard services. On February 11, 2016, after continuing to work without a license, he pleaded guilty to providing security services without a license. ODPS issued a cease-and-desist order on April 21, 2016. Still, Harris continued to work and was charged May 18, 2016, with the two charges elevated to felonies.

In investigating Harris, ODPS and its Private Investigator Security Guard Services section partnered with the Ohio Investigative Unit and Toledo Police Department.



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