# MANUAL OF
# MODEL CRIMINAL JURY INSTRUCTIONS

## FOR THE DISTRICT COURTS OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT

Prepared by the
Ninth Circuit
Jury Instructions Committee

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2022 Edition

*Last Updated August 2026*

# NINTH CIRCUIT
# JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE

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# INTRODUCTION

Correctly and effectively instructing juries is one of the most important—and challenging—responsibilities of a trial judge. Instructions should provide jurors with understandable and accurate explanations of the law and their duties as jurors. Instructions also should be presented in a neutral, even-handed manner. The Jury Instructions Committee of the Ninth Circuit (Committee) has prepared this Manual of Model Criminal Jury Instructions (Manual) to help judges perform this task.

As the title states, these instructions are only models. They are not mandatory, and they have been neither adopted nor approved by the Ninth Circuit. *See* Caveat. They also must be carefully reviewed, with additional legal research and analysis performed when needed, before being used in any specific case, and they should be tailored or modified when appropriate. The Comments that follow many of the model instructions may be helpful. In addition, these model instructions are not intended to discourage judges from using their own forms and techniques for instructing juries.

This 2022 edition of the Manual incorporates new and modified instructions and is current as of March 2022. The Committee meets quarterly to review the most recent decisions from the Supreme Court and the Ninth Circuit that may affect jury instructions. The Committee also considers comments received from judges, court staff, and practitioners and modifies these instructions as appropriate. Because any instruction can be revised at any of these quarterly meetings, the print edition of the Manual provides only a "snapshot" of the model instructions as of March 2022. Accordingly, the Committee encourages all users to consult the online edition to find the most recent version of these model instructions. The online edition is available at www.ce9.uscourts.gov/jury-instructions/model-criminal.

The Committee also significantly reorganized the presentation of the model instructions in this 2022 edition. In earlier editions, substantive criminal jury instructions were presented in numerical order based on the relevant section of Title 18 (and other applicable titles) of the United States Code. In the current reorganization, the Committee presents substantive criminal instructions in separate substantive chapters organized by subject matter. To assist users, the Committee has included a table listing the former instruction numbers from the 2010 edition and the corresponding numbers in the 2022 edition. The Committee encourages users of this book to make suggestions for further revisions, updates, and improvements.

Finally, the Committee expresses its deep appreciation to all previous Committee members whose efforts and insights continue to be reflected in this continuing work and also to the dedicated and accomplished staff of the Ninth Circuit who have assisted the Committee in this project throughout the years. These talented prior staff members include Nicholas Jackson, Esq. and Debra Landis, Esq. Today, the Committee enormously benefits from, and is extremely grateful for, the many contributions of staff attorney Aejung Yoon, Esq. The Committee also recognizes the substantial past contributions from Joseph Franaszek, Esq., who provided many years of volunteer service to the Ninth Circuit at the earliest stages of these model instructions.

## CAVEAT

These model jury instructions are written and organized by judges who are appointed to the Ninth Circuit Jury Instructions Committee by the Chief Circuit Judge. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals does not adopt these instructions as definitive. Indeed, occasionally the correctness of a given instruction may be the subject of a Ninth Circuit opinion.

Ninth Circuit Jury Instructions Committee
March 2022

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# 1. PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTIONS

**Instruction**


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## 1.1 Duty of Jury

Jurors: You now are the jury in this case, and I want to take a few minutes to tell you something about your duties as jurors and to give you some preliminary instructions. At the end of the trial, I will give you more detailed [written] instructions that will control your deliberations.

When you deliberate, it will be your duty to weigh and to evaluate all the evidence received in the case and, in that process, to decide the facts. To the facts as you find them, you will apply the law as I give it to you, whether you agree with the law or not. You must decide the case solely on the evidence and the law before you.

Perform these duties fairly and impartially. You should not be influenced by any person's race, color, religious beliefs, national ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, or economic circumstances. Also, do not allow yourself to be influenced by personal likes or dislikes, sympathy, prejudice, fear, public opinion, or biases[.] [, including unconscious biases. Unconscious biases are stereotypes, attitudes, or preferences that people may consciously reject but may be expressed without conscious awareness, control, or intention. Like conscious bias, unconscious bias can affect how we evaluate information and make decisions.]

### Comment

*See generally* JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 3.3 (2013).

The Supreme Court emphasized the importance of jury instructions as a bulwark against bias in *Pena-Rodriguez v. Colorado*, 137 S. Ct. 855, 871 (2017). Accordingly, the Committee has incorporated stronger language regarding the jury's duty to act fairly and impartially into this instruction, Instruction 1.7 (Credibility of Witnesses), Instruction 6.1 (Duties of Jury to Find Facts and Follow Law), and Instruction 6.19 (Duty to Deliberate).

The presence of even one biased juror deprives the accused of a fair trial. This is true even if the biased juror is an alternate. *United States v. Colar*, 182 F.4th 1110, 1116-17 (9th Cir. 2026).

The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington has prepared a ten-minute video about unconscious bias that can be shown to jurors. *See* www.wawd.uscourts.gov/jury/unconscious-bias. In addition, the United States District Court for the Northern District of California has prepared a shortened version of that video to show to potential jurors before jury selection. *See* www.cand.uscourts.gov/attorneys/unconscious-bias-video-for-potential-jurors.

The second paragraph of this instruction informs the jury that it is the duty of the jury to apply the law as the judge gives it to them, whether they agree with it or not. This type of caution against jury nullification is permissible. *United States v. Lynch*, 903 F.3d 1061, 1079 (9th Cir. 2018). "[N]ullifcation is, by definition, a violation of the juror's oath to apply the law as instructed by the court." *Id.* (quoting *United States v. Thomas*, 116 F.3d 606, 614 (2d Cir. 1997)). "While jurors have the power to nullify a verdict, they have no right to do so." *Lynch*, 903 F.3d at 1080 (quoting *Merced v. McGrath*, 426 F.3d 1076, 1079 (9th Cir. 2005)). An anti-

nullification instruction will be improper if it states or implies that nullification would place jurors at risk of legal sanction or otherwise be invalid. *Lynch*, 903 F.3d at 1080 (holding that district court's admonition that nullification was violation of jury's duty to follow law did not deprive jurors of ability to nullify); *United States v. Kleinman*, 880 F.3d 1020, 1031-32 (9th Cir. 2017) (holding instruction erroneous but harmless that told jury "[t]here is no such thing as a valid jury nullification" and that "[y]ou would violate your oath and the law if you willfully brought a verdict contrary to the law given to you in this case").

*Revised August 2026*

## 1.2 The Charge—Presumption of Innocence

This is a criminal case brought by the United States government. The government charges the defendant with [*specify crime[s] charged*]. The charge[s] against the defendant [is] [are] contained in the indictment. The indictment simply describes the charge[s] the government brings against the defendant. The indictment is not evidence and does not prove anything.

The defendant has pleaded not guilty to the charge[s] and is presumed innocent unless and until the government proves the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. In addition, the defendant has the right to remain silent and never has to prove innocence or present any evidence.

[To help you follow the evidence, I will now give you a brief summary of the elements of the crime[s] that the government must prove to make its case: [*supply brief statement of elements of crime[s]*].]

### Comment

"Although the Constitution does not require jury instructions to contain any specific language, the instructions must convey both that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty and that he may only be convicted upon a showing of proof beyond a reasonable doubt." *Gibson v. Ortiz*, 387 F.3d 812, 820 (9th Cir. 2004), *overruled on other grounds*, *Byrd v. Lewis* 566 F.3d 855 (9th Cir. 2009) (citation omitted). "Any jury instruction that reduces the level of proof necessary for the government to carry its burden is plainly inconsistent with the constitutionally rooted presumption of innocence." *Id.* The words "unless and until" adequately inform the jury of the presumption of innocence. *United States v. Lopez*, 500 F.3d 840, 847 (9th Cir. 2007).

The second paragraph of this instruction assumes that no affirmative defense has been raised. When a defendant presents an affirmative defense on which the defendant has the burden of proof, the following paragraph may be substituted:

The government has the burden of proving every element of the crime[s] charged beyond a reasonable doubt. This burden of proof stays with the government throughout the case. [The; a] defendant is never required to prove [his] [her] innocence. [He] [She] is not required to produce any evidence at all. In this case, the defendant has raised the affirmative defense of [*identify defense, e.g., duress, insanity*]. Thus, the defendant has the burden of proving that affirmative defense by [a preponderance of the evidence] [clear and convincing evidence].

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 1.3 What is Evidence

The evidence you are to consider in deciding what the facts are consists of:

First, the sworn testimony of any witness; [and]

Second, the exhibits that are received in evidence[.] [; and]

[Third, any facts to which the parties agree.]

## Comment

"When parties have entered into stipulations as to material facts, those facts will be deemed to have been conclusively established." *United States v. Houston*, 547 F.2d 104, 107 (9th Cir. 1976) (citation omitted).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 1.4 What is Not Evidence

The following things are *not* evidence, and you must not consider them as evidence in deciding the facts of this case:

First, statements and arguments of the attorneys;

Second, questions and objections of the attorneys;

Third, testimony that I instruct you to disregard; and

Fourth, anything you may see or hear when the court is not in session even if what you see or hear is done or said by one of the parties or by one of the witnesses.

### Comment

It is advisable to instruct the jury generally about what is not evidence, both as a preliminary instruction at the beginning of the case and as a final instruction at the close of the case. *See* Instruction 1.6 (Ruling on Objections); Instruction 2.12 (Evidence for Limited Purpose); Instruction 6.7 (What Is Not Evidence).

But these general instructions are unlikely to be sufficient when a prompt and specific curative instruction from the court is needed. *See generally United States v. Barragan*, 871 F.3d 689 (9th Cir. 2017) ("A curative instruction can neutralize the harm of a prosecutor's improper statements if it is given 'immediately after the damage [is] done' and mentions 'the specific statements.'") (brackets and internal quotation marks in original); JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 3.16 (2013). Thus, a curative instruction should be given immediately after the damage is done and refer to the specific statement or statements that the jury must disregard. *See also United States v. Wells*, 879 F.3d 900, 936-37 (9th Cir. 2018) ("Generally, when evidence is heard by the jury that is subsequently ruled inadmissible, or is applicable only to limited defendants or in a limited manner, a cautionary instruction from the judge is sufficient to cure any prejudice to the defendant . . . . [O]ur court assumes that the jury listened to and followed the trial judge's instruction") (brackets in original; internal quotation marks and citation omitted).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 1.5 Direct and Circumstantial Evidence

Evidence may be direct or circumstantial. Direct evidence is direct proof of a fact, such as testimony by a witness about what that witness personally saw or heard or did. Circumstantial evidence is indirect evidence, that is, it is proof of one or more facts from which one can find another fact.

You are to consider both direct and circumstantial evidence. Either can be used to prove any fact. The law makes no distinction between the weight to be given to either direct or circumstantial evidence. It is for you to decide how much weight to give to any evidence.

### Comment

"It is the exclusive function of the jury to weigh the credibility of witnesses, resolve evidentiary conflicts and draw reasonable inferences from proven facts . . . Circumstantial and testimonial evidence are indistinguishable insofar as the jury fact-finding function is concerned, and circumstantial evidence can be used to prove any fact." *United States v. Ramirez-Rodriquez*, 552 F.2d 883, 884 (9th Cir. 1977) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 419 F.2d 1237, 1239-41 (9th Cir. 1969)). *See also United States v. Kelly*, 527 F.2d 961, 965 (9th Cir. 1976); and *Payne v. Borg*, 982 F.2d 335, 339 (9th Cir. 1992) (citing *United States v. Stauffer,* 922 F.2d 508, 514 (9th Cir. 1990)).

The Committee believes that an instruction on circumstantial evidence generally eliminates the need to explain the same principle in terms of inferences, and that matters such as flight, resistance to arrest, etc., are generally better left to argument of counsel as examples of circumstantial evidence from which the jury may find another fact. *See United States v. Beltran–Garcia*, 179 F.3d 1200, 1206 (9th Cir. 1999) (in discussing jury instruction regarding inferring intent to possess for distribution from quantity of drugs, the Ninth Circuit stated that "[a]lthough the instructions in this case were not delivered in error, we do not hesitate to point out the 'dangers and inutility of permissive inference instructions.'" (citations omitted). *See also United States v. Rubio–Villareal*, 967 F.2d 294, 300 (9th Cir. 1992) (en banc) (disapproved instructing jury that knowledge of presence of drugs in vehicle may be inferred from defendant being driver).

It may be helpful to include an illustrative example in the instruction:

By way of example, if you wake up in the morning and see that the sidewalk is wet, you may find from that fact that it rained during the night. However, other evidence, such as a turned-on garden hose, may provide an explanation for the water on the sidewalk. Therefore, before you decide that a fact has been proven by circumstantial evidence, you must consider all the evidence in the light of reason, experience, and common sense.

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 1.6 Ruling on Objections

There are rules of evidence that control what can be received in evidence. When a lawyer asks a question or offers an exhibit in evidence and a lawyer on the other side thinks that it is not permitted by the rules of evidence, that lawyer may object. If I overrule the objection, the question may be answered or the exhibit received. If I sustain the objection, the question cannot be answered, or the exhibit cannot be received. Whenever I sustain an objection to a question, you must ignore the question and must not guess what the answer would have been.

Sometimes I may order that evidence be stricken from the record and that you disregard or ignore the evidence. That means that when you are deciding the case, you must not consider the evidence that I told you to disregard.

## 1.7 Credibility of Witnesses

In deciding the facts in this case, you may have to decide which testimony to believe and which testimony not to believe. You may believe everything a witness says, or part of it, or none of it.

In considering the testimony of any witness, you may take into account:

First, the witness's opportunity and ability to see or hear or know the things testified to;

Second, the witness's memory;

Third, the witness's manner while testifying;

Fourth, the witness's interest in the outcome of the case, if any;

Fifth, the witness's bias or prejudice, if any;

Sixth, whether other evidence contradicted the witness's testimony;

Seventh, the reasonableness of the witness's testimony in light of all the evidence; and

Eighth, any other factors that bear on believability.

Sometimes a witness may say something that is not consistent with something else he or she said. Sometimes different witnesses will give different versions of what happened. People often forget things or make mistakes in what they remember. Also, two people may see the same event but remember it differently. You may consider these differences, but do not decide that testimony is untrue just because it differs from other testimony.

However, if you decide that a witness has deliberately testified untruthfully about something important, you may choose not to believe anything that witness said. On the other hand, if you think the witness testified untruthfully about some things but told the truth about others, you may accept the part you think is true and ignore the rest.

You must avoid bias[, conscious or unconscious,] based on a witness's race, color, religious beliefs, national ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, or economic circumstances in your determination of credibility.

The weight of the evidence as to a fact does not necessarily depend on the number of witnesses who testify about it. What is important is how believable the witnesses are, and how much weight you think their testimony deserves.

### Comment

The Committee recommends that the jurors be given some guidelines for determining credibility at the beginning of the trial so that they will know what to look for when witnesses are

testifying.

*See also* Instruction 6.9 (Credibility of Witnesses) for the corresponding instruction to be given at the end of the case.

*Revised March 2024*

## 1.8 Conduct of the Jury

I will now say a few words about your conduct as jurors.

First, keep an open mind throughout the trial, and do not decide what the verdict should be until you and your fellow jurors have completed your deliberations at the end of the case.

Second, because you must decide this case based only on the evidence received in the case and on my instructions as to the law that applies, you must not be exposed to any other information about the case or to the issues it involves during the course of your jury duty. Thus, until the end of the case or unless I tell you otherwise:

> Do not communicate with anyone in any way and do not let anyone else communicate with you in any way about the merits of the case or anything to do with it. This restriction includes discussing the case in person, in writing, by phone, tablet, or computer, or any other means, via email, via text messaging, or any Internet chat room, blog, website or application, including but not limited to Facebook, YouTube, the platform "X" formerly known as Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, or any other forms of social media. This restriction also applies to communicating with your fellow jurors until I give you the case for deliberation, and it applies to communicating with everyone else including your family members, your employer, the media or press, and the people involved in the trial, although you may notify your family and your employer that you have been seated as a juror in the case, and how long you expect the trial to last. But, if you are asked or approached in any way about your jury service or anything about this case, you must respond that you have been ordered not to discuss the matter. In addition, you must report the contact to the court.
>
> Because you will receive all the evidence and legal instruction you properly may consider to return a verdict: do not read, watch, or listen to any news or media accounts or commentary about the case or anything to do with it[, although I have no information that there will be news reports about this case]; do not do any research, such as consulting dictionaries, searching the Internet or using other reference materials; and do not make any investigation or in any other way try to learn about the case on your own. Do not visit or view any place discussed in this case, and do not use the Internet or any other resource to search for or view any place discussed during the trial. Also, do not do any research about this case, the law, or the people involved—including the parties, the witnesses or the lawyers—until you have been excused as jurors. If you happen to read or hear anything touching on this case in the media, turn away and report it to me as soon as possible.

These rules protect each party's right to have this case decided only on evidence that has been presented here in court. Witnesses here in court take an oath to tell the truth, and the accuracy of their testimony is tested through the trial process. If you do any research or investigation outside the courtroom, or gain any information through improper communications, then your verdict may be influenced by inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading information that has

not been tested by the trial process. Each of the parties is entitled to a fair trial by an impartial jury, and if you decide the case based on information not presented in court, you will have denied the parties a fair trial. Remember, you have taken an oath to follow the rules, and it is very important that you follow these rules.

A juror who violates these restrictions jeopardizes the fairness of these proceedings[, and a mistrial could result that would require the entire trial process to start over]. If any juror is exposed to any outside information, please notify the court immediately.

**Comment**

This instruction has been updated specifically to instruct jurors against accessing electronic sources of information and communicating electronically about the case, as well as to inform jurors of the potential consequences if a juror violates this instruction. An abbreviated instruction should be repeated before the first recess, and as needed before other recesses. *See* Instruction 2.1 (Cautionary Instruction—First Recess). The practice in federal court of repeatedly instructing jurors not to discuss the case until deliberations is widespread. *See, e.g., United States v. Pino-Noriega*, 189 F.3d 1089, 1096 (9th Cir. 1999).

*Revised June 2025*

## 1.9 No Transcript Available to Jury

At the end of the trial, you will have to make your decision based on what you recall of the evidence. You will not have a written transcript of the trial. I urge you to pay close attention to the testimony as it is given.

### Comment

For further discussion, *see* JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 5.1.C (2013).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 1.10 Taking Notes

If you wish, you may take notes to help you remember the evidence. If you do take notes, please keep them to yourself until you and your fellow jurors go to the jury room to decide the case. Do not let note-taking distract you from being attentive. When you leave court for recesses, your notes should be left in the [courtroom] [jury room] [envelope in the jury room]. No one will read your notes.

Whether or not you take notes, you should rely on your own memory of the evidence. Notes are only to assist your memory. You should not be overly influenced by your notes or those of your fellow jurors.

### Comment

It is well settled in this circuit that the trial judge has discretion to allow jurors to take notes. *United States v. Baker*, 10 F.3d 1374, 1403 (9th Cir. 1993). *See also* JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 3.4 (2013).

## 1.11 Outline of Trial

The next phase of the trial will now begin. First, each side may make an opening statement. An opening statement is not evidence. It is simply an outline to help you understand what that party expects the evidence will show. A party is not required to make an opening statement.

The government will then present evidence and counsel for the defendant may cross-examine. Then, if the defendant chooses to offer evidence, counsel for the government may cross-examine.

After the evidence has been presented, [I will instruct you on the law that applies to the case and the attorneys will make closing arguments] [the attorneys will make closing arguments and I will instruct you on the law that applies to the case].

After that, you will go to the jury room to deliberate on your verdict.

## 1.12 Jury to Be Guided by English Translation/Interpretation

[A language] [Languages] other than English will be used for some evidence during this trial. [When a witness testifies in another language, the witness will do so through an official court interpreter.] [When recorded evidence is presented in another language, there will be an official court translation of the recording.]

The evidence you are to consider and on which you must base your decision is only the English-language [interpretation] [translation] provided through the official court [interpreters] [translators]. Although some of you may know the non-English language used, you must disregard any meaning of the non-English words that differs from the official [interpretation] [translation].

[You must not make any assumptions about a witness or a party based solely upon the use of an interpreter to assist that witness or party.]

### Comment

When "a district court is faced with a jury that includes one or more bilingual jurors and the taped conversations are in a language other than English, restrictions on the jurors who are conversant with the foreign tongue is not only appropriate, it may in fact be essential. Where the translation of a portion of the tape is disputed, both sides have an interest in what information is given to the jury. The rules of evidence and the expert testimony would prove of little use if a self-styled expert in the deliberations were free to give his or her opinion on this crucial issue, unknown to the parties." *United States v. Fuentes-Montijo*, 68 F.3d 352, 355 (9th Cir. 1995). *See also United States v. Franco*, 136 F.3d 622, 626 (9th Cir. 1998). As to the qualification and designation of interpreters in federal courts, *see* 28 U.S.C. § 1827.

*See* Instructions 2.7 (Transcript of Recording in Foreign Language) and 2.9 (Foreign Language Testimony) concerning foreign language transcripts and testimony to be given during trial, and Instruction 6.17 (Foreign Language Testimony) to be given at the end of the case.

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 1.13 Separate Consideration for Each Defendant

Although the defendants are being tried together, you must give separate consideration to each defendant. In doing so, you must determine which evidence in the case applies to each defendant, disregarding any evidence admitted solely against some other defendant[s]. The fact that you may find one of the defendants guilty or not guilty should not control your verdict as to any other defendant[s].

### Comment

*See* Instructions 6.12 (Separate Consideration of Single Count—Multiple Defendants) and 6.13 (Separate Consideration of Multiple Counts—Multiple Defendants) for use at the end of the case.

## 1.14 Questions to Witnesses by Jurors During Trial

*Option 1*

Only the lawyers and I are allowed to ask questions of witnesses. A juror is not permitted to ask questions of witnesses. [*Specific reasons for not allowing jurors to ask questions may be explained.*] If, however, you are unable to hear a witness or a lawyer, please raise your hand and I will correct the situation.

*Option 2*

When attorneys have finished their examination of a witness, you may ask questions of the witness. [*Describe procedure to be used*.] If the rules of evidence do not permit a particular question, I will advise you. After your questions, if any, the attorneys may ask additional questions.

### Comment

There may be occasions when a juror desires to ask a question of a witness, and the court has discretion in permitting or refusing to permit jurors to do so. *See United States v. Huebner*, 48 F.3d 376, 382 (9th Cir. 1994) ("Huebner does not point out prejudice resulting from any of the few questions [jurors] asked. There was no error or abuse of discretion."); *United States v. Gonzales*, 424 F.2d 1055, 1056 (9th Cir. 1970) (holding there was no error by trial judge in allowing juror to submit question to court); JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 3.5 (2013) (providing practical suggestions).

Option 1 is for judges who want to disallow jury questions explicitly. Option 2 is for judges who want to tell jurors that they may submit questions to be asked of witnesses.

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 1.15 Pro Se Defendant

[*Name of defendant*] has decided to represent [himself] [herself] in this trial and not to use the services of a lawyer. [He] [She] has a constitutional right to do that. [His] [Her] decision has no bearing on whether [he] [she] is guilty or not guilty, and it must not affect your consideration of the case.

Because [*name of defendant*] has decided to act as [his] [her] own lawyer, you will hear [him] [her] speak at various times during the trial. [He] [She] may make an opening statement and closing argument and may ask questions of witnesses, make objections, and argue legal issues to the court. I want to remind you that when [*name of defendant*] speaks in these parts of the trial, [he] [she] is acting as a lawyer in the case, and [his] [her] words are not evidence. The only evidence in this case comes from witnesses who testify under oath on the witness stand and from exhibits that are admitted.

### Comment

A defendant has a constitutional right to waive his or her Sixth Amendment right to assistance of counsel and proceed pro se. *Faretta v. California*, 422 U.S. 806 (1975). This instruction informs the jury of the defendant's choice to proceed pro se and directs the jury to treat the words spoken by the defendant while functioning as counsel like those of any other lawyer and not to treat them as evidence in the case. This Instruction is modeled on the Third Circuit's Criminal Jury Instruction § 1.18, which is similar to the Eighth Circuit's Criminal Jury Instruction § 2.23. The Eighth Circuit's model also includes the following paragraph that may be added when the court has appointed standby counsel:

> Although [*name of defendant*] has chosen to represent [himself] [herself], the court has appointed [*name of standby counsel*] to assist [*name of defendant*] as standby counsel. This is a standard procedure. [*Name of standby counsel*] may [confer with [*name of defendant*]] [,] [make an opening statement] [,] [question witnesses] [,] [make objections] [and] [or] [argue legal issues to the court]. Just as when [*name of defendant*] speaks in [this part] [these parts] of the trial, when [*name of standby counsel*] speaks in [this part] [these parts] of the trial, [his] [her] words are not evidence.]

Eighth Circuit, Criminal Jury Instruction § 2.23 (formatting modified).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 1.16 Bench Conferences and Recesses

During the trial, I may need to take up legal matters with the attorneys privately, either by having a conference at the bench when the jury is present in the courtroom, or by calling a recess. Please understand that while you are waiting, we are working. The purpose of these conferences is not to keep relevant information from you, but to decide how certain evidence is to be treated under the rules of evidence and to avoid confusion and error.

Of course, we will do what we can to keep the number and length of these conferences to a minimum. I may not always grant an attorney's request for a conference. Do not consider my granting or denying a request for a conference as any indication of my opinion of the case or what your verdict should be.

### Comment

Conducting bench conferences is within the discretion of the court. Regarding the defendant's right to be present at bench conferences, *see* JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 1.6 (2013).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 2. INSTRUCTIONS DURING COURSE OF TRIAL

**Instruction**


2.1 Cautionary Instructions
2.2 Stipulated Testimony
2.3 Stipulations of Fact
2.4 Judicial Notice
2.5 Deposition as Substantive Evidence
2.6 Transcript of Recording in English
2.7 Transcript of Recording in Foreign Language
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2.10 Other Crimes, Wrongs, or Acts of Defendant
2.11 Similar Acts in Sexual Assault and Child Molestation Cases (Fed. R. Evid. 413 and 414)
2.12 Evidence for Limited Purpose
2.13 Photos of Defendant, "Mugshots"
2.14 Dismissal of Some Charges Against Defendant
2.15 Disposition of Charge Against Codefendant
2.16 Defendant's Previous Trial

## 2.1 Cautionary Instructions

**At the End of Each Day of the Case:**

As I indicated before this trial started, you as jurors will decide this case based solely on the evidence presented in this courtroom. This means that after you leave here for the night, you must not conduct any independent research about this case, the matters in the case, the legal issues in the case, or the individuals or other entities involved in the case. This is important for the same reasons that jurors have long been instructed to limit their exposure to traditional forms of media information such as television and newspapers. You also must not communicate with anyone, in any way, about this case. And you must ignore any information about the case that you might see while browsing the Internet or your social media feeds.

**At the Beginning of Each Day of the Case:**

As I reminded you yesterday and continue to emphasize to you today, it is important that you decide this case based solely on the evidence and the law presented here. So you must not learn any additional information about the case from sources outside the courtroom. To ensure fairness to all parties in this trial, I will now ask each of you whether you have learned about or shared any information about this case outside of this courtroom, even if it was accidental.

[ALTERNATIVE 1 (in open court): if you think that you might have done so, please let me know now by raising your hand. [Wait for a show of hands]. I see no raised hands; however, if you would prefer to talk to the court privately in response to this question, please notify a member of the court's staff at the next break. Thank you for your careful adherence to my instructions.]

[ALTERNATIVE 2 (during voir dire with each juror, individually): Have you learned about or shared any information about this case outside of this courtroom? . . . Thank you for your careful adherence to my instructions.]

### Comment

This instruction is derived from the model instruction prepared by the Judicial Conference Committee on Court Administration and Case Management in June 2020.

The practice in federal court of repeatedly instructing jurors not to discuss the case until deliberations is widespread. *See e.g., United States v. Pino-Noriega*, 189 F.3d 1089, 1096 (9th Cir. 1999).

*Revised Dec. 2020*

## 2.2 Stipulated Testimony

The parties have agreed what [*name of witness*]'s testimony would be if called as a witness. You should consider that testimony in the same way as if it had been given here in court.

## Comment

There is a difference between stipulating that a witness would give certain testimony and stipulating that the facts to which a witness might testify are true. *United States v. Lambert,* 604 F.2d 594, 595 (8th Cir. 1979) (per curiam); *United States v. Hellman,* 560 F.2d 1235, 1236 (5th Cir. 1977) (per curiam). On the latter, *see* Instruction 2.3 (Stipulations of Fact).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 2.3 Stipulations of Fact

The parties have agreed to certain facts that have been stated to you. Those facts are now conclusively established.

## Comment

"[W]hen a stipulation to a crucial fact is entered into the record in open court in the presence of the defendant, and is agreed to by defendant's acknowledged counsel, the trial court may reasonably assume that the defendant is aware of the content of the stipulation and agrees to it through his or her attorney. Unless a criminal defendant indicates objection at the time the stipulation is made, he or she is ordinarily bound by such stipulation." *United States v. Ferreboeuf*, 632 F.2d 832, 836 (9th Cir. 1980). In any event, a trial judge need not make as probing an inquiry as is required by Fed. R. Crim. P. 11 when considering whether a defendant's factual stipulation is knowing and voluntary. *United States v. Miller*, 588 F.2d 1256, 1263-64 (9th Cir. 1978).

*See Old Chief v. United States*, 519 U.S. 172, 186 (1997) (discussing acceptance of stipulation regarding prior conviction); JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 1.1.B (2013).

It may be necessary to add to the instruction a statement of the purpose for which the stipulation is offered. *See United States v. Page*, 657 F.3d 126, 130-31 (2d Cir. 2011); *United States v. Higdon*, 638 F.3d 233, 243 & n.7 (3d Cir. 2011); Instruction 2.12 (Evidence for Limited Purpose).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 2.4 Judicial Notice

I have decided to accept as proved the fact that [*insert fact noticed*], even though no evidence was presented on this point [,] [because this fact is of such common knowledge]. You may accept this fact as true, but you are not required to do so.

## Comment

An instruction regarding judicial notice should be given at the time notice is taken. "A judicially noticed fact must be one not subject to reasonable dispute in that it is either (1) generally known within the territorial jurisdiction of the trial court or (2) capable of accurate and ready determination by resort to sources whose accuracy cannot reasonably be questioned." Fed. R. Evid. 201(b) (addressing adjudicative facts). Although the court must instruct a jury in a civil case to accept as conclusive any fact judicially noticed, "[i]n a criminal case, the court must instruct the jury that it may or may not accept the noticed fact as conclusive." Fed. R. Evid. 201(f). Thus, in *United States v. Chapel*, 41 F.3d 1338 (9th Cir. 1994), the trial court correctly took judicial notice of a bank's FDIC status because the evidence established that its status "was not subject to reasonable dispute." *Id*. at 1342. Moreover, the court did not "usurp the jury's fact-finding role by taking judicial notice" when it instructed the jury that "you may accept the court's declaration as evidence and regard as proved the fact or event which has been judicially noticed. You are not required to do so, however, since you are the sole judges of the facts." *Id.*

Note that Rule 201 does not apply to legislative facts. For example, in *United States v. Zepeda*, 792 F. 3d 1103, 1114 (9th Cir. 2015) (en banc), the court held that whether an Indian tribe is federally recognized is "a question of law to be decided by the judge." "[T]he court may consult . . . evidence that is judicially noticeable" such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs' annual list of federally recognized tribes to decide the question. *Id*. Where the court takes judicial notice of a legislative fact, the court may simply instruct the jury to that effect: "You are instructed that [*insert legislative fact noticed, e.g., the Gila River Indian Community of the Gila River Indian Reservation, Arizona, is a federally recognized tribe*])."

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 2.5 Deposition as Substantive Evidence

When a person is unavailable to testify at trial, the deposition of that person may be used at the trial. A deposition is the sworn testimony of a witness taken before trial. The witness is placed under oath to tell the truth and lawyers for each party may ask questions. The questions and answers are recorded.

The deposition of [*name of witness*], which was taken on [*date*], is about to be presented to you. You should consider deposition testimony in the same way that you consider the testimony of the witnesses who have appeared before you. [Do not place any significance on the behavior or tone of voice of any person reading the questions or answers.]

### Comment

Use this instruction only when the court concludes that testimony by deposition may be received as substantive evidence in light of the rules of evidence and the defendant's confrontation rights. The Committee recommends that it be given immediately before a deposition is read. The bracketed last sentence of the instruction would not be used when the deposition is presented by video or audio recording.

*See* Fed. R. Crim. P. 15.

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 2.6 Transcript of Recording in English

You [are about to [hear] [watch]] [have [heard] [watched]] a recording that has been received in evidence. [Please listen to it very carefully.] Each of you [has been] [was] given a transcript of the recording to help you identify speakers and as a guide to help you listen to the recording. However, bear in mind that the recording is the evidence, not the transcript. If you [hear][heard] something different from what [appears][appeared] in the transcript, what you [hear][heard] is controlling. [[After] [Now that] the recording has been played, the transcript will be taken from you.]

### Comment

*See United States v. Franco*, 136 F.3d 622, 626 (9th Cir. 1998).

The Committee recommends that this instruction be given immediately before a recording is played so that the jury is alerted to the fact that what they hear is controlling. It need not be repeated if more than one recording is played. However, the judge should remind the jury that the recording and not the transcript is the evidence, and that they should disregard anything in the transcript that they do not hear. Further, the transcripts should not be left with the jury after the recording has been played.

*Revised Sept. 2017*

## 2.7 Transcript of Recording in Foreign Language

You [are about to [hear][watch]] [have [heard][watched]] a recording in the [*specify foreign language*] language. Each of you [has been] [was] given a transcript of the recording that has been admitted into evidence. The transcript is an English-language translation of the recording.

Although some of you may know the [*specify foreign language*] language, it is important that all jurors consider the same evidence. The transcript is the evidence, not the foreign language spoken in the recording. Therefore, you must accept the English translation contained in the transcript and disregard any different meaning of the non-English words.

### Comment

The Committee recommends giving this instruction immediately before the jury hears a recorded conversation in a foreign language if the accuracy of the translation is not in issue. As the court noted in *United States v. Franco*, 136 F.3d 622, 626 (9th Cir. 1998):

> The district court also correctly held that the relation between tapes and transcripts changes when the tapes are in a foreign language. When tapes are in English, they normally constitute the actual evidence and transcripts are used only as aids to understanding the tapes; the jury is instructed that if the tape and transcript vary, the tape is controlling. *See United States v. Turner,* 528 F.2d 143, 167-68 (9th Cir. 1975). When the tape is in a foreign language, however, such an instruction is "not only nonsensical, it has the potential for harm where the jury includes bilingual jurors." *United States v. Fuentes-Montijo,* 68 F.3d 352, 355-56 (9th Cir. 1995). We therefore have upheld a trial court's instruction that a jury is not free to disagree with a translated transcript of tape recordings. *See id.*

For a discussion regarding unintelligible recordings, *see United States v. Rrapi*, 175 F.3d 742, 748 (9th Cir. 1999).

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 2.8 Disputed Transcript of Recording in Foreign Language

You [are about to [hear][watch]] [have [heard][watched]] a recording in the [*specify foreign language*] language. A transcript of the recording has been admitted into evidence. The transcript is an [official] English-language translation of the recording. The accuracy of the transcript is disputed in this case.

Whether a transcript is an accurate translation, in whole or in part, is for you to decide. In considering whether a transcript accurately describes the words spoken in a conversation, you should consider the testimony presented to you regarding how, and by whom, the transcript was made. You may consider the knowledge, training, and experience of the translator, the audibility of the recording, as well as the nature of the conversation and the reasonableness of the translation in light of all the evidence in the case.

Although some of you may know the [*specify foreign language*] language, it is important that all jurors consider the same evidence. Therefore, you must not rely in any way on any knowledge you may have of the language spoken on the recording; your consideration of the transcript must be based on the evidence in the case.

### Comment

This instruction is appropriate where parties are unable to stipulate to a transcript. The court should encourage the parties to stipulate to a transcript of the foreign language recording that satisfies all sides. *United States v. Cruz*, 765 F.2d 1020, 1023 (11th Cir. 1985); *United States v. Wilson*, 578 F.2d 67, 69–70 (5th Cir. 1978). If the parties are unable to do so, then they should submit competing translations of the disputed passages, and each side may submit evidence supporting the accuracy of its version or challenging the accuracy of the other side. *Cruz*, 765 F.2d at 1023; *Wilson*, 578; F.2d at 70; *United States v. Franco*, 136 F.3d 622, 626 (9th Cir. 1998).

Jurors should be instructed to rely only on the English translation, not on any knowledge they may have of the foreign language spoken on the recording. *United States v. Fuentes-Montijo*, 68 F.3d 353, 355 (9th Cir. 1995).

*See also* Instruction*s* 1.12 (Jury to be Guided by English Translation/Interpretation); 2.6 (Transcript of Recording in English); 2.7 (Transcript of Recording in Foreign language); and 2.9 (Foreign Language Testimony).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 2.9 Foreign Language Testimony

You [are about to hear] [have heard] testimony of a witness who [will be testifying] [testified] in the [*specify foreign language*] language. Witnesses who do not speak English or are more proficient in another language testify through an official court interpreter. Although some of you may know the [*specify foreign language*] language, it is important that all jurors consider the same evidence. Therefore, you must accept the interpreter's translation of the witness's testimony. You must disregard any different meaning.

You must not make any assumptions about a witness or party based solely on the fact that an interpreter was used.

### Comment

This instruction should be given immediately before the jury hears testimony in a foreign language. *Cf. United States v. Franco*, 136 F.3d 622, 626 (9th Cir. 1998); *United States v. Fuentes-Montijo*, 68 F.3d 352, 355-56 (9th Cir. 1995).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 2.10 Other Crimes, Wrongs, or Acts of Defendant

You [[are about to hear] [have heard] testimony] [[are about to see] [have seen] evidence] that the defendant [*summarize other act evidence*]. This evidence of other acts [was] [will be] admitted only for [a] limited purpose[s]. You may consider this evidence only for the purpose of deciding whether the defendant:

[had the state of mind, knowledge, or intent necessary to commit the crime charged in the indictment;]

*or*

[had a motive or the opportunity to commit the acts charged in the indictment;]

*or*

[was preparing or planning to commit the acts charged in the indictment;]

*or*

[acted with a method of operation as evidenced by a unique pattern [*describe pattern*];]

*or*

[did not commit the acts for which the defendant is on trial by accident or mistake;]

*or*

[is the person who committed the crime charged in the indictment. You may consider this evidence to help you decide [*describe how the evidence will be used to prove identity*];]

*or*

[*describe other purpose for which other act evidence was admitted*.]

Do not consider this evidence for any other purpose.

Of course, it is for you to determine whether you believe this evidence and, if you do believe it, whether you accept it for the purpose offered. You may give it such weight as you feel it deserves, but only for the limited purpose that I described to you.

The defendant is not on trial for committing these other acts. You may not consider the evidence of these other acts as a substitute for proof that the defendant committed the crime[s] charged. You may not consider this evidence as proof that the defendant has a bad character or any propensity to commit crimes. Specifically, you may not use this evidence to conclude that because the defendant may have committed the other act[s], [he] [she] must also have committed the act[s] charged in the indictment.

Remember that the defendant is on trial here only for [*state charges*], not for these other acts. Do not return a guilty verdict unless the government proves the crime[s] charged in the indictment beyond a reasonable doubt.

**Comment**

*See* Fed. R. Evid. 404(b). "Under Federal Rule of Evidence 404(b), evidence of other acts may be admissible to prove, among other things, motive, opportunity, intent, or knowledge. For other act evidence to be admissible, (1) the evidence must tend to prove a material issue in the case, (2) the acts must be similar to the offense charged, (3) proof of the other acts must be based upon sufficient evidence, and (4) the acts must not be too remote in time. *See United States v. Montgomery*, 150 F.3d 983, 1000 (9th Cir. 1998)." *United States v. Fuchs*, 218 F.3d 957, 965 (9th Cir. 2000). *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Boudreau*, 154 F.4th 1132, 1142-43 (9th Cir. 2025) (applying Federal Rule of Evidence 404(b)(1) to admit prior sexual relationships with a minor during trial for possession of child pornography on the basis that the information "tended to prove a material point—that [defendant] was sexually interested in minors"); *United States v. Justus*, 162 F.4th 962, 968-69 (9th Cir. 2025) (admitting social media posts advocating violence and physical attacks on law enforcement for non-propensity purpose of demonstrating the defendant's state of mind at the time of his attack on two Protective Service Officers standing guard at the federal courthouse).

"If the evidence meets [the four-part] test under [Fed. R. Evid.] 404(b), 'the [district] court must then decide whether the probative value is substantially outweighed by the prejudicial impact under Rule 403.'" *United States v. Ruiz*, 167 F.4th 1024, 1035 (9th Cir. 2026) (internal citations omitted).

A limiting instruction must be given if requested, Fed. R. Evid. 105, and it may be appropriate to give such an instruction sua sponte. Nonetheless, it is "well-settled that where no limiting instruction is requested concerning evidence of other criminal acts, the failure of the trial court to give such an instruction *sua sponte* is not reversible error." *United States v. Multi-Management, Inc.*, 743 F.2d 1359, 1364 (9th Cir. 1984).

*Revised March 2026*

## 2.11 Similar Acts in Sexual Assault and Child Molestation Cases (Fed. R. Evid. 413 and 414)

You are about to hear evidence that the defendant [may have committed] [was convicted of] a similar offense of [sexual assault] [child molestation].

You may use this evidence to decide whether the defendant committed the act charged in the indictment. You may not convict the defendant simply because he [may have committed] [was convicted of] other unlawful acts. You may give this evidence such weight as you think it should receive or no weight.

[You may not use this evidence, however, to decide whether the defendant [*insert improper purpose, e.g., made a statement in this case or destroyed evidence in this case*].]

### Comment

This instruction is based on Fed. R. Evid. 413 and 414. *See also United States v. Porter*, 121 F.4th 747, 749, 753 (9th Cir. 2024) (holding Rule 413 does not violate the Due Process Clause when applied in conjunction with Evidence Rule 403, and this instruction's use was "appropriate" in a sexual assault case).

Federal Rules of Evidence 413 and 414 permit introduction of evidence the defendant committed a similar act of sexual assault or child molestation "for its bearing on any matter to which it is relevant," including the defendant's propensity to commit the crime charged. The prosecution is not required to prove the defendant was charged with or convicted of a crime, to prove the other act beyond reasonable doubt, or to corroborate a percipient witness's testimony that the other act occurred. In addition, the evidence is frequently "emotional and highly charged." *United States v. Lemay*, 260 F.3d 1018, 1030 (9th Cir. 2001). For these reasons, it is appropriate to remind the jury that it decides how to weigh the evidence and may not convict the defendant for acts not charged in the indictment.

The court should consider giving the instruction before the evidence is admitted and again in the final instructions. *See Porter*, 121 F.4th at 749. For factors to consider in determining the admissibility of the evidence, *see Lemay*, 260 F.3d at 1027-28.

Rule 413 or 414 evidence is not admissible to show any other propensity, such as propensity to confess or propensity to destroy evidence. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Redlightning*, 624 F.3d 1090, 1119-22 (9th Cir. 2010). Where the evidence presented at trial poses the prospect of impermissible use of the propensity evidence, the further limiting instruction provided in the third paragraph may be necessary. But if confession or evidence destruction is part of the defendant's alleged modus operandi, the further limitation would not be necessary.

*Revised March 2025*

## 2.12 Evidence for Limited Purpose

You are about to hear evidence that [*describe evidence to be received for limited purpose*]. I instruct you that this evidence is admitted only for the limited purpose of [*describe purpose*] and, therefore, you must consider it only for that limited purpose and not for any other purpose.

### Comment

Federal Rule of Evidence 105 provides that when evidence is admitted for a limited purpose, the court, when requested, must provide a limiting instruction. Furthermore, the court must provide an appropriate limiting instruction sua sponte if failure to do so would affect the defendant's "substantial rights." *See United States v. Armijo*, 5 F.3d 1229, 1232 (9th Cir. 1993). For example, in *United States v. Sauza-Martinez*, 217 F.3d 754, 760 (9th Cir. 2000), the Ninth Circuit held the trial court "had no alternative" but to give the jury a limiting instruction sua sponte when a testifying codefendant's post-arrest statements were admitted as substantive evidence against her under Fed. R. Evid. 801(d)(2)(A) but were not admissible against another codefendant "under *any* theory" (emphasis in original). Under the circumstances of the case, it was plain error to fail to give the limiting instruction sua sponte. *Id.* at 761.

The Committee recommends judges use limiting instructions whenever evidence is received for a limited purpose. "We have repeatedly held that a district court's careful and frequent limiting instructions to the jury, explaining how and against whom certain evidence may be considered, can reduce or eliminate any possibility of prejudice arising from a joint trial." *United States v. Fernandez*, 388 F.3d 1199, 1243 (9th Cir. 2004) (internal citations omitted).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 2.13 Photos of Defendant, "Mugshots"

You have heard evidence that a photo of the defendant was shown to [*name of witness*]. You may consider this evidence only for [*specify admissible purpose*] and not for any other purpose. [Because the government obtains photos of many people from many different sources and for many different purposes, you must not infer the defendant committed this or any other crime from the fact that the government obtained and displayed the defendant's photo.]

### Comment

This instruction should not be given unless specifically requested by the defense. *See United States v. Monks,* 774 F.2d 945, 954-55 (9th Cir. 1985), in which the Ninth Circuit held the trial court did not abuse its discretion in denying a motion for mistrial after the defendant declined the trial court's offer of a limiting instruction to address a witness's unintentional reference to a photo lineup as "mugshots."

