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Trenton man first in Mercer to receive stricter bail conditions after domestic violence incident

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By Lisa Coryell/For The Times



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TRENTON — A man accused of smashing his car into his ex-girlfriend's vehicle found himself on the business end of a new domestic violence law yesterday when a judge ordered him held on \$50,000 cash bail.

Timothy Pack, 38, of Trenton was the first person in Mercer County subjected to new stricter bail conditions for domestic violence offenders charged with violating pre-existing restraining orders.

Under the new law, signed by Gov. Chris Christie two weeks ago, defendants who violate domestic restraining orders will no longer have the option of paying just 10 percent of a specified bail amount. Cash-only bails will be presumed for those who cause serious injury to a victim or who have previously violated a restraining order from that victim.

Assistant Prosecutor Sean McMurtry said the legislation is a powerful weapon in the court's arsenal against domestic violence.

"It's a new tool for us and we're going to use it," McMurtry said. "Word is going to get out that we're using this, and other prosecutors are going to use it, and the judges are going to support it."

The new bail restrictions will act as a deterrent to prevent repeated acts of domestic violence and will ensure the incarceration of those who continue to torment their victims, he said.

"Offenders knew that for pennies they could get a bond and get out of jail," McMurtry said. "Now they'll understand they're going to get a cash-only bail. And no bail bondsman is going to put up money for that."

Pack is accused of striking his ex-girlfriend's car Nov. 16, then chasing her in his own vehicle when she tried to drive off. Pack rammed the woman's car with his own, causing her to lose control of the vehicle and crash into a building, McMurtry said.

Pack is charged with aggravated assault and possessing a weapon — the car — for unlawful purposes.

Pack's \$75,000 cash or bond bail was up for review yesterday. McMurtry argued that it should be changed to cash only, citing the new law. Superior Court Judge Thomas Summers reduced the bail to \$50,000 with a cash-only restriction.

Pack's attorney Jeffrey Broderick says his client denies the charges and says he was at his girlfriend's house at the time of the alleged assault.

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