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 2.14 Dismissal of Some Charges Against Defendant

At the beginning of the trial, I described the charge[s] against the defendant. For reasons that do not concern you, [*specify count[s] or charge[s]*] [is] [are] no longer before you. Do not speculate about why the charge[s] [is] [are] no longer part of this trial.

The defendant is on trial only for the charge[s] of [*remaining count[s]*]. You may consider the evidence presented only as it relates to the remaining count[s].

### Comment

This instruction should not be given unless specifically requested by the defense. *See United States v. de Cruz*, 82 F.3d 856, 865 (9th Cir. 1996) (concluding that district court's instruction adequately informed jury that dismissed counts were not before them, that defendant was on trial only for remaining counts, and that evidence could only be considered as it related to remaining charged counts or as it related to defendant's intent).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 2.15 Disposition of Charge Against Codefendant

For reasons that do not concern you, the case against codefendant [*name*] is no longer before you. Do not speculate why. This fact should not influence your verdict[s] with reference to the remaining defendant[s], and you must base your verdict[s] solely on the evidence against the remaining defendant[s].

### Comment

Although it is not plain error to give a similar instruction when a codefendant dies after the jury begins to deliberate, it may be advisable under certain circumstances to give a "simple and honest" explanation to the jury as to why a codefendant is no longer in the case, particularly if the codefendant's removal from the case occurred early in the trial. *United States v. Bussell*, 414 F.3d 1048, 1054 (9th Cir. 2005). The later in the trial that the codefendant is "removed," the more likely it is that the jury could be influenced by a fact-specific disclosure, especially if the remaining defendant(s) had a close relationship with the withdrawn defendant. Therefore, a better approach at that stage may be simply to inform the jury that the codefendant is no longer a defendant in the case. *See United States v. Garrison*, 888 F.3d 1057, 1066 (9th Cir. 2018) ("In instances where defendants depart from a multi-defendant trial late in the trial . . . the best course may be simply to tell the jury that the defendant is no longer part of the case.").

No reference should ordinarily be made in this situation to a plea of guilty by the codefendant. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Barrientos*, 758 F.2d 1152, 1159-60 (7th Cir. 1985) (stating that when codefendant becomes absent from trial for any reason, trial court should acknowledge codefendant's absence to jury and instruct them on their duty to consider evidence of guilt or innocence as to remaining defendant without any reference to any implications of codefendant's absence). *See also United States v. Carraway*, 108 F.3d 745, 755 (7th Cir. 1997); *United States v. Rapp*, 871 F.2d 957, 967-68 (11th Cir. 1989).

*See also United States v. Candoli*, 870 F.2d 496, 501-02 (9th Cir. 1989) ("flight" instruction on codefendant's midtrial disappearance did not prejudice defendant when instruction did not require jury to consider codefendant's absence as evidence of guilt and provided that evidence of codefendant's flight was not admissible against defendant).

*Revised June 2018*

## 2.16 Defendant's Previous Trial

You have heard evidence that the defendant has been tried before. Keep in mind, however, that you must decide this case solely on the evidence presented to you in this trial. You are not to consider the fact of a previous trial in deciding this case.

### Comment

This instruction should not be given unless the jury has been informed of the previous trial and the instruction is specifically requested by the defense. A preferable practice is to avoid all reference to prior trials.

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 3. CONSIDERATION OF PARTICULAR EVIDENCE

**Instruction**

Introductory Comment
3.1 Statements by Defendant or Codefendent
3.2 Silence in the Face of Accusation
3.3 Other Crimes, Wrongs, or Acts of Defendant
3.4 Character of Defendant
3.5 Character of Victim
3.6 Impeachment, Prior Conviction of Defendant
3.7 Character of Witness for Truthfulness
3.8 Impeachment Evidence—Witness
3.9 Testimony of Witnesses Involving Special Circumstances—Immunity, Benefits, Accomplice, Plea
3.10 Government's Use of Undercover Agents and Informants
3.11 Eyewitness Identification
3.12 Child Witness
3.13 Deported Material Witness
3.14 Opinion Evidence, Expert Witness
3.15 Dual Role Testimony
3.16 Charts and Summaries Not Admitted into Evidence
3.17 Charts and Summaries Admitted into Evidence
3.18 Flight/Concealment of Identity
3.19 Lost or Destroyed Evidence
3.20 Untimely Disclosure of Exculpatory or Impeachment Evidence

## Introductory Comment

The Committee believes that instructions on particular kinds of evidence should be avoided as much as possible. General instructions on direct and circumstantial evidence and on credibility of witnesses should in most instances suffice, obviating the need for more specific instructions. *See, for example*, *United States v. Holmes*, 229 F.3d 782, 787-88 (9th Cir. 2000); *United States v. Ketola,* 478 F.2d 64, 66 (9th Cir. 1973).

However, instructions on particular kinds of evidence may be necessary in two circumstances. First, when evidence is admissible for one purpose but not another, a limiting instruction may be required by Fed. R. Evid. 105. Second, certain specific instructions (including those specified in Instructions 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.14, and 3.15) may need to be given when requested and may be advisable even if not requested. *See United States v. Bernard*, 625 F.2d 854, 857 (9th Cir. 1980) (holding that failure to give requested accomplice instruction was prejudicial error where accomplice's testimony was important to case).

The Committee believes that an instruction on circumstantial evidence generally eliminates the need to explain the same principle in terms of inferences. Thus, the Committee recommends against giving instructions on matters such as flight, resistance to arrest, a missing witness, failure to produce evidence, false or inconsistent exculpatory statements, failure to respond to accusatory statements, and attempts to suppress or tamper with evidence. These matters are generally better left to argument of counsel as examples of circumstantial evidence from which the jury may find another fact. *See United States v. Beltran-Garcia*, 179 F.3d 1200, 1206 (9th Cir. 1999) (in discussing jury instruction regarding inferring intent to possess for distribution from quantity of drugs, Ninth Circuit stated that "[a]lthough the instructions in this case were not delivered in error, we do not hesitate to point out the 'dangers and inutility of permissive inference instructions.'" (citations omitted)). *See also United States v. Rubio–Villareal*, 967 F.2d 294, 300 (9th Cir. 1992) (en banc) (Ninth Circuit disapproved of instructing jury that knowledge of presence of drugs in vehicle may be inferred from defendant being driver).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 3.1 Statements by Defendant or Codefendant

You have heard testimony that the defendant made a statement. It is for you to decide (1) whether the defendant made the statement, and (2) if so, how much weight to give to it. In making those decisions, you should consider all the evidence about the statement, including the circumstances under which the defendant may have made it.

### Comment

This instruction uses the word "statement" in preference to the more pejorative term, "confession." The word "confession" implies an ultimate conclusion about the significance of a defendant's statement, which should be left for the jury to determine. The language of this instruction was expressly approved in *United States v. Hoac*, 990 F.2d 1099, 1108 n.4 (9th Cir. 1993).

When voluntariness of a confession is an issue, the instruction is required by 18 U.S.C. § 3501(a), providing that after a trial judge has determined a confession to be admissible, the judge "shall permit the jury to hear relevant evidence on the issue of voluntariness and shall instruct the jury to give such weight to the confession as the jury feels it deserves under all the circumstances." *See also United States v. Dickerson*, 530 U.S. 428, 432 (2000) (holding that *Miranda v. Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436 (1966), and its progeny govern admissibility of accused person's statement during custodial interrogation and could not be in effect overruled by § 3501). Section 3501(e) defines "confession" as "any confession of guilt of any criminal offense or any self-incriminating statement made or given orally or in writing." *See Hoac*, 990 F.2d at 1107 (where defendant raises genuine issue at trial concerning voluntariness of statement, trial court is obligated by statute to instruct jury concerning weight to be accorded that statement). Failure to give the required instruction may constitute plain error. *Id.* at 1109.

In a joint trial, when a nontestifying defendant's statement directly inculpates a nonconfessing codefendant, the Confrontation Clause may bar the admission of the defendant's statement. *Bruton v. United States*, 391 U.S. 123, 137 (1968) (holding admission of nontestifying defendant's statement inculpating nonconfessing codefendant by name violated the Confrontation Clause, despite limiting instruction). In these circumstances, modification of the statement may be necessary to avoid directly identifying the nonconfessing codefendant and the court may be required to offer a limiting instruction that jurors may consider the statement only with respect to the confessing codefendant. *See Samia v. United States*, 599 U.S. 635 (2023) (holding that nontestifying codefendant's confession that substituted a codefendant's name with "other person," coupled with limiting instruction, did not violate the Confrontation Clause because it did not directly inculpate defendant); *Gray v. Maryland*, 523 U.S. 185, 194 (1998) (holding that obviously redacted statement substituting nonconfessing codefendant's name with "deleted" or "deletion" was "directly accusatory" and violated the Confrontation Clause, notwithstanding limiting instruction); *Richardson v. Marsh*, 481 U.S. 200, 211 (1987) (holding the Confrontation Clause did not bar admission of a redacted statement by the nontestifying codefendant because the statement did not implicate anyone else and the jury was instructed not to use the confession in any way against the defendant). *See* Model Instruction 2.12 Evidence for Limited Purpose for limiting instructions.

The trial court must make a preliminary finding by a preponderance of the evidence that the co-conspirator's statements fall within the scope of the hearsay exception for statement of co-conspirators. In *United States v. Ehmer*, 87 F.4th 1073, 1127-28 (9th Cir. 2023), one of the defendants contended that another co-conspirator's statements, which were made after the defendant had withdrawn from the conspiracy, were hearsay and erroneously admitted. The Ninth Circuit agreed and held that the trial court erred in not making a preliminary finding on the "threshold question" whether the co-conspirator's statements were made when the defendant was part of the conspiracy. *Id.* at 1127 (rejecting the government's argument that "the hearsay exception continues to apply, even as to persons who have withdrawn from the conspiracy, so long as the ***declarant*** remains in the conspiracy.").

*Revised June 2024*

## 3.2 Silence in the Face of Accusation

### Comment

A silence in the face of accusation instruction is a permissive inference instruction and, as such, the Committee recommends that it generally not be given.

If a defendant is in custody, silence in the face of an accusatory statement does not constitute an admission of the truth of the statements. *Doyle v. Ohio*, 426 U.S. 610, 617-19 (1976). Such evidence should not be received, and no instruction will be necessary. *Arnold v. Runnels*, 421 F.3d 859, 869 (9th Cir. 2005).

If a defendant is not in custody, evidence of his refusal to answer an officer's questions may be admissible as substantive evidence of guilt. *Salinas v. Texas*, 133 S. Ct. 2174, 2177-78 (2013) (holding that use at trial of petitioner's silence to suggest "that he was guilty" was constitutional because petitioner did not invoke Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination).

The Committee includes former Instruction 4.2 for reference, as it recites the factual findings the court must make to admit into evidence silence in the face of accusation, and in some circumstances it may be appropriate to give the instruction if the facts warrant it and it is requested by the defendant. The text of the instruction is based on judicial interpretation. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. McKinney*, 707 F.2d 381, 384 (9th Cir. 1983); *United States v. Sears*, 663 F.2d 896, 904-05 (9th Cir. 1981); *United States v. Giese*, 597 F.2d 1170, 1195-96 (9th Cir. 1979).

Former Instruction 4.2 in the MANUAL OF MODEL CRIMINAL JURY INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT (2003) read as follows:

> Evidence has been introduced that statements accusing the defendant of the crime charged in the indictment were made, and that the statements were neither denied nor objected to by the defendant. If you find that the defendant actually was present and heard and understood the statements, and that they were made under such circumstances that the statements would have been denied if they were not true, then you may consider whether the defendant's silence was an admission of the truth of the statements.

*Revised June 2018*

## 3.3 Other Crimes, Wrongs, or Acts of Defendant

You have heard evidence that the defendant committed other [crimes] [wrongs] [acts] not charged here. You may consider this evidence only for its bearing, if any, on the question of the defendant's [intent] [motive] [opportunity] [preparation] [plan] [knowledge] [identity] [absence of mistake] [absence of accident] and for no other purpose. [You may not consider this evidence as evidence of guilt of the crime for which the defendant is now on trial.]

### Comment

*See* Fed. R. Evid. 404(b). Evidence of other crimes, wrongs or acts may be admissible for one purpose but not another; therefore, this instruction is required by Fed. R. Evid. 105 ("If the court admits evidence that is admissible against a party or for a purpose— but not admissible against another party or for another purpose—the court, on timely request, must restrict the evidence to its proper scope and instruct the jury accordingly."). *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Boudreau*, 154 F.4th 1132, 1142-43 (9th Cir. 2025) (applying Federal Rule of Evidence 404(b)(1) to admit prior sexual relationships with a minor during trial for possession of child pornography on the basis that the information "tended to prove a material point—that [defendant] was sexually interested in minors"); *United States v. Justus*, 162 F.4th 962, 968-69 (9th Cir. 2025) (admitting social media posts advocating violence and physical attacks on law enforcement for non-propensity purpose of demonstrating the defendant's state of mind at the time of his attack on two Protective Service Officers standing guard at the federal courthouse).

The Ninth Circuit has approved this instruction. *See United States v. Lloyd*, 807 F.3d 1128, 1167 (9th Cir. 2015) (rejecting argument that "not charged here" improperly implies other acts that could have been charged); *United States v. Hardrick*, 766 F.3d 1051, 1056 (9th Cir. 2014).

*See also* Instruction 2.10 (Other Crimes, Wrongs, or Acts of Defendant), Instruction 2.11 (Similar Acts in Sexual Assault and Child Molestation Cases), and Instruction 3.6 (Impeachment, Prior Conviction of Defendant) and the Comment thereto.

*Revised March 2026*

## 3.4 Character of Defendant

### Comment

The Committee believes that the trial judge need not give an instruction on the character of the defendant when such evidence is admitted under Fed. R. Evid. 404(a)(1) because it adds nothing to the general instructions regarding the consideration and weighing of evidence. *See United States v. Karterman*, 60 F.3d 576, 579 (9th Cir. 1995) (holding that refusal of trial court to instruct on character of defendant was not plain error when "the district court instructed the jury to 'consider all of the evidence introduced by all parties,' to 'carefully scrutinize all the testimony given,' and to consider 'every matter in evidence which tends to show whether a witness is worthy of belief.'"); *see also* Fed. R. Evid. 404(a)(1).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 3.5 Character of Victim

You have heard evidence of specific instances of the victim's character for [*specify character trait*]. You may consider this evidence in determining whether the victim acted in conformance with that character trait at the time of the offense charged against the defendant in this case. In deciding this case, you should consider the victim's character evidence together with and in the same manner as all the other evidence in this case.

## Comment

Generally, character evidence is inadmissible, but it may be admitted for a particular purpose, *see*, Fed. R. Evid. 404(a)(2), and if sexual conduct of the victim is at issue, *see* Fed. R. Evid. 412. This instruction is a form of limiting instruction. *See* Fed. R. Evid. 105. When extrinsic evidence corroborating a defendant's testimony about a victim's prior acts of violence is admitted pursuant to Fed. R. Evid. 404(a)(2), this instruction should be modified accordingly. *United States v. Saenz*, 179 F.3d 686, 687-89 (9th Cir. 1999); *United States v. James*, 169 F.3d 1210, 1214 (9th Cir. 1999); *see also United States v. Keiser*, 57 F.3d 847, 854 (9th Cir. 1995) ("Rule 404(a)(2) provides one of the few instances in which character evidence is admissible to allow the jury to infer that a person acted on a specific occasion in conformity with his character.").

*Revised March 2026*

### 3.6 Impeachment, Prior Conviction of Defendant

You have heard evidence that the defendant has previously been convicted of a crime. You may consider that evidence only as it may affect the defendant's believability as a witness. You may not consider a prior conviction as evidence of guilt of the crime for which the defendant is now on trial.

### Comment

*See* Fed. R. Evid. 609 (Impeachment by Evidence of a Criminal). The court must give such a limiting instruction if requested by the defendant. Fed. R. Evid. 105 (Limiting Evidence That Is Not Admissible Against Other Parties or for Other Purposes).

If past crimes of the defendant are to be used for another purpose—such as proving an element of a habitual offender charge or establishing intent—that limited purpose should similarly be identified. *See* Instruction 3.3 (Other Crimes, Wrongs, or Acts of Defendant).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 3.7 Character of Witness for Truthfulness

### Comment

The Committee believes that the trial judge need not give an instruction on the character of a witness for truthfulness because it adds nothing to the general instructions on witness credibility. As to these instructions, *see* Instructions 1.7 (Credibility of Witnesses) and 6.9 (Credibility of Witnesses).

Character and reputation are not two separate types of evidence. Reputation is one means of proving character. Opinion evidence is another. Regarding admissibility of character evidence, *see* Fed. R. Evid. 607 (Who May Impeach a Witness), 608 (A Witness's Character for Truthfulness or Untruthfulness), and 609 (Impeachment by Evidence of a Criminal Conviction).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 3.8 Impeachment Evidence—Witness

You have heard evidence that [*name of witness*], a witness, [*specify basis for impeachment*]. You may consider this evidence in deciding whether or not to believe this witness and how much weight to give to the testimony of this witness.

### Comment

Fed. R. Evid. 608 (A Witness's Character for Truthfulness or Untruthfulness) and 609 (Impeachment by Evidence of a Criminal Conviction) place restrictions on the use of instances of past conduct and convictions to impeach a witness, and Fed. R. Evid. 105 (Limiting Evidence That Is Not Admissible Against Other Parties or for Other Purposes) gives a defendant the right to request a limiting instruction explaining that the use of this evidence is limited to credibility of the witness.

*Revised Mar. 2018*

### 3.9 Testimony of Witnesses Involving Special Circumstances—Immunity, Benefits, Accomplice, Plea

You have heard testimony from [*name of witness*], a witness who

[might receive or has received immunity. That testimony was given in exchange for a promise by the government that [the witness will not be prosecuted] [the testimony will not be used in any case against the witness]];

[might receive or has received [benefits] [compensation] [favored treatment] from the government in connection with this case];

[[admitted being] [was alleged to be] an accomplice to the crime charged. An accomplice is one who voluntarily and intentionally joins with another person in committing a crime];

[pleaded guilty to a crime arising out of the same events for which the defendant is on trial. This guilty plea is not evidence against the defendant, and you may consider it only in determining this witness's believability].

For [this] [these] reason[s], in evaluating the testimony of [*name of witness*], you should consider the extent to which or whether [his] [her] testimony may have been influenced by [this] [any of these] factor[s]. In addition, you should examine the testimony of [*name of witness*] with greater caution than that of other witnesses.

#### Comment

The instruction to consider accomplice testimony with "greater caution" is appropriate regardless of whether the accomplice's testimony favors the defense or prosecution. *United States v. Tirouda*, 394 F.3d 683, 687-88 (9th Cir. 2005). The Committee recommends giving this instruction whenever it is requested. At least in some cases, a cooperating witness will not have received benefits at the time of his testimony, but may hope for future benefits, such as a reduced sentence, a Section 5K1.1 motion from the Government, Federal Criminal Procedure Rule 35 sentence reduction, or other benefit. The Committee recommends giving this instruction even when a benefit to the cooperating witness has not yet materialized.

*Revised August 2026*

### 3.10 Government's Use of Undercover Agents and Informants

You have heard testimony from [an undercover agent] [an informant] who was involved in the government's investigation in this case. Law enforcement officials may engage in stealth and deception, such as the use of informants and undercover agents, to investigate criminal activities. Undercover agents and informants may use false names and appearances and assume the roles of members in criminal organizations.

### Comment

This instruction should be given when the entrapment defense is being asserted. Furthermore, the Ninth Circuit held it was not plain error to give this instruction in the absence of an entrapment defense instruction when the defendant contended the government agent acted improperly. *United States v. Hoyt*, 879 F.2d 505, 510 (9th Cir. 1989), *amended on other grounds*, 888 F.2d 1257 (1989).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 3.11 Eyewitness Identification

You have heard testimony of eyewitness identification. In deciding how much weight to give to this testimony, you may consider the various factors mentioned in these instructions concerning credibility of witnesses.

In addition to those factors, in evaluating eyewitness identification testimony, you may also consider the following:

First, the capacity and opportunity of the eyewitness to observe the suspect based upon the length of time for observation and the conditions at the time of observation, including lighting and distance;

Second, whether the identification was the product of the eyewitness's own recollection or was the result of subsequent influence or suggestiveness;

Third, any inconsistent identifications made by the eyewitness;

Fourth, the witness's familiarity with the subject identified;

Fifth, the strength of earlier and later identifications;

Sixth, lapses of time between the event and the identification[s]; and

Seventh, the totality of circumstances surrounding the eyewitness's identification.

### Comment

It is within the trial court's sound discretion to instruct a jury both on eyewitness identification and general witness credibility. The need for heightened jury instructions should correlate with the amount of corroborative evidence. *See United States v. Masterson*, 529 F.2d 30, 32 (9th Cir. 1976).

The Ninth Circuit has approved the giving of a comprehensive eyewitness jury instruction, at least when the district court has determined that proffered expert witness testimony regarding eyewitness identification should be excluded. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Hicks*, 103 F.3d 837, 847 (9th Cir. 1996), *overruled on other grounds, United States v. W.R. Grace*, 526 F.3d 499 (9th Cir. 2008).

*Revised June 2019*

## 3.12 Child Witness

### Comment

The Committee recommends that the trial judge give no instruction on the credibility of a child witness because it adds nothing to the general instructions on witness credibility. As to these instructions, *see* Instructions 1.7 (Credibility of Witnesses) and 6.9 (Credibility of Witnesses).

In *People of Territory of Guam v. McGravey*, 14 F.3d 1344, 1348 (9th Cir. 1994), the Ninth Circuit stated that "the better view is . . . that a 'trial judge retains discretion to determine whether the jury should receive a special instruction with respect to the credibility of a young witness, and if so, the nature of that instruction.'" (citation omitted). *See also United States v. Pacheco*, 154 F.3d 1236, 1239 (10th Cir. 1998) (holding that general witness credibility instruction provided jury with adequate guidance in evaluating child's testimony).

## 3.13 Deported Material Witness

The government has failed to produce a witness whose testimony would have been material to an issue in this case. You are allowed to infer that the testimony would have been favorable to the defendant.

### Comment

The Committee cautions that a missing witness instruction will be appropriate only in limited circumstances, such as when the government deports an alien witness knowing that the witness would testify favorably for the defense. *See United States v. Leal-Del Carmen*, 697 F.3d 964, 975 (9th Cir. 2013) (holding in such circumstances that "[t]he district court abused its discretion by failing to give the missing-witness instruction"). "A missing witness instruction is appropriate if two requirements are met: (1) [t]he party seeking the instruction must show that the witness is peculiarly within the power of the other party and (2) under the circumstances, an inference of unfavorable testimony [against the non-moving party] from an absent witness is a natural and reasonable one." *Id*. at 974.

"A missing witness instruction is proper only if from all the circumstances an inference of unfavorable testimony from an absent witness is a natural and reasonable one." *United States v. Bramble*, 680 F.2d 590, 592 (9th Cir. 1982) (noting that absent any inference of unfavorable testimony, trial court would have erred by giving missing witness instruction; defense counsel interviewed witness and "indicated that she did not wish to have him stay around").

Even when a missing witness instruction is not given, a judge may not forbid a jury from drawing a negative inference from a party's failure to call a witness. *United States v. Ramirez*, 714 F.3d 1134, 1139 (9th Cir. 2013) ("By instructing the jurors to disregard any uncertainty about why the prosecution didn't call a witness—who might have been the key witness—the court improperly inserted itself into the jury room and interfered with the jury's role as a factfinder.").

*Revised June 2018*

### 3.14 Opinion Evidence, Expert Witness

You [have heard] [are about to hear] testimony from [*name*] who [testified] [will testify] about [his] [her] opinions and the reasons for those opinions. This opinion testimony is allowed because of the specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education of this witness.

Such opinion testimony should be judged like any other testimony. You may accept it or reject it, and give it as much weight as you think it deserves, considering the witness's knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education, the reasons given for the opinion, and all the other evidence in the case.

### Comment

*See* Fed. R. Evid. 701-05. *See also United States v. Ruvalcaba-Garcia*, 923 F.3d 1183, 1189 (9th Cir. 2019) ("a district court abuses its discretion when it either abdicates its role as gatekeeper by failing to assess the scientific validity or methodology of an expert's proposed testimony, or delegates that role to the jury by admitting the expert testimony without first finding it to be relevant and reliable") (internal quotations and brackets omitted); *United States v. Mendoza*, 244 F.3d 1037, 1048 (9th Cir. 2001) (holding that instruction should be given when requested by defendant).

This instruction avoids labeling the witness as an "expert." If the court refrains from informing the jury that the witness is an "expert," this will "ensure[] that trial courts do not inadvertently put their stamp of authority" on a witness's opinion and will protect against the jury's being "overwhelmed by the so-called 'experts.'" Fed. R. Evid. 702 advisory committee's note (2000) (quoting Hon. Charles Richey, Proposals to Eliminate the Prejudicial Effect of the Use of the Word "Expert" Under the Federal Rules of Evidence in Criminal and Civil Jury Trials, 154 F.R.D. 537, 559 (1994)).

In addition, Fed. R. Evid. 703 provides that facts or data that are the basis for an expert's opinion but are otherwise inadmissible may nonetheless be disclosed to the jury if the court determines that their probative value in assisting the jury to evaluate the expert's opinion substantially outweighs their prejudicial effect. Even in the absence of a request, it may be plain error for the trial court to fail to give an instruction sufficient to explain to the jury that the otherwise inadmissible evidence should not be considered for its truth but only to assess the strength of the expert's opinions. *See United States v. Torralba-Mendia*, 784 F.3d 652, 659 (9th Cir. 2015); *United States v. Vera*, 770 F.3d 1232 (9th Cir. 2014).

Further, the "interpretation of clear statements is not permissible, and is barred by the helpfulness requirement of both Fed. R. Evid. 701 and Fed. R. Evid. 702." *Vera*, 770 F.3d at 1246 (emphasis in original) (quotation marks and citation omitted).

Although an expert witness in a criminal case may not opine "about whether the defendant did or did not have a mental state or condition that constitutes an element of the crime charged or of a defense," Fed. R. Evid. 704(b), an expert may testify that "most people" in a group have a particular mental state, because such an opinion is not a "conclusion[] as to *the defendant's* mental state." *Diaz v. United States*, 602 U.S. __, 144 S. Ct. 1727, 1733-35 (2024) (emphasis added)

(holding that expert testimony that most drug couriers "know they are hired . . . to take drugs from point A to point B" was permissible under Rule 704(b)).

"An expert opinion 'is "about" the ultimate issue of the defendant's mental state only if it includes a conclusion on that precise topic, not merely if it concerns or refers to that topic.'" *United States v. Olivas*, 150 F.4th 1107, 1115 (9th Cir. 2025) (quoting *Diaz*, 602 U.S. at 537). In *Olivas*, an expert testified that gang "secretaries" knew everything about a gang's activities and that Defendant Olivas was one such secretary. *Id.* at 1116. The court considered whether the expert impermissibly opined that Defendant Olivas had the requisite mental state or whether this testimony still allowed for a "'less-numerous-but-still-existent' group of secretaries that do not have the requisite mental state." *Id.* at 1115. The court concluded the district court was not plainly erroneous in admitting the expert's testimony. *Id.* at 1115-16 (finding no plain error because, even assuming the expert's statements ran afoul of *Diaz*, the statements "came hours apart" and were "separated by exchanges on topics unrelated to secretaries").

This instruction also may be given as a limiting instruction at the time testimony is received.

This instruction is appropriate for a witness who provides only expert opinion testimony. If the same witness provides both expert opinion testimony and percipient witness testimony (including fact testimony, lay opinion testimony, or both), these different roles must be clarified for the jury. *See* Comment to Instruction 3.15 (Dual Role Testimony). In that event, use one of the three options shown in Instruction 3.15, instead of this instruction.

*Revised March 2026*

## 3.15 Dual Role Testimony

[Option 1—Facts and Expert Opinions]

[You [have heard] [are about to hear] testimony from [*name*] who [testified] [will testify] about facts and [his] [her] opinions and the reasons for those opinions. Fact testimony is based on what the witness personally saw, heard, or did. Opinion testimony is based on the specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education of the witness.

As to the testimony about facts, it is your job to decide which testimony to believe and which testimony not to believe. You may believe everything a witness says, or part of it, or none of it.

As to the testimony about the witness's opinions, this testimony is allowed because of the specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education of this witness. Opinion testimony should be judged like any other testimony. You may accept all of it, part of it, or none of it. You should give it as much weight as you think it deserves, considering the witness's knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education, the reasons given for the opinion, and all the other evidence in the case.

You also should [pay careful attention as to whether the witness is testifying] [consider whether the witness testified] to personal observations or involvement as a fact witness or testifying to an opinion based on specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education. When a witness provides opinion testimony based on knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education, that person might rely on facts that are not based on his or her personal observations or involvement, but that opinion cannot serve as proof of the underlying facts.

[You should also consider the factors discussed earlier in these instructions that were provided to assist you in weighing the credibility of witnesses.]

[Also, the fact that a witness is allowed to express opinions based on that person's specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education should not cause you to give that witness undue deference for any of aspect of that person's testimony or otherwise influence your assessment of the credibility of that witness.]]

[Option 2—Lay and Expert Opinions]

[You [have heard] [are about to hear] testimony from [*name*] who [testified] [will testify] about [his] [her] opinions and the reasons for those opinions. Some of the opinion testimony you [will hear] [have heard] from this witness is based on the specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education of this witness. This testimony is allowed because of the knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education of this witness. It should be judged like any other testimony. You may accept all of it, part of it, or none of it. You should give it as much weight as you think it deserves, considering the witness's knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education, the reasons given for the opinion, and all the other evidence in the case.

Other opinion testimony you [will hear] [have heard] from this witness is called "lay opinion testimony." Lay opinion testimony is based on inferences drawn from the witness's direct perceptions and must be rationally based on those perceptions and not on speculation or what

someone else has said. You should judge lay opinion testimony like any other testimony. You may accept all of it, part of it, or none of it. You should give it as much weight as you think it deserves. When considering lay opinion testimony, however, you should not give it any extra credence based on the specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education of this witness.

You also should [pay careful attention as to whether the witness is testifying] [consider whether the witness testified] about a lay opinion based on the witness's perceptions or testifying to an opinion based on specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education. When a witness provides opinion testimony based on knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education, that person might rely on facts that are not based on his or her personal observations or involvement, but that opinion cannot serve as proof of the underlying facts.

[You should also consider the factors discussed earlier in these instructions that were provided to assist you in weighing the credibility of witnesses.]

[Also, the fact that a witness is allowed to express opinions based on that person's specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education should not cause you to give that witness undue deference for any of aspect of that person's testimony or otherwise influence your assessment of the credibility of that witness.]]

[Option 3—Facts, Lay Opinions, and Expert Opinions]

[You [have heard] [are about to hear] testimony from [*name*] who [testified] [will testify] to both facts and two types of opinions and the reasons for those opinions. I will describe all three types of testimony. The first is fact testimony. Fact testimony is based on what the witness personally saw, heard, or did. The second is opinion testimony based on the specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education of the witness. The third is what is called "lay opinion testimony."

As to the testimony about facts, it is your job to decide which testimony to believe and which testimony not to believe. You may believe everything a witness says, or part of it, or none of it.

As to the opinion testimony based on the witness's specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education, you should judge this testimony like any other testimony. You may accept all of it, part of it, or none of it. You should give it as much weight as you think it deserves, considering the witness's knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education, the reasons given for the opinion, and all the other evidence in the case.

As to the lay opinion testimony, this testimony is based on inferences drawn from the witness's direct perceptions and must be rationally based on those perceptions and not on speculation or what someone else has said. You should judge this testimony like any other testimony. You may accept all of it, part of it, or none of it. You should give it as much weight as you think it deserves. When considering lay opinion testimony, however, you should not give it any extra credence based on the specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education of this witness.

You also should [pay careful attention as to whether the witness is testifying] [consider whether the witness testified] to personal observations or involvement as a fact witness, testifying

about a lay opinion based on the witness's perceptions, or testifying to an opinion based on specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education. When a witness provides opinion testimony based on knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education, that person might rely on facts that are not based on his or her personal observations or involvement, but that opinion cannot serve as proof of the underlying facts.

[You should also consider the factors discussed earlier in these instructions that were provided to assist you in weighing the credibility of witnesses.]

[Also, the fact that a witness is allowed to express opinions based on that person's specialized knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education should not cause you to give that witness undue deference for any of aspect of that person's testimony or otherwise influence your assessment of the credibility of that witness.]]

**Comment**

In *United States v. Holguin*, 51 F.4th 841 (9th Cir. 2022), the Ninth Circuit explained:

> We have previously emphasized that trial courts should endeavor to explain clearly the differences between lay percipient testimony, lay opinion testimony (as governed by Rule 701), and expert opinion testimony (as governed by Rule 702) in settings where all three arise. In many cases, designating an umbrella category of "opinion testimony" may fail to provide an appropriate level of nuance to guide the jury's evaluation of dual role testimony. Glossing over this three-way distinction may lead to the jury applying the instructions that they were given about "opinion" testimony to lay opinion even though it was intended for expert testimony. In doing so, the jury would consider the witness's experience, training, and specialized knowledge in evaluating lay opinion – exactly the kind of bolstering of lay opinion with expert credentials about which we have warned.

*Id*. at 864 (quotation marks, internal citations, and brackets omitted) (citing *United States v. Rodriguez*, 971 F.3d 1005, 1118 (9th Cir. 2020)).

In some cases, a witness may provide only expert opinion testimony. In that event, Instruction 3.14 should suffice.

In other cases, a witness may testify both as an expert witness and as a fact witness without offering any lay opinion testimony. Option 1 addresses this situation. The word "expert," which is used in the title of Option 1, should not be used in the presence of the jury. *See* Comment to Instruction 3.14 (Opinion Evidence, Expert Witness).

If a witness testifies to both facts and expert opinions, a cautionary instruction on the dual role of such a witness must be given. This situation can arise, for example, when a law enforcement witness testifies as both a fact witness and a witness offering an expert opinion. *See United States v. Torralba-Mendia*, 784 F.3d 652, 659 (9th Cir. 2015); *United States v. Vera*, 770 F.3d 1232, 1246 (9th Cir. 2014). In a criminal case, omitting such a cautionary or curative instruction is plain error, even if no party requests such an instruction or affirmatively opposes it.

*Id.* at 1246 (holding that court's failure to instruct jury on how to evaluate agent's dual role testimony prejudiced defendant when agent testified as both expert witness and lay, or fact, witness); *see also Torralba-Mendia*, 784 F.3d at 659 (noting holding in *Vera* and finding error in district court's omission of dual role instruction differentiating between lay and expert testimony). Indeed, in *Torralba-Mendia*, the government proposed such an instruction, the defendant objected, and the court declined to give the instruction; the Ninth Circuit found plain error. *Id.*

The court might also consider bifurcating a witness's testimony, separating a witness's percipient, or factual, testimony from the witness's expert opinions. *See United States v. Anchrum*, 590 F.3d 795, 803-04 (9th Cir. 2009) (holding that district court "avoided blurring the distinction between [the case agent's] distinct role as a lay witness and his role as an expert witness" when it "clearly separated [the agent's] testimony into a first 'phase' consisting of his percipient observations, and a second 'phase' consisting of his credentials in the field of drug trafficking and expert testimony regarding the modus operandi of drug traffickers").

In addition, if an opinion witness is allowed to present otherwise inadmissible evidence under Fed. R. Evid. 703, an additional instruction may be needed. *See* Comment to Instruction 3.14 (Opinion Evidence, Expert Witness).

In still other cases, a witness may provide both expert opinion testimony and lay opinion testimony (but not as a percipient witness testifying about facts). Option 2 addresses this situation. Again, the word "expert," which is used in the title of Option 2, should not be used in the presence of the jury. *See* Comment to Instruction 3.14 (Opinion Evidence, Expert Witness). As with Option 1, the judge also might consider bifurcating this witness's testimony by separating a witness's expert opinions from the witness's lay opinions. The lay opinion testimony instruction is based on Rule 701 of the Federal Rules of Evidence and the Ninth Circuit's discussion in *Vera*, 770 F.3d at 1242.

And in still other cases, as mentioned in both *Holguin* and *Rodriguez*, a witness may provide all three types of testimony: fact testimony, lay opinion testimony (as governed by Rule 701), and expert opinion testimony (as governed by Rule 702). Option 3 addresses this situation. Again, the word "expert," which is used in the title of Option 3, should not be used in the presence of the jury. *See* Instruction 3.14 (Comment). And again, as with Option 1, the judge also might consider trifurcating this witness's testimony by separating a witness's fact testimony, expert opinions based on education or experience, and lay opinions.

The cautionary statements within each option come from the Ninth Circuit's statement of the need to explain clearly the differences between lay percipient testimony, lay opinion testimony, and expert opinion testimony and "to provide an appropriate level of nuance to guide the jury's evaluation of dual role testimony." *Rodriguez*, 971 F.3d at 1018.

Finally, each option concludes with a "no deference" statement in brackets. The Ninth Circuit does not require this statement, and it typically is not given in cases involving witnesses who provide only expert opinions. *See, e.g.*, Instruction 3.14. It might be helpful, however, to avoid undue prejudice in cases dealing with dual (or triple) testimony.

*Revised Mar. 2023*

## 3.16 Charts and Summaries Not Admitted into Evidence

During the trial, certain charts and summaries were shown to you to help explain the evidence in the case. These charts and summaries were not admitted into evidence and will not go into the jury room with you. They are not themselves evidence or proof of any facts. If they do not correctly reflect the facts or figures shown by the evidence in the case, you should disregard these charts and summaries and determine the facts from the underlying evidence.

**Comment**

This instruction applies only when the charts and summaries are not admitted into evidence and are used for demonstrative purposes. *See United States v. Krasn*, 614 F.2d 1229, 1238 (9th Cir. 1980). If the charts and summaries are admitted in evidence, it may be appropriate to instruct the jury using Instruction 3.17 (Charts and Summaries Admitted into Evidence). *See also* JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 3.10.A (2013).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 3.17 Charts and Summaries Admitted into Evidence

Certain charts and summaries have been admitted into evidence. Charts and summaries are only as good as the underlying supporting material. You should, therefore, give them only such weight as you think the underlying material deserves.

### Comment

*See* Fed. R. Evid. 1006 (Summaries to Prove Content).

Use this instruction when charts and summaries are admitted into evidence. If charts and summaries are not admitted into evidence, use Instruction 3.16 (Charts and Summaries Not Admitted into Evidence).

This instruction may be unnecessary if there is no dispute as to the accuracy of the chart or summary.

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 3.18 Flight/Concealment of Identity

### Comment

The Committee generally recommends against giving specific inference instructions in areas such as flight or concealment of identity because the general instruction on direct and circumstantial evidence is sufficient (*see* Introductory Comment to this chapter). Also, caution is warranted because evidence of flight can be consistent with innocence. *United States v. Dixon*, 201 F.3d 1223, 1232 (9th Cir. 2000). Where sufficient facts support such an inference, the Ninth Circuit has not foreclosed the use of such an instruction. *See United States v. Blanco*, 392 F.3d 382, 395-97 (9th Cir. 2004) (flight); *United States v. Silverman*, 861 F.2d 571, 580-82 (9th Cir. 1988) (concealment of identity).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 3.19 Lost or Destroyed Evidence

If you find that the government intentionally [destroyed] [failed to preserve] [*insert description of evidence*] that the government knew or should have known would be evidence in this case, you may infer, but are not required to infer, that this evidence was unfavorable to the government.

### Comment

An instruction concerning evidence lost or destroyed by the government is appropriate when the balance "between the quality of the Government's conduct and the degree of prejudice to the accused" weighs in favor of the defendant. *United States v. Loud Hawk*, 628 F.2d 1139, 1152 (9th Cir. 1979) (en banc) (Kennedy, J., concurring), overruled on other grounds by *United States v. W.R. Grace*, 526 F.3d 499 (9th Cir. 2008); *see United States v. Sivilla*, 714 F.3d 1168, 1173 (9th Cir. 2013). The government bears the burden of justifying its conduct, and the defendant bears the burden of demonstrating prejudice. *Id*. In evaluating the government's conduct, a court should consider whether the evidence was lost or destroyed while in the government's custody, whether it acted in disregard of the defendant's interests, whether it was negligent, whether the prosecuting attorneys were involved, and, if the acts were deliberate, whether they were taken in good faith or with reasonable justification. *Id.* (citing *Loud Hawk*, 628 F.2d at 1152). Factors relevant to prejudice to the defendant include the centrality and importance of the evidence to the case, the probative value and reliability of secondary or substitute evidence, the nature and probable weight of the factual inferences and kinds of proof lost to the accused, and the probable effect on the jury from the absence of the evidence. *Id*. While a showing of bad faith on the part of the government is required to warrant the dismissal of a case based on lost or destroyed evidence, it is not required for a remedial jury instruction. *Id*. at 1170.

*Revised Mar. 2018*

### 3.20 Untimely Disclosure of Exculpatory or Impeachment Evidence

A trial court has discretion in shaping the remedies for violations of *Brady v. Maryland*, 373 U.S. 83 (1963), and *Giglio v. United States*, 405 U.S. 150 (1972). For example, in *United States v. Garrison*, 888 F.3d 1057, 1061 (9th Cir. 2018), "the government made grave mistakes in its prosecution of the case by repeatedly failing to timely disclose information to the defense." Rather than dismiss the case, the district court instructed the jury that "the government's failure to timely comply with its constitutional obligations . . . could lead the jury to find reasonable doubt" as to guilt. The Ninth Circuit held that there was no error. *Id*. at 1066.

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 4. RESPONSIBILITY

**Instruction**


4.1 Aiding and Abetting (18 U.S.C. § 2(a))
4.2 Aiding and Abetting (18 U.S.C. § 2(b))
4.3 Accessory After the Fact
4.4 Attempt
4.5 Specific Intent
4.6 Willfully
4.7 Maliciously
4.8 Knowingly
4.9 Deliberate Ignorance
4.10 Presumptions
4.11 Advice of Counsel
4.12 Corruptly
4.13 Intent to Defraud

## 4.1 Aiding and Abetting (18 U.S.C. § 2(a))

A defendant may be found guilty of [*specify crime charged*], even if the defendant personally did not commit the act or acts constituting the crime but aided and abetted in its commission. To "aid and abet" means intentionally to help someone else commit a crime. To prove a defendant guilty of [*specify crime charged*] by aiding and abetting, the government must prove each of the following beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, someone else committed [*specify crime charged*];

Second, the defendant aided, counseled, commanded, induced, or procured that person with respect to at least one element of [*specify crime charged*];

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to facilitate [*specify crime charged*]; and

Fourth, the defendant acted before the crime was completed.

It is not enough that the defendant merely associated with the person committing the crime, or unknowingly or unintentionally did things that were helpful to that person or was present at the scene of the crime. The evidence must show beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant acted with the knowledge and intention of helping that person commit [*specify crime charged*].

A defendant acts with the intent to facilitate the crime when the defendant actively participates in a criminal venture with advance knowledge of the crime [and having acquired that knowledge when the defendant still had a realistic opportunity to withdraw from the crime].

The government is not required to prove precisely which defendant actually committed the crime and which defendant aided and abetted.

### Comment

Use this instruction with an instruction on the elements of the underlying substantive crime.

The Supreme Court has stated that the federal aiding and abetting statute has two primary components: "a person is liable under § 2 if (and only if) he (1) takes an affirmative act in furtherance of that offense, (2) with the intent of facilitating the offense's commission." *Rosemond v. United States*, 572 U.S. 65, 71 (2014). The defendant's conduct need not facilitate each and every element of the crime; a defendant can be convicted as an aider and abettor even if the defendant's conduct "relates to only one (or some) of a crime's phases or elements." *Id*. at 73. The intent requirement is satisfied when a person actively participates in a criminal venture with advance knowledge of the circumstances constituting the elements of the charged offense. *Id*. at 77; *see also United States v. Goldtooth*, 754 F.3d 763, 769 (9th Cir. 2014) (reversing defendants' convictions for aiding and abetting robbery on Indian reservation because there was no evidence that defendants had foreknowledge that robbery was to occur).

In *Rosemond*, the defendant was charged with aiding and abetting the crime of using a firearm during and in relation to a drug-trafficking crime in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c). The

Supreme Court held that the government need not necessarily prove that the defendant took action with respect to any firearm, so long as the government proves that the defendant facilitated another element—drug trafficking. *Rosemond*, 572 U.S. at 74. It was necessary, however, that the government prove that the defendant had advance knowledge of the firearm. *Id.* at 78. *See* Instruction 14.22 (Firearms—Using, Carrying, or Brandishing in Commission of Crime of Violence or Drug Trafficking Crime).

If, as in *Rosemond*, there is an issue as to when the defendant learned of a particular circumstance that constitutes an element of the crime, the judge should further instruct the jury that the defendant must have learned of the circumstance at a time when the defendant still had a realistic opportunity to withdraw from the crime. *See Rosemond*, 572 U.S. 81 & n.10 (instruction telling jury to consider whether Rosemond "knew his cohort used a firearm" was erroneous because instruction "failed to convey that Rosemond had to have advance knowledge . . . that a confederate would be armed" such that "he c[ould] realistically walk away").

Aiding and abetting is not a separate and distinct offense from the underlying substantive crime but is a different theory of liability for the same offense. *United States v. Garcia*, 400 F.3d 816, 820 (9th Cir. 2005). An aiding and abetting instruction is proper even when the indictment does not specifically charge that theory of liability because all indictments are read as implying that theory in each count. *United States v. Vaandering*, 50 F.3d 696, 702 (9th Cir. 1995); *United States v. Armstrong*, 909 F.2d 1238, 1241-42 (9th Cir. 1990); *United States v. Jones*, 678 F.2d 102, 104 (9th Cir. 1982). *See also United States v. Gaskins*, 849 F.2d 454, 459 (9th Cir. 1988); *United States v. Sayetsitty,* 107 F.3d 1405, 1412 (9th Cir. 1997). There are two paths to a conviction for the substantive offense under an "aiding and abetting" theory: first, aiding and abetting an attempt, and second, attempting to aid and abet. *United States v. Bellot*, 113 F.4th 1151, 1155-56 (9th Cir. 2024) (describing the two paths in the context of a conviction for knowingly attempting to possess with the intent to distribute cocaine in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1)). Aiding and abetting an attempt requires "a guilty principal," while attempting to aid and abet does not. *Id.* However, to prove an attempt, the government must prove that the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime. *See* Instruction 4.4.

A person may be convicted of aiding and abetting despite the prior acquittal of the principal. *Standefer v. United States,* 447 U.S. 10, 20 (1980); *United States v. Mejia-Mesa*, 153 F.3d 925, 930 (9th Cir. 1998). Moreover, the principal need not be named or identified; it is necessary only that the offense was committed by somebody and that the defendant intentionally did an act to help in its commission. *Mejia-Mesa*, 153 F.3d at 930 (citing *Feldstein v. United States,* 429 F.2d 1092, 1095 (9th Cir. 1970)).

The defendant's deliberate ignorance of the actions taken by another person who commits a crime is sufficient to satisfy the knowledge required for the offense of aiding and abetting that crime. *United States v. Nosal*, 844 F.3d 1024, 1039-40 (9th Cir. 2016) (approving instruction that defendant acted "knowingly" if he "was aware of a high probability that [other employees] had gained unauthorized access to a computer . . . or misappropriated trade secrets . . . without authorization . . . and deliberately avoided learning the truth."). For a definition of "deliberate ignorance," *see* Instruction 4.9 (Deliberate Ignorance).

No specific unanimity instruction on the issue of who acted as principal or aider and abettor

is necessary, *id.*, nor does the jury need to reach unanimous agreement on the manner (e.g., "procured," "aided," "abetted," "counseled," "induced," or "commanded") by which the defendant provided assistance. *United States v. Kim*, 196 F.3d 1079, 1083 (9th Cir. 1999).

The last paragraph of this instruction has been expressly approved in *Vaandering*, 50 F.3d at 702. It may be unnecessary to give the last paragraph if there is no dispute as to the identities of the principal and the aider and abettor.

*Revised November 2024*

## 4.2 Aiding and Abetting (18 U.S.C. § 2(b))

A defendant may be found guilty of the crime(s) charged even if the defendant did not personally commit the act(s) constituting the crime if the defendant willfully caused an act to be done that if directly performed by him would be an offense against the United States. A defendant who puts in motion or causes the commission of an indispensable element of the offense may be found guilty as if he had committed this element himself.

### Comment

*See United States v. Ubaldo*, 859 F.3d 690, 705-06 (9th Cir. 2017) (quoting *United States v. Causey*, 835 F.2d 1289, 1292 (9th Cir. 1987)); *United States v. Vaughn*, 797 F.2d 1485, 1490-91 (9th Cir. 1986).

Section 2(b) "does not require a defendant to have a duty to disclose if prosecuted for inaction," *United States v. Sullivan*, 131 F.4th 776, 784 (9th Cir. 2025), so long as the third party who does the act has such a duty, *id.* (citing *United States v. Singh*, 979 F.3d 697, 717-18 (9th Cir. 2020)).

*Revised June 2025*

## 4.3 Accessory After the Fact

The defendant is charged with having been an accessory after the fact to the crime of [*specify crime charged*]. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*name of pricipal*] committed the crime of [*specify crime charged*];

Second, the defendant knew that [*name of principal*] had committed the crime of [*specify crime charged*]; and

Third, the defendant assisted [*name of principal*] with the specific purpose or design to hinder or prevent that person's [apprehension] [trial] [or] [punishment].

The government is not required to prove that [*name of principal*] has been indicted for or convicted of the crime of [*specify crime charged in the indictment*].

### Comment

The court must charge on the elements of the underlying offense if those elements are not set forth in another count.

When there is substantial evidence that the defendant participated in the principal offense before its completion, an instruction on this distinct offense need not be given. *United States v. Panza*, 612 F.2d 432, 441 (9th Cir. 1979); *United States v. Jackson,* 448 F.2d 963, 971 (9th Cir. 1971).

Knowledge that the principal committed the offense charged may be inferred from circumstantial evidence. *United States v. Mills*, 597 F.2d 693, 697 (9th Cir. 1979). Accordingly, an instruction requiring "positive knowledge in contrast to imputed or implied knowledge" should not be given, but the jury should be instructed that the accessory after the fact must know of the principal's actions and act with the "specific purpose or design" to hinder or prevent the principal's apprehension, trial, or punishment. *Id.*

If the name of the principal is unknown, replace "[*name of principal*]" with "someone else."

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 4.4 Attempt

The defendant is charged in the indictment with attempting to commit [*specify crime charged*]. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to [*specify elements of crime charged*]; and

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

### Comment

This definition should follow the elements instruction for the substantive crime.

Where this Manual provides a model instruction covering attempt to commit a specific offense, such instruction should be used instead of this generic attempt instruction. This instruction is appropriate only when a defendant is accused of attempting to commit a crime for which there is no specific model instruction.

This Manual contains model instructions for attempt to commit the following specific offenses:

Instruction 7.1 Alien–Bringing or Attempting to Bring to the United States (Other than Designated Place)
Instruction 7.2 Alien–Illegal Transportation or Attempted Transportation
Instruction 7.3 Alien–Harboring or Attempted Harboring
Instruction 7.5 Alien–Bringing or Attempting to Bring to the United States (Without Authorization)
Instruction 7.7 Alien–Deported Alien Reentering United States Without Consent–Attempt
Instruction 9.4 Attempted Bank Robbery
Instruction 9.5 Hobbs Act–Extortion or Attempted Extortion by Force
Instruction 9.6 Hobbs Act–Extortion or Attempted Extortion by Nonviolent Threat
Instruction 9.7 Hobbs Act–Extortion or Attempted Extortion Under Color of Official Right
Instruction 9.8 Hobbs Act–Robbery or Attempted Robbery
Instruction 12.3 Controlled Substance–Attempted Possession with Intent to Distribute
Instruction 12.7 Controlled Substance–Attempted Distribution or Manufacture
Instruction 12.9 Controlled Substance–Attempted Distribution to Person Under 21 Years
Instruction 12.11 Controlled Substance–Attempted Distribution in or Near School

Instruction 12.13 Controlled Substance–Attempted Employment of Minor to Violate Drug Laws
Instruction 13.2 Passing or Attempting to Pass Counterfeit Obligations
Instruction 13.8 Passing or Attempting to Pass Forged Endorsement on Treasury Check, Bond, or Security of United States
Instruction 15.38 Attempted Bank Fraud–Scheme to Deprive Bank of Intangible Right of Honest Services
Instruction 15.40 Attempted Bank Fraud–Scheme to Defraud by False Promises
Instruction 16.5 Attempted Murder
Instruction 17.5 Attempted Kidnapping–Foreign Official or Official Guest
Instruction 17.6 Attempted Kidnapping–Federal Officer of Employee
Instruction 18.1 Travel Act–Interstate or Foreign Travel in Aid of Racketeering Enterprise
Instruction 18.3 Financial Transaction or Attempted Transaction to Promote Unlawful Activity
Instruction 18.4 Laundering or Attempting to Launder Monetary Instruments
Instruction 18.5 Transporting or Attempting to Transport Funds to Promote Unlawful Activity
Instruction 18.6 Transporting or Attempting to Transport Monetary Instruments for the Purpose of Laundering
Instruction 18.8 Violent Crime or Attempted Violent Crime in Aid of Racketeering Enterprise
Instruction 20.2 and 20.4 Attempted Aggravated Sexual Abuse
Instruction 20.4 Attempted Aggravated Sexual Abuse–Administration of Drug, Intoxicant, or Other Substance
Instruction 20.6 Attempted Aggravated Sexual Abuse of Child
Instruction 20.8 Attempted Sexual Abuse–By Threat
Instruction 20.10 Attempted Sexual Abuse–Incapacity of Victim
Instruction 20.12 Attempted Sexual Abuse of Minor
Instruction 20.14 Attempted Sexual Abuse of Person in Official Detention
Instruction 20.27 Transportation or Attempted Transportation for Prostitution or Criminal Sexual Activity
Instruction 20.28 Persuading or Coercing to Travel in Prostitution or Sexual Activity
Instruction 20.29 Using or Attempting to Use the Mail or a Means of Interstate Commerce to Persuade or Coerce a Minor to Travel to Engage in Prostitution or Sexual Activity
Instruction 21.1 Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods
Instruction 21.2 Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods from the United States
Instruction 21.3 Passing or Attempting to Pass False Papers Through Customhouse
Instruction 22.7 Forcible or Attempted Rescue of Seized Property
Instruction 23.11 Attempted Mail Theft
Instruction 24.2 Arson or Attempted Arson
Instruction 24.5 Attempted Escape

"There is no general federal 'attempt' statute. A defendant therefore can only be found guilty of an attempt to commit a federal offense if the statute defining the offense also expressly proscribes an attempt." (citations omitted). *United States v. Hopkins*, 703 F.2d 1102, 1104 (9th Cir. 1983). However, many federal statutes defining crimes also expressly proscribe attempts.

"[A]ttempt is a term that at common law requires proof that the defendant had the specific intent to commit the underlying crime and took some overt act that was a substantial step toward committing that crime." *United States v. Gracidas-Ulibarry*, 231 F.3d 1188, 1192 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc). To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised Dec. 2023*

## 4.5 Specific Intent

### Comment

The Committee recommends avoiding instructions that distinguish between "specific intent" and "general intent." The Ninth Circuit has stated: "Both the manual [on jury trial procedures] accompanying the Model Instructions and our case law discourage the use of generic intent instructions." *United States v. Bell*, 303 F.3d 1187, 1191 (9th Cir. 2002). The "preferred practice" is to give an intent instruction that reflects the intent requirements of the offense charged. *Id*.

If the statute at issue is silent regarding the necessary mens rea of the crime, the court should examine the statute's legislative history. *United States v. Nguyen*, 73 F.3d 887, 891 (9th Cir. 1995). *See also United States v. Barajas-Montiel,*185 F.3d 947, 952 (9th Cir. 1999) (following *Nguyen* and holding that criminal intent is required for conviction of felony offenses of 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(2)(B)). If the court perceives an ambiguity regarding Congress's intent to require a mens rea, the court should read such a requirement into the statute. *Nguyen*, 73 F.3d at 890-91. *Accord, United States v. Johal*, 428 F.3d 823, 826 (9th Cir. 2005) (requirement of some mens rea for conviction of crime is "firmly embedded").

Most attempt crimes require specific intent. *See United States v. Gracidas-Ulibarry*, 231 F.3d 1188, 1192 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc) (crime of attempted illegal reentry, for example, is specific intent offense).

## 4.6 Willfully

### Comment

As the Supreme Court has observed, "willful" is a word of "many meanings" and "its construction [is] often . . . influenced by its context." *Ratzlaf v. United States*, 510 U.S. 135, 141 (1994). Accordingly, Ninth Circuit cases have defined "willful" in different terms depending on the particular crime charged. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Hernandez*, 859 F.3d 817 (9th Cir. 2017) (holding that in criminal prosecution for transporting firearms into one's state of residence, "willfully" requires that defendant knew transportation itself, not some later intended crime, was unlawful); *United States v. Lloyd*, 807 F.3d 1128, 1166 (9th Cir. 2015) (in criminal prosecution for selling unregistered securities in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 77e, "willfully" does not require actor to have known conduct was unlawful (citing *Reyes*, 577 F.3d 1069)); *United States v. Anguiano-Morfin*, 713 F.3d 1208, 1210 (9th Cir. 2013) (in prosecution for falsely claiming United States citizenship, defendant's subjective belief is dispositive on issue of willfulness); *United States v. Berry*, 683 F.3d 1015, 1021 (9th Cir. 2012) (in prosecution for social security fraud, "willfully" connotes "culpable state of mind"); *United States v. Reyes*, 577 F.3d 1069, 1080 (9th Cir. 2009) (in prosecution for securities fraud, "willfully" means "intentionally undertaking an act that one knows to be wrongful; 'willfully' in this context does *not* require that the actor know specifically that the conduct was unlawful," quoting *United States v. Tarallo*, 380 F.3d 1174, 1188 (9th Cir. 2004) (emphasis in original)). *See also United States v. Easterday*, 564 F.3d 1004, 1006 (9th Cir. 2009) (for crime of failure to pay employee payroll taxes, "willful" defined as "a voluntary, intentional violation of a known legal duty"); *United States v. Awad*, 551 F.3d 930, 939 (9th Cir. 2009) (in health care fraud case, "willful" act is one undertaken with "bad purpose" with knowledge that conduct was unlawful); *but see United States v. Ajoku*, 718 F.3d 882 (9th Cir. 2013), *judgment vacated*, 134 S. Ct. 1872 (mem.) (U.S. April 21, 2014). After the Solicitor General confessed error, the Supreme Court vacated the decision of the Ninth Circuit in *Ajoku*. As a result, in cases alleging a false statement to a government agency in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001, as well as cases alleging a false statement relating to health care matters in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1035, the government must prove, among other things, that a defendant acted deliberately and with knowledge both that the statement was untrue and that his or her conduct was unlawful.

As the meaning of "willfully" necessarily depends on particular facts arising under the applicable statute, the Committee has not provided a generic instruction defining that term. In the context of tax crimes, however, *see* Instruction 22.6 (Willfully—Defined).

*Revised Sept. 2017*

## 4.7 Maliciously

### Comment

There is no uniform definition of the term "maliciously." When a statute provides a definition of a term, that definition controls. However, when a statute does not define a term, the term will generally be interpreted "'by employing the ordinary, contemporary, and common meaning of the words that Congress used.'" *United States v. Kelly*, 676 F.3d 912, 917 (9th Cir. 2012) (quoting *United States v. Iverson*, 162 F.3d 1015, 1022 (9th Cir. 1988)). Furthermore, when a term "ha[s] accumulated settled meaning under . . . the common law . . . a court must infer, unless the statute otherwise dictates, that Congress means to incorporate the established meaning of [the term]." *Id.* at 917 (quotation marks and citation omitted) (in prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 1363, government was not required to prove that defendant harbored any "malevolence or ill-will"). One acts "maliciously" when he or she has the intent to do the prohibited act and has no justification or excuse. *Id*. at 918.

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 4.8 Knowingly

An act is done knowingly if the defendant is aware of the act and does not [act] [fail to act] through ignorance, mistake, or accident. [The government is not required to prove that the defendant knew that [his] [her] acts or omissions were unlawful.] You may consider evidence of the defendant's words, acts, or omissions, along with all the other evidence, in deciding whether the defendant acted knowingly.

### Comment

The second sentence of this instruction should not be given when an element of the offense requires the government to prove that the defendant knew that what the defendant did was unlawful. *See United States v. Liu*, 731 F.3d 982, 994-95 (9th Cir. 2013) (criminal copyright infringement); *United States v. Santillan*, 243 F.3d 1125, 1129 (9th Cir. 2001) (violation of Lacey Act). In the context of a money laundering offense, the second sentence of this instruction may be given if altered to clarify that it applies only to the act of engaging in monetary transactions, and not to whether a defendant knew the money involved in the transaction was the proceeds of criminal activity. *Compare United States v. Lonich*, 23 F.4th 881, 897-901 (9th Cir. 2022), *with United States v. Stein*, 37 F.3d 1407, 1409-10 (9th Cir. 1994), *and United States v. Turman*, 122 F.3d 1167, 1169-70 (9th Cir. 1997), *abrogated on other grounds by Henderson v. United States*, 568 U.S. 266 (2013). *See also United States v. Jaimez*, 45 F.4th 1118, 1123 (9th Cir. 2022) (money laundering conspiracy).

*Revised Sept. 2022*

## 4.9 Deliberate Ignorance

You may find that the defendant acted knowingly if you find beyond a reasonable doubt that:

First, the defendant was aware of a high probability that [*e.g.*, drugs were in the defendant's automobile], and

Second, the defendant deliberately avoided learning the truth.

You may not find such knowledge, however, if you find that the defendant actually believed that [*e.g.* no drugs were in the defendant's automobile], or if you find that the defendant was simply negligent, careless, or foolish.

### Comment

In *United States v. Heredia*, 483 F.3d 913 (9th Cir. 2007) (en banc), the Ninth Circuit revived its decision in *United States v. Jewell*, 532 F.2d 697 (9th Cir. 1976) (en banc), on which the language of this instruction is based. In so doing, the en banc court reiterated that in deciding whether to give a deliberate ignorance instruction along with an instruction on actual knowledge, "the district court must determine whether the jury could rationally find willful blindness even though it has rejected the government's evidence of actual knowledge. If so, the court may also give a *Jewell* instruction." *Heredia*, 483 F.3d at 922; *see also United States v. Ramos-Atondo*, 732 F.3d 1113, 1120, (9th Cir. 2013) (deliberate ignorance instruction may be given in conspiracy case); *United States v. Yi*, 704 F.3d 800, 805 (9th Cir. 2013) (approving modified version of Instruction 5.8 (now Instruction 4.9) when defendant knew of high probability of asbestos in condominium ceilings and deliberately avoided learning truth) ; *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 729 (9th Cir. 2023) (holding no abuse of discretion in giving deliberate ignorance instruction in the context of the Analogue Act).

In the event the court determines to give a *Jewell* instruction, "it must, at a minimum contain the two prongs of suspicion and deliberate avoidance." *Heredia* at 483 F.3d at 924. As the Ninth Circuit explained:

> We conclude, therefore, that the two-pronged instruction given at defendant's trial met the requirements of *Jewell* and, to the extent some of our cases have suggested more is required, *see* page 920 *supra*, they are overruled. A district judge, in the exercise of his discretion, may say more to tailor the instruction to the particular facts of the case. Here, for example, the judge might have instructed the jury that it could find Heredia did not act deliberately if it believed that her failure to investigate was motivated by safety concerns. Heredia did not ask for such an instruction and the district judge had no obligation to give it sua sponte. Even when defendant asks for such a supplemental instruction, it is within the district court's broad discretion whether to comply.

*Id.* at 920-21. Accordingly, the government need not prove that the reason for the defendant's deliberate avoidance was to obtain a defense against prosecution. *Id*.

In *United States v. Hong*, 938 F.3d 1040 (9th Cir. 2019), the Ninth Circuit applied *Heredia* and discussed when a deliberate ignorance (or willful blindness) instruction should be given in the context of a charge of health care fraud. The Ninth Circuit explained:

> A deliberate ignorance—or "willful blindness"—instruction is only relevant if the jury rejects the government's evidence of actual knowledge. *United States v. Heredia*, 483 F.3d 913, 922 (9th Cir. 2007) (en banc). "In deciding whether to give a willful blindness instruction, in addition to an actual knowledge instruction, the district court must determine whether the jury could rationally find willful blindness even though it has rejected the government's evidence of actual knowledge." *Id*. A jury can believe some, but not all, evidence presented by a party. *Id*. at 923. As we have said before, "[t]he government has no way of knowing which version of the facts the jury will believe, and it is entitled (like any other litigant) to have the jury instructed in conformity with [different] rational possibilities. That these possibilities are mutually exclusive is of no consequence." *Id*. Still, "the district judge has discretion to refuse" the instruction even where its factual predicates are present. *Id*. at 924.

*Hong*, 938 F.3d at 1046-47.

*Revised March 20247*

## 4.10 Presumptions

### Comment

The Committee recommends that extreme caution be used in instructing the jury regarding presumptions. "A jury instruction cannot relieve the State of the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt a crucial element of the criminal offense." *Patterson v. Gomez*, 223 F.3d 959, 962 (9th Cir. 2000). Accordingly, "if a 'reasonable juror could have given the presumption conclusive or persuasion-shifting effect,' the instruction is unconstitutional." *Id.* (quoting *Sandstrom v. Montana*, 442 U.S. 510, 519 (1979)).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 4.11 Advice of Counsel

One element that the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt is that the defendant had the unlawful intent to [*specify applicable unlawful act*]. Evidence that the defendant in good faith followed the advice of counsel would be inconsistent with such an unlawful intent. Unlawful intent has not been proved if the defendant, before acting, made full disclosure of all material facts to an attorney, received the attorney's advice as to the specific course of conduct that was followed, and reasonably followed the attorney's recommended course of conduct or advice in good faith.

### Comment

A defendant who reasonably relies on the advice of counsel may "not be convicted of [a] crime which involves willful and unlawful intent[.]" *Williamson v. United States*, 207 U.S. 425, 453 (1908). Advice of counsel is not a separate and distinct defense but rather is a circumstance indicating good faith which the trier of fact is entitled to consider on the issue of intent. *Bisno v. United States*, 299 F.2d 711, 719 (9th Cir. 1961). A defendant is entitled to an instruction concerning the advice of counsel if it has some foundation in the evidence. *United States v. Ibarra-Alcarez*, 830 F.2d 968, 973 (9th Cir. 1987). To assert advice of counsel, a defendant must have made a full disclosure of all material facts to his or her attorney, received advice as to the specific course of conduct that he or she followed, and relied on the advice in good faith. *United States v. Munoz*, 233 F.3d 1117, 1132 (9th Cir. 2000) (citing *id*.).

In appropriate cases, where the prerequisites are met, the jury may be instructed as to good-faith reliance on advice of an accountant or tax return preparer. *United States v. Bishop*, 291 F.3d 1100, 1106-07 (9th Cir. 2002); *United States v. Claiborne*, 765 F.2d 784, 798 (9th Cir. 1985), *abrogated on other grounds*, *Ross v. Oklahoma*, 487 U.S. 81 (1988). In such cases, the instruction should be modified accordingly.

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 4.12 Corruptly

### Comment

Consult each statute that uses the term "corruptly," and related case law, for the meaning of the term because it is capable of different meanings in different statutory contexts.

For example:

> In a prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 1512(b)(2)(A) or (B) (making it a crime to "knowingly . . . or corruptly persuade[e] another person . . . with intent to . . . cause [the] person" to "withhold" or "alter" documents for use in "an official proceeding"), the term "corruptly" must reflect some consciousness of wrongdoing. *Arthur Andersen LLP v. United States*, 544 U.S. 696, 704-06 (2005).
>
> In a prosecution under 26 U.S.C. § 7212(a) (making it a crime to "corruptly" endeavor to intimidate or impede the administration of tax laws), "the district court correctly instructed the jury that 'corruptly' means 'performed with the intent to secure an unlawful benefit for oneself or another.'" *United States v. Massey*, 419 F.3d 1008, 1010 (9th Cir. 2005) (citing *United States v. Workinger*, 90 F.3d 1409, 1414 (9th Cir. 1996)).
>
> In a prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(2)(B) (making it a crime to "corruptly" receive something of value in return for being influenced in the performance of an official act), the district court properly rejected a defendant's requested instruction that would have required the government to prove an official acts "corruptly" when the official uses his official position to commit or aid in the commission of fraud. *United States v. Leyva,* 282 F.3d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 2002).

In a prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 215(a)(2) (making it crime for banking officials, employees, or agents to "corruptly" solicit, demand, or accept anything of value in connection with any bank business or transaction), the district court correctly instructed the jury that "corruptly" refers to the language in § 215(a)(2) requiring the government to prove that the defendant "'intend[ed] to be influenced or rewarded in connection with any business or transaction of' a financial institution." *United States v. Lonich*, 23 F.4th 881, 902-03 (9th Cir. 2022) (alteration in original).

In *United States v. Sanders*, 421 F.3d 1044 (9th Cir. 2005), the Ninth Circuit noted it had not yet ruled as to whether a defendant violates 18 U.S.C. § 1512(b) when he "corruptly persuades" others to invoke their Fifth Amendment right to remain silent. *Id.* at 1050-51. The Ninth Circuit has held, however, that a defendant does not act "corruptly" within the meaning of § 1512 when she non-coercively persuades a witness to exercise a legal privilege not to testify. *United States v. Doss*, 630 F.3d 1181, 1189-90 (9th Cir. 2011). "[T]here is a difference in approach among the circuits about whether merely attempting to persuade a witness to withhold cooperation or not to disclose information to law enforcement officials—as opposed to actively lying—falls within the ambit of § 1512(b)." *United States v. Khatami*, 280 F.3d 907, 913 (9th Cir. 2002).

In a prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 1512(c) (making it crime to corruptly obstruct, influence or impede any official proceeding, or attempt to do so), the district court did not err by failing to include the words "evil" and "wicked" in its instructions defining the word "corruptly"; nor would it be error to omit these words when instructing on 18 U.S.C. § 1512(b). *United States v. Watters*, 717 F.3d 733, 735 (9th Cir. 2013).

*Revised June 2018*

## 4.13 Intent to Defraud

An intent to defraud is an intent to deceive [or] [and] cheat.

### Comment

While *United States v. Shipsey*, 363 F.3d 962 (9th Cir. 2004) explicitly approved the language of this instruction, *United States v. Miller*, 953 F.3d 1095, 1101 (9th Cir. 2020) expressly overruled *Shipsey*, holding that intent to defraud for purposes of wire fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1343) and mail fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1341) requires intent "to deceive *and* cheat[.]" (emphasis in original); *see also United States v. Saini*, 23 F.4th 1155, 1163 (9th Cir. 2022) (holding that "ordinary meaning of 'intent to defraud' under § 1029(a)(3) and (4) requires an intent to deceive *and* cheat" (emphasis added)). However, for purposes of other statutes, the [or] [and] formulation may be permissible for this instruction. *See United States v. Dearing*, 504 F.3d 897 (9th Cir. 2007).

*Miller* did not disturb *Shipsey*'s ruling that because the trial court gave this instruction, "no good faith instruction was necessary at all." *Shipsey*, 363 F.3d at 967-68; *see also United States v. Crandall*, 525 F.3d 907, 911-12 (9th Cir. 2008) (in which the Ninth Circuit rejected a contention based on *Arthur Andersen LLP v. United States*, 544 U.S. 696, 704-06 (2005), an obstruction of justice case, that intent to deceive requires proof of "consciousness of wrongdoing" in a prosecution for mail or wire fraud and said that the Ninth Circuit model instruction that was given "adequately covered the defense theory of lack of intent.").

As to whether the defendant acted in good faith, and therefore did not act with an intent to defraud, *see United States v. Molinaro*, 11 F.3d 853, 863 (9th Cir. 1993), in which the Ninth Circuit approved the following instruction in a case involving the crime of bank fraud:

> You may determine whether a defendant had an honest, good faith belief in the truth of the specific misrepresentations alleged in the indictment in determining whether or not the defendant acted with intent to defraud. However, a defendant's belief that the victims of the fraud will be paid in the future or will sustain no economic loss is no defense to the crime.

*Revised Sept. 2020*

## 5. SPECIFIC DEFENSES

**Instruction**

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5.13 Public Authority or Government Authorization Defense

## Introductory Comment

"A defendant is entitled to have the jury instructed on his or her theory of defense, as long as the theory has support in the law and some foundation in the evidence." *United States v. Perdomo-Espana*, 522 F.3d 983, 986-87 (9th Cir. 2008). But the instruction need not be given in the form requested, nor if it "merely duplicates what the jury has already been told." *United States v. Lopez-Alvarez*, 970 F.2d 583, 597 (9th Cir. 1992).

There appears to be some conflict in Ninth Circuit case law as to when a district court must sua sponte instruct the jury on a specific defense. *Compare United States v. Bear*, 439 F.3d 565, 568 (9th Cir. 2006) ("[w]hen a defendant actually presents and relies on a theory of defense at trial," in this case, a public authority defense, "the judge must instruct the jury on that theory even where such an instruction was not requested.") *with United States v. Lillard*, 354 F.3d 850, 855 (9th Cir. 2003) ("In the absence of a request from the defendant, the omission of an alibi instruction cannot be plain error.").

The unanimity requirement extends to affirmative defenses. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Ramirez*, 537 F.3d 1075, 1084 (9th Cir. 2008). In most cases the general unanimity instruction in Instruction 6.19 (Duty to Deliberate) should suffice. *See United States v. Nobari*, 574 F.3d 1065, 1081 (9th Cir. 2009); *United States v. Kim*, 196 F.3d 1079, 1082 (9th Cir. 1999). However, "a specific unanimity instruction is required if it appears that there is a genuine possibility of jury confusion or that a conviction may occur as the result of different jurors concluding that the defendant committed different acts." *United States v. Lyons*, 472 F.3d 1055, 1068 (9th Cir. 2007). *See also* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

## 5.1 Alibi

Evidence has been admitted that the defendant was not present at the time and place of the commission of the crime charged in the indictment. The government has the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt the defendant was present at that time and place. The defendant does not have the burden of proving an alibi defense, nor does the defendant have to convince you that [he] [she] was not present at the time and place of the commission of the crime.

If, after consideration of all the evidence, you have a reasonable doubt that the defendant was present at the time and place the crime was committed, you must find the defendant not guilty.

### Comment

*See* Fed. R. Crim. P. 12.1 (Notice of Alibi) as to a defendant's notice of defense.

"[T]here is no burden of proof on the accused regarding an alibi." *Leavitt v. Arave*, 383 F.3d 809, 833 (9th Cir. 2004) (per curiam). It is error to refuse a request for an alibi instruction when there is evidence to support this theory. *United States v. Lillard*, 354 F.3d 850, 855 (9th Cir. 2003); *United States v. Hairston*, 64 F.3d 491, 495 (9th Cir. 1995); *United States v. Zuniga,* 6 F.3d 569, 571 (9th Cir. 1993). It does not matter which party introduces the alibi evidence; the instruction should be given even if the alibi evidence is "weak, insufficient, inconsistent or of doubtful credibility." *Hairston*, 64 F.3d at 495 (citations omitted). However, the failure to give an alibi instruction sua sponte is not plain error. *Lillard*, 354 F.3d at 855-56.

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 5.2 Entrapment

The defendant contends that [he] [she] was entrapped by a government agent. The government has the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant was not entrapped. The government must prove either:

1. the defendant was predisposed to commit the crime before being contacted by government agents, or

2. the defendant was not induced by the government agents to commit the crime.

When a person, independent of and before government contact, is predisposed to commit the crime, it is not entrapment if government agents merely provide an opportunity to commit the crime. In determining whether the defendant was predisposed to commit the crime before being approached by government agents, you may consider the following:

First, whether the defendant demonstrated reluctance to commit the offense;

Second, the defendant's character and reputation;

Third, whether government agents initially suggested the criminal activity;

Fourth, whether the defendant engaged in the criminal activity for profit; and

Fifth, the nature of the government's inducement or persuasion.

In determining whether the defendant was induced by government agents to commit the offense, you may consider any government conduct creating a substantial risk that an otherwise innocent person would commit an offense, including persuasion, fraudulent representations, threats, coercive tactics, harassment, promises of reward, or pleas based on need, sympathy, or friendship.

### Comment

When there is evidence of entrapment, an additional element should be added to the instruction on the substantive offense: for example, "Fourth, the defendant was not entrapped."

A defendant need not concede that he or she committed the crime to be entitled to an entrapment instruction. *United States v. Demma*, 523 F.2d 981, 982 (9th Cir. 1975); *cf. United States v. Paduano*, 549 F.2d 145, 148 (9th Cir. 1977). Only slight evidence raising the issue of entrapment is necessary for submission of the issue to the jury. *United States v. Gurolla*, 333 F.3d 944, 951 (9th Cir. 2003).

The government is not required to prove both lack of inducement and predisposition. *United States v. McClelland*, 72 F.3d 717, 722 (9th Cir. 1995) ("If the defendant is found to be predisposed to commit a crime, an entrapment defense is unavailable regardless of the inducement."); *United States v. Simas*, 937 F.2d 459, 462 (9th Cir. 1991) (in absence of

inducement, evidence of lack of predisposition is irrelevant and the failure to give a requested entrapment instruction is not error).

There are a number of Ninth Circuit cases describing the five factors that should be considered when determining "predisposition." *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Mohamud*, 843 F.3d 420, 432-35 (9th Cir. 2016); *United States v. Gurolla*, 333 F.3d at 956, *United States v. Jones*, 231 F.3d 508, 518 (9th Cir. 2000).

The government must prove that the defendant was predisposed to commit the crime *prior* to being approached by a government agent. *Jacobson v. United States*, 503 U.S. 540, 553 (1992). However, evidence gained after government contact with the defendant can be used to prove that the defendant was predisposed before the contact. *Id.* at 550-53*; see also United States v. Burt*, 143 F.3d 1215, 1218 (9th Cir. 1998) (previous Ninth Circuit Entrapment Instruction 6.02 erroneous "because it failed to state clearly the government's burden of establishing 'beyond [a] reasonable doubt that the defendant was disposed to commit the criminal act prior to first being approached by [g]overnment agents.'") (citing *Jacobson*, 503 U.S. at 549). The Ninth Circuit has stated that an entrapment instruction should avoid instructing the jury that a person is not entrapped if the person was "already" willing to commit the crime because of the ambiguity resulting therefrom. *United States v. Kim*, 176 F.3d 1126, 1128 (9th Cir. 1999).

The final paragraph of the instruction, explaining inducement, appears repeatedly in the case law. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Williams*, 547 F.3d 1187, 1197 (9th Cir. 2008) (quoting *United States v. Davis*, 36 F.3d 1424, 1430 (9th Cir. 1994)). *See United States v. Spentz*, 653 F.3d 815, 819-20 (9th Cir. 2011) (no abuse of discretion in denying defendant's request for entrapment jury instruction when only inducement for committing crime, other than being afforded opportunity to do so, is typical benefit from engaging in criminal act such as proceeds from robbery). When a case presents a *Spentz* issue, the Ninth Circuit has suggested adding the following language:

> It is not entrapment if a person is tempted into committing a crime solely on the hope of obtaining ill-gotten gain; that is often the motive to commit a crime. However, in deciding whether a law enforcement officer induced the defendant to commit the crime, the jury may consider all of the factors that shed light on how the officers supposedly persuaded or pressured the defendant to commit the crime.

*United States v. Cortes*, 732 F.3d 1078, 1087 (9th Cir. 2013) (emphasis omitted).

When the propriety of a government agent's conduct is an issue, *see* Instruction 3.10 (Government's Use of Undercover Agents and Informants).

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 5.3 Sentencing Entrapment

### Comment

Sentencing entrapment is a separate defense from entrapment and, in appropriate cases, an issue for the jury. "A defendant 'bears the burden of proving sentencing entrapment by a preponderance of the evidence.'" *United States v. Biao Huang*, 687 F.3d 1197, 1203 (9th Cir. 2012) (quoting *United States v. Parilla*, 114 F.3d 124, 127 (9th Cir. 1997)). "The district court must make express factual findings regarding whether the defendant has met his burden." *Id*. (citing *United States v. Riewe*, 165 F.3d 727, 729 (9th Cir. 1999) (per curiam)). When a defendant contends that he or she was entrapped as to the quantity of drugs involved in the crime, consult *United States v. Cortes*, 757 F.3d 850, 864 (9th Cir. 2014) and *United States v. Yuman-Hernandez*, 712 F.3d 471, 474-75 (9th Cir. 2013).

Sentencing entrapment should not be confused with sentencing manipulation. A defendant may be eligible for a downward departure or variance for sentencing entrapment where he "can show he was predisposed to commit a minor or lesser offense, but was entrapped to commit a greater offense, subject to greater punishment . . . ." *United States v. Boykin*, 785 F.3d 1352, 1360 (9th Cir. 2015) (citing *United States v. Mejia*, 559 F.3d 1113, 1118 (9th Cir. 2009)). "In contrast, 'sentencing manipulation' occurs when the government increases a defendant's guideline sentence by conducting a lengthy investigation which increases the number of drug transactions and quantities for which the defendant is responsible." *Id*. (citing *United States v. Torres*, 563 F.3d 731, 734 (8th Cir. 2009)). Sentencing entrapment focuses on the defendant's predisposition; sentencing manipulation focuses on the government's conduct and motives. *Id*. at 1360-61.

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 5.4 Entrapment by Estoppel Defense

The defendant contends that [[if] [although]] [[he] [she]] committed the acts charged in the indictment, [he] [she] did so reasonably relying upon the affirmative advice of an authorized [federal government official] [agent of the federal government].

To establish this defense, the defendant has the burden to show by a preponderance of the evidence that:

First, an authorized [federal government official] [agent of the federal government] was empowered to render the claimed erroneous advice;

Second, the [federal government official] [agent of the federal government] had been made aware of all the relevant historical facts;

Third, the [federal government official] [agent of the federal government] affirmatively told the defendant the proscribed conduct was permissible;

Fourth, the defendant relied on the false information; and

Fifth, this reliance was reasonable.

In deciding this, you should consider all of the relevant circumstances, including the identity of the federal government [official] [agent], what the [official] [agent] said to the defendant, and how closely the defendant followed any instructions the [official] [agent] gave.

A preponderance of the evidence means that you must be persuaded that the things the defendant seeks to prove are more probably true than not true. This is a lesser burden of proof than the government's burden to prove beyond a reasonable doubt each element of [*specify crime charged*].

If you find that the defendant has proved that [he] [she] reasonably relied upon the affirmative advice of the federal government [official] [agent], you must find the defendant not guilty of [*specify crime charged*].

### Comment

For applications of this defense, *see, e.g.*, *United States v. Lynch*, 903 F.3d 1061, 1075-78 (9th Cir. 2018) (marijuana dispensary); *United States v. Schafer*, 625 F.3d 629, 637 (9th Cir. 2010) (marijuana manufacturing); *United States v. Batterjee*, 361 F.3d 1210, 1216 (9th Cir. 2004) (firearms offense); *United States v. Ramirez-Valencia*, 202 F.3d 1106, 1109-10 (9th Cir. 2000) (immigration offense).

This defense applies only to advice from federal officials or authorized agents of the federal government and not state or local officials. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Mack*, 164 F.3d 467, 474 (9th Cir. 1999) (rejecting entrapment by estoppel defense "because Mack did not rely on the advice or authority of federal officials or agents") (emphasis omitted)); *United States v.*

*Collins*, 61 F.3d 1379, 1385 (9th Cir. 1995) (noting entrapment by estoppel defense applies only when defendant relies either on "a federal government official empowered to render the claimed erroneous advice, or on an authorized agent of the federal government, who has been granted the authority from the federal government to render such advice") (citation omitted).

Regarding "authorized agents," the Ninth Circuit has held that "[c]learly, the United States Government has made licensed firearms dealers federal agents in connection with the gathering and dispensing of information on the purchase of firearms. Under these circumstances, we believe that a buyer has the right to rely on the representations of a licensed firearms dealer, who has been made aware of all the relevant historical facts . . . ." *United States v. Tallmadge*, 829 F.2d 767, 774 (9th Cir. 1987). *See also United States v. Brebner*, 951 F.2d 1017, 1027 (9th Cir. 1991) (noting defendant may rely on advice of either a federal government official or "an authorized agent of the federal government who, like licensed firearms dealers, has been granted the authority from the federal government to render such advice").

"To establish affirmative authorization, a defendant must do more than show that the government made vague or even contradictory statements. Instead, the defendant must show that the government affirmatively told him the proscribed conduct was permissible." *Lynch*, 903 F.3d at 1076 (citations and internal quotations marks omitted) (rejecting entrapment by estoppel defense when government official advised that legality of marijuana business "was up to the cities and counties to decide how they wanted to handle the matter" because statement was too vague and ambiguous to qualify as affirmative authorization).

Reasonable reliance occurs if "a person sincerely desirous of obeying the law would have accepted the information as true, and would not have been put on notice to make further inquiries." *Id*. at 1077 (citation omitted). *See also Batterjee*, 361 F.3d at 1217 (holding that defendant dealing with complicated intersection of immigration and criminal law, who was told by federal licensee that he was "legally purchasing and possessing a firearm," could reasonably rely on those assurances because he had no reason to believe he needed to inquire any further).

No Ninth Circuit authority clearly sets out the burden that a defendant must satisfy to make out an entrapment by estoppel defense. However, the Ninth Circuit has held that the entrapment by estoppel defense is very similar to the public authority defense, and the preponderance standard applies to the public authority defense. *See, e.g*., *United States v. Doe*, 705 F.3d 1134, 1146 (9th Cir. 2013) (holding that defendant had burden of proving public authority defense by preponderance of the evidence because defense did not serve to negate any elements of charged offenses); *United States v. Burrows*, 36 F.3d 875, 882 (9th Cir. 1994) ("The difference between the entrapment by estoppel defense and the public authority defense is not great."). *See also United States v. Beaty*, 245 F.3d 617, 623 (6th Cir. 2001) (applying preponderance standard); *United States v. Stewart*, 185 F.3d 112, 124 (3rd Cir. 1999) (applying preponderance standard).

*Revised April 2019*

## 5.5 Entrapment Defense—Whether Person Acted as Government Agent

The defendant contends [he] [she] was entrapped by a government agent. Whether or not [*name of witness*] was acting as a government agent in connection with the crimes charged in this case, and if so, when that person began acting as a government agent, are questions for you to decide. In deciding those questions, you should consider that, for purposes of entrapment, someone is a government agent when the government authorizes, directs, and supervises that person's activities and is aware of those activities. To be a government agent, it is not enough that someone has previously acted or been paid as an informant by other state or federal agencies, or that someone expects compensation for providing information.

In determining whether and when someone was acting as a government agent, you must look at all the circumstances existing at the time of that person's activities in connection with the crimes charged in this case, including but not limited to: the nature of that person's relationship with the government, the purposes for which it was understood that person might act on behalf of the government, the instructions given to that person about the nature and extent of permissible activities, and what the government knew about those activities and permitted or used.

### Comment

The Ninth Circuit has explicitly approved the factors articulated in the second paragraph of this instruction. *See United States v. Jones*, 231 F.3d 508, 517 (9th Cir. 2000).

When the propriety of a putative government agent's conduct is an issue, *see* Instruction 3.10 (Government's Use of Undercover Agents and Informants).

*Compare United States v. Tallmadge*, 829 F.2d 767, 774 (9th Cir. 1987) (licensed firearms dealer held to be government agent; "we believe that a buyer has the right to rely on the representations of a licensed firearms dealer, who has been made aware of all the relevant historical facts, that a person may receive and possess a weapon if his felony conviction has been reduced to a misdemeanor")*, with United States v. Rodman*, 776 F.3d 638, 643 (9th Cir. 2015) (licensed firearms dealer could not rely on entrapment by estoppel defense even if told by another licensed firearms dealer that removing serial numbers from machine guns and then placing numbers on other guns for sale was legal because other licensed firearms dealer was in no better position than defendant to determine legality of scheme).

*Revised Mar. 2015*

## 5.6 Insanity

The defendant contends [he] [she] was insane at the time of the crime. Insanity is a defense to the charge. The sanity of the defendant at the time of the crime charged is therefore a question you must decide.

A defendant is insane only if at the time of the crime charged:

First, the defendant had a severe mental disease or defect; and

Second, as a result, the defendant was unable to appreciate the nature and quality or the wrongfulness of [his] [her] acts.

The defendant has the burden of proving the defense of insanity by clear and convincing evidence. Clear and convincing evidence of insanity means that it is highly probable that the defendant was insane at the time of the crime. Proof by clear and convincing evidence is a lower standard of proof than proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

You may consider evidence of the defendant's mental condition before or after the crime in deciding whether the defendant was insane at the time of the crime. Insanity may be temporary or extended.

Your finding on the question of whether the defendant was insane at the time of the crime must be unanimous.

[Your verdict form will allow you to select from three possible verdicts:

If you unanimously agree that the government has failed to prove the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt and (2) the defendant has not proven insanity by clear and convincing evidence, you must select "not guilty";

If you unanimously agree that (1) the government has proven the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, you must select "guilty";

If you unanimously agree that the government has proven the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, and you also unanimously agree that the defendant has proven by clear and convincing evidence that [he] [she] was insane at the time of the crime charged, you must select "not guilty only by reason of insanity."]

### Comment

The insanity defense and the burden of proof are set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 17. Clear and convincing evidence requires that the existence of a disputed fact be highly probable. *Colorado v. New Mexico*, 467 U.S. 310, 316 (1984). When an affirmative defense of insanity is submitted to the jury, unanimity is required on both questions of guilt and sanity. "[A] jury united as to guilt but divided as to an affirmative defense (such as insanity) is necessarily a hung jury." *United States v. Southwell,* 432 F.3d 1050, 1055 (9th Cir. 2005).

A special verdict is required to resolve an insanity defense if requested by the government or the defendant, or on the court's own motion. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 4242(b). The final paragraph in the bracketed section should be included in such instances.

When asserting an insanity defense to a continuing offense, such as illegal reentry under 8 U.S.C. § 1326(a), a defendant must prove that he or she was legally insane for "virtually the entire duration" of his or her offense. *See United States v. Alvarez-Ulloa*, 784 F.3d 558, 568 (9th Cir. 2015) (approving supplemental jury instruction in 8 U.S.C. § 1326(a) prosecution informing jury that insanity defense is negated if defendant ceased being insane for period long enough that he could have reasonably left United States, but knowingly remained).

*Revised Jan. 2019*

## 5.7 Duress, Coercion, or Compulsion (Legal Excuse)

The defendant contends [he] [she] acted under [duress] [coercion] [compulsion] at the time of the crime charged. [Duress] [coercion] [compulsion] legally excuses the crime of [*specify crime charged*].

The defendant must prove [duress] [coercion] [compulsion] by a preponderance of the evidence. A preponderance of the evidence means that you must be persuaded that the things the defendant seeks to prove are more probably true than not true. This is a lesser burden of proof than the government's burden to prove beyond a reasonable doubt each element of [*specify crime charged*].

A defendant acts under [duress] [coercion] [compulsion] only if at the time of the crime charged:

First, there was a present, immediate, or impending threat of death or serious bodily injury to [the defendant] [a family member of the defendant] if the defendant did not [commit] [participate in the commission of] the crime;

Second, the defendant had a well-grounded fear that the threat of death or serious bodily injury would be carried out; [and]

Third, the defendant had no reasonable opportunity to escape the threatened harm[.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant surrendered to authorities as soon as it was safe to do so.]

If you find that each of these things has been proved by a preponderance of the evidence, you must find the defendant not guilty.

### Comment

The bracketed fourth element should be used only in cases of prison escape. *See United States v. Solano*, 10 F.3d 682, 683 (9th Cir. 1993). "[I]n order to be entitled to an instruction on duress or necessity as a defense to the crime charged, an escapee must first offer evidence justifying his continued absence from custody as well as his initial departure[.]" *United States v. Bailey*, 444 U.S. 394, 408 (1980). Although not an element in non-escape cases, whether the defendant surrendered to authorities upon reaching a point of safety is nevertheless relevant to whether the third element is satisfied. *United States v. Zaragoza-Moreira*, 780 F.3d 971, 978 (9th Cir. 2015) (citations omitted).

In *Dixon v. United States*, 548 U.S. 1, 7-8 (2006), the Supreme Court held that when a statute is silent on the question of an affirmative defense and when the affirmative defense does not negate an essential element of the offense, the burden is on the defendant to prove the elements of the defense by a preponderance of the evidence. "Like the defense of necessity, the defense of duress does not negate a defendant's criminal state of mind when the applicable offense requires a defendant to have acted knowingly or willfully; instead, it allows the defendant to 'avoid liability . . . because coercive conditions or necessity negates a conclusion of guilt even though the necessary

mens rea was present.'" *Id*. (quoting *Bailey*, 444 U.S. at 402).

Use this instruction when the defendant alleges that he or she committed the alleged criminal act under duress, coercion, or compulsion. *See United States v. Meraz-Solomon*, 3 F.3d 298, 299 (9th Cir. 1993) (in prosecution for importation of cocaine, burden is on defendant to prove duress, coercion, or compulsion by a preponderance of the evidence). A defendant is not obligated to admit guilt to a crime as a precondition for raising the affirmative defense of duress. *See United States v. Haischer*, 780 F.3d 1277, 1284 n.1 (9th Cir. 2015) (clarifying that defendant does not have to admit knowing or intentional commission of crime to assert duress defense).

"[A] defendant is not entitled to present a duress defense to the jury unless the defendant has made a prima facie showing of duress in a pre-trial offer of proof." *United States v. Vasquez-Landaver*, 527 F.3d 798, 802 (9th Cir. 2008). The phrase "present, immediate, or impending threat" in the first element of the instruction was used in *Vasquez-Landaver*, 527 F.3d at 802.

Expert testimony about Battered Women's Syndrome may be relevant to both the second and third elements of the duress defense, as well as in rehabilitating a defendant's credibility. *See United States v. Lopez*, 913 F.3d 807, 822-23 (9th Cir. 2019).

Duress is not a defense to murder, nor will it mitigate murder to manslaughter. *United States v. LaFleur*, 971 F.2d 200, 206 (9th Cir. 1991). In cases where duress-like evidence may be admitted on the issue of a defendant's mental state, a clarifying instruction may be appropriate "to help guide the jury on the parameters for which it could consider the duress-like evidence." *United States v. Justus*, 162 F.4th 962 (9th Cir. 2025).

*Revised March 2026*

## 5.8 Necessity (Legal Excuse)

The defendant contends that [he] [she] acted out of necessity. Necessity legally excuses the crime charged.

The defendant must prove necessity by a preponderance of the evidence. A preponderance of the evidence means that you must be persuaded that the things the defendant seeks to prove are more probably true than not true. This is a lesser burden of proof than the government's burden to prove beyond a reasonable doubt each element of [*specify crime charged*].

A defendant acts out of necessity only if at the time of the crime charged:

First, the defendant was faced with a choice of evils and chose the lesser evil;

Second, the defendant reasonably acted to prevent imminent harm;

Third, the defendant reasonably anticipated [his] [her] conduct would prevent such harm; [and]

Fourth, there were no other reasonable legal alternatives to violating the law[.] [; and]

[Fifth, the defendant surrendered to authorities as soon as it was safe to do so.]

If you find that each of these things has been proved by a preponderance of the evidence, you must find the defendant not guilty.

### Comment

This defense traditionally covers situations "where physical forces beyond [an] actor's control rendered illegal conduct as the less of two evils." *United States v. Perdomo-Espana*, 522 F.3d 983, 987 (9th Cir. 2008) (*quoting Bailey*, 444 U.S. at 409-10). The defense of necessity is usually invoked when the defendant acted in the interest of the general welfare. *United States v. Contento-Pachon*, 723 F.2d 691, 695 (9th Cir. 1984). The defendant is not entitled to submit the defense of necessity to the jury unless the proffered evidence, construed most favorably to the defendant, establishes all the elements of the defense. *United States v. Cervantes-Flores*, 421 F.3d 825, 829 (9th Cir. 2005); *see also United States v. Chao Fan Xu*, 706 F.3d 965, 988 (9th Cir. 2013) ("Fear of prosecution for crimes committed is not an appropriate reason to claim necessity."). The defendant's proffered necessity defense is analyzed through an objective framework. *Perdomo-Espana*, 522 F.3d at 987; *see United States v. Powers*, 129 F.4th 617, 625-26 (9th Cir. 2025) (clarifying that reasonableness requirement applies to second, third, and fourth elements of necessity defense (citing *Perdomo-Espana*, 522 F.3d at 987-88)).

To be entitled to an instruction on necessity as a defense to the crime charged, an escapee must first offer evidence justifying his continued absence from custody. *See United States v. Bailey*, 444 U.S. 394, 412-13 (1980). The bracketed fifth element should be used in cases of escape

only.

Although felon-in-possession cases in the Ninth Circuit are typically analyzed under the justification defense (Instruction 5.9), *see United States v. Gomez*, 92 F.3d 770, 775 (9th Cir. 1996), the necessity defense may also be applicable to such cases. *See United States v. Barnes*, 895 F.3d 1194, 1204-05 nn.4 & 6 (9th Cir. 2018).

*Revised June 2025*

## 5.9 Justification (Legal Excuse)

The defendant contends that [his] [her] conduct was justified. Justification legally excuses the crime charged.

The defendant must prove justification by a preponderance of the evidence. A preponderance of the evidence means that you must be persuaded that the things the defendant seeks to prove are more probably true than not true. This is a lesser burden of proof than the government's burden to prove beyond a reasonable doubt each element of [*specify crime charged*].

A defendant's conduct was justified only if at the time of the crime charged:

First, the defendant was under an unlawful and present threat of death or serious bodily injury;

Second, the defendant did not recklessly place [himself] [herself] in a situation where [he] [she] would be forced to engage in criminal conduct;

Third, the defendant had no reasonable legal alternative; and

Fourth, there was a direct causal relationship between the conduct and avoiding the threatened harm.

If you find that each of these things has been proved by a preponderance of the evidence, you must find the defendant not guilty.

### Comment

In *United States v. Gomez*, 92 F.3d 770, 775 (9th Cir. 1996), the Ninth Circuit set forth the four elements needed to make out a justification defense. *See also United States v. Wofford*, 122 F.3d 787, 790 (9th Cir. 1997); *United States v. Beasley*, 346 F.3d 930, 933 n.2 (9th Cir. 2003).

In *Gomez*, 92 F.3d at 778, the Ninth Circuit held that the defendant presented evidence that, if believed, would have supported a justification defense (specifically, evidence that defendant, a convicted felon, had armed himself with shotgun after receiving several death threats resulting from the government's identification of him as informant).

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 5.10 Self-Defense

The defendant has offered evidence of having acted in self-defense. Use of force is justified when a person reasonably believes that it is necessary for the defense of oneself or another against the immediate use of unlawful force. However, a person must use no more force than appears reasonably necessary under the circumstances.

Force likely to cause death or great bodily harm is justified in self-defense only if a person reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm.

The government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt, with all of you agreeing, that the defendant did not act in reasonable self-defense.

### Comment

The Ninth Circuit has found that the first two paragraphs of this instruction adequately inform the jury of defendant's defense where "[t]he court also instructed the jury that the prosecution bore the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant had not acted in reasonable self-defense." *United States v. Keiser*, 57 F.3d 847, 850-52 (9th Cir. 1995). *See also United States v. Morsette*, 622 F.3d 1200, 1202 (9th Cir. 2010) ("[t]he model jury instruction remains correct").

Failure of the trial court to instruct the jury that the government has the burden of disproving self-defense is reversible error. *United States v. Pierre*, 254 F.3d 872, 876 (9th Cir. 2001). When there is evidence of self-defense, an additional element should be added to the instruction on the substantive offense: for example, "Fourth, the defendant did not act in reasonable self-defense."

A defendant is entitled to a self-defense instruction when "there is any foundation in the evidence, even though the evidence may be weak, insufficient, inconsistent or of doubtful credibility." *United States v. Sanchez-Lima*, 161 F.3d 545, 549 (9th Cir. 1998) (quotation marks and citation omitted) ; *United States v. Ehmer*, 87 F.4th 1073, 1131 (9th Cir. 2023) (holding that defendant is not entitled to a self-defense instruction unless confronted with an immediate use of force, even if it was "reasonable" to believe that defendant faced an in-the-future "immediate use of unlawful force").

The jury must unanimously reject the defendant's self-defense theory to find the defendant guilty. *United States v. Ramirez*, 537 F.3d 1075, 1083 (9th Cir. 2008).

This instruction is not appropriate when the defendant is charged with violating the Endangered Species Act. *See United States v. Wallen*, 874 F.3d 620, 628-29 (9th Cir. 2017) (holding that it was error to apply standard self-defense instruction to defense based on defendant's 'good faith belief'"); *see also United States v. Charette*, 893 F.3d 1169, 1175-76 (9th Cir. 2018) (same).

*See also* Comment to Instruction 3.5 (Character of Victim) for a discussion of the admissibility of the victim's character where self-defense is claimed.

For self-defense claims involving excessive force, *see United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138, 1147-48 (9th Cir. 2018).

*Revised March 2024*

## 5.11 Diminished Capacity

Evidence has been admitted that the defendant may have [been intoxicated] [suffered from diminished capacity] at the time that the crime charged was committed. [Intoxication can result from being under the influence of alcohol or drugs or both.]

You may consider evidence of the defendant's [intoxication] [diminished capacity] in deciding whether the government has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant acted with the intent required to commit [*specify crime charged*].

### Comment

A defense based on voluntary intoxication is available only for specific intent crimes. *United States v. Gracidas-Ulibarry*, 231 F.3d 1188, 1195 (9th Cir. 2000); *United States v. Dare*, 425 F.3d 634, 641 n.3 (9th Cir. 2005) ("Voluntary intoxication is not a defense to a general intent offense."). However, a voluntary intoxication instruction may be appropriate where the jury also receives an attempt instruction—even if the completed crime is a general intent crime—because "attempt includes an element of specific intent even if the crime attempted does not." *United States v. Sneezer*, 900 F.2d 177, 179-80 (9th Cir 1990); *see Gracidas-Ulibarry*, 231 F.3d at 1193 ("When the defendant's conduct does not constitute a completed criminal act, . . . a heightened intent requirement is necessary to ensure that the conduct is truly culpable." (citing *Sneezer*, 900 F.2d at 180)).

Likewise, diminished capacity is a defense only when specific intent is at issue. *United States v. Twine*, 853 F.2d 676, 679 (9th Cir. 1988). The diminished capacity defense is "concerned with whether the defendant possessed the ability to attain the culpable state of mind which defines the crime." *Id.* at 678. Evidence that the defendant suffers from some mental illness is insufficient by itself to require a diminished capacity instruction. *United States v. Christian*, 749 F.3d 806, 815 (9th Cir. 2014), *overruled on other grounds by United States v. Bacon*, 979 F.3d 766 (2020) (en banc). Rather, there must be some evidence (however weak) of a link between the defendant's mental illness and his ability to form a specific intent. *Id.* (citing *United States v. Washington*, 819 F.2d 221, 225 (9th Cir. 1987)).

*Revised Jan. 2019*

## 5.12 Mere Presence

Mere presence at the scene of a crime or mere knowledge that a crime is being committed is not sufficient to establish that the defendant committed the crime of [*specify crime charged*]. The defendant must be a participant and not merely a knowing spectator. The defendant's presence may be considered by the jury along with other evidence in the case.

### Comment

Such a "mere presence" instruction is unnecessary if the government's case is not solely based on the defendant's presence and the jury has been instructed on the elements of the crime. *See United States v. Tucker*, 641 F.3d 1110, 1122 (9th Cir. 2011); *see also United States v. Gooch*, 506 F.3d 1156, 1160 (9th Cir. 2007).

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 5.13 Public Authority or Government Authorization Defense

The defendant contends that [[if] [although]] [[he] [she]] committed the acts charged in the indictment, [he] [she] did so at the request of a government agent. Government authorization of the defendant's acts legally excuses the crime charged.

The defendant must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that:

First, the defendant believed [he] [she] was acting as an authorized government agent to assist in law enforcement activity at the time of the offense charged in the indictment; and

Second, the defendant's belief was reasonable.

In deciding this, you should consider all of the relevant circumstances, including the identity of the government official, what the official said to the defendant, and how closely the defendant followed any instructions the official gave.

A preponderance of the evidence means that you must be persuaded that the things the defendant seeks to prove are more probably true than not true. This is a lesser burden of proof than the government's burden to prove beyond a reasonable doubt each element of [*specify crime charged*].

If you find that the defendant has proved that [he] [she] reasonably believed that [he] [she] was acting as an authorized government agent as provided in this instruction, you must find the defendant not guilty of [*specify crime charged*].

### Comment

In *United States v. Doe*, 705 F.3d 1134 (9th Cir. 2013), the Ninth Circuit held that a defendant had the burden of proving the public authority defense by a preponderance of the evidence because the defense did not serve to negate any of the elements of the crimes with which the defendant was charged. *Id.* at 1146. The court quoted the Seventh Circuit in explaining "when a statute is silent on the question of affirmative defenses and when the affirmative defense does not negate an essential element of the offense, we must presume that the common law rule that places the burden of persuasion on the defendant reflects the intent of Congress." *Id.* at 1147 (quoting *United States v. Jumah*, 493 F.3d 868, 873 (7th Cir. 2007)); *see Dixon v. United States*, 548 U.S. 1, 13-14 (2006). However, the *Doe* court cautioned that "[t]his is not to suggest that there is a *per se* rule that the public authority defense must always be proven by the defendant by a preponderance of the evidence. To the contrary, the burden of proof for the public authority defense depends on both the statute at issue and the facts of the specific case." 705 F.3d at 1147. "[W]hen confronted with an affirmative defense, the court must always look closely to the statutory language of the specific offense charged and determine (1) whether the public authority defense negates an element of the charged offense that the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt and (2) whether Congress intended to alter the common law rules governing the public authority defense [in the statute at issue]." *Id.* (citation omitted).

*See* Fed. R. Crim. P. 12.3 (Notice of a Public-Authority Defense) regarding giving notice of

the defense. The failure to comply with Rule 12.3 allows the court to exclude the testimony of any undisclosed witness except the defendant, regarding the public authority defense. *United States v. Bear*, 439 F.3d 565, 571 n.1 (9th Cir. 2006). The public authority defense is properly used when the defendant reasonably believed that a government agent authorized her to engage in illegal acts. *Id.* at 568. It is plain error for the court not to instruct on the public authority defense sua sponte when the defendant actually presents and relies on that theory of defense. *Id*. at 568-70.

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 6. JURY DELIBERATIONS

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## Introductory Comment

In 2019, the Ninth Circuit reversed a criminal conviction based on "structural error" because the district court did not orally instruct the jury but instead directed the jurors to read the instructions themselves and then confirmed with each juror that the juror had done so. *United States v. Becerra*, 939 F.3d 995 (9th Cir. 2019). As the reader encounters the model jury instructions that follow and begins to craft the instructions to be given at trial, the words from this decision provide valuable guidance and context:

> [M]any jurors may not adequately comprehend written instructions. It is no secret that jury instructions are often written in language more suitable for lawyers than laypersons. *See, e.g.*, Jonathan Barnes, *Tailored Jury Instructions: Writing Instructions that Match a Specific Jury's Reading Level*, 87 Miss. L.J. 193, 195 (2018); Prentice H. Marshall et al., *Pattern Criminal Jury Instructions: Report of the Federal Judicial Center Committee to Study Jury Instructions*, at vii, 79–83 (1982); Phil H. Cook, *Instructionese: Legalistic Lingo of Contrived Confusion*, 7 J. Mo. B. 113 (1951). Written instructions can be especially impenetrable for those jurors with limited reading comprehension skills. *See* Laurence J. Severance et. al., *Toward Criminal Jury Instructions that Jurors Can Understand*, 75 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 198, 224 (1984); Robert P. Charrow & Veda R. Charrow, *Making Legal Language Understandable: A Psycholinguistic Study of Jury Instructions*, 79 Colum. L. Rev. 1306, 1320–21 (1979). And even if a jury is comprised of an unusually educated cross-section of the community, many of us at times succumb to the temptation to glaze over a long paragraph of text or flip over a few pages of a lengthy stack of papers. When the instructions are read orally, tonal inflection can make the content of the instructions more accessible, as well as discourage the "tuning out" common when reading dense material. Oral instruction in the formal courtroom setting thus assures that jurors are exposed to the substance of the essential instructions by at least one sensual route.
>
> The oral charge also performs a second, signaling function that cannot be replaced by a printout or a pamphlet. Jury instructions are not the judicial equivalent of a car manual or a cookbook. When an enrobed judge orally charges the jury, the jurors are impressed with the fact that they have been entrusted with the power to decide the defendant's fate. This oral, public ritual helps ensure that "jurors . . . recognize the enormity of their task and ... take [that task] seriously." Nancy S. Marder, *Bringing Jury Instructions into the Twenty-First Century*, 81 Notre Dame L. Rev. 449, 465 (2006). By analogy, reading a sermon is not the same as hearing it read in church or synagogue by a pastor or priest or rabbi. If it were, religious leaders would just hand out the sermons and end the services early.
>
> For these reasons, the historic practice of oral jury instruction remains central to the fairness of jury trials.

*Becerra*, 939 F.3d at 1001. Further, the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure permit the court to instruct the jury before or after arguments, or at both times. Fed. R. Crim. P. 30(c).

## 6.0 Cover Sheet

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
_____ DISTRICT OF _____

United States of America,)
)
Plaintiff, )
)
v. )
)
)
)No. _____
)
_____,)
)
Defendant.)
)
_____)

**JURY INSTRUCTIONS**

DATED: _____

_____
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

## 6.1 Duties of Jury to Find Facts and Follow Law

Members of the jury, now that you have heard all the evidence, it is my duty to instruct you on the law that applies to this case. A copy of these instructions will be available in the jury room for you to consult.

It is your duty to weigh and to evaluate all the evidence received in the case and, in that process, to decide the facts. It is also your duty to apply the law as I give it to you to the facts as you find them, whether you agree with the law or not. You must decide the case solely on the evidence and the law. You will recall that you took an oath promising to do so at the beginning of the case. You should also not be influenced by any person's race, color, religious beliefs, national ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, or economic circumstances. Also, do not allow yourself to be influenced by personal likes or dislikes, sympathy, prejudice, fear, public opinion, or biases[.] [, including unconscious biases. Unconscious biases are stereotypes, attitudes, or preferences that people may consciously reject but may be expressed without conscious awareness, control, or intention.]

You must follow all these instructions and not single out some and ignore others; they are all important. Please do not read into these instructions or into anything I may have said or done as any suggestion as to what verdict you should return—that is a matter entirely up to you.

### Comment

*See* JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 4.5 (2013).

The Supreme Court emphasized the importance of jury instructions as a bulwark against bias in *Pena-Rodriguez v. Colorado*, 137 S. Ct. 855, 871 (2017). Accordingly, the Committee has incorporated stronger language, regarding the jury's duty to act fairly and impartially, into this instruction, Instruction 1.1 (Duty of Jury), and Instruction 6.19 (Duty to Deliberate).

*Revised March 2024*

### 6.2 Charge Against Defendant Not Evidence—Presumption of Innocence—Burden of Proof

The indictment is not evidence. The defendant has pleaded not guilty to the charge[s]. The defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until the government proves the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. In addition, the defendant does not have to testify or present any evidence. The defendant does not have to prove innocence; the government has the burden of proving every element of the charge[s] beyond a reasonable doubt.

**Comment**

The trial judge has wide discretion as to whether the jury should be provided with a copy of the indictment for use during jury deliberations. The Ninth Circuit has said that when a district judge permits the jury to have a copy of the indictment, the court should caution the jury that the indictment is not evidence. *See United States v. Utz*, 886 F.2d 1148, 1151-52 (9th Cir. 1989) (per curiam) (permissible to give each juror a copy of indictment if judge cautions jury that indictment is not evidence).

In *United States v. Garcia-Guizar*, 160 F.3d 511, 524 (9th Cir. 1998), the Ninth Circuit held that failure to give a presumption-of-innocence instruction at the end of the case is not plain error if the record indicates the jury was aware of the presumption of innocence. Nonetheless, "it is preferable for the court" to give one "when charging the jury." *Id.* "Although the Constitution does not require jury instructions to contain any specific language, the instructions must convey both that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty and that he may only be convicted upon a showing of proof beyond a reasonable doubt." *Gibson v. Ortiz*, 387 F.3d 812, 820 (9th Cir. 2004), *overruled on other grounds by Byrd v. Lewis*, 566 F.3d 855 (9th Cir. 2009). "Any jury instruction that 'reduce[s] the level of proof necessary for the Government to carry its burden . . . is plainly inconsistent with the constitutionally rooted presumption of innocence.'" *Id.* (quoting *Cool v. United States*, 409 U.S. 100, 104 (1972)) (alteration and omission in original). The words "unless and until" adequately inform the jury of the presumption of innocence. *United States v. Lopez*, 500 F.3d 840, 847 (9th Cir. 2007).

*See also* JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 4.6 (2013).

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 6.3 Defendant's Decision Not to Testify

A defendant in a criminal case has a constitutional right not to testify. In arriving at your verdict, the law prohibits you from considering in any manner that the defendant did not testify.

## Comment

If this instruction is requested by the defendant, it must be given. *Carter v. Kentucky*, 450 U.S. 288, 305 (1981); *see also United States v. Soto*, 519 F.3d 927, 930 (9th Cir. 2008) (per curiam). However, "[i]t may be wise for a trial judge not to give such a cautionary instruction over a defendant's objection." *Lakeside v. Oregon*, 435 U.S. 333, 340-41 (1978).

In *United States v. Padilla*, 639 F.3d 892 (9th Cir. 2011), the Ninth Circuit held the following language sufficient:

> [T]he law prohibits you in arriving at your verdict from considering that the defendant may not have testified.

*Id*. at 897. The Ninth Circuit also held in *Padilla* that in that particular case, the district court did not plainly err in failing to repeat this instruction at the end of the case when it had been given four days earlier after the jury was sworn. *Id*. at 898. The Ninth Circuit suggested, however, that a lengthy period between the delivery of the instruction and commencement of deliberations might alter the analysis. *Id*.

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 6.4 Defendant's Decision to Testify

The defendant has testified. You should treat this testimony just as you would the testimony of any other witness.

### Comment

*See* Instruction 6.3 (Defendant's Decision Not to Testify) if the defendant does not testify.

## 6.5 Reasonable Doubt—Defined

Proof beyond a reasonable doubt is proof that leaves you firmly convinced the defendant is guilty. It is not required that the government prove guilt beyond all possible doubt.

A reasonable doubt is a doubt based upon reason and common sense and is not based purely on speculation. It may arise from a careful and impartial consideration of all the evidence, or from lack of evidence.

If after a careful and impartial consideration of all the evidence, you are not convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty, it is your duty to find the defendant not guilty. On the other hand, if after a careful and impartial consideration of all the evidence, you are convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty, it is your duty to find the defendant guilty.

### Comment

The Ninth Circuit has repeatedly upheld this instruction. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Velazquez*, 1 F.4th 1132, 1136-41 (9th Cir. 2021) (upholding model instruction but remanding due to prosecutor's misleading comments that compared the reasonable doubt standard to making casual, everyday decisions); *United States v. Mikhel*, 889 F.3d 1003, 1033 (9th Cir. 2018) (rejecting defendant's argument that jury can use speculation to find reasonable doubt in favor of accused); *see also Victor v. Nebraska*, 511 U.S. 1, 17 (1994) ("A fanciful doubt is not a reasonable doubt"). In addition, the Ninth Circuit has expressly approved a reasonable doubt instruction that informs the jury that the jury must be "firmly convinced" of the defendant's guilt. *United States v. Velasquez*, 980 F.2d 1275, 1278 (9th Cir. 1992). *Accord United States v. Soto-Zuniga*, 837 F.3d 992, 1004 (9th Cir. 2016) (rejecting challenge to this instruction and noting that Ninth Circuit has repeatedly upheld use of this instruction). In *United States v. Gomez*, 725 F.3d 1121, 1131 (9th Cir. 2013), the Ninth Circuit approved the conditional language in this model instruction regarding a jury's duty in a criminal case. Nonetheless, "[t]he Constitution does not require that any particular form of words be used in advising the jury of the government's burden of proof." *Victor*, 511 U.S. at 5.

In *Victor*, 511 U.S. at 5, the Court held that any reasonable doubt instruction must (1) convey to the jury that it must consider only the evidence, and (2) properly state the government's burden of proof. *See also Gibson v. Ortiz*, 387 F.3d 812, 820 (9th Cir. 2004), *overruled on other grounds by Byrd v. Lewis*, 566 F.3d 855 (9th Cir. 2009), and *Ramirez v. Hatcher*, 136 F.3d 1209, 1213-14 (9th Cir. 1998).

Care should be taken to ensure that the language used in a verdict form does not require the jury to find the defendant not guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to acquit. *See United States v. Espino*, 892 F.3d 1048, 1052 (9th Cir. 2018).

*Revised Sept. 2021*

## 6.6 What is Evidence

The evidence you are to consider in deciding what the facts are consists of:

First, the sworn testimony of any witness; [and]

Second, the exhibits received in evidence[.] [; and]

[Third, any facts to which the parties have agreed.]

### Comment

"When parties have entered into stipulations as to material facts, those facts will be deemed to have been conclusively established." *United States v. Houston,* 547 F.2d 104, 107 (9th Cir. 1976); *see also United States v. Mikaelian*, 168 F.3d 380, 389 (9th Cir. 1999).

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 6.7 What is Not Evidence

In reaching your verdict you may consider only the testimony and exhibits received in evidence. The following things are not evidence, and you may not consider them in deciding what the facts are:

1. Questions, statements, objections, and arguments by the lawyers are not evidence. The lawyers are not witnesses. Although you must consider a lawyer's questions to understand the answers of a witness, the lawyer's questions are not evidence. Similarly, what the lawyers have said in their opening statements, [will say in their] closing arguments, and [have said] at other times is intended to help you interpret the evidence, but it is not evidence. If the facts as you remember them differ from the way the lawyers state them, your memory of them controls.

2. Any testimony that I have excluded, stricken, or instructed you to disregard is not evidence. [In addition, some evidence was received only for a limited purpose; when I have instructed you to consider certain evidence in a limited way, you must do so.]

3. Anything you may have seen or heard when the court was not in session is not evidence. You are to decide the case solely on the evidence received at the trial.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 2.12 (Evidence for Limited Purpose) regarding case law on limiting instructions.

"A jury's exposure to extrinsic evidence deprives a defendant of the rights to confrontation, cross-examination, and assistance of counsel embodied in the Sixth Amendment." *Raley v. Ylst*, 470 F.3d 792, 803 (9th Cir. 2006) (citing *Lawson v. Borg*, 60 F.3d 608, 612 (9th Cir. 1995)).

Supplemental instructions to the jury may be proper when counsel's arguments to the jury are legally erroneous or inflammatory. *See United States v. Blixt*, 548 F.3d 882, 890 (9th Cir. 2008).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 6.8 Direct and Circumstantial Evidence

Evidence may be direct or circumstantial. Direct evidence is direct proof of a fact, such as testimony by a witness about what that witness personally saw or heard or did. Circumstantial evidence is indirect evidence, that is, it is proof of one or more facts from which you can find another fact.

You are to consider both direct and circumstantial evidence. Either can be used to prove any fact. The law makes no distinction between the weight to be given to either direct or circumstantial evidence. It is for you to decide how much weight to give to any evidence.

### Comment

"[I]t is the exclusive function of the jury to weigh the credibility of witnesses, resolve evidentiary conflicts and draw reasonable inferences from proven facts. Circumstantial and testimonial evidence are indistinguishable insofar as the jury fact-finding function is concerned, and circumstantial evidence can be used to prove any fact." *United States v. Ramirez-Rodriquez*, 552 F.2d 883, 884 (9th Cir. 1977) (per curiam) (citations omitted); *see also Payne v. Borg*, 982 F.2d 335, 339 (9th Cir. 1992).

The Committee believes that an instruction on circumstantial evidence generally eliminates the need to explain the same principle in terms of inferences. Thus, the Committee recommends against giving instructions on matters such as flight, resistance to arrest, a missing witness, failure to produce evidence, false or inconsistent exculpatory statements, failure to respond to accusatory statements, and attempts to suppress or tamper with evidence. These matters are generally better left to argument of counsel as examples of circumstantial evidence from which the jury may find another fact. *See United States v. Beltran-Garcia,* 179 F.3d 1200, 1207 (9th Cir. 1999) (in discussing jury instruction regarding inferring intent to possess for distribution from quantity of drugs, the Ninth Circuit stated that "[a]lthough the instructions in this case were not delivered in error, we do not hesitate to point out the 'dangers and inutility of permissive inference instructions.'" (citation omitted)); *see also United States v. Rubio–Villareal*, 967 F.2d 294, 295, 300 (9th Cir. 1992) (en banc) (disapproving jury instruction that knowledge of presence of drugs in vehicle may be inferred when defendant is driver).

It may be helpful to include an illustrative example of circumstantial evidence in the instruction. If so, consider the following:

> By way of example, if you wake up in the morning and see that the sidewalk is wet, you may find from that fact that it rained during the night. However, other evidence, such as a turned-on garden hose, may provide an explanation for the water on the sidewalk. Therefore, before you decide that a fact has been proved by circumstantial evidence, you must consider all the evidence in the light of reason, experience, and common sense.

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 6.9 Credibility of Witnesses

In deciding the facts in this case, you may have to decide which testimony to believe and which testimony not to believe. You may believe everything a witness says, or part of it, or none of it.

In considering the testimony of any witness, you may take into account the following:

First, the opportunity and ability of the witness to see or hear or know the things testified to;

Second, the witness's memory;

Third, the witness's manner while testifying;

Fourth, the witness's interest in the outcome of the case, if any;

Fifth, the witness's bias or prejudice, if any;

Sixth, whether other evidence contradicted the witness's testimony;

Seventh, the reasonableness of the witness's testimony in light of all the evidence; and

Eighth, any other factors that bear on believability.

Sometimes a witness may say something that is not consistent with something else he or she said. Sometimes different witnesses will give different versions of what happened. People often forget things or make mistakes in what they remember. Also, two people may see the same event but remember it differently. You may consider these differences, but do not decide that testimony is untrue just because it differs from other testimony.

However, if you decide that a witness has deliberately testified untruthfully about something important, you may choose not to believe anything that witness said. On the other hand, if you think the witness testified untruthfully about some things but told the truth about others, you may accept the part you think is true and ignore the rest.

You must avoid bias[, conscious or unconscious,] based on a witness's race, color, religious beliefs, national ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, or economic circumstances in your determination of credibility.

The weight of the evidence as to a fact does not necessarily depend on the number of witnesses who testify. What is important is how believable the witnesses were, and how much weight you think their testimony deserves.

*Revised March 2024*

## 6.10 Activities Not Charged

You are here only to determine whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty of the charge[s] in the indictment. The defendant is not on trial for any conduct or offense not charged in the indictment.

### Comment

When evidence has been introduced during trial pursuant to Fed. R. Evid. 404(b), consider also using Instructions 2.11 (Similar Acts in Sexual Assault and Child Molestation Cases) and 3.3 (Other Crimes, Wrongs, or Acts of Defendant).

When conduct necessary to satisfy an element of the offense is charged in the indictment and the government's proof at trial includes uncharged conduct that would satisfy the same element, the court should instruct the jury that it must find the conduct charged in the indictment before it may convict. *See United States v. Ward*, 747 F.3d 1184, 1191 (9th Cir. 2014) (reversible error to permit jury to convict on counts of aggravated identity theft against two victims named in indictment based on evidence presented at trial of uncharged conduct against identity-theft victims not named in indictment).

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 6.11 Separate Consideration of Multiple Counts—Single Defendant

A separate crime is charged against the defendant in each count. You must decide each count separately. Your verdict on one count should not control your verdict on any other count.

### Comment

Use this instruction when there is one defendant charged with multiple counts. If the case involves multiple defendants and multiple counts, use Instruction 6.13 (Separate Consideration of Multiple Counts—Multiple Defendants) instead. If more than one defendant is charged with the same crime, use Instruction 6.12 (Separate Consideration of Single Count—Multiple Defendants).

When the counts are satisfactorily distinguished in the jury charge, the jury will be presumed to have followed instructions and not to have confused the evidence pertinent to the individual counts. *United States v. Parker*, 432 F.2d 1251, 1255 (9th Cir. 1970); *see also United States v. Robertson*, 15 F.3d 862, 869 (9th Cir. 1994), *rev'd on other grounds*, 514 U.S. 669 (1995).

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 6.12 Separate Consideration of Single Count—Multiple Defendants

A separate crime is charged against each defendant. The charges have been joined for trial. You must consider and decide the case of each defendant separately. Your verdict as to one defendant should not control your verdict as to any other defendant.

All the instructions apply to each defendant [unless a specific instruction states that it applies to only a specific defendant].

### Comment

Use this instruction when there is more than one defendant charged with the same crime. If the case involves multiple defendants and multiple counts, use Instruction 6.13 (Separate Consideration of Multiple Counts—Multiple Defendants) instead. If one defendant has been charged with multiple counts, use Instruction 6.11 (Separate Consideration of Multiple Counts—Single Defendant).

## 6.13 Separate Consideration of Multiple Counts—Multiple Defendants

A separate crime is charged against one or more of the defendants in each count. The charges have been joined for trial. You must decide the case of each defendant on each crime charged against that defendant separately. Your verdict on any count as to any defendant should not control your verdict on any other count or as to any other defendant.

All the instructions apply to each defendant and to each count [unless a specific instruction states that it applies only to a specific [defendant] [count]].

### Comment

Use this instruction when there is more than one defendant charged with multiple counts. If the case involves multiple defendants charged with the same count, use Instruction 6.12 (Separate Consideration of Single Count—Multiple Defendants) instead. If one defendant has been charged with multiple counts, use Instruction 6.11 (Separate Consideration of Multiple Counts—Single Defendant).

## 6.14 Lesser Included Offense

The crime of [*specify crime charged*] includes the lesser crime of [*specify lesser included crime*]. If (1) [any] [all] of you are not convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty of [*specify crime charged*]; and (2) all of you are convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty of the lesser crime of [*specify lesser included crime*], you may find the defendant guilty of [*specify lesser included crime*].

For the defendant to be found guilty of the lesser crime of [*specify lesser included crime*], the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

[*List elements of lesser included crime.*]

### Comment

When a lesser included offense instruction is appropriate, a defendant has the right to elect whether all or only some of the jurors must not be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt of guilt of the greater offense. *United States v. Peneda-Doval*, 614 F.3d 1019, 1030 (9th Cir. 2010); *United States v. Jackson*, 726 F.2d 1466, 1469-70 (9th Cir. 1984).

Pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 31(c), "[a] defendant may be found guilty of . . . an offense necessarily included in the offense charged." Moreover, a defendant in a capital case has a due process right to a lesser included offense instruction when the facts would allow the jury to impose a life sentence rather than death. *Beck v. Alabama*, 447 U.S. 625, 637-38 (1980). The Ninth Circuit has not yet decided whether a defendant's right to a lesser included instruction in a noncapital case springs solely from Fed. R. Crim. P. 31(c) or also from the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause. *United States v. Torres-Flores*, 502 F.3d 885, 887 n.3 (9th Cir. 2007).

Whether an offense is a lesser included offense of a charged crime is a question of law. *United States v. Arnt*, 474 F.3d 1159, 1163 (9th Cir. 2007). "A defendant is entitled to an instruction on a lesser-included offense if the law and evidence satisfy a two-part test: 1) 'the elements of the lesser offense are a subset of the elements of the charged offense,' *Schmuck v. United States*, 489 U.S. 705, 716 (1989); and 2) 'the evidence would permit a jury rationally to find [the defendant] guilty of the lesser offense and acquit [her] of the greater,' *Keeble v. United States*, 412 U.S. 205, 208 (1973)." *Arnt*, 474 F.3d at 1163 (alterations in original); *see also United States v. Rivera-Alonzo*, 584 F.3d 829, 835 (9th Cir. 2009) (holding that although simple assault is lesser included offense of both 8- and 20-year felonies described in 18 U.S.C. § 111, defendant was not entitled to lesser included offense instruction when there was "undisputed evidence of physical contact" that precluded conviction on simple assault); *Torres-Flores*, 502 F.3d at 888 (holding that trial court appropriately refused lesser included offense instruction when jury could not have convicted on the lesser offense without also finding all elements of the greater offense); *see United States v. Hernandez*, 476 F.3d 791, 801-02 (9th Cir. 2007) (holding it was reversible error in prosecution for intent to distribute methamphetamine not to instruct on lesser offense of possession of controlled substances when evidence would permit rational jury to find defendant guilty of lesser offense and acquit him of greater offense).

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 6.15 Possession—Defined

A person has possession of something if the person knows of its presence and has physical control of it or knows of its presence and has the power and intention to control it.

[More than one person can be in possession of something if each knows of its presence and has the power and intention to control it.]

## Comment

The Committee believes this instruction is all-inclusive, and there is no need to attempt to distinguish further between actual and constructive possession and sole and joint possession.

The Ninth Circuit has approved language similar to that contained in this instruction. *United States v. Cain*, 130 F.3d 381, 382-84 (9th Cir. 1997).

In the event the case involves use or possession of a firearm under 18 U.S.C. § 924(c), *see* Instructions 14.22 (Firearms—Using, Carrying, or Brandishing in Commission of Crime of Violence or Drug Trafficking Crime) and 14.23 (Firearms—Possession in Furtherance of Crime of Violence or Drug Trafficking Crime). *See also United States v. Johnson*, 459 F.3d 990, 998 (9th Cir. 2006) (rejecting premise that "passing control" of firearm does not constitute possession).

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 6.16 Corporate Defendant

The fact that a defendant is a corporation should not affect your verdict. Under the law a corporation is considered a person and all persons are equal before the law. A corporation is entitled to the same fair and conscientious consideration by you as any other person.

*Revised Dec. 2017*

## 6.17 Foreign Language Testimony

You have heard testimony of a witness who testified in the [*specify foreign language*] language. Witnesses who do not speak English or are more proficient in another language testify through an official interpreter. Although some of you may know the [*specify foreign language*] language, it is important that all jurors consider the same evidence. Therefore, you must accept the interpreter's translation of the witness's testimony. You must disregard any different meaning.

You must not make any assumptions about a witness or a party based solely on the fact that an interpreter was used.

### Comment

When there is no dispute as to the accuracy of the translation of evidence in a foreign language, the jury may be instructed that it "is not free to disagree with a translated transcript of tape recordings." *United States v. Franco*, 136 F.3d 622, 626 (9th Cir. 1998) (concluding that to hold otherwise would be "nonsensical"); *see also United States v. Fuentes-Montijo*, 68 F.3d 352, 355-56 (9th Cir. 1995). When the accuracy of a foreign language translation is disputed, *see United States v. Rrapi*, 175 F.3d 742, 748 (9th Cir. 1999).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 6.18 On or About—Defined

The indictment charges that the offense alleged [in Count_____] was committed "on or about" a certain date.

Although it is necessary for the government to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the offense was committed on a date reasonably near the date alleged in [Count _____of] the indictment, it is not necessary for the government to prove that the offense was committed precisely on the date charged.

### Comment

*See United States v. Loya*, 807 F.2d 1483, 1493-94 (9th Cir. 1987) (approving similarly worded "on or about" jury instruction).

If the defendant asserts an alibi defense, this instruction should be coordinated with Instruction 5.1 (Alibi). *See id.* If the case involves a continuing offense or theory of defense, this instruction will need to be modified. *See, e.g.*, Comment to Instruction 5.6 (Insanity).

*Revised June 2015*

## 6.19 Duty to Deliberate

When you begin your deliberations, elect one member of the jury as your [presiding juror] [foreperson] who will preside over the deliberations and speak for you here in court.

You will then discuss the case with your fellow jurors to reach agreement if you can do so. Your verdict, whether guilty or not guilty, must be unanimous.

Each of you must decide the case for yourself, but you should do so only after you have considered all the evidence, discussed it fully with the other jurors, and listened to the views of your fellow jurors.

Do not be afraid to change your opinion if the discussion persuades you that you should. But do not come to a decision simply because other jurors think it is right.

It is important that you attempt to reach a unanimous verdict but, of course, only if each of you can do so after having made your own conscientious decision. Do not change an honest belief about the weight and effect of the evidence simply to reach a verdict.

Perform these duties fairly and impartially. You should also not be influenced by any person's race, color, religious beliefs, national ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, or economic circumstances. Also, do not allow yourself to be influenced by personal likes or dislikes, sympathy, prejudice, fear, public opinion, or biases[.] [, including unconscious biases. Unconscious biases are stereotypes, attitudes, or preferences that people may consciously reject but may be expressed without conscious awareness, control, or intention.]

It is your duty as jurors to consult with one another and to deliberate with one another with a view towards reaching an agreement if you can do so. During your deliberations, you should not hesitate to reexamine your own views and change your opinion if you become persuaded that it is wrong.

### Comment

"In the typical case, a . . . general unanimity instruction to the jury adequately protects a defendant's right to a unanimous jury verdict." *United States v. Gonzalez*, 786 F.3d 714, 717 (9th Cir. 2015) (citing *United States v. Chen Chiang Liu*, 631 F.3d 993, 1000 (9th Cir. 2011)). A specific unanimity instruction is required "if it appears that there is a genuine possibility of jury confusion or that a conviction may occur as the result of different jurors concluding that the defendant committed different acts." *Id*. (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). A specific unanimity instruction may also be necessary in certain circumstances to avoid constitutional error. *See United States v. Ramirez*, 537 F.3d 1075, 1083 (9th Cir. 2008) (trial court appropriately instructed jury it must unanimously reject self-defense theory to find defendant guilty). For further discussion of when a specific unanimity instruction is needed, *see* Comment at Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

The Supreme Court emphasized the importance of jury instructions as a bulwark against bias in *Pena-Rodriguez v. Colorado*, 137 S. Ct. 855, 871 (2017). Accordingly, the Committee has

incorporated stronger language, regarding the jury's duty to act fairly and impartially, into this instruction, Instruction 1.1 (Duty of Jury), and Instruction 6.1 (Duties of Jury to Find Facts and Follow Law).

*Revised March 2024*

## 6.20 Consideration of Evidence—Conduct of the Jury

Because you must base your verdict only on the evidence received in the case and on these instructions, I remind you that you must not be exposed to any other information about the case or to the issues it involves. Except for discussing the case with your fellow jurors during your deliberations:

> Do not communicate with anyone in any way and do not let anyone else communicate with you in any way about the merits of the case or anything to do with it. This restriction includes discussing the case in person, in writing, by phone, tablet, computer, or any other means, via email, text messaging, or any Internet chat room, blog, website or any other forms of social media. This restriction applies to communicating with your family members, your employer, the media or press, and the people involved in the trial. If you are asked or approached in any way about your jury service or anything about this case, you must respond that you have been ordered not to discuss the matter and to report the contact to the court.
>
> Do not read, watch, or listen to any news or media accounts or commentary about the case or anything to do with it; do not do any research, such as consulting dictionaries, searching the Internet or using other reference materials; and do not make any investigation or in any other way try to learn about the case on your own.

The law requires these restrictions to ensure the parties have a fair trial based on the same evidence that each party has had an opportunity to address. A juror who violates these restrictions jeopardizes the fairness of these proceedings [, and a mistrial could result that would require the entire trial process to start over]. If any juror is exposed to any outside information, please notify the court immediately.

*Revised Dec. 2020*

## 6.21 Use of Notes

Some of you have taken notes during the trial. Whether or not you took notes, you should rely on your own memory of what was said. Notes are only to assist your memory. You should not be overly influenced by your notes or those of your fellow jurors.

## 6.22 Jury Consideration of Punishment

The punishment provided by law for this crime is for the court to decide. You may not consider punishment in deciding whether the government has proved its case against the defendant beyond a reasonable doubt.

### Comment

In *United States v. Lynch*, 903 F.3d 1061, 1081 (9th Cir. 2018), the Ninth Circuit rejected a challenge to this instruction.

"[I]t is inappropriate for a jury to consider or be informed of the consequences of their verdict." *United States v. Frank*, 956 F.2d 872, 879 (9th Cir. 1991). There may be "particular, limited circumstances," however, when "'an instruction of some form' as to the consequences of a verdict" is necessary to ensure the jury remains "focused on the facts, the evidence, and the witnesses' credibility." *United States v. Dencklau*, 160 F.4th 1046, 1061 (9th Cir. 2025) (quoting *Shannon v. United States*, 512 U.S. 573, 587-88 (1994)) (rejecting challenge to jury instructions that informed jurors that cooperating witnesses faced the death penalty, but that defendants did not, that sentencing was the judge's job, and that the jury should consider a witness's interest in the outcome of a case and their cooperation in evaluating the witness's credibility).

*Revised March 2026*

## 6.23 Verdict Form

A verdict form has been prepared for you. [*Explain verdict form as needed.*] After you have reached unanimous agreement on a verdict, your [presiding juror] [foreperson] should complete the verdict form according to your deliberations, sign and date it, and advise the [clerk] [bailiff] that you are ready to return to the courtroom.

## 6.24 Communication with Court

If it becomes necessary during your deliberations to communicate with me, you may send a note through the [clerk] [bailiff], signed by any one or more of you. No member of the jury should ever attempt to communicate with me except by a signed writing, and I will respond to the jury concerning the case only in writing or here in open court. If you send out a question, I will consult with the lawyers before answering it, which may take some time. You may continue your deliberations while waiting for the answer to any question. Remember that you are not to tell anyone—including me—how the jury stands, numerically or otherwise, on any question submitted to you, including the question of the guilt of the defendant, until after you have reached a unanimous verdict or have been discharged.

### Comment

In *United States v. Southwell*, 432 F.3d 1050, 1052-53 (9th Cir. 2005), the Ninth Circuit noted:

> "The necessity, extent and character of additional [jury] instructions are matters within the sound discretion of the trial court." *Wilson v. United States*, 422 F.2d 1303, 1304 (9th Cir. 1970) (per curiam). That discretion is abused, however, when the district court fails to answer a jury's question on a matter that is not fairly resolved by the court's instructions. Because it is not always possible, when instructing the jury, to anticipate every question that might arise during deliberations, "the district court has the responsibility to eliminate confusion when a jury asks for clarification of a particular issue." *United States v. Hayes,* 794 F.2d 1348, 1352 (9th Cir. 1986); *see also Bollenbach v. United States,* 326 U.S. 607, 612-13 (1946) ("When a jury makes explicit its difficulties a trial judge should clear them away with concrete accuracy.").

## 6.25 Deadlocked Jury

[**Option 1**]

Members of the jury, you have reported that you have been unable to reach a unanimous verdict in this case. I have decided to suggest a few additional thoughts to you.

As jurors, you have a duty to discuss the case with one another and to deliberate in an effort to reach a unanimous verdict if each of you can do so without violating your individual judgment and conscience. Each of you must decide the case for yourself, but only after you consider the evidence impartially with your fellow jurors. During your deliberations, you should not hesitate to reexamine your own views and change your opinion if you become persuaded that it is wrong. You should not, however, change an honest belief as to the weight or effect of the evidence solely because of the opinions of your fellow jurors or for the mere purpose of returning a verdict.

I also remind you that in your deliberations you are to consider the instructions that I have given you as a whole. You should not single out any part of any instruction, including this one, and ignore others. They are all equally important.

What I have just said is not meant to rush you or pressure you into agreeing on a verdict. Take as much time as you need to discuss things. There is no hurry.

I ask that you now return to the jury room and continue your deliberations with these additional comments in mind.

**[Option 2]**

Members of the jury, you have reported that you are unable to reach a unanimous verdict in this case. I realize and appreciate that you are having some difficulty in reaching unanimity, but that is not unusual.

To attempt to assist you in reaching a unanimous verdict, I want to suggest some additional thoughts for your consideration. Sometimes after hearing this additional instruction and engaging in further discussions, jurors can work out their differences and agree unanimously on a verdict.

Although there is no requirement that you reach a verdict in this case, your goal as jurors should be to reach a fair and impartial verdict if you are able to do so based on the evidence presented and the principles of law on which I have instructed you.

> [The Final Jury Instructions that I previously gave you reads: "A separate crime is charged against the Defendant in each count. You must decide each count separately. Your verdict on one count should not control your verdict on any other count." I now add that a jury may return a verdict on some counts and deadlock on others. In other words, a jury may return a verdict on those counts on which it has agreed and leave blank or write "deadlocked" as to those counts as to which there is not unanimity. I did not tell you that earlier because jurors should be neither encouraged nor discouraged to return a partial verdict. At this stage of your deliberations, however, I want to ensure that you understand your options.]

It is your duty, as jurors, carefully to consider, weigh, and evaluate all the evidence that has been presented during the trial. It is also your duty to discuss your views on the evidence with your fellow jurors. And it is your duty to listen to and consider the views of your fellow jurors.

During your deliberations, you should not hesitate to reexamine your views or request that fellow jurors reexamine their views. Likewise, you should not hesitate to change a viewpoint that you held initially, if you become convinced that that viewpoint is wrong. Nor should you hesitate to suggest that other jurors change their views if you are convinced that they are wrong.

Keep in mind that while each of you must decide the case for yourself, you should do so only after an impartial consideration of all the evidence with fellow jurors and after fairly considering and evaluating the viewpoints of fellow jurors.

No juror, however, should surrender an honest belief as to the weight or effect of the evidence solely because of the opinion of fellow jurors or merely for the purpose of returning a verdict.

I remind you that the Defendant is presumed to be innocent and that the Government, not the Defendant, has the burden of proof. Also, the Government must prove the Defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Those of you who believe that the Government has proved the Defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt should stop and ask yourselves if the evidence is really convincing enough, given that other conscientious members of the jury are not convinced. On the other hand, those who believe that the Government has not proved the Defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt should stop and ask yourselves if the doubt you have is a reasonable one, given that other equally conscientious members of the jury do not share that doubt. In short, every individual juror should reconsider and reexamine his or her own views.

Fair and effective jury deliberations require frank and forthright exchange of views. As the jury in this case, you have absolute discretion to conduct your deliberations in any way you deem appropriate. I want to suggest to you, however, that because you have not been able to reach a verdict using the methods you have tried so far, you consider the possibility of trying some new methods.

For example, you may wish to have different jurors lead the discussion for a period. Sometimes reconsidering issues from a new or a fresh perspective is helpful. Or you may wish to engage in what is called “reverse role playing.” That is, you might consider having those of you on one side of an issue present or advocate the other side’s position, and vice versa. Either of these methods might enable you to better understand one another’s positions.

By suggesting these different methods of deliberation, I want to stress that I am not dictating to you how you should conduct your deliberations. Nor am I attempting to pressure you to reach a verdict or demanding that you reach a verdict at all costs. There is no requirement, of course, that you reach a verdict in this case.

Instead, I am merely suggesting that you consider additional or alternative methods of ensuring that each juror has a full and fair opportunity to express his or her point of view and that all jurors strive to consider and understand and engage the views of their fellow jurors.

During your further deliberations, you should also reconsider the instructions that I previously gave you and that you have in the jury room. All the instructions, I remind you, are important. And you should consider this supplemental instruction in conjunction with the other instructions that I have previously given.

Nothing that I have said in this Supplemental Instruction is meant to rush you or pressure you into agreeing on a verdict. I want to emphasize that. Take as much time as you need to discuss things. There is no hurry. I now ask you to take this Supplemental Instruction back into the jury room and continue your deliberations with these additional comments in mind.

**Comment**

Before giving any supplemental jury instruction to a deadlocked jury and before declaring a mistrial or partial mistrial based on jury deadlock or partial deadlock, the Committee recommends the court review JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES §§ 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6 (2013); *see also United States v. Hernandez-Guardado*, 228 F.3d 1017, 1029 (9th Cir. 2000) ("The most critical factor is the jury's own statement that it is unable to reach a verdict."); *Rogers v. United States*, 609 F.2d 1315, 1317 (9th Cir. 1979) (noting that before declaring mistrial based on jury deadlock, "the judge should question the jury . . . either individually or through its foreman, on the possibility that its current deadlock could be overcome by further deliberations") (internal quotation marks and citation omitted).

The Committee recommends caution when considering whether to give a supplemental instruction (sometimes known as an "*Allen* charge") to encourage a deadlocked jury to reach a verdict. *See United States v. Evanston*, 651 F.3d 1080, 1085 (9th Cir. 2011) (noting extraordinary caution to be exercised when giving "*Allen* charge").

As the Ninth Circuit explained in *United States v. Berger*, 473 F.3d 1080, 1089 (9th Cir. 2007):

> The term "*Allen* charge" is the generic name for a class of supplemental jury instructions given when jurors are apparently deadlocked; the name derives from the first Supreme Court approval of such an instruction in *Allen v. United States*, 164 U.S. 492, 501-02 (1896). In their mildest form, these instructions carry reminders of the importance of securing a verdict and ask jurors to reconsider potentially unreasonable positions. In their stronger forms, these charges have been referred to as "dynamite charges," because of their ability to "blast" a verdict out of a deadlocked jury.

*Allen* "charges are proper 'in all cases except those where it's clear from the record that the charge had an impermissibly coercive effect on the jury.'" *United States v. Banks*, 514 F.3d 959, 974 (9th Cir. 2008) (quoting *United States v. Ajiboye*, 961 F.2d 892, 893 (9th Cir. 1992)). In assessing the coerciveness of an *Allen* charge, the Ninth Circuit considers "(1) the form of the

instruction, (2) the time the jury deliberated after receiving the charge as compared to the total time of deliberation, and (3) any other indicia of coerciveness." *United States v. Freeman*, 498 F.3d 893, 908 (9th Cir. 2007) (citing *United States v. Daas*, 198 F.3d 1167, 1179-80 (9th Cir. 1999)); *see also Warfield v. Alaniz*, 569 F.3d 1015, 1029 (9th Cir. 2009) (holding that weekend interval between "standard" *Allen* charge and resumption of deliberations "probably would have diluted any coercive effect").

In *United States v. Sproat*, 89 F.4th 771 (9th Cir. 2023), the Ninth Circuit held that the trial court did not improperly coerce the jurors into reaching a unanimous guilty verdict by sending them home at 4:30 p.m. on the first day of deliberations, with the instruction to return the next day, in response to the jury saying they were at impasse. *Sproat*, 89 F.4th at 775-776. When the jury returned the next day, the defendant objected again that bringing the jury back was coercive. The parties discussed, the judge gave a partial *Allen* charge which "emphasized the possibility that the jurors would not reach a unanimous verdict, the command that the jurors should not change an honest belief, and the assurance that the jurors could be excused at any time if they concluded that they could not overcome their earlier impasse," *Id.* at 776, and the jury returned a verdict convicting the defendant on all counts. The Ninth Circuit rejected the defendant's argument, stating that "even if the jury had been firmly deadlocked, instructing them to return the next day—without more—would not have been the equivalent of an *Allen* charge," as "[t]elling the jurors to return the next day neither explicitly nor implicitly encouraged them to reach a unanimous verdict." *Id.* at 775 ("[S]imply excusing the jurors for an evening recess did not equal an instruction to them to strive for a unanimous verdict."). First, the late-afternoon instruction did not convey that the jurors were required to continue deliberating the next day." *Id.* at 776. "Second, the court did not ask the jury to identify the nature of its impasse or the vote count before excusing the jurors for the evening . . . Rather, the judge's inquiries . . . were limited to establishing that the jury was at an impasse and clarifying that there was no unanimity as to any counts. . . . At no point during those exchanges with the jurors did the court ask the jury to reveal vote counts, areas of disagreement, or specific factual matters on which it disagreed. " *Id.* (quotation marks and citations omitted) Finally, there was no coercion because the court gave the partial *Allen* charge the next day, which the defendant had endorsed.

The Committee presents two options for an *Allen* charge. Option 1 has been approved by the Ninth Circuit in appropriate circumstances. *See United States v. Beattie*, 613 F.2d 762, 765 (9th Cir. 1980) ("Instructions admonishing jurors to reconsider their positions have 'been consistently approved in the Ninth Circuit when (they are) in a form not more coercive than that in Allen.'"); *see also United States v. Steele*, 298 F.3d 906, 910-11(9th Cir. 2002) (identifying three factors to be considered when determining whether an *Allen* charge is coercive and affirming the district court's decision to give the *Allen* charge presented in Option 1). Option 2 has not been considered by the Ninth Circuit in a published opinion.

Further, the Ninth Circuit has explained:

> If the trial judge gives an *Allen* charge after inquiring into the numerical division of the jury, "the charge is per se coercive and requires reversal." *Ajiboye*, 961 F.2d at 893-94. "Even when the judge . . . is inadvertently told of the jury's division, reversal is necessary if the holdout jurors could interpret the charge as directed specifically at them—that is, if the judge knew which jurors were the holdouts and each holdout

juror knew that the judge knew he was a holdout." *Id*. at 894 (citing *United States v. Sae-Chua*, 725 F.2d 530, 532 (1984)).

*United States v. Williams*, 547 F.3d 1187, 1205 (9th Cir. 2008) (reversing conviction after neutral *Allen* charge when "hold-out" juror knew her identity was known by the court). In *United States v. Chapman*, 175 F.4th 1118 (9th Cir. 2026), the Ninth Circuit held that giving the *Allen* instruction after the jury told the judge the numerical breakdown of the jurors' votes is per se coercive and requires reversal even if the judge did not give the numerical breakdown to the parties or attorneys. *Id.* at 1131. *See Evanston*, 651 F.3d at 1085-93 (holding that district court committed reversible error by allowing supplemental closing arguments to deadlocked jury after court gave *Allen* charge and inquired as to reason for deadlock).

In addition, after being advised that a jury is deadlocked, a trial judge might consider informing jurors that the court has an additional instruction that may help them break the impasse and solicit the jury's on-the-record willingness to consider it.

Finally, the bracketed paragraph may be used when a single defendant has been charged with multiple counts. Similar instructions, appropriately modified, also may be used when there are multiple defendants.

*Revised August 2026*

## 6.26 Script for Post-*Allen* Charge Inquiry

### Comment

If the jury indicates that it is deadlocked after an *Allen* charge is given, the Committee recommends polling the jury to confirm that they "cannot agree on a verdict on one or more counts," Fed. R. Crim. P. 31(b)(3), and, thus, that there is a basis to declare a mistrial. As the Ninth Circuit noted in *Brazzel v. Washington*, 491 F.3d 976, 982 (9th Cir. 2007):

> A hung jury occurs when there is an irreconcilable disagreement among the jury members. A "high degree" of necessity is required to establish a mistrial due to the hopeless deadlock of jury members. *See Arizona v. Washington,* 434 U.S. 497, 506 (1978). The record should reflect that the jury is "genuinely deadlocked." *Richardson v. United States*, 468 U.S. 317, 324-25 (1984) (explaining that when a jury is genuinely deadlocked, the trial judge may declare a mistrial and require the defendant to submit to a second trial); *see also Selvester* [*v. United States*], 170 U.S. [262,] 270 [(1898)] ("But if, on the other hand, after the case had been submitted to the jury they reported their inability to agree, and the court made record of it and discharged them, such discharge would not be equivalent to an acquittal, since it would not bar the further prosecution.").

In *United States v. Hernandez-Guardado*, 228 F.3d 1017 (9th Cir. 2000), the court noted that "[i]n determining whether to declare a mistrial because of jury deadlock, relevant factors for the district court to consider include the jury's collective opinion that it cannot agree, the length of the trial and complexity of the issues, the length of time the jury has deliberated, whether the defendant has objected to a mistrial, and the effects of exhaustion or coercion on the jury." *Id*. at 1029 (citing *United States v. Cawley*, 630 F.2d 1345, 1348-49 (9th Cir. 1980)). "The most critical factor is the jury's own statement that it is unable to reach a verdict." *Cawley*, 630 F.2d at 1349. "Without more, however, such a statement is insufficient to support a declaration of a mistrial." *Hernandez-Guardado*, 228 F.3d at 1029. "On receiving word from the jury that it cannot reach a verdict, the district court must question the jury to determine independently whether further deliberations might overcome the deadlock." *Id*.

A suggested script for this purpose follows:

> "*To the* [*Presiding Juror*] [*Foreperson*]: In your opinion, is the jury [[hopelessly deadlocked] [unable to agree on a verdict]] [as to one or more counts]?"
>
> "*To all jurors*: If any of you disagree with the [Presiding Juror's] [Foreperson's] answer, please tell me now."

If the response to the first question is "yes," then ask:

> "Is there a reasonable probability that the jury can reach a unanimous verdict if sent back to the jury room for further deliberation?"

If the response is "no," then ask the entire panel the following:

"[*To all jurors*]: Without stating where any juror stands, do any of you believe there is a reasonable probability that the jury can reach a unanimous verdict if sent back to the jury room for further deliberation?"

*See also* JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES § 5.5 (2013).

NOTE: It is per se error to give a second *Allen* charge where the jury has not requested one, because the second *Allen* charge "conveys a message" of "impermissible coercion." *United States v. Evanston*, 651 F.3d 1080, 1085 (9th Cir. 2011).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 6.27 Specific Issue Unanimity

### Comment

"In the typical case, a . . . general unanimity instruction to the jury adequately protects a defendant's right to a unanimous jury verdict." *United States v. Gonzalez*, 786 F.3d 714, 717 (9th Cir. 2015) (citing *United States v. Liu*, 631 F.3d 993, 1000 (9th Cir. 2011)).

"Courts must make a 'threshold inquiry' whether the 'listed items' in an 'alternatively phrased' statute are 'elements or means.'" *United States v. Mickey*, 897 F.3d 1173, 1181 (9th Cir. 2018) (quoting *Mathis v. United States*, 136 S. Ct. 2243, 2256 (2016)); *see also United States v. Barai*, 55 F.4th 1245, 1249 (9th Cir. 2022) ("Calling a particular part of a statute an 'element,' as opposed to a 'means,' is legally significant."). "[E]lements are those circumstances on which the jury must unanimously agree, while means are those circumstances on which the jury may disagree yet still convict." *Mickey*, 897 F.3d at 1181(internal quotation marks, italics, and brackets omitted). Alternative elements require a specific unanimity instruction, while alternative means do not. *See id.* at 1181-82; *see, e.g.*, *Barai*, 55 F.4th at 1250 (holding district court did not abuse its discretion in declining to give specific unanimity instruction because "the listed alternatives of 18 U.S.C. § 1589(a) are factual means, rather than distinct legal elements").

Nonetheless, a specific unanimity instruction is required "if it appears that there is a genuine possibility of jury confusion or that a conviction may occur as the result of different jurors concluding that the defendant committed different acts." *Gonzalez*, 786 F.3d at 717 (internal quotation marks omitted); *compare United States v. Echeverry*, 719 F.2d 974, 975 (9th Cir. 1983) (holding that unanimity instruction regarding specific conspiracy should have been given in light of proof of multiple conspiracies) *with United States v. Kim*, 196 F.3d 1079, 1082 (1999) (holding there was no abuse of discretion to decline to give specific unanimity instruction when the defendant was charged with a single crime based on single set of facts and where prohibited acts were merely alternative means by which defendant could be held criminally liable for underlying substantive offense). Thus, the Committee recommends the court consider the need for a specific unanimity instruction to avoid juror confusion if (1) the evidence is factually complex, (2) the indictment is broad or ambiguous, or (3) the jury's questions indicate that it may be confused. *See United States v. Anguiano*, 873 F.2d 1314, 1319-21 (9th Cir. 1989). When the evidence establishes multiple conspiracies, failure to give a specific unanimity instruction may be plain error and the court may have a duty to *sua sponte* give the instruction requiring the jurors to unanimously agree on which conspiracy the defendant participated in. *See United States v. Lapier*, 796 F.3d 1090, 1093 (9th Cir. 2015) (holding that failure to give specific unanimity instruction was plain error because some jurors could have found defendant guilty of joining one conspiracy while other jurors could have found defendant guilty of joining second, completely independent conspiracy).

A specific unanimity instruction may also be necessary to avoid constitutional error. For example, when self-defense is at issue, a jury must unanimously reject the defense to convict. *See United States v. Ramirez*, 537 F.3d 1075, 1083 (9th Cir. 2008) (approving instruction that included specific unanimity within self-defense instruction consistent with this instruction and Instruction 5.10 (Self-Defense)); *see also Richardson v. United States*, 526 U.S. 813, 815 (1999) (continuing-criminal-enterprise prosecution requires unanimity as to specific violations that make up "continuing series of violations"); *but see United States v. Nobari*, 574 F.3d 1065, 1081 (9th Cir.

2009) (although unanimity is required to reject affirmative defense, specific unanimity instruction is not required for most affirmative defenses).

A specific unanimity instruction is not required to distinguish an aiding and abetting theory of liability from the underlying substantive crime. *See United States v. Garcia*, 400 F.3d 816, 820 (9th Cir. 2005). Nor is one required as to a particular false promise in a mail fraud case or as to a particular theory of liability underlying a "scheme to defraud" so long as jurors are unanimous that the defendant committed the underlying substantive offense. *United States v. Lyons*, 472 F.3d 1055, 1068-69 (9th Cir. 2007), *overruling on other grounds recognized by Tamosaitis v. URS Inc.*, 781 F.3d 468, 489 n.11 (9th Cir. 2015). Likewise, jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime in a prosecution for an attempt to commit a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010). Further, when a defendant is charged with "a single, continuous act of possession," jurors need not reach unanimous agreement on the pieces of evidence they find persuasive in establishing that possession. *United States v. Ruiz*, 710 F.3d 1077, 1081-82 (9th Cir. 2013); *see also United States v. Mancuso*, 718 F.3d 780, 792-93 (9th Cir. 2013).

When a specific unanimity instruction is necessary, the Committee recommends including in the substantive instruction the phrase " . . . with all of you agreeing [*as to the particular matter requiring unanimity*]." *See United States v. Garcia-Rivera*, 353 F. 3d 788, 792 (9th Cir. 2003) (unanimity instruction "fatally ambiguous" when jury could have understood they were required to decide unanimously only that possession occurred during *any* of three times enumerated).

*Revised March 2023*

## 6.28 Readback or Playback

### Comment

If during jury deliberations a request is made by the jury or juror for a readback of a portion or all of a witness's testimony, and the court in exercising its discretion determines after consultation with legal counsel that a readback should be allowed, the Committee recommends the following admonition be given in open court with both sides and the defendant present:

> Because a request has been made for a [readback] [playback] of the testimony of [*witness's name*] it is being provided to you, but you are cautioned that all [readbacks] [playbacks] run the risk of distorting the trial because of overemphasis of one portion of the testimony. [Therefore, you will be required to hear all the witness's testimony on direct and cross-examination, to avoid the risk that you might miss a portion bearing on your judgment of what testimony to accept as credible.] [Because of the length of the testimony of this witness, excerpts will be [read] [played].] The [readback] [playback] could contain errors. The [readback] [playback] cannot reflect matters of demeanor [, tone of voice,] and other aspects of the live testimony. Your recollection and understanding of the testimony controls. Finally, in your exercise of judgment, the testimony [read] [played] cannot be considered in isolation but must be considered in the context of all the evidence presented.

In *United States v. Newhoff*, 627 F.3d 1163, 1168 (9th Cir. 2010), the court underscored the need to take certain precautionary steps when an excerpt or entire testimony of a witness is requested by a deliberating jury. The court endorsed the "general rule" that when such a request is made and the trial court, in exercising its discretion, grants the request after consultation with the parties, it should require the jury to hear the readback in open court, with counsel for the parties and the defendant present after giving the admonition set out above, unless the defendant has waived the right to be present. *Id.*

In *United States v. Price*, 980 F.3d 1211, 1227 (9th Cir. 2019), the Ninth Circuit noted "'the district court's great latitude to address requests for readbacks'" (quoting *United States v. Medina Casteneda*, 511 F.3d 1246, 1249 (9th Cir. 2008)).

*Revised Dec. 2020*

## 6.29 Continuing Deliberations After Juror is Discharged and Not Replaced

[One] [some] of your fellow jurors [has] [have] been excused from service and will not participate further in your deliberations. You should not speculate about the reason the [juror is] [jurors are] no longer present.

You should continue your deliberations with the remaining jurors. Do not consider the opinions of the excused [juror] [jurors] as you continue deliberating. All the previous instructions given to you, including the unanimity requirement for a verdict, remain in effect.

### Comment

The trial court, upon written stipulation by the parties, may permit a jury of fewer than 12 persons to return a verdict, or by order of the court for good cause, a jury of 11 persons may return a verdict. Fed. R. Crim. P. 23(b); *United States v. Brown*, 784 F.3d 1301, 1304-07 (9th Cir. 2015). It may also substitute an alternate juror. *See Brown*, 784 F.3d at 1304; *see also* Instruction 6.30 (Resumption of Deliberations After Alternate Juror is Added).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 6.30 Resumption of Deliberations After Alternate Juror is Added

[An alternate juror has] [Alternate jurors have] been substituted for the excused [juror] [jurors]. You should not speculate about the reason for the substitution.

You must start your deliberations anew. This means you should disregard entirely any deliberations taking place before the alternate [juror was] [jurors were] substituted and consider freshly the evidence as if the previous deliberations had never occurred.

Although starting over may seem frustrating, please do not let it discourage you. It is important that each juror have a full and fair opportunity to explore his or her views and respond to the views of others so that you may come to a unanimous verdict. All the previous instructions given to you, including the unanimity requirement for a verdict, remain in effect.

### Comment

The court must ensure that the alternate did not discuss the case with anyone after the original jury retired, and it must instruct the reconstituted jury to begin its deliberations "anew." Fed. R. Crim. P. 24(c); *United States v. Brown*, 784 F.3d 1301, 1302 (9th Cir. 2015).

The trial court, upon written stipulation by the parties, may permit a jury of fewer than 12 persons to return a verdict, or by order of the court for good cause, a jury of 11 persons may return a verdict. *See* Fed. R. Crim. P. 23(b); *Brown*, 784 F.3d at 1304-07; Instruction 6.29 (Continuing Deliberations After Juror is Discharged and Not Replaced). The court may also substitute an alternate juror. *See* Fed. R. Crim. P. 24(c).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 6.31 Post-Discharge Instruction

Now that the case has been concluded, some of you may have questions about the confidentiality of the proceedings. Now that the case is over, you are free to discuss it with any person you choose. By the same token, however, I would advise you that you are under no obligation whatsoever to discuss this case with any person.

[If you do decide to discuss the case with anyone, I would suggest you treat it with a degree of solemnity in that whatever you do decide to say, you would be willing to say in the presence of the other jurors or under oath here in open court in the presence of all the parties.]

[Finally, always bear in mind that if you do decide to discuss this case, the other jurors fully and freely stated their opinions with the understanding they were being expressed in confidence. Please respect the privacy of the views of the other jurors.]

[Finally, if you would prefer not to discuss the case with anyone, but are feeling undue pressure to do so, please feel free to contact the courtroom deputy, who will notify me, and I will assist.]

### Comment

*See* JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT, A MANUAL ON JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES, § 6.1 (2013).

*Revised Dec. 2019*

## 6.32 Venue

The Indictment alleges that some act [or acts] in furtherance of the crime charged occurred in [*Name of venue*]. There is no requirement that [all aspects of the crime charged] [the entire conspiracy] take place here in [*Name of venue*]. Before you may return a verdict of guilty, however, if that is your decision, the government must convince you that [some act in furtherance of the crime charged] [either the agreement or one of the overt acts in furtherance of the agreement] [one of the expressly contemplated effects of the act [or acts]] took place in [*Name of venue*].

[*Define the specific geographic boundaries of the venue, if needed*.]

Unlike all the specific elements of the crime[s] charged that I have described elsewhere in these instructions, this fact regarding venue need only be proven by a preponderance of the evidence. This means the government need only convince you that it is more likely than not that [some act in furtherance of the crime charged] [part of the conspiracy] took place here.

The government, however, must prove all the offense-specific elements of any crime charged, as I have described elsewhere in these instructions, beyond a reasonable doubt. The lesser standard of preponderance of the evidence only applies to your decision on the issue of venue.

### Comment

The Ninth Circuit has explained:

> Controlling circuit law establishes that, although venue is not an element of the offense, nevertheless it must still be proved by the government at trial. Venue is a question of fact that the government must prove by a preponderance of the evidence. It is a jury question. Normally it is not for the court to determine venue and *it is error to not give a requested instruction on venue*. Venue is part of the bedrock of our federal system, and proper venue is a constitutional right, not a mere technicality. The district court therefore could not properly decide venue itself and should have submitted the issue to the jury.

*United States v. Moran-Garcia*, 966 F.3d 966, 969 (9th Cir. 2020) (footnotes, quotation marks, and brackets omitted; emphasis added); *see also United States v. Ghanem*, 993 F.3d 1113, 1131 (9th Cir. 2021) ("In future cases with similarly muddled postures, a district court might consider using a special-verdict form requiring a venue finding separate from substantive guilt.").

This instruction is based on the Third Circuit's model criminal instruction § 3.09, the Sixth Circuit's model criminal instruction § 3.07, and the Eighth Circuit's model criminal instruction § 3.13.

In *Smith v. United States*, 599 U.S. 236 (2023), the Supreme Court held that a violation of the Constitution's Venue Clause does not necessitate dismissal; rather, it warrants a new trial. *Accord United States v. Fortenberry*, 89 F.4th 702, 713 (9th Cir. 2023) (reversing defendant's conviction obtained in wrong venue "so that he may be retried, if at all, in a proper venue").

In *United States v. Abouammo*, 122 F.4th 1072 (9th Cir. 2024), the Ninth Circuit held that venue was proper for a prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 1519 in the district where the false document was (or false documents were) prepared, or in the district where the false document was (or false documents were) intended to stymie an investigation that was ongoing or contemplated. *Id.* at 1092-93, 1096.

*Revised March 2025*

## 7. ALIEN OFFENSES

**Instruction**


7.1 Alien—Bringing or Attempting to Bring to the United States (Other than Designated Place) (8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(i))
7.2 Alien—Illegal Transportation or Attempted Transportation (8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii))
7.3 Alien—Harboring or Attempted Harboring (8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii))
7.4 Alien—Encouraging Illegal Entry (8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv))
7.5 Alien—Bringing or Attempting to Bring to The United States (Without Authorization) (8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(2)(B)(i)-(iii))
7.6 Alien—Deported Alien Reentering United States Without Consent (8 U.S.C. § 1326(a))
7.7 Alien—Deported Alien Reentering United States Without Consent—Attempt (8 U.S.C. § 1326)
7.8 Alien—Deported Alien Found in United States (8 U.S.C. § 1326(a))

## 7.1 Alien—Bringing or Attempting to Bring to the United States (Other than Designated Place) (8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(i))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [bringing] [attempting to bring] an alien to the United States in violation of Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(i) of Title 8 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [brought] [attempted to bring] a person who was an alien to the United States at a place other than a designated port of entry or at a place other than as designated by a United States immigration official;

Second, the defendant knew that the person was an alien; [and]

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to violate the United States immigration laws by assisting that person to enter the United States at a time or place other than as designated by a United States immigration official[.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing a crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

An alien is a person who is not a natural-born or naturalized citizen of the United States.

### Comment

Bringing an alien to the United States does not require that the alien be free from official restraint as is required for offenses under 8 U.S.C. § 1326 for aliens illegally reentering or being found in the United States. *United States v. Lopez*, 484 F.3d 1186, 1193 (9th Cir. 2007); *United States v. Hernandez-Garcia*, 284 F.3d 1135, 1137-38 (9th Cir. 2002); *see also* Comment to Instruction 7.6 (Alien—Deported Alien Reentering United States Without Consent).

The offense of bringing an alien to the United States is a continuing offense; "although all of the elements of the 'bringing to' offense are satisfied once the aliens cross the border, the crime does not terminate until the initial transporter who brings the aliens to the United States ceases to transport them—in other words, the offense continues until the initial transporter drops off the aliens on the U.S. side of the border." *Lopez*, 484 F.3d at 1187-88. Thereafter, the offense is illegal "transport within" the United States, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii). *Id.* at 1194-98. *Lopez* overrules *United States v. Ramirez-Martinez*, 273 F.3d 903 (9th Cir. 2001) (applying immediate destination analysis of whether alien had reached ultimate or intended destination within United States);

*United States v. Angwin*, 271 F.3d 786, 271 F.3d 786 (9th Cir. 2001) (same). *Lopez*, 484 F.3d at 1191.

Aiding and abetting, involving a state-side transporter, requires proof of the specific intent to facilitate the commission of the "bringing to" offense and evidence that the state-side transporter involved himself in the bringing to offense prior to its completion. *See United States v. Singh*, 532 F.3d 1053, 1057-59 (9th Cir. 2008). Aiding and abetting a "bringing to" offense may take place entirely on the United States side of the border. *United States v. Noriega-Perez*, 670 F.3d 1033, 1040 (9th Cir. 2012).

Statutory maximum sentences under § 1324 are increased for offenses causing serious bodily injury, placing the life of any person in jeopardy, or resulting in the death of a person. In such cases, a special jury finding is required.

An alien is also defined as being a person who is not a national. In the rare event that there is an issue as to the alien being a national, the definition of alien in the last paragraph of the instruction should be modified accordingly. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(22); *Perdomo-Padilla v. Ashcroft*, 333 F.3d 964, 967-68 (9th Cir. 2003); *United States v. Sotelo*, 109 F.3d 1446, 1447-1448 (9th Cir. 1997).

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 7.2 Alien—Illegal Transportation or Attempted Transportation (8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [attempted] illegal transportation of an alien in violation of Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii) of Title 8 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*name of alien*] was an alien;

Second, [*name of alien*] was not lawfully in the United States;

Third, the defendant [knew] [acted in reckless disregard of the fact] that [*name of alien*] was not lawfully in the United States; [and]

Fourth, the defendant knowingly [[transported or moved] [attempted to transport or move]] [*name of alien*] to help [him] [her] remain in the United States illegally[.] [; and]

[Fifth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

An alien is a person who is not a natural-born or naturalized citizen of the United States. An alien is not lawfully in this country if the person was not duly admitted by an immigration officer.

A person acts with reckless disregard if: (1) the person is aware of facts from which a reasonable inference could be drawn that the alleged alien was in fact an alien in the United States unlawfully; and (2) the person actually draws that inference.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 7.1 (Alien—Bringing or Attempting to Bring to the United States (Other than Designated Place)).

"Reckless disregard" is not defined in Title 8, United States Code, but the Ninth Circuit has clarified that "reckless disregard" includes both an objective prong and a subjective prong. *United States v. Rodriguez*, 880 F.3d 1151, 1161 (9th Cir. 2018) ("[A] correct definition of 'reckless disregard,' consistent with Supreme Court and Ninth Circuit law, would include 'the defendant's disregard of a risk of harm of which the defendant is aware.'") (internal brackets omitted).

Statutory maximum sentences under § 1324 are increased for offenses done for commercial advantage or private financial gain, or which caused serious bodily injury, placed the life of any person in jeopardy, or resulted in the death of a person. In such cases, a special jury finding is required.

If the defendant is charged with transportation of illegal aliens resulting in deaths under 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii) and (a)(1)(B)(iv), the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant's conduct was the proximate cause of the charged deaths. *United States v. Pineda-Doval*, 614 F.3d 1019, 1026-28 (9th Cir. 2010). In such cases, the instruction should be modified to instruct on the proximate cause element of "resulting in death."

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

### 7.3 Alien—Harboring or Attempted Harboring (8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [attempted] harboring of an alien in violation of Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii) of Title 8 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*name of alien*] was an alien;

Second, [*name of alien*] was not lawfully in the United States;

Third, the defendant [knew] [acted in reckless disregard of the fact] that [name of *alien*] was not lawfully in the United States; [and]

Fourth, the defendant [[harbored, concealed, or shielded from detection] [attempted to harbor, conceal, or shield from detection]] [*name of alien*] with intent to violate the law[.] [; and]

[Fifth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

An alien is a person who is not a natural-born or naturalized citizen of the United States. An alien is not lawfully in this country if the person was not duly admitted by an Immigration Officer.

A person acts with reckless disregard if: (1) the person is aware of facts from which a reasonable inference could be drawn that the alleged alien was in fact an alien in the United States unlawfully; and (2) the person actually draws that inference.

#### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 7.1 (Alien—Bringing or Attempting to Bring to United States (Other than Designated Place)) and 7.2 (Alien—Illegal Transportation or Attempted Illegal Transportation).

Statutory maximum sentences under § 1324 are increased for offenses done for commercial advantage or private financial gain, or which caused serious bodily injury, placed the life of any person in jeopardy, or resulted in the death of a person. In such cases, a special jury finding is required.

The defendant acts with "reckless disregard" only if "the defendant herself [is] aware of

facts from which an inference of risk could be drawn and the defendant . . . actually draw[s] that inference." *United States v. Tydingco*, 909 F.3d 297, 304 (2018) (emphasis in original) (citing *United States v. Rodriguez*, 880 F.3d 1151, 1159-62 (9th Cir. 2018)).

The defendant must "intend[] to violate the law." *Tydingco*, 909 F.3d at 302-03. Prior versions of this instruction required the jury to specifically find that the defendant harbored the alien "for the purpose of avoiding the alien's detection by immigration authorities." However, although proving that the defendant sought to avoid the alien's detection is one way to demonstrate the requisite intent, it is not the only way. *Id*. at 304. "For example, a defendant who chooses to publicize her harboring of an illegal alien to call attention to what she considers an unjust immigration law intends to violate the law, even though she does not intend to prevent detection." *Id*.

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

"To harbor" means to provide "shelter to." *Valle del Sol Inc. v. Whiting*, 732 F.3d 1006, 1017 n.9 (9th Cir. 2013).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 7.4 Alien—Encouraging Illegal Entry
## 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with encouraging illegal entry by an alien in violation of Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv) of Title 8 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*name of alien*] was an alien;

Second, the defendant encouraged or induced [*name of alien*] to [come to] [enter] [reside in] the United States in violation of law; and

Third, the defendant [knew] [acted in reckless disregard of the fact] that [name of alien]'s [coming to] [entry into] [residence in] the United States would be in violation of the law.

An alien is a person who is not a natural-born or naturalized citizen of the United States. An alien enters the United States in violation of law if not duly admitted by an Immigration Officer.

For purposes of this statute, the term "encourage or induce" means the intentional encouragement of an unlawful act or the provision of assistance to a wrongdoer with the intent to further the commission of an offense.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 7.1 (Alien—Bringing or Attempting to Bring to United States (Other than Designated Place)) and 7.2 (Alien—Illegal Transportation or Attempted Transportation).

Statutory maximum sentences under § 1324 are increased for offenses done for commercial advantage or private financial gain, or which caused serious bodily injury, placed the life of any person in jeopardy, or resulted in the death of a person. In such cases, a special jury finding is required.

The terms "encourage[]" or "induce[]" are used in their "specialized, criminal-law sense—that is, as incorporating common-law liability for solicitation and facilitation." *United States v. Hansen*, 599 U.S. 762, 774 (2023). "[S]olicitation is the intentional encouragement of an unlawful act" and facilitation "is the provision of assistance to a wrongdoer with the intent to further an offense's commission. *Id*. at 771 (citations omitted); *see also United States v. Hansen*, 97 F.4th 677, 681 (9th Cir. 2024). "[S]olicitation is complete as soon as the encouragement occurs" whereas liability for facilitation "requires that a wrongful act be carried out." *Hansen*, 599 U.S. at 774For both crimes, "words may be enough." *Id*. The terms "encourage[] or induce[]" also "carry" the "traditional *mens rea*" requirement for the crimes of solicitation and facilitation. *Id*. at 780.

The scope of 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv) is not limited to conduct involving unlawful means (e.g., fraud, false documents, or fraud against the government) or conduct that provides no legitimate benefit to the alien. *United States v. Sineneng-Smith*, 982 F.3d 766, 773-74 (9th Cir. 2020), *cert. denied*, 142 S. Ct. 117 (Mem.) (2021).

*Revised June 2024*

## 7.5 Alien—Bringing or Attempting to Bring to The United States (Without Authorization) (8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(2)(B)(i)-(iii))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [bringing] [attempting to bring] an alien to the United States [knowing] [in reckless disregard of the fact] that the alien has not received prior official authorization to [come to] [enter] [reside in] the United States. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [brought] [attempted to bring] a person who was an alien to the United States [for the purpose of the defendant's [commercial advantage] [private gain]] [and upon arrival did not immediately bring and present the alien to an appropriate immigration official at a designated port of entry] [with the intent or with reason to believe that the alien will commit an offense against the United States or any state punishable by imprisonment for more than one year];

Second, the defendant [knew] [was in reckless disregard of the fact] that the person was an alien who had not received prior official authorization to [come to] [enter] [reside in] the United States; [and]

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to violate the United States immigration laws[.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

An alien is a person who is not a natural-born or naturalized citizen of the United States.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 7.1 (Alien—Bringing or Attempting to Bring to the United States (Other than Designated Place)) for "aiding and abetting" and "bringing to" the United States and 7.2 (Alien—Illegal Transportation or Attempted Transportation) for "reckless disregard."

This is a separate crime from 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(i) (as to that statutory provision, *see* Instruction 7.1). Nevertheless, the two crimes share the same elements. Both require that the alien lack prior authorization to enter the United States, but §1324(a)(1)(A)(i) requires that the entry be at a place not designated as a port of entry. *United States v. Barajas-Montiel*, 185 F.3d 947, 951 (9th Cir. 1999).

The instruction should be modified to reflect which subsection in § 1324(a)(2)(B) is charged: (i) an offense committed with the intent or with reason to believe that the alien will commit an offense against the United States or any state punishable by imprisonment for more than one year; (ii) an offense done for the purpose of commercial advantage or private financial gain or (iii) an offense in which the alien is not upon arrival immediately brought to an appropriate immigration official at a designated port of entry.

Commercial advantage or financial gain may be established under either the theory that, as a principal, the defendant acted for his own commercial advantage or financial gain or under the theory that he aided another individual in committing the crime for a pecuniary motive. *United States v. Lopez-Martinez*, 543 F.3d 509, 515-16 (9th Cir. 2008); *United States v. Munoz*, 412 F.3d 1043, 1046-47 (9th Cir. 2005); *United States v. Tsai*, 282 F.3d 690, 697 (9th Cir. 2002). If the theory of liability is aiding and abetting, the jury need not find that the defendant committed the offense for his own financial advantage. It is enough that the offense was committed for the purpose of commercial advantage and financial gain of another. *Lopez-Martinez*, 543 F.3d at 515-16. If the defendant is charged with aiding and abetting instead of as a principal, modify the first element by deleting the words "the defendant's" to reflect the offense was done "for the purpose of [commercial advantage] [private financial gain]."

Statutory maximum sentences are increased for offenses involving groups of aliens in excess of 10. 8 U.S.C. § 1324(c). In such cases, a special jury finding is required.

*See Barajas–Montiel*, 185 F.3d at 951-53 (holding that criminal intent is required for felony convictions under 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1) and (2)(B), as distinguished from misdemeanor offense under § 1324(a)(2)(A), where Congress eliminated mens rea requirement if illegal alien is brought to United States and taken directly to INS official at designated port of entry). This instruction may be used for a misdemeanor charge by excluding the felonies described in § 1324(a)(2)(B)(i), (ii), and (iii) in the first element and omitting the third element.

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person

may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 7.6 Alien—Deported Alien Reentering United States Without Consent (8 U.S.C. § 1326(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with being an alien who, after [removal] [deportation], reentered the United States in violation of Section 1326(a) of Title 8 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [the defendant was [removed] [deported] from the United States] [the defendant departed the United States while an order of [removal] [deportation] was outstanding];

Second, thereafter, the defendant knowingly and voluntarily reentered the United States without having obtained the consent of the Attorney General or the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, to reapply for admission into the United States; and

Third, the defendant was an alien at the time of reentry.

Fourth, the defendant was free from official observation or restraint between the moment [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] physically crossed into U.S. territory and the moment [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] was apprehended.

An alien is a person who is not a natural-born or naturalized citizen of the United States.

"Official restraint" means the defendant was under constant, continuous observation by a United States officer, either directly or by camera surveillance, from the moment [he] [she] [other pronoun] first crossed the border and entered the territory of the United States up until the time of [his] [her] [*other pronoun*] apprehension. If the individual was first observed after [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] had physically crossed the border of the United States, then [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] is not under constant official restraint.

### Comment

Section 1326 provides three separate offenses for a deported alien: to enter, to attempt to enter, and to be found in the United States without permission. *United States v. Castillo-Mendez*, 868 F.3d 830, 835 (9th Cir. 2017); *United States v. Parga-Rosas*, 238 F.3d 1209, 1213 (9th Cir. 2001). Entry and being "found in" are general intent crimes; attempting reentry is a specific intent crime. *Castillo-Mendez*, 868 F.3d at 835-36. Use this instruction for "entered," Instruction 7.7 (Alien—Deported Alien Reentering United States Without Consent—Attempt) for "attempted reentry," and Instruction 7.8 (Alien—Deported Alien Found in United States) for "found in."

As to the second element of this instruction, it should be noted that although 8 U.S.C. § 1326(a) provides that the statute is violated by an alien who "enters, attempts to enter, or is at any time found in, the United States, unless . . . prior to his reembarkation at a place outside the United States or his application for admission from foreign contiguous territory, the Attorney General has expressly consented" to the alien's reapplying for admission, it is common for the charging indictment in such prosecutions to refer to the lack of consent by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

"[T]he Attorney General's consent to reapply must come after the most recent deportation." *United States v. Hernandez-Quintania*, 874 F.3d 1123, 1126 (9th Cir. 2017). If there is any evidence presented that the defendant obtained such consent, the second element should be supplemented to clarify that the government must only prove that the defendant did not obtain consent since the defendant's most recent deportation.

An alien has not reentered the United States for purposes of the crime of reentry of deported alien "until he or she is physically present in the country and free from official restraint." *United States v. Gracidas-Ulibarry*, 231 F.3d 1188, 1191 n.3 (9th Cir. 2000) (citing *United States v. Pacheco-Medina*, 212 F.3d 1162, 1166 (9th Cir. 2000)). *United States v. Liberato,* 142 F.4th 1174, 1182 (9th Cir. 2025) (concluding that the government had not met its burden of proving with sufficient evidence that the defendant "was at any point free from official observation or restraint between the moment he physically crossed into U.S. territory and the moment he was apprehended" and therefore free of official restraint.) An alien is under official restraint if, after crossing the border, he is "'deprived of his liberty and prevented from going at large within the United States.'" *United States v. Cruz-Escoto*, 476 F.3d 1081, 1085 (9th Cir. 2007) (citations omitted). An alien need not be in physical custody to be officially restrained. *Id.* (citing *United States v. Ruiz-Lopez*, 234 F.3d 445, 448 (9th Cir. 2000)). Official restraint includes constant government observation or surveillance from the moment of the noncitizen's entry to the time of capture. *Liberato*, 142 F.4th at 1179. "'[R]estraint may take the form of surveillance, unbeknownst to the alien.'" *Cruz-Escoto*, 476 F.3d at 1085. (quoting *Pacheco-Medina*, 212 F.3d at 1164). The government has the burden of proving the defendant was free from official restraint but need not respond to a defendant's free floating speculation that he might have been observed the whole time. *United States v. Castellanos-Garcia*, 270 F.3d 773, 777 (9th Cir. 2001).

In *Almendarez-Torres v. United States*, 523 U.S. 224, 244 (1998), the Supreme Court held that in a prosecution for illegal re-entry after deportation in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1326(a), the existence of a prior aggravated felony conviction need not be alleged in the indictment and presented to the jury because the conviction constitutes a sentencing enhancement pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1326(b)(2) and "[a] prior felony conviction is not an element of the offense described in 8 U.S.C. § 1326(a)." *United States v. Alviso*, 152 F.3d 1195, 1199 (9th Cir. 1998). The Supreme Court's opinion in *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2002) expressed doubt concerning the correctness of *Almendarez-Torres*; however, the Ninth Circuit has stated that "until the Supreme Court expressly overrules it, *Almendarez-Torres* controls." *United States v. Pacheco-Zepeda*, 234 F.3d 411, 414-415 (9th Cir. 2000).

To trigger an increase in the statutory maximum sentence under § 1326(b)(1)-(2), the aggravating fact of the removal being subsequent to the predicate conviction must be submitted to the jury and proved beyond a reasonable doubt. *See United States v. Martinez*, 850 F.3d 1097, 1105 (9th Cir. 2017); *United States v. Salazar-Lopez*, 506 F.3d 748, 751-52 (9th Cir. 2007); *United States v. Covian-Sandoval*, 462 F.3d 1090, 1097-98 (9th Cir. 2006). However, if the temporal sequence of events is necessarily established by the evidence and jury verdict, then the absence of a special jury finding may not constitute reversible error. *Compare United States v. Calderon-Segura*, 512 F.3d 1104, 1110-11 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that, because all evidence of prior removal related only to one removal in 1999, jury necessarily found beyond reasonable doubt not only fact of prior removal but also that removal occurred subsequent to 1997 conviction), *with*

*Martinez*, 850 F.3d at 1108-09 (holding that jury's finding of fact of prior removal could not be construed as finding that removal occurred subsequent to conviction where immigration documents submitted to jury contained mistakes).

The third element, alienage, is an element of the offense that the government must prove. *United States v. Sandoval-Gonzalez*, 642 F.3d 717, 722 (9th Cir. 2011). A defendant who contends that his or her citizenship derives from the citizenship of a parent is not raising an affirmative defense. *Id*. at 721-24. The burden remains on the government to prove the defendant is an alien. *Id*. Alienage cannot be proven either by a prior deportation order alone or a defendant's admission of noncitizenship alone without corroborating evidence. *United States v. Gonzalez-Corn*, 807 F.3d 989, 996 (9th Cir. 2015). These two facts taken together, however, may establish alienage. *See id*. at 992, 996 (providing example of instruction addressing alienage).

A person who meets any of the qualifications set out in 8 U.S.C § 1401 is a national or a citizen at birth.

In the typical case the third element will turn on whether the defendant is a citizen, but in rare cases the issue could be whether the defendant is a national of the United States. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(22) for a definition of national of the United States. *See also Perdomo-Padilla v. Ashcroft*, 333 F.3d 964, 967-68 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised September 2025*

## 7.7 Alien—Deported Alien Reentering United States Without Consent—Attempt (8 U.S.C. § 1326)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of]] the indictment with being an alien who, after [removal] [deportation], attempted reentry into the United States in violation of Section 1326 of Title 8 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [the defendant was [removed] [deported] from the United States] [the defendant departed the United States while an order of [removal] [deportation] was outstanding];

Second, the defendant had the specific intent to enter the United States free from official restraint;

Third, the defendant was an alien at the time of the defendant's attempted reentry into the United States;

Fourth, the defendant had not obtained the consent of the Attorney General or the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to reapply for admission into the United States; and

Fifth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

An alien is a person who is not a natural-born or naturalized citizen of the United States.

### Comment

An alien has not reentered the United States for purposes of the crime of reentry of a deported alien "until he or she is physically present in the country and free from official restraint." *United States v. Gracidas-Ulibarry*, 231 F.3d 1188, 1191 n.3 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc) (citing *United States v. Pacheco-Medina*, 212 F.3d 1162, 1166 (9th Cir. 2000)).

The crime of attempted illegal reentry is a specific intent offense. *United States v. Castillo-Mendez*, 868 F.3d 830, 836 (9th Cir. 2017); *see also Gracidas-Ulibarry,* 231 F.3d at 1190 (discussing elements of offense where defendant claimed he was asleep when he entered United States). In an attempt case, the government must prove that the alien had a specific intent to enter the country free from official restraint. *Castillo-Mendez*, 868 F.3d at 836; *United States v. Vazquez-Hernandez*, 849 F.3d 1219, 1225 (9th Cir. 2017). "Official restraint" means restraint by any government official, and thus an alien who enters the United States with the sole intent to go to jail lacks specific intent to enter the country free from official restraint. *United States v. Lombera-Valdovinos*, 429 F.3d 927, 929-30 (9th Cir. 2005); *see also United States v. Argueta-Rosales*, 819

F.3d 1149, 1156 (9th Cir. 2016) (stating that if the alien's sole "intent was to be taken into custody," then "no rational trier of fact could conclude [he] was guilty of the specific intent crime of attempted illegal reentry" (internal quotation marks and citation omitted)). "Official restraint" does not make substantial steps toward entry impossible, and thus an alien who was under official restraint so as to preclude a conviction for illegal reentry may still be guilty of attempted reentry. *United States v. Leos-Maldonado*, 302 F.3d 1061, 1063 (9th Cir. 2002).

The government "need not prove that entry free from official restraint was the defendant's *sole* intent," only "*a* specific intent." *Argueta-Rosales*, 819 F.3d at 1157; *accord United States v. Cabrera*, 83 F.4th 729, 737 (9th Cir. 2023) (upholding instruction that included "language indicating that the government need not prove a defendant's intent to evade authorities was his *sole* intent in entering the United States"). If there is conflicting evidence as to whether the defendant possessed any specific intent to remain free of restraint, the jury should decide the issue. *See Argueta-Rosales*, 819 F.3d at 1156.

For an attempt to commit the crime, jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010). The attempt coupled with the specification of the time and place of the attempted illegal reentry may provide the requisite overt act that constitutes a substantial step toward completing the offense. *United States v. Resendiz-Ponce*, 549 U.S. 102, 107-08 (2007).

Regarding sentencing, *see* the Comment to 7.6 (Alien—Deported Alien Reentering United States Without Consent) for a discussion of *Almendarez-Torres v. United States*, 523 U.S. 224 (1998).

The "strongly corroborates" language comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

*Revised Dec. 2023*

## 7.8 Alien—Deported Alien Found in United States (8 U.S.C. § 1326(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with being an alien who, after [removal] [deportation], was found in the United States in violation of Section 1326(a) of Title 8 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [the defendant was [removed] [deported] from the United States] [the defendant departed the United States while an order of [removal] [deportation] was outstanding];

Second, thereafter, the defendant voluntarily entered the United States;

Third, [at the time of entry the defendant knew [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] was entering the United States] [after entering the United States the defendant knew that [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] was in the United States and knowingly remained];

Fourth, the defendant was found in the United States without having obtained the consent of the Attorney General or the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to reapply for admission into the United States;

Fifth, the defendant was an alien at the time of the defendant's entry into the United States; and

Sixth, the defendant was free from official observation or restraint between the moment [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] physically crossed into U.S. territory and the moment [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] was apprehended.

An alien is a person who is not a natural-born or naturalized citizen of the United States.

### Comment

"Found in" the United States is a general intent crime. *United States v. Castillo-Mendez*, 868 F.3d 830, 836 (9th Cir. 2017). In *United States v. Salazar-Gonzalez*, 458 F.3d 851, 856 (9th Cir. 2006), *overruled on other grounds by United States v. Orozco-Acosta*, 607 F.3d 1156 (9th Cir. 2010), the court clarified "an area of confusion in our § 1326 jurisprudence" by holding "that for a defendant to be convicted of a § 1326 'found in' offense, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he entered voluntarily *and* had knowledge that he was committing the underlying act that made his conduct illegal—entering or remaining in the United States."

In *United States v. Martinez*, 850 F.3d 1097 (9th Cir. 2017), the court reiterated that the jury is required to make a finding regarding the defendant's removal date and that the government is required to prove that date beyond a reasonable doubt. *See id.* at 1099, 1105. This finding may be made by a special jury verdict form.

Mere physical presence is inadequate to support a conviction for being found in the United States. *See United States v. Ruiz-Lopez*, 234 F.3d 445, 448 (9th Cir. 2000) (holding proof that

border patrol encountered the defendant at the port of entry does not constitute adequate proof that the defendant was found in the United States free from official restraint). "The burden is on the government to establish lack of official restraint." *United States v. Bello–Bahena*, 411 F.3d 1083, 1087 (9th Cir. 2005); *see also Castillo-Mendez*, 868 F.3d at 838 ("In 'found in' cases, on the other hand, the government must prove that at the time a defendant entered, he was free from official restraint as a matter of fact, irrespective of his knowledge or intent to avoid that restraint."). An alien is under official restraint if, after crossing the border, he is "'deprived of his liberty and prevented from going at large within the United States.'" *United States v. Cruz-Escoto*, 476 F.3d 1081, 1185 (9th Cir. 2007) (citations omitted).

Whether an alien crosses the border at a designated point of entry or elsewhere weighs on the question of official restraint. *Cruz-Escoto*, 476 F.3d at 1085. When an alien crosses the border at a designated point of entry and proceeds directly in the manner designated by the government where he is stopped when he presents himself to the authorities, he has not yet entered and cannot be found in the United States. *Id.* (citing *United States v. Zavala-Mendez*, 411 F.3d 1116, 1121 (9th Cir. 2005)). Aliens who sneak across the border are under official restraint only if they are under constant governmental observation from the moment they set foot in this country until the moment of their arrest. *Id.* (citing *United States v. Castellanos-Garcia*, 270 F.3d 773, 775 (9th Cir. 2001)); *United States v. Liberato,* 142 F.4th 1174, 1182 (9th Cir. 2025) (concluding that the government had not met its burden of proving with sufficient evidence that the defendant "was at any point free from official observation or restraint between the moment he physically crossed into U.S. territory and the moment he was apprehended" and therefore free of official restraint).

An alien is under official restraint if he is "'deprived of his liberty and prevented from going at large within the United States.'" *Cruz-Escoto*, 476 F.3d at 1085 (citations omitted). An alien need not be in physical custody to be officially restrained. *Id*. (citing *Ruiz-Lopez*, 234 F.3d at 448). "'[R]estraint may take the form of surveillance, unbeknownst to the alien.'" *Id*. (quoting *United States v. Pacheco-Medina*, 212 F.3d 1162, 1164 (9th Cir. 2000)). The government has the burden of proving the defendant was free from official restraint but need not respond to a defendant's free floating speculation that he might have been observed the whole time. *Castellanos-Garcia*, 270 F.3d at 777. When there is some evidentiary support for it, the court might consider instructing the jury on the defense of constant official restraint as follows:

THEORY OF DEFENSE

> In this case when deciding whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty of the crime of being a deported alien found in the United States, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant was not under constant official restraint when [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] entered the United States. If the defendant was under constant official restraint, [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] cannot be found guilty of being found in the United States.
>
> "Under constant official restraint" means the defendant was under constant, continuous observation by a United States officer, either directly or by camera surveillance, from the moment [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] first crossed the border and entered the territory of the United States up until the time of [his] [her] [*other pronoun*] apprehension. If the individual was first observed after [he] [she] [*other*

*pronoun*] had physically crossed the border of the United States, then [he] [she] [*other pronoun*] is not under constant official restraint.

Regarding sentencing, *see* Comment to Instruction 7.6 (Alien—Deported Alien Reentering United States Without Consent) for a discussion of *Almendarez-Torres v. United States*, 523 U.S. 224 (1998).

*Revised September 2025*

## 8. ASSAULT AND THREAT OFFENSES

**Instruction**


8.1 Assault on Federal Officer or Employee (18 U.S.C. § 111(a))
8.2 Assault on Federal Officer or Employee [With a Deadly or Dangerous Weapon] [Which Inflicts Bodily Injury] (18 U.S.C. § 111(b))
8.3 Assault on Federal Officer or Employee—Defenses
8.4 Assault with Intent to Commit Murder or Other Felony (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(1), (2))
8.5 Assault with Dangerous Weapon (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(3))
8.6 Assault by Striking or Wounding (18 U.S.C § 113(a)(4))
8.7 Simple Assault of Person Under Age 16 (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(5))
8.8 Assault Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(6))
8.9 Assault of Person Under Age 16 Resulting in Substantial Bodily Injury (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(7))
8.10 Assault by Strangulation or Suffocation (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(8))
8.11 Assault of Spouse, Intimate Partner, or Dating Partner (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(7))
8.12 Threats Against the President (18 U.S.C. § 871)
8.13 Transmitting a Communication Containing a Threat to Kidnap or Injure (18 U.S.C. § 875(c))
8.14 Mailing Threatening Communications—Threats to Kidnap or Injure (18 U.S.C. § 876(c))
8.15 Threatening to Assault, Kidnap, or Murder a United States Official, United States Judge, Federal Law Enforcement Officer, or Other Official (18 U.S.C. § 115(a)(1)(B))

## 8.1 Assault on Federal Officer or Employee (18 U.S.C. § 111(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assault on a federal officer in violation of Section 111(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant forcibly assaulted [*name of federal officer or employee*]; [and]

Second, the defendant did so while [*name of federal officer or employee*] was engaged in, or on account of [his] [her] official duties[.] [; and]

[Third, the defendant [made physical contact] [acted with the intent to commit another felony].]

There is a forcible assault when one person intentionally strikes another, or willfully attempts to inflict injury on another, or intentionally threatens another coupled with an apparent ability to inflict injury on another which causes a reasonable apprehension of immediate bodily harm.

### Comment

When the crime is charged under the enhanced penalty provisions of 18 U.S.C. § 111(b), use Instruction 8.2 (Assault on Federal Officer or Employee [With a Deadly or Dangerous Weapon] [Which Inflicts Bodily Injury]).

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 1114 for the definition of federal officer or employee referenced in 18 U.S.C. § 111.

The third element is to be used only when the charge is a felony. A felony charge requires actual physical contact or action with the intent to commit another felony.

A reasonable apprehension of immediate bodily harm is determined with reference to a reasonable person aware of the circumstances known to the victim, not with reference to all circumstances, including circumstances unknown to the victim. *United States v. Acosta-Sierra*, 690 F.3d 1111, 1121 (9th Cir. 2012).

The statutory language states that the crime can be committed by one who "forcibly assaults, resists, opposes, impedes, intimidates or interferes," but the Ninth Circuit has held that regardless of the circumstances, "convictions under [111(a)] require at least some form of assault." *United States v. Chapman*, 528 F.3d 1215, 1221 (9th Cir. 2008). Similarly, the court has held that a proper instruction may not reduce the concept of force or threatened force to the mere appearance of physical intimidation. *United States v. Harrison*, 585 F.3d 1155, 1160 (9th Cir. 2009).

There is no requirement that an assailant be aware that the victim is a federal officer. *United States v. Feola*, 420 U.S. 671, 684 (1975); *see also United States v. Mobley*, 803 F.3d 1105,

1109 (9th Cir. 2015) (citing *Feola* and holding that defendant's lack of knowledge as to victim's status as federal officer was "irrelevant to establishing the wrongfulness of the defendant's conduct" in prosecution for assault of federal officer). If the defendant denies knowledge that the person assaulted was a federal officer and claims to have acted in self-defense, Instruction 8.3 (Assault on Federal Officer or Employee—Defenses) should be used.

Violation of § 111 is a general intent crime in this circuit. *United States v. Jim*, 865 F.2d 211, 215 (9th Cir. 1989). Among other things, this means that voluntary intoxication is not a defense. *Id.*

For an instruction defining "official duties," *see United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138, 1149 (9th Cir. 2018) (upholding "official duties" instruction providing that: "the test" for determining whether officer is "[e]ngaged in the performance of official duties" is "whether the officer is acting within the scope of his employment, that is, whether the officer's actions fall within his agency's overall mission, in contrast to engaging in a personal frolic of his own"); *see also United States v. Juvenile Female*, 566 F.3d 943, 950 (9th Cir. 2009) (describing official duties test as "whether [the officer] is acting within the scope of what he is employed to do, as distinguished from engaging in a personal frolic of his own").

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 8.2 Assault on Federal Officer or Employee [With a Deadly or Dangerous Weapon] [Which Inflicts Bodily Injury] (18 U.S.C. § 111(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assault on a federal officer in violation of Section 111(b) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant forcibly assaulted [*name of federal officer or employee*];

Second, the defendant did so while [*name of federal officer or employee*] was engaged in, or on account of [his] [her] official duties; and

Third, the defendant [used a deadly or dangerous weapon] [inflicted bodily injury].

There is a forcible assault when one person intentionally strikes another, or willfully attempts to inflict injury on another, or intentionally threatens another coupled with an apparent ability to inflict injury on another which causes a reasonable apprehension of immediate bodily harm.

[A [*specify weapon*] is a deadly or dangerous weapon if it is used in a way that is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury.]

### Comment

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 1114 for the definition of federal officer or employee referenced in 18 U.S.C. § 111.

The statutory language states that the crime can be committed by one who "forcibly assaults, resists, opposes, impedes, intimidates or interferes," but the Ninth Circuit has held that regardless of the circumstances, "convictions under [111(a)] require at least some form of assault." *United States v. Chapman*, 528 F.3d 1215, 1221 (9th Cir. 2008).

There is no requirement that an assailant be aware that the victim is a federal officer. *United States v. Feola*, 420 U.S. 671, 684 (1975); *see also United States v. Mobley*, 803 F.3d 1105, 1109 (9th Cir. 2015) (citing *Feola* and holding that defendant's lack of knowledge as to victim's status as federal officer was "irrelevant to establishing the wrongfulness of the defendant's conduct" in prosecution for assault of federal officer). If the defendant denies knowledge that the person assaulted was a federal officer and claims to have acted in self-defense, Instruction 8.3 (Assault on Federal Officer or Employee—Defenses) should be used.

A reasonable apprehension of immediate bodily harm is determined with reference to a reasonable person aware of the circumstances known to the victim, not with reference to all circumstances, including circumstances unknown to the victim. *United States v. Acosta-Sierra*, 690 F.3d 1111, 1121 (9th Cir. 2012).

Violation of § 111 is a general intent crime in this circuit. *United States v. Jim*, 865 F.2d

211, 215 (9th Cir. 1989). Among other things, this means that voluntary intoxication is not a defense, *id.*, and that § 111(b) does not require an intent to cause the bodily injury. *United States v. Garcia-Camacho*, 122 F.3d 1265, 1269 (9th Cir. 1997).

For an instruction defining "official duties," *see United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138, 1149 (9th Cir. 2018) (upholding "official duties" instruction providing that: "the test" for determining whether officer is "[e]ngaged in the performance of official duties" is "whether the officer is acting within the scope of his employment, that is, whether the officer's actions fall within his agency's overall mission, in contrast to engaging in a personal frolic of his own"); *see also United States v. Juvenile Female*, 566 F.3d 943, 950 (9th Cir. 2009) (describing official duties test as "whether [the officer] is acting within the scope of what he is employed to do, as distinguished from engaging in a personal frolic of his own").

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 8.3 Assault on Federal Officer or Employee—Defenses

The defendant asserts that [he] [she] acted in self-defense. It is a defense to the charge if (1) the defendant did not know that [*name of federal officer or employee*] was a federal [officer] [employee], (2) the defendant reasonably believed that use of force was necessary to defend oneself against an immediate use of unlawful force, and (3) the defendant used no more force than appeared reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

Force which is likely to cause death or great bodily harm is justified in self-defense only if a person reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm.

In addition to proving all the elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt, the government must also prove beyond a reasonable doubt either (1) that the defendant knew that [*name of federal officer or employee*] was a federal [officer] [employee] or (2) that the defendant did not reasonably believe force was necessary to defend against an immediate use of unlawful force or (3) that the defendant used more force than appeared reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

### Comment

In *United States v. Feola*, 420 U.S. 671, 684 (1975), the Supreme Court held that there is no "requirement that an assailant be aware that his victim is a federal officer" but went on to point out that there could be circumstances where ignorance of the official status of the person assaulted might justify a defendant acting in self-defense. "The jury charge in such a case, therefore, should include (1) an explanation of the essential elements of a claim of self-defense, and (2) an instruction informing the jury that the defendant cannot be convicted *unless* the government proves, beyond a reasonable doubt, *either* (a) that the defendant knew that the victim was a federal agent, *or* (b) that the defendant's use of deadly force would not have qualified as self-defense even if the agent had, in fact, been a private citizen." *United States v. Alvarez*, 755 F.2d 830, 847 (11th Cir. 1985) (emphasis in original).

In *United States v. Span*, 970 F.2d 573 (9th Cir. 1992), the Ninth Circuit upheld this instruction. The court cautioned, however, that "the model instruction would be inappropriate in a case where a defendant's theory of the case is self-defense against the use of *excessive* force by a federal law enforcement officer." *Id.* at 577 (emphasis in original). In such a case, the instruction must be modified appropriately.

## 8.4 Assault with Intent to Commit Murder or Other Felony (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(1), (2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assault with intent to commit [*specify felony*] in violation of Section 113(a)[(1)][(2)] of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant assaulted [*name of victim*] by intentionally [[striking] [wounding]] [[him] [her]] [using a display of force that reasonably caused [him] [her] to fear immediate bodily harm];

Second, the defendant did so with the intent to commit [*specify felony*]; and

Third, the assault took place on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

### Comment

Assaults proscribed by 18 U.S.C. § 113 are those committed "within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States." *See* 18 U.S.C. § 7 for the definition of "special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States."

When the assault consists of a display of force, it must actually cause reasonable apprehension of immediate bodily harm; fear is a necessary element. *United States v. Skeet*, 665 F.2d 983, 986 n.1 (9th Cir. 1982).

Assault with intent to commit murder is a specific intent crime. *United States v. Jones*, 681 F.2d 610, 611 (9th Cir. 1982).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 8.5 Assault with Dangerous Weapon (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assault with a dangerous weapon in violation of Section 113(a)(3) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant assaulted [*name of victim*] by intentionally [[striking] [wounding]] [[him] [her]] [using a display of force that reasonably caused [him] [her] to fear immediate bodily harm];

Second, the defendant acted with the intent to do bodily harm to [*name of victim*];

Third, the defendant used a dangerous weapon; and

Fourth, the assault took place on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

[A [*specify weapon*] is a dangerous weapon if it is used in a way that is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 8.2 (Assault on Federal Officer or Employee [With a Deadly or Dangerous Weapon] [Which Inflicts Bodily Injury]).

*See United States v. Smith*, 561 F.3d 934, 938-40 (9th Cir. 2009) (en banc) (discussing prior version of jury instruction).

The use of bare hands only to perpetrate an assault did not constitute use of a "dangerous weapon" and therefore could not support a conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(3). *United States v. Rocha*, 598 F.3d 1144, 1153-58 (9th Cir. 2010).

The statutory definition of assault with a dangerous weapon, 18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(3), includes "without just cause or excuse." However, the existence of "just cause or excuse" is an affirmative defense, and the government does not have the burden of pleading or proving its absence. *United States v. Guilbert*, 692 F.2d 1340, 1343 (11th Cir. 1982).

## 8.6 Assault by Striking or Wounding (18 U.S.C § 113(a)(4))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the information with assault by striking or wounding in violation of Section 113(a)(4) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant assaulted [*name of victim*] by intentionally [[striking] [wounding]] [[him]] [her]]; and

Second, the assault took place on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

### Comment

*See United States v. Pierre*, 254 F.3d 872, 875 (9th Cir. 2001) (holding that assault by striking, beating, or wounding is not lesser included offense of assault with dangerous weapon).

*Revised September 2025*

## 8.7 Simple Assault of Person Under Age 16 (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(5))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assaulting a person who has not attained the age of 16 years in violation of Section 113(a)(5) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant assaulted [*name of victim*] by intentionally using a display of force that reasonably caused [him] [her] to fear immediate bodily harm;

Second, [*name of victim*] was under the age of 16 years at the time of the assault; and

Third, the assault took place on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

### Comment

When the assault consists of a display of force, it must actually cause reasonable apprehension of immediate bodily harm; fear is a necessary element. *United States v. Skeet*, 665 F.2d 983, 986 n.1 (9th Cir. 1982).

## 8.8 Assault Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(6))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assault resulting in serious bodily injury in violation of Section 113(a)(6) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant assaulted [*name of victim*] by intentionally [[striking] [wounding]] [him] [her];

Second, as a result, [*name of victim*] suffered serious bodily injury; and

Third, the assault took place on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

"Serious bodily injury" means bodily injury that involves (1) a substantial risk of death; (2) extreme physical pain; (3) protracted and obvious disfigurement; or (4) protracted loss or impairment of the function of a body part, organ, or mental faculty.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 8.1 (Assault on Federal Officer or Employee) concerning general intent.

The definition of "serious bodily injury" in the last paragraph of the instruction is the statutory definition in 18 U.S.C. §§ 113(b)(2) and 1365(h)(3).

Proof of battery supports conviction of assault. *United States v. Lewellyn*, 481 F.3d 695, 697 (9th Cir. 2007).

At common law, criminal battery is shown if the defendant's conduct is reckless. *United States v. Loera*, 923 F.2d 725, 728 (9th Cir. 1991). A defendant can be convicted of assault resulting in serious bodily injury if a battery is proved.

## 8.9 Assault of Person Under Age 16 Resulting in Substantial Bodily Injury (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(7))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assaulting a person who has not attained the age of 16 years resulting in substantial bodily injury in violation of Section 113(a)(7) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant assaulted [*name of victim*] by intentionally [[striking] [wounding]] [[him] [her]];

Second, as a result, [*name of victim*] suffered substantial bodily injury;

Third, [*name of victim*] was under the age of 16 years at the time of the assault; and

Fourth, the assault took place on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

"Substantial bodily injury" means a temporary but substantial disfigurement, or a temporary but substantial loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member, organ or mental faculty.

### Comment

The definition of "substantial bodily injury" in the last paragraph of the instruction is the definition given in 18 U.S.C. § 113(b)(1).

## 8.10 Assault by Strangulation or Suffocation (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(8))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assault by strangulation in violation of Section 113(a)(8) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant assaulted a [spouse] [intimate partner] [, or] [dating partner] by [[strangling] [suffocating] [, or] [attempting to [strangle] [or] [suffocate]] [[him] [her]];

Second, the assault took place on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

["Spouse"] ["intimate partner"] [or] ["dating partner"] includes any of the following:

(1) a spouse or former spouse of the defendant; or
(2) a person who shares a child in common with the defendant; or
(3) a person who cohabits or has cohabited as a spouse with the defendant; or
(4) a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the defendant; or
(5) [*insert definition of person similarly situated to a spouse who is protected by the domestic or family violence laws of the state or tribal jurisdiction in which the injury occurred or where the victim resides*].

["Intimate partner" [also] means a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the defendant. You may determine whether such a relationship existed by considering (a) the length of the relationship, (b) the type of relationship, and (c) the frequency of interaction between the defendant and [*name of victim*].]

["Dating partner" means a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the defendant. You may determine whether such a relationship existed by considering (a) the length of the relationship, (b) the type of relationship, and (c) the frequency of interaction between the defendant and [*name of victim*].]

["Strangling" means intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood of a person by applying pressure to the throat or neck.]

["Suffocating" means intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly impeding the normal breathing of a person by covering the mouth of the person, the nose of the person, or both, regardless of whether that conduct results in any visible injury or whether there is any intent to kill or protractedly injure the victim.]

The government is not required to prove that the defendant intended to kill the victim or cause [him] [her] to suffer prolonged injury. It also is not required to prove that the victim suffered any visible injury.

### Comment

The definitions of "strangling" and "suffocating" in the instruction are the statutory definitions in 18 U.S.C. § 113(b)(4) and 113(b)(5).

The definitions of "spouse," "intimate partner," and "dating partner" are the statutory definitions in 18 U.S.C. § 2266, which is incorporated into 18 U.S.C. § 113(b)(3).

Assault by strangulation is a general intent crime. *United States v. Lamott*, 831 F.3d 1153, 1154 (9th Cir. 2016).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 8.11 Assault of Spouse, Intimate Partner, or Dating Partner (18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(7))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assaulting a [[spouse] [intimate partner] [or] [dating partner]] resulting in substantial bodily injury in violation of Section 113(a)(7) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant assaulted [*name of victim*] by intentionally [[striking] [wounding]] [[him] [her]];

Second, as a result, [*name of victim*] suffered substantial bodily injury;

Third, [*name of victim*] was a [[spouse] [intimate partner] [or] [dating partner]] of the defendant; and

Fourth, the assault took place on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

[["Spouse"] ["Intimate partner"] ["dating partner"]] includes any of the following:

(1) a spouse or former spouse of the defendant; or
(2) a person who shares a child in common with the defendant; or
(3) a person who cohabits or has cohabited as a spouse with the defendant; or
(4) a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the defendant; or
(5) [*insert definition of person similarly situated to a spouse who is protected by the domestic or family violence laws of the state or tribal jurisdiction in which the injury occurred or where the victim resides*].

["Intimate partner" [also] means a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the defendant. You may determine whether such a relationship existed by considering (a) the length of the relationship, (b) the type of relationship, and (c) the frequency of interaction between the defendant and [*name of victim*].]

["Dating partner" means a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the defendant. You may determine whether such a relationship existed by considering (a) the length of the relationship, (b) the type of relationship, and (c) the frequency of interaction between the defendant and [*name of victim*].]

### Comment

The definitions of "spouse," "intimate partner," and "dating partner" are the statutory definitions in 18 U.S.C. § 2266, which is incorporated into 18 U.S.C. § 113(b)(3).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 8.12 Threats Against the President (18 U.S.C. § 871)

### Comment

The Committee has withdrawn the previously adopted and published jury instruction for violations of 18 U.S.C. § 871, (threats against the president). In reversing a defendant's conviction for violating 18 U.S.C. § 875(c) (transmitting in interstate or foreign commerce any communication containing a threat to kidnap any person or injure any person), the Supreme Court has held that the mens rea of a crime involved in communicating a threat is established through proof that the defendant makes a communication for the purpose of issuing a threat, or with knowledge that the communication will be viewed as a threat. *Elonis v. United States*, 575 U.S. 723, 740 (2015). *Elonis* rejected the rule applied in the Ninth Circuit that "'[w]hether a particular statement may properly be considered to be a threat is governed by an objective standard—whether a reasonable person would foresee that the statement would be interpreted by those to whom the maker communicates the statement as a serious expression of intent to harm or assault.'" *United States v. Keyser*, 704 F.3d 631, 638 (9th Cir. 2012) (quoting *United States v. Orozco-Santillan*, 903 F.2d 1262, 1265 (9th Cir. 1990)). The withdrawn instruction incorporated an element that also used an objective standard when viewing whether the communication was a threat. While this crime is not identical in its elements to the more general crime under 18 U.S.C. § 875(c), a court may want to consider whether the legal analysis regarding the mens rea element in *Elonis* applies to the more specific crime of threats against the President.

*See also United States v. Bagdasarian*, 652 F.3d 1113, 1122-23 (9th Cir. 2011) (reversing conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 879(a)(3), criminalizing threats against major presidential candidates, when defendant's statements were "predictive" and "exhortatory" but did not indicate speaker's own intention to threaten then-candidate Obama).

*Revised Sept. 2019*

## 8.13 Transmitting a Communication Containing a Threat to Kidnap or Injure (18 U.S.C. § 875(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with transmitting in [interstate commerce] [foreign commerce] a threatening communication to a person in violation of Section 875(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly transmitted in [interstate commerce] [foreign commerce] a [*insert form of communication*] containing a threat to [[kidnap] [injure]] [*insert name or title of natural person*].

Second, such [*insert form of communication*] was transmitted for the purpose of issuing a threat, or with knowledge that the [*insert form of communication*] would be viewed as a threat.

The government need not prove that the defendant intended to carry out the threat.

### Comment

Whether a particular statement may be considered a threat is not governed by an objective standard. The mens rea of the crime involved in communicating a threat is established through proof that a defendant makes a communication for the purpose of issuing a threat, or with knowledge that the communication will be viewed as a threat. *See Elonis v. United States*, 575 U.S. 723, 740 (2015) (involving violation of 18 U.S.C. § 875(c), transmitting in interstate or foreign commerce any threat to kidnap any person or threat to injure the person of another).

*Revised Sept. 2015*

## 8.14 Mailing Threatening Communications—Threats to Kidnap or Injure (18 U.S.C. § 876(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with mailing threatening communications in violation of Section 876(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [mailed] [arranged to have mailed] a [letter] [*insert other form of communication*] addressed to [*insert name or title of natural person*] containing a threat to [kidnap] [injure] any person; and

Second, the defendant intended to communicate a threat by such [*insert form of communication*].

The government need not prove that the defendant intended to carry out the threat.

### Comment

This instruction is based on *United States v. Keyser*, 704 F.3d 631 (9th Cir. 2012), *United States v. Havelock*, 664 F.3d 1284 (9th Cir. 2012), *United States v. King*, 122 F.3d 808 (9th Cir. 1997), *United States v. Twine*, 853 F.2d 676 (9th Cir. 1988), and *United States v. Sirhan*, 504 F.2d 818, 820 (9th Cir. 1974). While the Ninth Circuit has not offered comprehensive guidance concerning the requirements for conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 876, these cases are instructive.

Under 18 U.S.C. § 876, the threatening communications must be addressed to a natural person. *Havelock*, 664 F.3d at 1286. "[I]n order to determine whom a threatening communication is 'addressed to,' a court may consult the directions on the outside of the envelope or the packaging, the salutation line, if any, and the contents of the communication." *Id*. at 1296. A general title such as "manager" is sufficient to meet this requirement. *Keyser*, 704 F.3d at 641.

There are two specific intent elements in 18 U.S.C. § 876. The defendant must have both "knowingly" transmitted the communication and subjectively intended to threaten. *Twine*, 853 F.2d at 680; *Keyser*, 704 F.3d at 638 ("In order to be subject to criminal liability for a threat, the speaker must subjectively intend to threaten."). *United States v. Bachmeier* clarifies that "subjective intent to threaten is the required mental state [under section 876], *not* . . . mere 'knowledge that the [communication] would be viewed as a threat.'" 8 F.4th 1059, 1065 (9th Cir. 2021) (emphasis added). However, the defendant need not have expected the threats to gain him a benefit or have had the intent or ability to actually carry out the threat. *Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/Williamette, Inc. v. Am. Coalition of Life Activists*, 290 F.3d 1058, 1076 n.9 (9th Cir. 2002); *King*, 122 F.3d at 809.

*Revised Sept. 2021*

### 8.15 Threatening to Assault, Kidnap, or Murder a United States Official, United States Judge, Federal Law Enforcement Officer, or Other Official (18 U.S.C. § 115(a)(1)(B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with threatening to [assault] [kidnap] [murder] [*name of United States official, judge, federal officer, or other official or member of the immediate family]* a [United States Official] [United States Judge] [federal law enforcement officer] [other official] in violation of Section 115(a)(1)(B) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant threatened to [assault] [kidnap] [murder] [*name of United States official, judge, federal officer or other official or member of the immediate family*]; [and]

[Second, the defendant did so with intent to [impede] [intimidate] [interfere] with [*name of United States official, judge, federal officer or other official*] while [he] [she] was engaged in the performance of official duties]

or

[Second, the defendant did so with intent to retaliate against [*name of United States official, judge, federal officer or other official*] on account of the performance of [his] [her] official duties.]

#### Comment

"'Federal law enforcement officer' means any officer, agent, or employee of the United States authorized by law or by a Government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of Federal criminal law." 18 U.S.C. § 115(c)(1).

"'United States judge' means any judicial officer of the United States, and includes a justice of the Supreme Court and a United States magistrate judge." 18 U.S.C. § 115(c)(3).

"'United States official' means the President, President-elect, Vice President, Vice President-elect, a Member of Congress, a member-elect of Congress, a member of the executive branch who is the head of a department listed in 5 U.S.C. § 101, or the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency." 18 U.S.C. § 115(c)(4).

"Other officials" are those "whose killing would be a crime under 18 U.S.C. § 1114." *United States v. Anderson,* 46 F.4th 1000, 1007 (9th Cir. 2022) (holding that threats to private security guard contracted by Federal Protective Service at Social Security Office violated § 115).

The instruction may be modified to identify any person who formerly served as a United States official, a United States judge, a federal law enforcement officer, or an official, or a member of the immediate family of any person who formerly served in any of these positions. See 18 U.SC. § 115(a)(2).

For an instruction defining "official duties," *see United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138, 1149 (9th Cir. 2018) (upholding "official duties" instruction stating that test for determining whether officer is "[e]ngaged in the performance of official duties" is "whether the officer is acting within the scope of his employment, that is, whether the officer's actions fall within his agency's overall mission, in contrast to engaging in a personal frolic of his own"). *See also United States v. Juvenile Female*, 566 F.3d 943, 950 (9th Cir. 2009) (describing official duties test as "whether [the officer] is acting within the scope of what he is employed to do, as distinguished from engaging in a personal frolic of his own").

## 9. BANK ROBBERY AND HOBBS ACT OFFENSES

**Instruction**


9.1 Bank Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 2113(a), (d))
9.2 Bank Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 2113(b), (c))
9.3 Bank Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 2113(e))
9.4 Attempted Bank Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 2113)
9.5 Hobbs Act—Extortion or Attempted Extortion by Force (18 U.S.C. § 1951)
9.6 Hobbs Act—Extortion or Attempted Extortion by Nonviolent Threat (18 U.S.C. § 1951)
9.7 Hobbs Act—Extortion or Attempted Extortion Under Color of Official Right (18 U.S.C. § 1951)
9.8 Hobbs Act—Robbery or Attempted Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 1951)
9.9 Hobbs Act—Affecting Interstate Commerce


### 9.1 Bank Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 2113(a), (d))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [armed] bank robbery in violation of Section 2113 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

[First, the defendant, through force and violence or intimidation, [[took] [obtained by extortion] [[property] [money] [something of value]] belonging to or in the care, custody, control, management or possession of [*specify financial institution*];]

*or*

[First, the defendant entered [*specify financial institution*] intending to commit [*insert applicable crime*] affecting [*specify financial institution*];]

Second, the deposits of [*specify financial institution*] were then insured by the [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation] [National Credit Union Administration Board] [.] [; and]

[Third, the defendant intentionally [[struck or wounded [*name of victim*]] [made a display of force that reasonably caused [*name of victim*] to fear bodily harm] by using a [*specify dangerous weapon or device*]. [A weapon or device is dangerous if it is something that creates a greater apprehension in the victim and increases the likelihood that police or bystanders would react using deadly force.]]

**Comment**

Choose the applicable first element of the instruction depending on which portion of 18 U.S.C. § 2113(a) the defendant is charged under. When the second option of the first element is used, a companion instruction may be necessary to define the applicable crime.

The third element should be used when a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2113(d) for use of a dangerous weapon is charged. When the § 2113(d) offense is predicated on an underlying § 2113(b) offense, substitute for the first element in this instruction the first element in Instruction 9.2 (Bank Robbery).

Frequently, the weapon used is a firearm, in which case there is not likely to be an issue about whether a dangerous weapon was used. In such cases, the last bracketed sentence in the third element might be omitted. A "dangerous weapon" is required for both the "assault" and "display of force" options of § 2113(d). *See Simpson v. United States*, 435 U.S. 6, 13 n.6 (1978), *superseded by statute on other grounds as stated in United States v. Beierle*, 77 F.3d 1199, 1201 n.1 (9th Cir. 1996).

There may be cases in which a jury must decide whether the weapon or device is dangerous. In such cases the bracketed last sentence in the third element should be used. The definition of dangerous weapon is derived from a discussion in *United States v. Pike*, 473 F.3d 1053, 1060 (9th Cir. 2007), which did not involve a dangerous weapon issue. The Ninth Circuit explained that its previous decisions in *United States v. Taylor*, 960 F.2d 115, 116-17 (9th Cir.

1992), and *United States v. Boyd*, 924 F.2d 945, 947 (9th Cir. 1991), had held devices to be dangerous because the device increased victim apprehension and increased the likelihood of police or bystanders responding with deadly force. *Pike*, 473 F.3d at 1060.

To constitute "use" of a dangerous weapon, the weapon must be actively employed rather than inadvertently displayed. *United States v. Bain*, 925 F.3d 1172, 1177-78 (9th Cir. 2019) (holding that inadvertent placement of closed pocket knife on bank counter does not constitute use of dangerous weapon); *see also United States v. Odom*, 329 F.3d 1032, 1033 (9th Cir. 2003) ("[A] bank robber with a concealed gun who never mentions or insinuates having one, but who displays it inadvertently [cannot] be convicted of armed bank robbery.").

To convict a defendant for armed bank robbery under an aiding and abetting theory, the Ninth Circuit requires the government to show beyond a reasonable doubt both that the defendant knew that the principal had and intended to use a dangerous weapon during the robbery, and that the defendant intended to aid in that endeavor. *United States v. Dinkane*, 17 F.3d 1192, 1195 (9th Cir. 1994). Failure to properly instruct the jury on this issue constitutes reversible error. *Id*.

Armed bank robbery under § 2113(d) "requires that 'the robber knowingly made one or more victims at the scene of the robbery aware that he had a gun, real or not.'" *United States v. Henry*, 984 F.3d 1343, 1358 (9th Cir. 2021) (quoting *United States v. McDuffy*, 890 F.3d 796, 799 (9th Cir. 2018)).

Bank robbery is a general intent crime. *See Carter v. United States*, 530 U.S. 255, 268 (2000).

*Revised Mar. 2021*

## 9.2 Bank Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 2113(b), (c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with bank robbery in violation of Section 2113 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[took and carried away with intent to steal or purloin] [received, possessed, concealed, stored, bartered, sold, or disposed of]] [[property] [money] [something of value]] belonging to or in the care, custody, control, management or possession of [*specify financial institution*];

Second, what the defendant [took and carried away] [received, possessed, concealed, bartered, sold, or disposed of] had a value [greater than $1000] [of $1000 or less]; [and]

[Third, the defendant knew that what the defendant received, possessed, concealed, stored, bartered, sold, or disposed of had been stolen; and]

*or*

[Third/Fourth], the deposits of [*specify financial institution*] were then insured by the [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation] [National Credit Union Administration Board].

### Comment

Use the third element concerning the defendant's knowledge when the defendant is charged under 18 U.S.C. § 2113(c) and adjust the number of the last element accordingly.

*See also* Instructions 9.1 (Bank Robbery) and 9.3 (Bank Robbery).

*Revised June 2015*

## 9.3 Bank Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 2113(e))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with bank robbery in violation of Section 2113 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

[First, the defendant [[took] [obtained by extortion]] [[property] [money] [something of value]] belonging to or in the care, custody, control, management or possession of [*specify financial institution*], using force and violence or intimidation in doing so.]

*or*

[First, the defendant entered [*specify financial institution*], intending to commit [*insert applicable crime*] affecting [*specify financial institution*];]

*or*

[First, the defendant took and carried away, with intent to steal or purloin, [[property] [money] [something of value]] belonging to or in the care, custody, control, management or possession of [*specify financial institution*];]

*or*

[First, the defendant received, possessed, concealed, stored, bartered, sold, or disposed of [property] [money] [something of value] belonging to, or in the care, custody, control, management, or possession of [*specify financial institution*], knowing that the [property] [money] [item] was stolen;]

*or*

[First, the defendant [[took] [obtained by extortion]] [[property] [money] [something of value]] belonging to, or in the care, custody, control, management, or possession of [*specify financial institution*], using force and violence or intimidation in doing so [and intentionally struck or wounded a person] [and intentionally made a display of force that reasonably caused another person to fear bodily harm by] using [*specify dangerous weapon or device*];]

*or*

[First, the defendant entered [*specify financial institution*] intending to commit [*insert applicable crime*] affecting [*specify financial institution*], using force and violence or intimidation in doing so and intentionally [struck or wounded a person] [made a display of force that reasonably caused another person to fear bodily harm by] using [*specify dangerous weapon or device*];]

Second, while doing so, the defendant [killed [*name of victim*]] [forced [*name of victim*]] to accompany the defendant without the consent of such person. A defendant "forces a person to accompany" the defendant when the defendant forces that person to go somewhere with the

defendant, even if the movement occurs entirely within a single building or over a short distance]; and

Third, the deposits of [*specify financial institution*] were then insured by the [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation] [National Credit Union Administration Board].

**Comment**

Depending on which crime(s) from 18 U.S.C. § 2113 are charged in the indictment, select the appropriate "First" option(s).

The "forced" language in the second element should be used when a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2113(e) for kidnapping a person in connection with a robbery is charged. *See Whitfield v. United States*, 574 U.S. 265, 267, 270 (2015) (§ 2113(e) does not require defendant to force someone to accompany defendant over "substantial distance"; movement may occur "entirely within a single building or over a short distance"); *United States v. Strobehn*, 421 F.3d 1017, 1019 (9th Cir. 2005) ("On its face, the enhancing elements are that a defendant (1) in the course of committing a bank robbery (2) forces a person (3) to accompany him (4) without that person's consent. While 'kidnaping' works as a shorthand description because § 2113(e) contemplates moving someone by force to someplace he doesn't want to go, the statute plainly, and only, requires accompaniment that is forced and without consent.").

*Revised June 2015*

## 9.4 Attempted Bank Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 2113)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted bank robbery in violation of Section 2113 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to use force and violence or intimidation to take money that belonged to [*specify financial institution*];

Second, the deposits of [*specify financial institution*] were then insured by the [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation] [National Credit Union Administration Board]; and

Third, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward the committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of the crime.

### Comment

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 9.5 Hobbs Act—Extortion or Attempted Extortion by Force (18 U.S.C. § 1951)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [attempted] extortion by force, violence, or fear in violation of Section 1951 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[induced] [intended to induce]] [*name of victim*] to part with property by the wrongful use of actual or threatened force, violence, or fear;

Second, the defendant obtained the property with [*name of victim*]'s consent;

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to obtain the property; [and]

Fourth, commerce from one state to another [was] [would have been] affected in some way[.] [; and]

[Fifth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

For an instruction on extortion or attempted extortion by nonviolent threat, *see* Instruction 9.6 (Hobbs Act—Extortion or Attempted Extortion by Nonviolent Threat).

For a definition of "affecting interstate commerce," *see* Instruction 9.9 (Hobbs Act—Affecting Interstate Commerce).

Only a de minimis effect on interstate commerce is required to establish jurisdiction under the Hobbs Act, and the effect need only be probable or potential, not actual. *United States v. Lynch*, 437 F.3d 902, 908-09 (9th Cir. 2006) (en banc). The interstate nexus may arise from either direct or indirect effects on interstate commerce. *Id*. at 909-10. When the effects are only indirect it may be appropriate to measure the adequacy of proof of interstate nexus by applying the test articulated in *United States v. Collins*, 40 F.3d 95, 100 (5th Cir. 1994).

"Property" under the Hobbs Act is not limited to tangible things; it includes the right to make business decisions and to solicit business free from coercion. *United States v. Hoelker*, 765 F.2d 1422, 1425 (9th Cir. 1985) (citing *United States v. Zemek,* 634 F.2d 1159, 1174 (9th Cir. 1980)). The Hobbs Act is not limited to lawful property and includes contraband. *United States v. Cortes*, 757 F.3d 850, 865-66 (9th Cir. 2014).

Actual or threatened force standing alone does not violate the statute. "We conclude that Congress did not intend to create a freestanding physical violence offense in the Hobbs Act. It did intend to forbid acts or threats of physical violence in furtherance of a plan or purpose to engage in what the statute refers to as robbery or extortion (and related attempts or conspiracies)." *Scheidler v. Nat'l Org. for Women, Inc.*, 547 U.S. 9, 23 (2006).

A defendant's claim of right to the property is not a defense. "'Congress meant to punish as extortion any effort to obtain property by inherently wrongful means, such as force or threats of force . . . regardless of the defendant's claim of right to the property . . . .'" *United States v. Daane*, 475 F.3d 1114, 1120 (9th Cir. 2007) (quoting with approval from *United States v. Zappola*, 677 F.2d 264, 268-69 (2d Cir. 1982)). There is an exception to this proposition, but it is confined to cases involving certain types of labor union activity. *Id*. at 1119-20.

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

It is unclear whether 18 U.S.C. § 1951 requires specific intent as an element. In *United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138 (9th Cir. 2018), the Ninth Circuit discussed the intent element in statutory offenses that appear to "simply punish" common law crimes. In footnote 2, however, the Ninth Circuit distinguished federal statutes that "simply punish" a common law offense (thus requiring importation of common law elements) from federal statutes that provide their own elements (and thus not requiring importation of common law elements). *Ornelas*, 906 F.3d at 1143 n.2. The circuits are currently split as to whether the Hobbs Act requires specific intent to steal. *Compare United States v. Thomas*, 8 F.3d 1552, 1562-63 (11th Cir. 1993), *with United States v. Nedley*, 255 F.2d 350, 355 (3d Cir. 1958).

*Revised May 2023*

## 9.6 Hobbs Act—Extortion or Attempted Extortion by Nonviolent Threat (18 U.S.C. § 1951)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [attempted] extortion by threat of [economic harm] [*specify other nonviolent harm*] in violation of Section 1951 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[induced] [intended to induce]] [*name of victim*] to part with property by wrongful threat of [economic harm] [*specify other nonviolent harm*];

Second, the defendant acted with the intent to obtain property;

Third, commerce from one state to another [was] [would have been] affected in some way[.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

A threat is wrongful [if it is unlawful] [or] [if the defendant knew [he] [she] was not entitled to obtain the property].

### Comment

*See generally* Comment to Instruction 9.5 (Hobbs Act—Extortion or Attempted Extortion by Force).

A nonviolent threat is prohibited by the Hobbs Act if it is "wrongful." 18 U.S.C. § 1951(b)(2) (defining extortion as "the obtaining of property from another, with his consent, induced by *wrongful* use of actual or threatened . . . fear" (emphasis added)); *United States v. Villalobos*, 748 F.3d 953, 955 (9th Cir. 2014) (error for jury instruction to essentially read out § 1951's "wrongful" element). "[T]hreats of sham litigation, which are made to obtain property to which the defendant knows he has no lawful claim, are 'wrongful' under the Hobbs Act." *United States v. Koziol*, 993 F.3d 1160, 1170 (9th Cir. 2021).

If a nonviolent threat is to be carried out by *unlawful* means, then the Hobbs Act's "wrongful" requirement is satisfied, regardless of whether the defendant had a lawful claim of right to the property demanded. *Villalobos*, 748 F.3d at 957-58. For example, threats to cooperate with, or alternatively, impede an ongoing investigation, contingent on payment, are unlawful and therefore clearly wrongful. *Id.*

If, on the other hand, a nonviolent threat is to be carried out by *lawful* means (for example, a threat of economic harm), a claim of right instruction is necessary. *See United States v. Dischner*, 974 F.2d 1502, 1515 (9th Cir. 1992) (holding that wrongfully obtaining property by threat of economic harm is sufficient to convict of extortion under Hobbs Act and noting that "[o]btaining property is generally 'wrongful' if the alleged extortionist has no lawful claim to that property" (citing *United States v. Enmons*, 410 U.S. 396, 400 (1973))), *overruled on other grounds by United States v. Morales*, 108 F.3d 1031 (9th Cir. 1997).

It is unclear whether the claim of right instruction to be given in lawful-threat cases must require that the defendant *knew* he or she was not entitled to obtain the property. At least one other circuit so requires, *see United States v. Sturm*, 870 F.2d 769, 773-74 (1st Cir. 1989), but the Ninth Circuit has yet to impose such a requirement. *See United States v. Greer*, 640 F.3d 1011, 1019 n.4 (9th Cir. 2011) ("Because the district court's instructions satisfied the First Circuit's requirement in *Sturm*, we need not decide whether to adopt *Sturm* as the law of this circuit."); *Dischner*, 974 F.2d at 1515 (declining to "decide whether the government must prove that the defendant knew he had no entitlement" to property because district court's jury instructions necessarily required such finding); *Koziol*, 993 F.3d at 1170 n. 10 ("We do not decide whether the Hobbs Act imposes liability absent proof that the defendant knew he was not entitled to the property."). Until the Ninth Circuit decides the question, the Committee recommends the above instruction, which requires the government to prove that the defendant knew he or she was not entitled to obtain the property.

A general instruction that the defendant need not have known that his or her conduct was unlawful does not negate the instruction in lawful-threat cases that a threat is wrongful if the defendant knew he or she was not entitled to obtain the property. Knowledge that one has no entitlement to property is distinguishable from knowledge that an act violates the Hobbs Act. *Greer*, 640 F.3d at 1019-20.

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

It is unclear whether 18 U.S.C. § 1951 requires specific intent as an element. In *United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138 (9th Cir. 2018), the Ninth Circuit discussed the intent element in statutory offenses that appear to "simply punish" common law crimes. In footnote 2, however, the Ninth Circuit distinguished federal statutes that "simply punish" a common law offense (thus requiring importation of common law elements) from federal statutes that provide their own elements (and thus not requiring importation of common law elements). *Ornelas*, 906 F.3d at 1143 n.2. The circuits are currently split as to whether the Hobbs Act requires specific intent to steal. *Compare United States v. Thomas*, 8 F.3d 1552, 1562-63 (11th Cir.1993), *with United States v. Nedley*, 255 F.2d 350, 355 (3d Cir. 1958).

*Revised May 2023*

## 9.7 Hobbs Act—Extortion or Attempted Extortion Under Color of Official Right (18 U.S.C. § 1951)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [attempted] extortion under color of official right in violation of Section 1951 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was a public official;

Second, the defendant [[obtained] [intended to obtain]] [*specify property*] that the defendant knew [he] [she] was not entitled to receive;

[Third, the defendant knew that the [*specify property*] [[was] [would be]] given in return for [taking] [withholding] some official action; and]

*or*

[Third, the defendant knew that the [*specify property*] [[was] [would be]] given in return for an express promise to perform a particular official action; and]

Fourth, commerce or the movement of an article or commodity in commerce from one state to another [was] [would have been] affected in some way[.] [; and]

[Fifth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

[The acceptance by a public official of a campaign contribution does not, in itself, constitute a violation of law even though the donor has business pending before the official. However, if a public official demands or accepts [money] [property] [some valuable right] in exchange for a specific requested exercise of official power, such a demand or acceptance does constitute a violation regardless of whether the payment is made in the form of a campaign contribution.]

### Comment

If the defendant is not a public official, then this instruction should be modified to include a requirement that the government prove that the defendant either conspired with a public official or aided and abetted a public official. *United States v. McFall*, 558 F.3d 951, 960 (9th Cir. 2009). A Hobbs Act conspiracy may exist even if some members of the conspiracy are not public officials

and thus cannot complete the offense. *Ocasio v. United States*, 136 S. Ct. 1423, 1429-32 (2016). The object of the conspiracy need not be to get property from a person outside the conspiracy; it is sufficient that the property comes from another member of the conspiracy. *Id*. at 1429, 1434-35.

If there is any question in the case about the "official" character of the action sought by the defendant, give Instruction 10.1 (Official Action—Defined). When using that instruction in connection with Instruction 9.7, the court should change the term "official act" to "official action."

When the property is not a campaign contribution, the government need only show that the public official obtained payment to which he or she was not entitled knowing that the payment was made in exchange for some official act. *See United States v. Kincaid-Chauncey*, 556 F.3d 923, 937-38 (9th Cir. 2009). In such a case the first version of the third element should be used and the final paragraph should not be included.

The second version of the third element, and the final paragraph should be included in cases involving an alleged campaign contribution. *See McCormick v. United States*, 500 U.S. 257 (1991); *Kincaid-Chauncey*, 556 F.3d at 936. The express promise need not actually be carried out. It is sufficient if the promise to act is given in exchange for the property. *See Evans v. United States*, 504 U.S. 255, 267 (1992).

The bracketed language stating a fifth element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

It is unclear whether 18 U.S.C. § 1951 requires specific intent as an element. In *United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138 (9th Cir. 2018), the Ninth Circuit discussed the intent element in statutory offenses that appear to "simply punish" common law crimes. In footnote 2, however, the Ninth Circuit distinguished federal statutes that "simply punish" a common law offense (thus requiring importation of common law elements) from federal statutes that provide their own elements (and thus not requiring importation of common law elements). *Ornelas*, 906 F.3d at 1143 n.2. The circuits are currently split as to whether the Hobbs Act requires specific intent to steal.

*Compare United States v. Thomas*, 8 F.3d 1552, 1562-63 (11th Cir.1993), *with United States v. Nedley*, 255 F.2d 350, 355 (3d Cir. 1958).

*Revised May 2023*

## 9.8 Hobbs Act—Robbery or Attempted Robbery (18 U.S.C. § 1951)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [attempted] robbery in violation of Section 1951 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [obtained] [attempted to obtain] money or property from or in the presence of [*name of victim*];

Second, the defendant [did so] [attempted to do so] by means of robbery;

Third, the defendant believed that [*name of victim*] [[parted] [would part]] with the money or property because of the robbery; [and]

Fourth, the robbery [affected] [would have affected] interstate commerce [; and][.]

[Fifth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

"Robbery" means the unlawful taking or obtaining of personal property from the person or in the presence of another, against his will, by means of actual or threatened force, or violence [or fear of injury, immediate or future, to his person or property, or to property in his custody or possession, or to the person or property of a relative or member of his family or of anyone in his company at the time of the taking or obtaining].

### Comment

Give the bracketed language appropriate to either a completed crime or an attempt. Only that portion of the definition of robbery that is relevant to the issues in the trial should be given to the jury.

For a definition of "affecting interstate commerce," *see* Instruction 9.9 (Hobbs Act—Affecting Interstate Commerce). Only a de minimis effect on interstate commerce is required to establish jurisdiction under the Hobbs Act, and the effect need only be probable or potential, not actual. *United States v. Lynch*, 437 F.3d 902, 908-09 (9th Cir. 2006) (en banc). The interstate nexus may arise from either direct or indirect effects on interstate commerce. *Id*. at 909-10. When the effects are only indirect it may be appropriate to measure the adequacy of proof of interstate nexus by applying the test articulated in *United States v. Collins*, 40 F.3d 95, 100 (5th Cir. 1994).

When the defendant has been charged with robbing or attempting to rob a drug dealer, the government satisfies the "affecting commerce" element of this crime if it shows that the defendant robbed or attempted to rob a drug dealer of drugs or drug proceeds. *Taylor v. United States*, 136 S. Ct. 2074, 2081 (2016). *See also United States v. Woodberry*, 987 F.3d 1231, 1235 (9th Cir. 2021) (applying *Taylor*'s holding to robbery of licensed marijuana dispensary). "[T]he Government need not show that the drugs that a defendant stole or attempted to steal either traveled or were destined for transport across state lines." *Taylor*, 136 S. Ct. at 2081.

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995))

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

Section 1951 requires specific intent as an element. *See United States v. Du Bo*, 186 F.3d 1177, 1179 (9th Cir. 1999) ("Although not stated in the Hobbs Act itself, criminal intent—acting 'knowingly or willingly'—is an implied and necessary element that the government must prove for a Hobbs Act conviction." (quoting *United States v. Soriano*, 880 F.2d 192, 198 (9th Cir. 1989)).

*Revised Dec. 2023*

## 9.9 Hobbs Act—Affecting Interstate Commerce

### Comment

To convict the defendant of [*specify crime*], the government must prove that the defendant's conduct affected or could have affected interstate commerce. Conduct affects interstate commerce if it in any way involves, interferes with, changes, or alters the movement or transportation or flow of goods, merchandise, money, or other property in commerce between or among the states or between the United States and a foreign country. The effect can be minimal.

It is not necessary for the government to prove that the defendant knew or intended that [his] [her] conduct would affect commerce; it must prove only that the natural consequences of [his] [her] conduct affected commerce in some way. Also, you do not have to find that there was an actual effect on commerce. The government must show only that the natural result of the offense would be to cause an effect on interstate commerce to any degree, however minimal or slight.

*See United States v. Woodberry*, 987 F.3d 1231, 1235 (9th Cir. 2021); *see generally United States v. Tuan Ngoc Luong*, 965 F.3d 973, 986 (9th Cir. 2020) (holding that district court did not err by instruction that "[a]n effect on interstate commerce is established by proof of an actual impact, however small, or in the absence of an actual impact, proof of a probable or potential impact. This impact can be slight, but not speculative.").

*Revised Mar. 2021*

## 10. BRIBERY

**Instruction**


10.1 Official Act—Defined (18 U.S.C. § 201(a)(3))
10.2 Bribery of Federal Public Official (18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(1))
10.3 Receiving Bribe by Public Official (18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(2))
10.4 Bribery of Witness (18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(3))
10.5 Receiving Bribe by Witness (18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(4))
10.6 Illegal Gratuity to Public Official (18 U.S.C. § 201(c)(1)(A))
10.7 Receiving Illegal Gratuity by Public Official (18 U.S.C. § 201 (c)(1)(B))
10.8 Illegal Gratuity to Witness (18 U.S.C. § 201(c)(2))
10.9 Receiving Illegal Gratuity by Witness (18 U.S.C. § 201(c)(3))
10.10 Receiving Commissions or Gifts for Procuring Loans (18 U.S.C. § 215(a)(2))

## 10.1 Official Act— Defined (18 U.S.C. § 201(a)(3))

"Official act" means any decision or action on a [question] [matter] [cause] [suit] [proceeding] [controversy] involving the formal exercise of governmental power. The [question] [matter] [cause] [suit] [proceeding] [controversy] must be pending, or be able by law to be brought, before a public official, and the [question] [matter] [cause] [suit] [proceeding] [controversy] must be something specific and focused, rather than a broad policy objective.

[The official's decision or action may include using [his] [her] official position to exert pressure on another official to perform an official act, or to advise another official, knowing or intending that such advice will form the basis for an official act by another official. The bribe recipient need not be the final decisionmaker.]

The government does not need to prove that the defendant ever actually intended to perform an official act or that the defendant ever did, in fact, perform an official act, provided that [he] [she] agreed to do so.

[Merely arranging a meeting, hosting an event, or giving a speech, do not qualify as the taking of a specific action.]

### Comment

This instruction is based on 18 U.S.C. § 201(a)(3) as construed in *McDonnell v. United States*, 136 S. Ct. 2355 (2016).

The question or matter at issue need not currently be pending or capable of being brought before a public official. *United States v. Kimbrew*, 944 F.3d 810, 815 (9th Cir. 2019).

When using this instruction with Instruction 9.7 (Hobbs Act—Extortion or Attempted Extortion Under Color of Official Right), change the term "official act" to "official action."

*Revised May 2020*

## 10.2 Bribery of Federal Public Official (18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with bribing a public official in violation of Section 201(b)(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [gave] [offered] [promised] something of value, [*specify the thing of value*], to [*name of federal public official*]; and

Second, the defendant acted corruptly, that is, with the intent to [influence an official act by the [*name of federal public official*]] [influence the [*name of federal public official*] to commit or allow a fraud on the United States] [induce the [*name of federal public official*] to do or to omit to do an act in violation of [his] [her] lawful duty][.] [; and]

[Third, [*name of federal public official*] was a federal public official.]

### Comment

The crime of bribery requires "corrupt intent," a higher degree of intent than is required under the provision outlawing gratuities to public officials. *United States v. Hsieh Hui Mei Chen*, 754 F.2d 817, 822 (9th Cir. 1985). Under § 201(b)(1), the term "corruptly" refers to the defendant's intent to influence an official act. *See United States v. Leyva*, 282 F.3d 623, 626 (9th Cir. 2002) (citation omitted).

The "thing of value" given, offered, or promised to a public official is an element of the bribery charge. It is recommended that the instruction specifically describe the thing of value just as it is described in the indictment to avoid a variance. *United States v. Choy*, 309 F.3d 602, 607 (9th Cir. 2002). *But see United States v. Renzi*, 769 F.3d 731, 744-45 (9th Cir. 2014) (holding that a "recommendation is just that—a recommendation. Neither the pattern jury instruction nor any controlling precedent requires the district court to identify the thing of value, especially where variance from the indictment is not at issue"). Where the defense asserts that the thing given, offered, or promised had no value, the jury must be asked to determine whether it had value. *Id*. at 744.

If there is any question in the case about the "official" character of the action sought by the defendant, give Instruction 10.1 (Official Act—Defined). "Public official" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 201(a)(1); § 201(b)(1) also applies to a person selected to be a public official. Actual power to do what defendant wants is not an *element.* "[A] person may be convicted of bribery even though the action requested is not within the official's power to perform." *Chen*, 754 F.2d at 825.

Omit the bracketed third element of this instruction when the recipient's status as a federal public official is not in dispute. Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g.*, "with all of you agreeing as to what the defendant intended the public official to do in return for the bribe"). *See*

Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

## 10.3 Receiving Bribe by Public Official (18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [soliciting] [receiving] [or] [agreeing to receive] a bribe in violation of Section 201(b)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was a public official;

Second, the defendant [demanded] [sought] [received] [accepted] [agreed to receive or accept] something of value, [*specify the thing of value*], in return for [being influenced in the performance of an official act] [being influenced to commit or allow a fraud on the United States] [being induced to do or not to do an act in violation of defendant's official duty]; and

Third, the defendant acted corruptly, that is, intending to be influenced [in the performance of an official act] [to commit or allow a fraud on the United States] [to do or to omit to do an act in violation of the defendant's official duty]. A public official acts "corruptly" when he or she accepts or receives, or agrees to accept or receive, a thing of value, in return for being influenced with the intent that, in exchange for the thing of value, some act would be influenced.

### Comment

"Public official" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 201(a)(1); § 201(b)(2) also applies to a person selected to be a public official. *See also* Comment to Instruction 10.2 (Bribery of Federal Public Official). The plain language of 18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(2)(B) requires only that the public official accept a thing of value in exchange for perpetrating a fraud; therefore, the use of an official position is not an element of the offense under § 201(b)(2)(B). *United States v. Leyva*, 282 F.3d 623, 625-26 (9th Cir. 2002).

It is recommended that the instruction specifically describe the thing of value just as described in the indictment to avoid a variance. *See* Comment to Instruction 10.2 (Bribery of Federal Public Official).

If there is any question in the case about the "official" character of the action sought by the defendant, give Instruction 10.1 (Official Act—Defined).

A public official is not required to actually make a decision or take an action to perform an "official act;" it is enough that the official agrees to do so. The agreement need not be explicit; the public official need not specify the means that he will use to perform his end of the bargain. *McDonnel v. United States*, 136 S. Ct. 2355, 2370-71 (2016).

It is immaterial whether the public official who receives a thing of value ever intended to follow through with his or her end of the bargain; all that is necessary is that he or she agreed to perform the official act. The offense is complete at the moment of agreement—liability does not depend on the outcome of any follow-through. *United States v. Kimbrew*, 944 F.3d 810 (9th Cir. 2019).

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with

language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g.*, "with all of you agreeing as to what the public official intended to do in return for the bribe"). *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

*Revised May 2020*

## 10.4 Bribery of Witness (18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with bribery of a witness in violation of Section 201(b)(3) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*name of witness*] was to be a witness under oath at a [*specify proceeding*];

Second, the defendant [gave] [offered] [promised] something of value, [*specify the thing of value*], to [*name of witness*]; and

Third, the defendant acted corruptly, that is, with the intent to influence [[the testimony of [*name of witness*]] [[*name of witness*] to be absent from the proceeding].

### Comment

It is recommended that the instruction specifically describe the thing of value just as it is described in the indictment to avoid a variance. *See* Comment to Instruction 10.2 (Bribery of Federal Public Official).

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g.*, "with all of you agreeing as to what the defendant intended the witness to do in return for the bribe"). *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 10.5 Receiving Bribe by Witness (18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(4))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with soliciting a bribe in violation of Section 201(b)(4) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was to be a witness under oath at a [*specify proceeding*];

Second, the defendant [solicited] [received] [agreed to receive] something of value, [*specify the thing of value*], in return for being [influenced in the defendant's testimony] [absent from the proceeding]; and

Third, the defendant acted corruptly, that is, in return for [being influenced in [his] [her] testimony] [absenting [himself] [herself] from the proceeding].

### Comment

It is recommended that the instruction specifically describe the thing of value just as it is described in the indictment to avoid a variance. *See* Comment to Instruction 10.2 (Bribery of Federal Public Official).

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g.*, "with all of you agreeing as to what the witness intended to do in return for the bribe"). *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 10.6 Illegal Gratuity to Public Official (18 U.S.C. § 201(c)(1)(A))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [giving] [offering] [or] [promising] an illegal gratuity in violation of Section 201(c)(1)(A) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, that the defendant [gave] [offered] [promised] something of value, [*specify the thing of value*] to a [*specify public official*]; and

Second, the defendant acted for or because of an official act performed or to be performed by the [*specify public official*].

### Comment

It is recommended that the instruction specifically describe the thing of value just as it is described in the indictment to avoid a variance. *See* Comment to Instruction 10.2 (Bribery of Federal Public Official).

To establish a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 201(c)(1)(A), the government must prove a link between a thing of value conferred upon a public official and a specific "official act" for or because of which it was given. *United States v. Sun-Diamond Growers of California*, 526 U.S. 398, 414 (1999).

If there is any question in the case about the "official" character of the action sought by the defendant, give Instruction 10.1 (Official Act—Defined).

The distinguishing features of the crimes of "bribery" and "illegal gratuity" are their intent elements. Bribery requires intent "to influence" an official act or "to be influenced" in an official act, while illegal gratuity requires only that the gratuity be given or accepted "for or because of" a specific official act. Bribery requires a specific intent to give or receive something of value in exchange for an official act. An illegal gratuity may constitute a reward for some future act the public official will take (and may already have determined to take) or for an act already taken. *Sun-Diamond Growers*, 526 U.S. at 404-05. The gratuity offenses are lesser included offenses of the parallel bribery offenses. *See United States v. Crutchfield*, 547 F.2d 496, 500 (9th Cir. 1977); *United States v. Brewster*, 506 F.2d 62, 71-72 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g.*, "with all of you agreeing as to what the defendant intended the public official to do in return for the gratuity"). *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 10.7 Receiving Illegal Gratuity by Public Official (18 U.S.C. § 201(c)(1)(B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [soliciting] [receiving] [agreeing to receive] an illegal gratuity in violation of Section 201(c)(1)(B) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was [*specify public official*]; and

Second, the defendant [[solicited] [received] [agreed to receive]] something of value, [*specify the thing of value*], personally for or because of an official act [performed] [to be performed] by the defendant.

### Comment

It is recommended that the instruction specifically describe the thing of value just as it is described in the indictment to avoid a variance. *See* Comment to Instruction 10.2 (Bribery of Federal Public Official).

*See* Comment to Instruction 10.6 (Illegal Gratuity to Public Official).

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g.*, "with all of you agreeing as to what the public official intended to do in return for the gratuity"). *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

"Public official" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 201(a)(1); § 201(c)(1)(B) also applies to a former public official and a person selected to be a public official.

If there is any question in the case about the "official" character of the action sought by the defendant, give Instruction 10.1 (Official Act—Defined).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 10.8 Illegal Gratuity to Witness (18 U.S.C. § 201(c)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [giving] [offering] [promising] an illegal gratuity in violation of Section 201(c)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant [gave] [offered] [promised] something of value, [*specify the thing of value*], to [*name of witness*] [for testimony to be given under oath by [him] [her] in [*specify proceeding*]] [because of testimony given under oath by [*name of witness*] at/in [*specify proceeding*]] [for being absent from [*specify proceeding*] so that [he] [she] could not testify as a witness].

### Comment

It is recommended that the instruction specifically describe the thing of value just as it is described in the indictment to avoid a variance. *See* Comment to Instruction 10.2 (Bribery of Federal Public Official).

*See* Comment to Instruction 10.6 (Illegal Gratuity to Public Official).

Section 201(c)(2) does not prohibit the government from paying fees, housing, expenses, and cash rewards to a cooperating witness so long as the payment does not recompense any corruption of the truth of testimony. *United States v. Ihnatenko*, 482 F.3d 1097, 1100 (9th Cir. 2007), *cert. denied*, 552 U.S. 904 (2007). Section 201(c)(2) also does not prohibit the government from providing immigration benefits or leniency, immunity from prosecution, or leniency to a cooperating witness. *See United States v. Feng*, 277 F.3d 1151, 1154 (9th Cir. 2002) (immigration benefits); *United States v. Smith*, 196 F.3d 1034, 1038–40 (9th Cir. 1999) (immunity); *United States v. Mattarolo*, 209 F.3d 1153, 1160 (9th Cir. 2000) (leniency).

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g.*, "with all of you agreeing as to what the defendant" intended the witness to do in return for the gratuity"). *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 10.9 Receiving Illegal Gratuity by Witness (18 U.S.C. § 201(c)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [soliciting] [receiving] [agreeing to receive] an illegal gratuity in violation of Section 201(c)(3) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant [solicited] [received] [agreed to receive] something of value, [*specify the thing of value*], [for testimony to be given under oath by the defendant as a witness in [*specify proceeding*]] [because of testimony given under oath by the defendant as a witness at/in [*specify proceeding*]] [for being absent from [*specify proceeding*] so that the defendant could not testify as a witness].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 10.2 (Bribery of Federal Public Official), 10.6 (Illegal Gratuity to Public Official), and 10.8 (Illegal Gratuity to Witness).

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g.*, "with all of you agreeing as to what the witness intended to do in return for the gratuity"). *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

## 10.10 Receiving Commissions or Gifts for Procuring Loans(18 U.S.C. § 215(a)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with soliciting, demanding, or accepting anything of value in connection with any bank business or transaction in violation of Section 215(a)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was an officer, director, employee, agent, or attorney of a financial institution;

Second, the defendant [solicited] [demanded] [accepted] [agreed to accept] something of value, [*specify the thing of value*], from any person in return for being [influenced] [rewarded] in connection with any business or transaction of the financial institution; and

Third, the defendant acted corruptly, that is, intending to be influenced or rewarded in connection with any business or transaction of such institution.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 4.12 (Corruptly); *United States v. Lonich*, 23 F.4th 881, 902-04 (9th Cir. 2022).

## 11. CONSPIRACY

**Instruction**


11.1 Conspiracy—Elements
11.2 Conspiracy to Defraud the United States (18 U.S.C. § 371 "Defraud Clause")
11.3 Multiple Conspiracies
11.4 Conspiracy—Knowledge of and Association with Other Conspirators
11.5 Withdrawal from Conspiracy
11.6 Conspiracy—Liability for Substantive Offense Committed by Co-conspirator (*Pinkerton* Charge)
11.7 Conspiracy—*Sears* Charge
11.8 Solicitation to Commit a Crime of Violence (18 U.S.C. § 373)

## 11.1 Conspiracy—Elements

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with conspiring to [_____] in violation of [Section _____] of [Title ___] of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, beginning on or about [*date*], and ending on or about [*date*], there was an agreement between two or more persons to commit at least one crime as charged in the indictment; [and]

Second, the defendant became a member of the conspiracy knowing of at least one of its objects and intending to help accomplish it[.] [; and]

[Third, one of the members of the conspiracy performed at least one overt act [on or after [*date*]] for the purpose of carrying out the conspiracy.]

A conspiracy is a kind of criminal partnership—an agreement of two or more persons to commit one or more crimes. The crime of conspiracy is the agreement to do something unlawful; it does not matter whether the crime agreed upon was committed.

For a conspiracy to have existed, it is not necessary that the conspirators made a formal agreement or that they agreed on every detail of the conspiracy. It is not enough, however, that they simply met, discussed matters of common interest, acted in similar ways, or perhaps helped one another. You must find that there was a plan to commit at least one of the crimes alleged in the indictment as an object of the conspiracy with all of you agreeing as to the particular crime which the conspirators agreed to commit.

One becomes a member of a conspiracy by knowingly participating in the unlawful plan with the intent to advance or further some object or purpose of the conspiracy, even though the person does not have full knowledge of all the details of the conspiracy. Furthermore, one who knowingly joins an existing conspiracy is as responsible for it as the originators. On the other hand, one who has no knowledge of a conspiracy, but happens to act in a way which furthers some object or purpose of the conspiracy, does not thereby become a conspirator. Similarly, a person does not become a conspirator merely by associating with one or more persons who are conspirators, nor merely by knowing that a conspiracy exists.

[An overt act does not itself have to be unlawful. A lawful act may be an element of a conspiracy if it was done for the purpose of carrying out the conspiracy. The government is not required to prove that the defendant personally did one of the overt acts.]

### Comment

When the charged offense is conspiracy to defraud the United States (or any agency thereof) under the "defraud clause" of 18 U.S.C. § 371, use Instruction 11.2 (Conspiracy to Defraud the United States) in place of this general conspiracy instruction. When the charged offense is conspiracy to distribute or manufacture a controlled substance pursuant to 21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a), 846, use Instruction 12.5 (Controlled Substance—Conspiracy to Distribute or

Manufacture).

With respect to the first element in this instruction, if other jury instructions do not set out the elements of the crimes alleged to be objects of the conspiracy, the elements must be included in this or an accompanying instruction. *United States v. Alghazouli*, 517 F.3d 1179, 1189 (9th Cir. 2008). Nevertheless, conspiracy to commit a crime "does not require completion of the intended underlying offense." *United States v. Iribe*, 564 F.3d 1155, 1160-61 (9th Cir. 2009).

To prove an agreement to commit a crime, it is not sufficient for the government to prove that the defendant committed the crime in question. It must prove that the defendant agreed with at least one other person to commit that crime. *United States v. Loveland*, 825 F.3d 555 (9th Cir. 2016). "The agreement need not be explicit; it is sufficient if the conspirators knew or had reason to know of the scope of the conspiracy and that their own benefits depended on the success of the venture." *United States v. Montgomery*, 384 F.3d 1050, 1062 (9th Cir. 2004) (citing *United States v. Romero,* 282 F.3d 683, 687 (9th Cir. 2002)). "An agreement to commit a crime can be explicit or tacit, and can be proved by direct or circumstantial evidence, including inferences from circumstantial evidence." *United States v. Kaplan*, 836 F.3d, 1199 (9th Cir. 2016) (quotation marks and citation omitted). *See also United States v. Gonzalez*, 906 F.3d 784, 792 (9th Cir. 2018) (noting that tacit agreement is sufficient for conspiracy conviction). A conspiracy may exist even if some members of the conspiracy cannot complete the offense, so long as the object of the conspiracy is that at least one conspirator complete the offense. *Ocasio v. United States*, 578 U.S. 282, 287-92 (2016). A defendant who conspires only with a government agent is not guilty of conspiracy; however, a conspiracy conviction is permitted if at least one co-conspirator is not a government agent. *United States v. Barragan*, 871 F.3d 689, 710-11 (9th Cir. 2017); *see also* Instruction 11.7 (Conspiracy—*Sears* Charge).

Use the third element in this instruction only if the applicable statute requires proof of an overt act, *e.g.*, 18 U.S.C. § 371 (first clause) or 18 U.S.C. § 1511(a) (conspiracy to obstruct state or local law enforcement) but omit the third element when the applicable statute does not require proof of an overt act. *See Whitfield v. United States*, 543 U.S. 209, 212-15 (2005) (proof of overt act not necessary for conspiracy to commit money laundering); *United States v. Shabani*, 513 U.S. 10, 15-16 (1994) (proof of overt act not necessary for conspiracy to violate drug statutes); *Gonzalez*, 906 F.3d at 792 (noting that proof of overt act is not necessary for conspiracy to violate civil rights).

As long as jurors agree that the government has proven each element of a conspiracy, they need not unanimously agree on the particular overt act that was committed in furtherance of the agreed-upon conspiracy. *See United States v. Gonzalez*, 786 F.3d 714, 718-19 (9th Cir. 2015) (rejecting defendant's argument that district court erred in failing to instruct jury that it must unanimously agree on which acts constituted conspiracy to murder underlying a VICAR charge).

When there is evidence that an overt act occurred outside the applicable limitations period, include the bracketed material within the third element. *See United States v. Fuchs*, 218 F.3d 957, 961-62 (9th Cir. 2000) (plain error not to require jury to find that overt act occurred within statute of limitations).

*See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity). When the evidence establishes multiple

conspiracies, failure to give a specific unanimity instruction may be plain error and the court may have a duty to *sua sponte* give the instruction requiring the jurors to unanimously agree on which conspiracy the defendant participated in. *United States v. Lapier*, 796 F.3d 1090 (9th Cir. 2015) (failure to give specific unanimity instruction was plain error because half of jury could have found defendant guilty of joining one conspiracy while other half of jury could have found defendant guilty of joining second, completely independent conspiracy).

The Supreme Court has held that "[a] conspiracy does not automatically terminate simply because the Government, unbeknownst to some of the conspirators, has 'defeated' the conspiracy's 'object'." *United States v. Jimenez Recio*, 537 U.S. 270, 274 (2003).

*See* Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly).

*Revised June 2024*

## 11.2 Conspiracy to Defraud the United States (18 U.S.C. § 371 "Defraud Clause")

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with conspiring to defraud the United States by obstructing the lawful functions of [*specify government agency*] by deceitful or dishonest means in violation of Section 371 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, beginning on or about [*date*], and ending on or about [*date*], there was an agreement between two or more persons to defraud the United States by obstructing the lawful functions of [*specify government agency*] by deceitful or dishonest means as charged in the indictment;

Second, the defendant became a member of the conspiracy knowing of at least one of its objects and intending to help accomplish it; and

Third, one of the members of the conspiracy performed at least one overt act [on or after [*date*]] for the purpose of carrying out the conspiracy.

An agreement to defraud is an agreement to deceive or cheat.

A conspiracy is a kind of criminal partnership—an agreement of two or more persons to commit one or more crimes. The crime of conspiracy is the agreement to do something unlawful; it does not matter whether the crime agreed upon was committed.

For a conspiracy to have existed, it is not necessary that the conspirators made a formal agreement or that they agreed on every detail of the conspiracy. It is not enough, however, that they simply met, discussed matters of common interest, acted in similar ways, or perhaps helped one another. You must find that there was a plan to commit at least one of the crimes alleged in the indictment as an object of the conspiracy with all of you agreeing as to the particular crime which the conspirators agreed to commit.

One becomes a member of a conspiracy by willfully participating in the unlawful plan with the intent to advance or further some object or purpose of the conspiracy, even though the person does not have full knowledge of all the details of the conspiracy. Furthermore, one who willfully joins an existing conspiracy is as responsible for it as the originators. On the other hand, one who has no knowledge of a conspiracy, but happens to act in a way which furthers some object or purpose of the conspiracy, does not thereby become a conspirator. Similarly, a person does not become a conspirator merely by associating with one or more persons who are conspirators, nor merely by knowing that a conspiracy exists.

An overt act does not itself have to be unlawful. A lawful act may be an element of a conspiracy if it was done for the purpose of carrying out the conspiracy. The government is not required to prove that the defendant personally did one of the overt acts.

### Comment

Use this instruction when the charged offense is conspiracy to defraud the United States under the "defraud clause" of 18 U.S.C. § 371; otherwise use Instruction 11.1 (Conspiracy—Elements).

In *United States v. Caldwell*, 989 F.2d 1056 (9th Cir. 1993), the Ninth Circuit held that defrauding the government under 18 U.S.C. § 371 "means obstructing the operation of any government agency by any 'deceit, craft or trickery, or at least by means that are dishonest."' *Id.* at 1058-59. Thus, an instruction that permitted conviction if a defendant merely agreed to defraud the United States by obstructing the Internal Revenue Service in ascertaining and collecting taxes, but did not require proof of deceit or dishonesty, was insufficient and required reversal. To "convict someone under the 'defraud clause' of 18 U.S.C. § 371, the government need only show (1) he entered into an agreement (2) to obstruct a lawful function of the government (3) by deceitful or dishonest means and (4) at least one overt act in furtherance of the conspiracy." *Id.; accord United States v. Rodman*, 776 F.3d 638, 642 (9th Cir. 2015). Moreover, the conspiracy "need not aim to deprive the government of property," and neither "the conspiracy's goal nor the means used to achieve it" need to be illegal. *Caldwell*, 989 F.2d at 1058-59.

In *United States v. Miller*, the Ninth Circuit held that intent to defraud for purposes of wire fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1343) and mail fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1341) requires the intent to both "deceive *and* cheat – in other words, to deprive the victim of money or property by means of deception." 953 F.3d 1095, 1103 (9th Cir. 2020) (emphasis in original).

If the evidence supports an argument the defendant did not act with the requisite intent to defraud because of a good faith misunderstanding about the requirements of law, consider modifying the fifth paragraph of the instruction as follows:

> An agreement to defraud is an agreement to deceive or to cheat, but one who acts on an honest and good faith misunderstanding as to the requirements of the law does not act with an intent to defraud simply because [his] [her] understanding of the law is wrong or even irrational. Nevertheless, merely disagreeing with the law does not constitute a good faith misunderstanding of the law because all persons have a duty to obey the law whether or not they agree with it.

This language is derived by analogy to cases recognizing a "good faith" defense when the government must prove a defendant "willfully" violated tax laws. *See* Instruction 4.6 (Willfully) for violations of 26 U.S.C. §§ 201, 7203, 7206, and 7207; *but see United States v. Hickey*, 580 F. 3d 922, 931 (9th Cir. 2009) (no good faith instruction needed when jury properly instructed on intent to defraud).

As long as jurors agree that the government has proven each element of a conspiracy, they need not unanimously agree on the particular overt act that was committed in furtherance of the agreed-upon conspiracy. *See United States v. Gonzalez*, 786 F.3d 714, 718-19 (9th Cir. 2015) (rejecting defendant's argument that district court erred in failing to instruct jury that it must unanimously agree on which act constituted conspiracy to murder underlying a VICAR charge).

*Revised March 2024*

## 11.3 Multiple Conspiracies

You must decide whether the conspiracy charged in the indictment existed, and, if it did, who at least some of its members were. If you find that the conspiracy charged did not exist, then you must return a not guilty verdict, even though you may find that some other conspiracy existed. Similarly, if you find that any defendant was not a member of the charged conspiracy, then you must find that defendant not guilty, even though that defendant may have been a member of some other conspiracy.

### Comment

Use this instruction when the indictment charges a single conspiracy, and the evidence indicates two or more possible conspiracies. *See United States v. Perry*, 550 F.2d 524, 533 (9th Cir. 1997).

This instruction obviates the need for further instructions on multiple conspiracies. *United States v. Si*, 343 F.3d 1116, 1126-27 (9th Cir. 2003). Given in combination with a proper conspiracy instruction, this instruction is adequate to cover a multiple conspiracy defense. *United States v. Bauer*, 84 F.3d 1549, 1560-61 (9th Cir. 1996); *United States v. Job*, 851 F.3d 889, 905 (9th Cir. 2017).

*See United States v. Singh*, 924 F.3d 1030, 1053 (9th Cir. 2019) (approving multiple conspiracy instruction that reflected defendant's theory of case).

*Revised June 2019*

## 11.4 Conspiracy—Knowledge of and Association with Other Conspirators

A conspiracy may continue for a long period of time and may include the performance of many transactions. It is not necessary that all members of the conspiracy join it at the same time, and one may become a member of a conspiracy without full knowledge of all the details of the unlawful scheme or the names, identities, or locations of all of the other members.

Even though a defendant did not directly conspire with [the other defendant] [or] [other conspirators] in the overall scheme, the defendant has, in effect, agreed to participate in the conspiracy if the government proves each of the following beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant directly conspired with one or more conspirators to carry out at least one of the objects of the conspiracy;

Second, the defendant knew or had reason to know that other conspirators were involved with those with whom the defendant directly conspired; and

Third, the defendant had reason to believe that whatever benefits the defendant might get from the conspiracy were probably dependent upon the success of the entire venture.

It is not a defense that a person's participation in a conspiracy was minor or for a short period of time.

### Comment

A person may be a member of a conspiracy even though the person does not know all of the purposes of or participants in the conspiracy. *United States v. Escalante*, 637 F.2d 1197, 1200 (9th Cir. 1980); *United States v. Kearney*, 560 F.2d 1358, 1362 (9th Cir. 1977).

A single conspiracy can be established even though it took place during a long period of time during which new members joined and old members dropped out. *United States v. Green,* 523 F.2d 229, 233 (2d Cir. 1975). *See also United States v. Perry*, 550 F.2d 524, 528 (9th Cir. 1997) (holding that law of conspiracy does not require government "to prove that all of the defendants met together at the same time and ratified the illegal scheme"); *United States v. Thomas*, 586 F.2d 123, 132 (9th Cir. 1978) (holding that proof that defendant "knew he was plotting in concert with others to violate the law was sufficient to raise the necessary inference that he joined in the overall agreement").

To prove a conspiracy "the evidence must show that 'each defendant knew, or had reason to know, that his benefits were probably dependent on the success of the entire operation.'" *United States v. Duran*, 189 F.3d 1071, 1080 (9th Cir. 1999) (quoting *United States v. Kearney*, 560 F.2d 1358, 1362 (9th Cir. 1977)).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 11.5 Withdrawal from Conspiracy

Once a person becomes a member of a conspiracy, that person remains a member until that person withdraws from it. One may withdraw by doing acts which are inconsistent with the purpose of the conspiracy and by making reasonable efforts to tell the co-conspirators about those acts. You may consider any definite, positive step that shows that the conspirator is no longer a member of the conspiracy to be evidence of withdrawal.

If you find that the government has proved beyond a reasonable doubt each element of a conspiracy and that the defendant was a member of the conspiracy, the burden is on the defendant to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that [he] [she] withdrew from the conspiracy before the overt act—on which you all agreed—was committed by some member of the conspiracy. A preponderance of the evidence means that you must be persuaded that the things the defendant seeks to prove are more probably true than not true. This is a lesser burden of proof than the government's burden to prove beyond a reasonable doubt each element of the conspiracy and that the defendant was a member of the conspiracy.

If you find that the defendant withdrew from the conspiracy, you must find the defendant not guilty of [*specify crime charged*].

### Comment

This instruction has been modified to place the burden on the defendant to prove by a preponderance of the evidence his or her withdrawal from the conspiracy. The earlier version of the instruction placed the burden on the government to prove that the defendant did not withdraw from the conspiracy before the overt act was committed by some member of the conspiracy. In *Smith v. United States*, 568 U.S. 106 (2013), the Court held that "establishing individual withdrawal was a burden that rested firmly on the defendant regardless of when the purported withdrawal took place." *Id*. at 110.

Use this instruction only when the conspiracy charged in the indictment requires proof of an overt act. If the statute of limitations is a defense to a conspiracy requiring proof of an overt act, the instruction should be modified to require the defendant to prove withdrawal before the limitations period begins. *Id.* at 107 ("A defendant who withdraws outside the relevant statute-of-limitations period has a complete defense to prosecution.").

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 11.6 Conspiracy—Liability for Substantive Offense Committed by Co-Conspirator (*Pinkerton* Charge)

Each member of the conspiracy is responsible for the actions of the other conspirators performed during the course and in furtherance of the conspiracy. If one member of a conspiracy commits a crime in furtherance of a conspiracy, the other members have also, under the law, committed that crime.

Therefore, you may find the defendant guilty of [*specify crime*] as charged in Count ___ of the indictment if the government has proved each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, a person named in Count _____ of the indictment committed the crime of [*specify crime*] as alleged in that count;

Second, the person was a member of the conspiracy charged in Count _____ of the indictment;

Third, the person committed the crime of [*specify crime*] in furtherance of the conspiracy;

Fourth, the defendant was a member of the same conspiracy at the time the offense charged in Count _____ was committed; and

Fifth, the offense fell within the scope of the unlawful agreement and could reasonably have been foreseen to be a necessary or natural consequence of the unlawful agreement.

### Comment

The *Pinkerton* charge derives its name from *Pinkerton v. United States*, 328 U.S. 640 (1946), which held that a defendant could be held liable for a substantive offense committed by a co-conspirator as long as the offense occurred within the course of the conspiracy, was within the scope of the agreement, and could reasonably have been foreseen as a necessary or natural consequence of the unlawful agreement. *United States v. Alvarez-Valenzuela*, 231 F.3d 1198, 1202 (9th Cir. 2000); *United States v. Henry*, 984 F.3d 1343, 1355-1356 (9th Cir. 2021).

When this instruction is appropriate, it should be given in addition to Instruction 11.1 (Conspiracy—Elements).

This instruction is based upon *United States v. Alvarez-Valenzuela*, 231 F.3d 1198 at 1202-03, in which the Ninth Circuit approved of the 1997 version of Instruction 8.5.5 (Conspiracy—*Pinkerton* Charge) (now Instruction 11.6), and *United States v. Montgomery*, 150 F.3d 983, 996-97 (9th Cir. 1998). *See also United States v. Gonzalez*, 906 F.3d 784, 791-92 (9th Cir. 2018); *United States v. Gadson*, 763 F.3d 1189, 1216-17 (9th Cir. 2014).

This instruction was found adequate in a case in which three separate conspiracies were charged. *See United States v. Moran*, 493 F.3d 1002, 1009-10 (9th Cir. 2007). However, given the potential for ambiguity where more than one conspiracy is charged, the court should consider

giving separate *Pinkerton* instructions for each conspiracy charged.

*Revised Mar. 2021*

## 11.7 Conspiracy—*Sears* Charge

Before being convicted of conspiracy, an individual must conspire with at least one co–conspirator. There can be no conspiracy when the only person with whom the defendant allegedly conspired was a government [agent] [informant] who secretly intended to frustrate the conspiracy.

### Comment

A defendant who conspires only with a government agent is not guilty of conspiracy; however, a conspiracy conviction is permitted if at least one co-conspirator is not a government agent. *United States v. Barragan*, 871 F.3d 689, 710-11 (9th Cir. 2017); *see also Sears v. United States*, 343 F.2d 139, 142 (5th Cir. 1965) ("there can be no indictable conspiracy with a government informer who secretly intends to frustrate the conspiracy"); Instruction 11.7 (Conspiracy—*Sears* Charge).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 11.8 Solicitation to Commit a Crime of Violence (18 U.S.C. § 373)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[soliciting] [commanding] [inducing] [endeavoring to persuade]] another person to commit a crime of violence in violation of Section 373 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[solicited] [commanded] [induced] [endeavored to persuade]] another person to commit the crime of [*specify crime of violence*] as defined in [*specify jury instruction stating all elements of predicate crime of violence*], which I instruct you is a crime of violence; and

Second, the defendant intended for such other person to commit the crime of [*specify crime of violence*] under circumstances that are strongly corroborative of that intent.

### Comment

*See United States v. Walthall*, 130 F.4th 791, 799 (9th Cir. 2025) (affirming district court's use of substantially similar jury instruction).

Use this instruction in conjunction with an instruction setting forth the elements of the predicate crime of violence.

Whether a particular crime is a crime of violence is a question of law. *See United States v. Amparo*, 68 F.3d 1222, 1226 (9th Cir. 1995). Murder-for-hire in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1958(a) is not categorically a crime of violence even if death results. *United States v. Henrikson*, 18s F.4th 774 (9th Cir. 2026). This instruction should not be used when the predicate crime is murder-for-hire.

Direct communication with the other person is not an element of the crime; rather, the solicitation, command, inducement, or endeavor to persuade may be carried out through an intermediary. *Walthall*, 130 F.4th at 796-97; *see also United States v. Stewart*, 420 F.3d 1007, 1021 (9th Cir. 2005).

The other person need not actually be prepare—d to commit the act of violence or even exist. *Walthall*, 130 F.4th at 797. Instead, the statute requires only that the defendant intended for another person to commit an act of violence. *Id.*

*Revised August 2026*

## 12. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES OFFENSES

**Instruction**


12.1 Controlled Substance—Possession with Intent to Distribute (21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1))
12.2 Determining Amount of Controlled Substance
12.3 Controlled Substance—Attempted Possession with Intent to Distribute (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846)
12.4 Controlled Substance—Distribution or Manufacture (21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1))
12.5 Controlled Substance—Conspiracy to Distribute or Manufacture (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a), 846)
12.6 Buyer-Seller Relationship
12.7 Controlled Substance—Attempted Distribution or Manufacture (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846)
12.8 Controlled Substance—Distribution to Person Under 21 Years (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 859)
12.9 Controlled Substance—Attempted Distribution to Person Under 21 Years (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846, 859)
12.10 Controlled Substance—Distribution in or Near School (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 860)
12.11 Controlled Substance—Attempted Distribution in or Near School (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846, 860)
12.12 Controlled Substance—Employment of Minor to Violate Drug Law (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 861(a)(1))
12.13 Controlled Substance—Attempted Employment of Minor to Violate Drug Laws (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846, 861(a)(1))
12.14 Controlled Substance—Possession of Listed Chemical with Intent to Manufacture (21U.S.C. § 841(c)(1))
12.15 Controlled Substance—Possession or Distribution of Listed Chemical (21 U.S.C. § 841(c)(2))
12.16 Illegal Use of Communication Facility (21 U.S.C. § 843(b))
12.17 Controlled Substance—Continuing Criminal Enterprise (21 U.S.C. § 848)
12.18 Controlled Substance—Maintaining Drug-Involved Premises (21 U.S.C. § 856(a)(1))
12.19 Controlled Substance—Unlawful Importation (21 U.S.C. §§ 952, 960)
12.20 Controlled Substance—Manufacture for Purpose of Importation (21 U.S.C. §§ 959, 960(a)(3))

## 12.1 Controlled Substance—Possession with Intent to Distribute (21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possession of [*specify controlled substance*] with intent to distribute in violation of Section 841(a)(1) of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed any controlled substance; and

Second, the defendant possessed it with the intent to distribute it to another person.

[The government is not required to prove the amount or quantity of [*specify controlled substance*]. It need only prove beyond a reasonable doubt that there was a measurable or detectable amount of [*specify controlled substance*].]

It does not matter whether the defendant knew that the substance was [*specify controlled substance*]. It is sufficient that the defendant knew that it was some kind of a federally controlled substance.

To "possess with intent to distribute" means to possess with intent to deliver or transfer possession of [*specify controlled substance*] to another person, with or without any financial interest in the transaction.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 12.4 (Controlled Substance—Distribution or Manufacture), if death or serious bodily injury occurred.

Use the bracketed paragraph only when quantity is not at issue.

The defendant does not need to know what the controlled substance is so long as the defendant knows that he or she has possession of such a substance. *United States v. Jewell*, 532 F.2d 697, 698 (9th Cir. 1976) (en banc). *See also United States v. Soto-Zuniga*, 837 F.3d 992, 1004-05 (9th Cir. 2016) (knowledge of type and quantity of drugs not element of offense).

After *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000), the Ninth Circuit has held that where the amount of drugs "increases the prescribed statutory maximum penalty to which a criminal defendant is exposed," the amount of drugs must be decided by a jury beyond a reasonable doubt. *See United States v. Garcia-Guizar*, 234 F.3d 483, 488 (9th Cir. 2000). However, the government need not prove that the defendant knew the type or quantity of controlled substance he possessed to obtain either a conviction under § 841(a) or a particular sentence under § 841(b). It is sufficient that the jury finds beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant actually possessed a certain type and quantity of drugs. *United States v. Jefferson*, 791 F.3d 1013, 1015 (9th Cir. 2015) (holding in context of parallel statute, 21 U.S.C. § 960, that government is not required to prove defendant's knowledge of type or quantity of drugs either for conviction or for heightened statutory penalties to apply). As a result, if applicable, the court should obtain a jury determination of the amount of

drugs involved. *See also United States v. Booker*, 543 U.S. 220 (2005); *United States v. Ameline*, 409 F.3d 1073 (9th Cir. 2005) (en banc). When it is necessary to determine an amount of controlled substance, use this instruction with Instruction 12.2 (Determining Amount of Controlled Substance), together with a verdict form similar to the example provided in the Comment to Instruction 12.5. *But see United States v. Hunt*, 656 F.3d 906 (9th Cir. 2011) (discussing effect on sentencing of knowledge of type of drug in attempted possession with intent to distribute case).

The defendant may be entitled to a jury instruction on a lesser included offense of simple possession, 21 U.S.C. § 844(a). *See* Instruction 6.15. *See also United States v. Hernandez*, 476 F.3d 791, 798-800 (9th Cir. 2007).

Possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute requires the jury to find that the defendant (1) knowingly possessed drugs and (2) possessed them with the intent to deliver them to another person. *See, for example*, *United States v. Orduno-Aguilera*, 183 F.3d 1138, 1140 (9th Cir. 1999); *United States v. Seley*, 957 F.2d 717, 721 (9th Cir. 1992). *See also United States v. Magallon-Jimenez*, 219 F.3d 1109, 1112 (9th Cir. 2000).

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

*Revised November 2024*

## 12.2 Determining Amount of Controlled Substance

If you find the defendant guilty of the charge in [Count _____ of] the indictment, you are then to determine whether the government proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the amount of [*specify controlled substance*] that defendant intended to distribute equaled or exceeded [certain weights] [*insert specific threshold weight*]. Your determination of weight must not include the weight of any packaging material. Your decision as to weight must be unanimous.

The government does not have to prove that the defendant knew the quantity of [*specify controlled substance*].

### Comment

When a drug conspiracy is charged, the jury may infer the agreed upon drug amount based on the conduct of the conspirators but may not speculate as to the amount. *See United States v. Narvarrette-Aguilar*, 813 F.3d 785, 794 (9th Cir. 2015) ("Express agreement is not required; rather, agreement may be inferred from conduct.").

While quantity and drug type are not elements of controlled substance offenses, a jury must determine those facts before a sentencing enhancement based upon drug type or quantity can be applied. The Ninth Circuit has held, however, that the government need not prove that a defendant knew either the controlled substance type or quantity for the enhancement to apply. *United States v. Collazo*, 984 F.3d 1308, 1329 (9th Cir. 2021) (en banc). If the charged controlled substances are not in evidence, the court should only allow the jury to use comparison drugs that are from the defendant's activity or a conspiracy in which the defendant was involved. *United States v. Lemus*, 847 F.3d 1016, 1022-23 (9th Cir. 2016) (stating that purity of controlled substances not connected to defendant could not be used to estimate purity of defendant's drugs).

When it is necessary to determine the amount of a controlled substance, use this instruction with Instruction 12.1 (Controlled Substance–Possession with Intent to Distribute). The court may also consider submitting a special verdict form to the jury. For an example of such a form, see the Comment to Instruction 12.5 (Controlled Substance—Conspiracy to Distribute or Manufacture).

*Revised June 2022*

## 12.3 Controlled Substance—Attempted Possession with Intent to Distribute (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted possession of [*specify controlled substance*] with intent to distribute in violation of Sections 841(a)(1) and 846 of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to possess any controlled substance with the intent to distribute it to another person; and

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

To "possess with the intent to distribute" means to possess with intent to deliver or transfer possession of a controlled substance to another person, with or without any financial interest in the transaction.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 12.1 (Controlled Substance–Possession with Intent to Distribute) and 12.2 (Determining Amount of Controlled Substance). *See United States v. Morales-Perez*, 467 F.3d 1219, 1222 (9th Cir. 2006) (citing *United States v. Davis*, 960 F.2d 820, 826-27 (9th Cir. 1992)); *United States v. Esquivel-Ortega*, 484 F.3d 1221, 1228 (9th Cir. 2007) (*citing to United States v. Estrada-Macias*, 218 F.3d 1064, 1066 (9th Cir. 2000) (jury instruction requiring government to prove that defendants knowingly associated themselves with crime and were not mere spectators)).

The Ninth Circuit has stated, in a case in which the defendant pleaded guilty to attempted possession of a controlled substance with the intent to distribute, in violation of § 841(a), and the government sought a sentence under the heightened penalty provisions of § 841(b) based on type and quantity, that the government was required to prove the defendant's intent to possess a *particular* controlled substance. *United States v. Hunt*, 656 F.3d 906, 912-13 (9th Cir. 2011). By contrast, in a case in which the defendant pleaded guilty to actual importation of a controlled substance in violation of § 960(a) (an analogous statute), the Ninth Circuit held that "the government need not prove that the defendant knew the precise type or quantity of the drug he imported" for the heightened penalties based on drug type and quantity to apply. *United States v. Jefferson*, 791 F.3d 1013, 1014-15, 1019 (9th Cir. 2015); *see also United States v. Carranza*, 289 F.3d 634, 644 (9th Cir. 2002) ("A defendant charged with importing or possessing a drug is not required to know the type and amount of drug."). The Committee believes that there may be

tension between *Hunt* and *Jefferson* on the issue of a defendant's knowledge or intent regarding drug type and quantity. At least one district judge has limited the holding in *Hunt* to attempt crimes. *See United States v. Rivera*, No. 10-cr-3310-BTM, 2014 WL 3896041, at *2 (S.D. Cal., Aug. 7, 2014).

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (internal quotations omitted).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised March 2024*

## 12.4 Controlled Substance—Distribution or Manufacture (21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [distribution] [manufacture] of [*specify controlled substance*] in violation of Section 841(a)(1) of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[distributed] [manufactured]] [*specify controlled substance*]; and

Second, the defendant knew that it was [*specify controlled substance*] or some other federally controlled substance.

["Distributing" means delivering or transferring possession of [*specify controlled substance*] to another person, with or without any financial interest in that transaction.]

[The government is not required to prove the amount or quantity of [*specify controlled substance*]. It need only prove beyond a reasonable doubt that there was a measurable or detectable amount of [*specify controlled substance*].]

[If you find that the defendant is guilty of [[distributing] [manufacturing]] [*specify controlled substance*], then you must determine whether [*name of decedent*]'s [[death] [serious bodily injury]] was a result of the use of the [*specify controlled substance*] [[distributed] [manufactured]] by the defendant. To find that the use of a drug resulted in [[death] [serious bodily injury]], you must unanimously and beyond a reasonable doubt find that "but for" the use of the [*specify controlled substance*] that the defendant [[distributed] [manufactured]], [*name of decedent*] would not have died.

To find a particular controlled substance [[distributed] [manufactured]] by the defendant was a "but for" cause of death, you must find beyond a reasonable doubt that, but for the decedent's use of the [*specify controlled substance*], the decedent would not have died.

The government does not have the burden of establishing that the defendant intended that death result from the use of [*specify controlled substance*]. Nor does the government have the burden of establishing that the defendant knew, or should have known, that death would result from the use of the [*specify controlled substance*] that the defendant [[distributed] [manufactured]].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 12.1 (Controlled Substance–Possession with Intent to Distribute) and 12.2 (Determining Amount of Controlled Substance).

A similar instruction was explicitly approved in *United States v. Houston*, 406 F.3d 1121, 1122 n.2 (9th Cir. 2005) ("In order for the defendant to be found guilty of this charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt: First, the defendant knowingly delivered methadone to Trina Bradford. Second, the defendant knew it was methadone or some other prohibited drug.").

Although the government must prove that death or serious bodily injury resulted from the use of the controlled substance for this enhancement to apply, the government need not prove that the death was a foreseeable result of the distribution of the controlled substance. *Houston*, 406 F.3d at 1125 ("Cause-in-fact is required by the 'results' language, but proximate cause, at least insofar as it requires that the death have been foreseeable, is not a required element.").

"[W]hen Congress made it a crime to 'knowingly . . . possess with intent to manufacture, distribute, or dispense, a controlled substance . . . , it meant to punish not only those who know they possess a controlled substance, but also those who don't know because they don't want to know." *United States v. Heredia*, 483 F.3d 913, 918 (9th Cir. 2007) (en banc). *See also* Instruction 4.9 (Deliberate Ignorance).

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

It is also unlawful under 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1) to dispense or possess with intent to dispense a controlled substance. If that crime is charged, the instruction should be modified accordingly.

In prosecutions involving a physician charged with distributing controlled substances not "as authorized," if the defendant produces evidence that his or her conduct was "authorized," the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant knowingly or intentionally acted in an unauthorized manner. *Ruan v. United States*, 597 U.S. 450, 457 (2022); *see also United States v. Pham*, 120 F.4th 1368, 1370-71 (9th Cir. 2024) (providing that a defendant's "admission that he prescribed controlled substances with intent to act outside the usual course of professional practice and without a legitimate medical purpose" was an admission to the "requisite knowledge of the elements that made his prescriptions not authorized").

The last four paragraphs of the instruction may be used where the government is seeking a sentencing enhancement "if death or serious bodily injury results from the use of such [controlled] substance[s]." 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(A)-(D). Several of the penalty sections for a violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846, 859, 860, and/or 861(a)(1) increase the sentence "if death or serious bodily injury results from the use of such [controlled] substance[s]." 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(A)-(C). "Because the 'death results' enhancement increased the minimum and maximum sentences to which [the defendant] was exposed, it is an element that must be

submitted to the jury and found beyond a reasonable doubt." *Burrage v. United States*, 571 U.S. 204, 210 (2014). "[A] phrase such as 'results from' imposes a requirement of but-for causation." *Id.* at 214. In *Burrage*, the Supreme Court declined to accept or reject a special rule allowing the government to satisfy the causation requirement by showing that use of the controlled substance was an independently sufficient cause of death or bodily injury. *Id.* at 214-15; *see id.* at 218-19 ("We hold that, at least where use of the drug distributed by the defendant is not an independently sufficient cause of the victim's death or serious bodily injury, a defendant cannot be liable under the penalty enhancement provision of 21 U. S. C. § 841(b)(1)(C) unless such use is a but-for cause of the death or injury."). And although the government must prove that death or serious bodily injury resulted from the use of the controlled substance for this enhancement to apply, the government need not prove that the death was a foreseeable result of the distribution of the controlled substance. *Houston*, 406 F.3d at 1125 ("Cause-in-fact is required by the 'results' language, but proximate cause, at least insofar as it requires that the death have been foreseeable, is not a required element.").

*See* Comment to Instruction 12.21 (Controlled Substance—Statutory Enhancement Based on Prior Serious Drug Felony or Serious Violent Felony).

*Revised March 2025*

## 12.5 Controlled Substance—Conspiracy to Distribute or Manufacture (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a), 846)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with conspiracy to [[distribute] [manufacture]] [*specify controlled substance*] in violation of Section 841(a) and Section 846 of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, beginning on or about [*date*] and ending on or about [*date*], there was an agreement between two or more persons to [[distribute] [manufacture]] [*specify controlled substance*]; and

Second, the defendant joined in the agreement knowing of its purpose and intending to help accomplish that purpose.

["To distribute" means to deliver or transfer possession of [*specify controlled substance*] to another person, with or without any financial interest in that transaction.]

A conspiracy is a kind of criminal partnership—an agreement of two or more persons to commit one or more crimes. The crime of conspiracy is the agreement to do something unlawful; it does not matter whether the crime agreed upon was committed.

For a conspiracy to have existed, it is not necessary that the conspirators made a formal agreement or that they agreed on every detail of the conspiracy. It is not enough, however, that they simply met, discussed matters of common interest, acted in similar ways, or perhaps helped one another. You must find that there was a plan to commit at least one of the crimes alleged in the indictment as an object or purpose of the conspiracy with all of you agreeing as to the particular crime which the conspirators agreed to commit.

One becomes a member of a conspiracy by knowingly participating in the unlawful plan with the intent to advance or further some object or purpose of the conspiracy, even though the person does not have full knowledge of all the details of the conspiracy. Furthermore, one who knowingly joins an existing conspiracy is as responsible for it as the originators. On the other hand, one who has no knowledge of a conspiracy, but happens to act in a way which furthers some object or purpose of the conspiracy, does not thereby become a conspirator. Similarly, a person does not become a conspirator merely by associating with one or more persons who are conspirators, nor merely by knowing that a conspiracy exists.

### Comment

This instruction is for use with Instructions 12.1, 12.2, 12.4, 12.8, 12.10, and 12.12. Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly).

Concerning the elements of the crime, *see, e.g.*, *United States v. Jaimez*, 45 F.4th 1118, 1123 (9th Cir. 2022); *United States v. Collazo*, 984 F.3d 1308, 1319 (9th Cir. 2021) (en banc); *United States v. Garrison*, 888 F.3d 1057, 1064-65 (9th Cir. 2018); *United States v. Reed*, 575 F.3d 900, 923 (9th Cir. 2009).

To prove an agreement to commit a crime, it is not sufficient for the government to prove that the defendant committed the crime in question. It must prove that the defendant agreed with at least one other person to commit that crime. *United States v. Loveland*, 825 F.3d 555, 557 (9th Cir. 2016).

*See United States v. Shabani*, 513 U.S. 10, 15-16 (1994), holding that to establish a violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846, the government is not required to prove commission of overt acts in furtherance of the conspiracy. The Court contrasted § 846, which is silent as to whether there must be an overt act, with the general conspiracy statute, 18 U.S.C. § 371, which contains the explicit requirement that a conspirator "do any act to effect the object of the conspiracy." *Id*. at 14.

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

When the prosecution relies on circumstantial evidence to establish an agreement to distribute drugs, "what we are looking for is evidence of a prolonged and actively pursued course of sales and . . . knowledge of and shared stake in the . . . drug operation." *United States v. Mendoza*, 25 F.4th 730, 736 (9th Cir. 2022). *See generally id.* at 735-741 for analysis of evidence that would or would not meet this threshold. *See* Comment to Instruction 12.6.

When it is necessary to determine the amount of a controlled substance, the court might consider submitting the following special verdict form to the jury:

**SUGGESTED VERDICT FORM**

WE, THE JURY, FIND THE DEFENDANT, [*name of defendant*], AS FOLLOWS:

AS TO COUNT [*insert count number*] OF THE INDICTMENT:

| NOT GUILTY | GUILTY | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | of conspiring to distribute [*insert controlled substance*] in violation of Title 21 United States Code §§ 846 and 841(a)(1) |

SPECIAL VERDICTS

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Having found the defendant [*name of defendant*] guilty of the offense charged in [*insert count number*], do you unanimously find beyond a reasonable doubt that (a) the conspiracy charged in [*insert count number*] involved [*insert applicable amount and type of controlled substance, e.g.*, 500 grams or more of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine]?<br><br>If you answered yes to this question, you need not answer further questions. Sign and date the verdict form. | ____Yes____No |
| 2. Having found the defendant [*name of defendant*] guilty of the offense charged in [*insert count number*], do you unanimously find beyond a reasonable doubt that (a) the conspiracy charged in [*insert count number*] involved [*insert applicable amount and type of controlled substance, e.g.*, 50 grams or more of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine]? | ____Yes____No |

_____ _____

DATE FOREPERSON

*Revised June 2024*

## 12.6 Buyer-Seller Relationship

A buyer-seller relationship between a defendant and another person, standing alone, cannot support a conviction for conspiracy. The fact that a defendant may have bought [specify controlled substance] from another person or sold [specify controlled substance] to another person is not sufficient without more to establish that the defendant was a member of the charged conspiracy. Instead, a conviction for conspiracy requires proof of an agreement to commit a crime beyond that of the mere sale.

In considering whether the evidence supports the existence of a conspiracy or the existence of a buyer-seller relationship, you should consider all the evidence, including the following factors:

[(1) whether the sales were made on credit or consignment;]
[(2) the frequency of the sales;]
[(3) the quantity of the sales;]
[(4) the level of trust demonstrated between the buyer and the seller, including the use of codes;]
[(5) the length of time during which the sales were ongoing;]
[(6) whether the transactions were standardized;]
[(7) whether the parties advised each other on the conduct of the other's business;]
[(8) whether the buyer assisted the seller by looking for other customers;]
[(9) whether the parties agreed to warn each other of potential threats from competitors or law enforcement;] and
[(10) whether the buyer was free to shop elsewhere.]

These are merely a list of relevant factors to aid you in analyzing the evidence; the presence or absence of any single factor is not determinative.

### Comment

Use this instruction with Instruction 12.5 (Controlled Substance—Conspiracy to Distribute or Manufacture) if applicable.

*See United States v. Moe*, 781 F.3d 1120, 1128 (9th Cir. 2015) (explaining that no buyer-seller instruction is required when jury instructions as whole accurately inform jury that conspiracy cannot be found based solely on sale of drugs from one party to another. However, buyer-seller instruction might assist jury in working through fact-intensive determinations and, in certain circumstances, buyer-seller instruction might be required); *see also United States v. Mendoza*, 25 F.4th 730, 742 (9th Cir. 2022) (declining to address whether sua sponte instruction on "buyer-seller rule" was required).

"To show a conspiracy, the government must show not only that [the seller] gave drugs to other people knowing that they would further distribute them, but also that he had an agreement with these individuals to so further distribute the drugs." *United States v. Lennick*, 18 F.3d 814, 819 (9th Cir. 1994).

"A relationship of mere seller and buyer, with the seller having no stake in what the buyer does with the goods, shows the absence of a conspiracy, because it is missing the element of an

agreement for redistribution." *United States v. Loveland*, 825 F.3d 555, 562 (9th Cir. 2016). Evidence showing that the seller probably knew the buyer was reselling the drugs based on the quantities and repeated sales between the two is insufficient by itself to establish an agreement for redistribution. *See id.*

When the prosecution relies on circumstantial evidence to establish an agreement to distribute drugs, "what we are looking for is evidence of a prolonged and actively pursued course of sales and . . . knowledge of and shared stake in the . . . drug operation." *Mendoza*, 25 F.4th at 736. "If we instead see only 'a casual sale [or purchase] of drugs, of a quantity consistent with personal use on the part of the buyer, with no evidence of any subsequent (or planned) redistribution of purchased drugs,' the evidence is generally insufficient to support a conspiracy conviction." *Id*. The "entire course of dealing" should be considered. *Id.* at 739. A relatively small number of communications and drug purchases over a course of dealing between buyer and seller does not support a finding of an agreement. *Id.* at 739-740. A "buyer-seller relationship (as opposed to conspiracy) is particularly likely when . . . the downstream buyer called the upstream seller (rather than vice versa) and when the downstream buyer was 'free to shop elsewhere.'" *Id.* at 739 (quoting *Loveland*, 825 F.3d at 563)). A conspiracy was less likely when the buyer "had to pester" the seller for drugs and "threaten[ed] to purchase drugs from someone else" and "haggled over price and quantity." *Id.*

The list of factors provided in this instruction is neither necessarily required nor meant to be exhaustive. *See Moe*, 781 F.3d at 1125-26. The list of factors presented to the jury should be tailored to fit the facts of the case.

*Revised June 2022*

## 12.7 Controlled Substance—Attempted Distribution or Manufacture (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted [distribution] [manufacture] of [*specify controlled substance*] in violation of Sections 841(a)(1) and 846 of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to [distribute [*specify controlled substance*] to another person] [manufacture [*specify controlled substance*]];

Second, the defendant knew that it was [*specify controlled substance*] or some other federally controlled substance; and

Third, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborates a defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward the commission of the crime of [distribution] [manufacture] of [*specify controlled substance*].

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

["To distribute" means to deliver or transfer possession of [*specify controlled substance*] to another person, with or without any financial interest in that transaction.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 12.1 (Controlled Substance–Possession with Intent to Distribute), 12.2 (Determining Amount of Controlled Substance), and 12.4 (Controlled Substance–Distribution or Manufacture).

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised March 2024*

## 12.8 Controlled Substance—Distribution to Person Under 21 Years (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 859)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with distribution of [*specify controlled substance*] to a person under the age of 21 years in violation of Section 841(a)(1) and 859 of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly distributed [*specify controlled substance*] to [*name of underage person*];

Second, the defendant knew that it was [*specify controlled substance*] or some other federally controlled substance;

Third, the defendant was at least eighteen years of age; and

Fourth, [*name of underage person*] was under twenty-one years of age.

"Distribution" means delivery or transfer of possession of [*specify controlled substance*] to another person, with or without any financial interest in that transaction.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 12.1 (Controlled Substance—Possession with Intent to Distribute). *See also* Instruction 12.2 (Determining Amount of Controlled Substance).

Knowledge by the defendant that the person to whom the controlled substance is distributed is under twenty-one years of age is not an essential element. *United States v. Valencia-Roldan*, 893 F.2d 1080, 1083 (9th Cir. 1990).

The government is required to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant: (1) "knowingly and intentionally" (2) distributed (3) a controlled substance (4) while the defendant was over the age of 18 and (5) the victim was under the age of twenty-one. *United States v. Durham*, 464 F.3d 976, 980-81 (9th Cir. 2006).

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in

the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

*Revised March 2024*

## 12.9 Controlled Substance—Attempted Distribution to Person Under 21 Years (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846, 859)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted distribution of [*specify controlled substance*] to a person under the age of twenty-one years in violation of Sections 841(a)(1), 846, and 859 of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to distribute [*specify controlled substance*] to [*name of underage person*];

Second, the defendant knew that it was [*specify controlled substance*] or some other federally controlled substance;

Third, the defendant was at least eighteen years of age;

Fourth, [*name of underage person*] was under the age of twenty-one years; and

Fifth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward the commission of the crime of distribution of [*specify controlled substance*] to a person under the age of twenty-one years.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

"Distribution" means delivery or transfer of possession of [*specify controlled substance*] to another person, with or without any financial interest in that transaction.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 12.1 (Controlled Substance–Possession with Intent to Distribute), 12.2 (Determining Amount of Controlled Substance), and 12.8 (Controlled Substance–Distribution to Person Under 21 Years).

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for

purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995))

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised March 2024*

## 12.10 Controlled Substance—Distribution in or Near School (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 860)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with distribution of [*specify controlled substance*] in, on or within 1,000 feet of the [schoolyard] [campus] of a [school] [college] [university] in violation of Sections 841(a)(1) and 860 of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly distributed [*specify controlled substance*] to another person;

Second, the defendant knew that it was [*specify controlled substance*] or some other federally controlled substance; and

Third, the distribution took place in, on or within 1,000 feet of the [schoolyard] [campus] of [*name of school*].

"Distribution" means delivery or transfer of possession of [*specify controlled substance*] to another person, with or without any financial interest in that transaction.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 12.1 (Controlled Substance—Possession with Intent to Distribute) and 12.2 (Determining Amount of Controlled Substance).

The defendant's specific knowledge of the proximity of a school is not an element of the offense. *United States v. Pitts*, 908 F.2d 458, 461 (9th Cir. 1990). Distance is measured by a straight line. *United States v. Watson,* 887 F.2d 980, 981 (9th Cir. 1989).

Section 860 applies not only to schools, but also to playgrounds and public housing facilities. In addition, it applies to youth centers, public swimming pools and video arcades; as to these locations, the distribution must have occurred within a 100-foot radius (as opposed to a 1,000-foot radius). The instruction should be revised as necessary to match the facts of the case.

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

*Revised March 2024*

## 12.11 Controlled Substance—Attempted Distribution in or Near School (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846, 860)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted distribution of [*specify controlled substance*] within 1,000 feet of the [schoolyard] [campus] of a [school] [college] [university] in violation of Sections 841(a)(1), 846 and 860 of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to distribute [*specify controlled substance*] to another person in, on, or within 1,000 feet of the [schoolyard] [campus] of [*name of school*];

Second, the defendant knew that it was [*specify controlled substance*] or some other federally controlled substance; and

Third, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward the commission of the crime of distribution of [*specify controlled substance*] in or near a school.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

"Distribution" means delivery or transfer of possession of [*specify controlled substance*] to another person, with or without any financial interest in that transaction.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 12.1 (Controlled Substance—Possession with Intent to Distribute), 12.2 (Determining Amount of Controlled Substance), and 12.10 (Controlled Substance–Distribution in or Near a School).

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in

the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised March 2024*

## 12.12 Controlled Substance—Employment of Minor to Violate Drug Law (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 861(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [hiring] [using] [employing] [persuading] [inducing] [enticing] [coercing] a minor to [*specify drug law violation*] in violation of Sections 841(a)(1) and 861(a)(1) of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[hired] [used] [persuaded] [coerced] [induced] [enticed] [employed]] [*name of minor*] to [*specify drug law violation and controlled substance*];

Second, the defendant was at least eighteen years of age; and

Third, [*name of minor*] was under the age of eighteen years.

The government is not required to prove that the defendant knew the age of [*name of minor*].

### Comment

The defendant's knowledge of the age of the minor is not an essential element of the offense. *United States v. Valencia–Roldan,* 893 F.2d 1080, 1083 (9th Cir. 1990). This statute creates a separate offense and is not a mere sentence enhancement. *Id.*

This instruction may be modified for use in cases arising under § 861(a)(2) and (3).

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

*Revised March 2024*

## 12.13 Controlled Substance—Attempted Employment of Minor to Violate Drug Laws (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), 846, 861(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted employment of a minor to [*specify drug law violation*] in violation of Sections 841(a)(1), 846 and 861(a)(1) of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to [[hire] [use] [persuade] [coerce] [induce] [entice] [employ]] [*name of minor*] to [*specify drug law violation and controlled substance*];

Second, the defendant was at least eighteen years of age;

Third, [*name of minor*] was under the age of eighteen years; and

Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward the commission of the crime of [hiring] [using] a minor to violate the drug laws.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 12.12 (Controlled Substance—Employment of Minor to Violate Drug Law).

Regarding cases involving a "controlled substance analogue" as it is defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A), the Supreme Court held in *McFadden v. United States*, 576 U.S. 186 (2015), that, to prove the knowledge element, the government must prove that either the defendant knew that the substance distributed is treated as a drug listed on the federal drug schedules—regardless of whether he knew the particular identity of the substance—or "that the defendant knew the specific analogue he was dealing with, even if he did not know its legal status as an analogue." *Id*. at 194-95. With respect to the definition of "controlled substance analogue" as meaning "a substance . . . (i) the chemical structure of which is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a controlled substance in schedule I or II," 21 U.S.C. § 802(32)(A)(i), substances are "substantially similar" for purposes of the statute if he two chemicals "share a common core of identical chemical structural features and that the subset of differences between the two chemicals does not make a difference in the substance's 'relevant characteristics'" *United States v. Galecki*, 89 F.4th 713, 731 (9th Cir. 2023) (quoting *United States v. Roberts*, 363 F.3d 118, 124 (2d Cir. 2004)).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless

interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised March 2024*

## 12.14 Controlled Substance—Possession of Listed Chemical with Intent to Manufacture (21 U.S.C. § 841(c)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possession of a listed chemical with intent to manufacture [*specify controlled substance*] in violation of Section 841(c)(1) of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed [*specify listed chemical*]; and

Second, the defendant possessed it with the intent to manufacture [*specify controlled substance*].

It does not matter whether the defendant knew that [*specify listed chemical*] was a listed chemical. It is sufficient that the defendant knew that it was to be used to manufacture [*specify controlled substance*] or some other prohibited drug.

### Comment

The term "knowingly" in the first element refers only to "possessed" and not to "listed chemical." *United States v. Estrada*, 453 F.3d 1208, 1212 (9th Cir. 2006); *see also United States v. Ching Tang Lo*, 447 F.3d 1212, 1231 (9th Cir. 2006) (same).

## 12.15 Controlled Substance—Possession or Distribution of Listed Chemical (21 U.S.C. § 841(c)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [possession] [distribution] of a listed chemical, knowing or having reasonable cause to believe it would be used to manufacture [*specify controlled substance*] in violation of Section 841(c)(2) of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[possessed] [distributed]] [*specify listed chemical*]; and

Second, the defendant [possessed] [distributed] it knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that it would be used to manufacture [*specify controlled substance*].

It does not matter whether defendant knew that [*specify listed chemical*] was a listed chemical. It is sufficient that the defendant knew or had reasonable cause to believe that it would be used to manufacture [*specify controlled substance*] or some other prohibited drug.

"Reasonable cause to believe" means knowledge of facts that, although not amounting to direct knowledge, would cause a reasonable person in the defendant's position knowing the same facts, to reasonably conclude that the [*specify listed chemical*] would be used to manufacture a controlled substance. You must consider the knowledge and sophistication of the defendant when determining whether the defendant had reasonable cause to believe that the [*specify listed chemical*] would be used to manufacture [*specify controlled substance*] or some other prohibited drug.

### Comment

In *United States v. Kaur*, 382 F.3d 1155, 1156-57 (9th Cir. 2004), the court recognized that 21 U.S.C. § 841(c)(2) "clearly presents knowledge and reasonable cause to believe as two distinct alternatives" and held that the trial court fairly and accurately defined "reasonable cause to believe" as follows: "'Reasonable cause to believe' means to have knowledge of facts which, although not amounting to direct knowledge, would cause a reasonable person knowing the same facts, to reasonably conclude that the pseudoephedrine would be used to manufacture a controlled substance." *See also United States v. Johal*, 428 F.3d 823, 825-28 (9th Cir. 2005). The "reasonable cause to believe" standard incorporates both objective and subjective elements. *Kaur*, 382 F.3d at 1157. The standard "requires a jury to evaluate scienter through the lens of the particular defendant on trial" considering "the knowledge and sophistication of the particular defendant on trial, not that of a hypothetical person before the court." *United States v. Munguia*, 704 F.3d 596, 603 (9th Cir. 2012).

*See United States v. Ching Tang Lo*, 447 F.3d 1212, 1231-33 (9th Cir. 2006) (discussing mens rea standard for conspiring to aid and abet manufacture of controlled substances).

*Revised Apr. 2013*

## 12.16 Illegal Use of Communication Facility (21 U.S.C. § 843(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with illegal use of a communication facility in violation of Section 843(b) of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant knowingly or intentionally used [a telephone] [the mail] [a radio] [a wire] to help bring about [*specify illegal act or acts*] as charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment].

### Comment

For a definition of "knowingly," *see* Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 12.17 Controlled Substance—Continuing Criminal Enterprise (21 U.S.C. § 848)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise in violation of Section 848 of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant committed the violation[s] of [*specify drug law violation*] [as charged in [Count[s] _____ of] the indictment];

Second, the violation[s] [was] [were] part of a series of three or more violations committed by the defendant over a definite period of time, with the jury unanimously finding that the defendant committed each of at least three such violations;

Third, the defendant committed the violations together with five or more other persons. The government does not have to prove that all five or more of the other persons operated together at the same time, or that the defendant knew all of them;

Fourth, the defendant acted as an organizer, supervisor, or manager of the five or more other persons; and

Fifth, the defendant obtained substantial income or resources from the violations.

"Income or resources" means receipts of money or property.

### Comment

"[A] jury in a federal criminal case brought under § 848 must unanimously agree not only that the defendant committed some 'continuing series of violations' but also that the defendant committed each of the individual 'violations' necessary to make up that 'continuing series.'" *Richardson v. United States*, 526 U.S. 813, 815 (1999); *see also United States v. Garcia*, 988 F.2d 965, 969 (9th Cir. 1993) (concluding that general unanimity instruction is sufficient unless "genuine possibility" of juror confusion exists) (citing *United States v. Gilley*, 836 F.2d 1206, 1211-12 (9th Cir. 1988)); *United States v. Hernandez-Escarsega*, 886 F.2d 1560, 1570-73 (9th Cir. 1989).

The Supreme Court has held that a § 846 drug conspiracy is a lesser included offense of a continuing criminal enterprise. *Rutledge v. United States*, 517 U.S. 292, 306-07 (1996).

To be held liable for occupying a "position of organizer" and a "supervisory position" within a continuing criminal enterprise, the defendant "must be in a position of management." *United States v. Barona*, 56 F.3d 1087, 1097 (9th Cir. 1995); *but see United States v. Jerome*, 942 F.2d 1328, 1330-31 (9th Cir. 1991) (reversing conviction when jury was not properly instructed as to which of several persons could be included in "five or more" category).

## 12.18 Controlled Substance—Maintaining Drug-Involved Premises (21 U.S.C. § 856(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with knowingly and intentionally [opening] [leasing] [renting] [using] [maintaining] any place, whether permanently or temporarily, for the purpose of manufacturing, distributing, or using a controlled substance in violation of Section 856(a)(1) of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant knowingly [opened] [maintained] a place for the purpose of [manufacturing] [distributing] [using] a controlled substance.

["For the purpose of manufacturing, distributing, or using a controlled substance" means that manufacturing, distributing, or using a controlled substance is one of the primary or principal uses to which the residence is put.]

"Maintaining" a place includes facts showing that over a period of time, the defendant directed the activities of and the people in the place.

### Comment

In *United States v. Shetler*, 665 F.3d 1150, 1162 (9th Cir. 2011), the Ninth Circuit held that "in the residential context, the manufacture (or distribution or use) of drugs must be at least one of the primary or principal uses to which the house is put" (quoting *United States v. Verners*, 53 F.3d 291, 296 (10th Cir. 1995)). *See also United States v. Mancuso*, 718 F.3d 780, 794-96 (9th Cir. 2013) (following *Shetler* and holding that "primary or principal use" instruction should have been used for count alleging unlawful use of dental office, as well as use of house).

*See United States v. Basinger*, 60 F.3d 1400, 1405-06 (9th Cir. 1995) (analyzing dominion and control over a shed).

*Revised July 2013*

## 12.19 Controlled Substance—Unlawful Importation (21 U.S.C. §§ 952, 960)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ ] of the indictment with unlawful importation of a controlled substance in violation of Sections 952 and 960 of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly brought [*specify controlled substance*] into the United States from a place outside the United States; and

Second, the defendant knew the substance he was bringing into the United States was [*specify controlled substance*] or some other prohibited drug.

[The government is not required to prove the amount or quantity of [*specify controlled substance*]. It need only prove beyond a reasonable doubt that there was a measurable or detectable amount of [*specify controlled substance*].]

It does not matter whether the defendant knew that the substance was [*specify controlled substance*]. It is sufficient that the defendant knew that it was some kind of a prohibited drug.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 12.1 (Controlled Substance—Possession with Intent to Distribute) and 12.2 (Determining Amount of Controlled Substance).

An indictment charging separate counts for different controlled substances is not multiplicitous. *See United States v. Vargas-Castillo*, 329 F.3d 715, 720-22 (9th Cir. 2003).

"By their very nature, 'importation' offenses and 'distribution' offenses require entirely different factual bases to justify a conviction." *United States v. Transfiguracion*, 442 F.3d 1222, 1235-36 (9th Cir. 2006).

*See also United States v. Vallejo*, 237 F.3d 1008, 1025 n.8 (9th Cir. 2001) (noting that "the Ninth Circuit model instructions correctly state the law under 21 U.S.C. § 952 and 960").

## 12.20 Controlled Substance—Manufacture for Purpose of Importation (21 U.S.C. §§ 959, 960(a)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with the manufacture of [*specify controlled substance*] for purposes of unlawful importation in violation of Sections 959 and 960(a)(3) of Title 21 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant manufactured [*specify controlled substance*] outside of the United States; and

Second, the defendant either intended that the [*specify controlled substance*] be unlawfully brought into the United States [or into waters within a distance of 12 miles off the coast of the United States] or knew that the [*specify controlled substance*] would be unlawfully brought into the United States.

## 12.21Controlled Substance—Statutory Enhancement Based on Prior Serious Drug Felony or Serious Violent Felony

### Comment

The First Step Act of 2018 ("FSA") changed the law on sentencing enhancements for drug crimes pursuant to 21 U.S.C. §§ 841, 851. Prior to the FSA, 21 U.S.C. § 841(b) provided for enhanced mandatory minimums (or increased maximums) for those defendants who had a prior conviction for a "felony drug offense." For the statutory enhancement to apply under this prior scheme, the government had to simply prove the fact of the prior conviction. 21 U.S.C. § 802(44).

In *Apprendi v. United States*, 530 U.S. 466, 490 (2000), the Supreme Court held that "[o]ther than the fact of a prior conviction, any fact that increases the penalty for a crime beyond the prescribed statutory maximum must be submitted to a jury, and proved beyond a reasonable doubt." The Court explained that recidivism, or "the fact of a prior conviction," is "an exceptional departure from" and a "narrow exception to the general rule" that requires the jury to find such facts. *Id.* at 487, 490. *Almendarez-Torres v. United States*, 523 U.S. 224 (1998), which created this narrow exception, has been questioned by the Supreme Court but not overturned. When the FSA was enacted, it replaced "felony drug offense" with "serious drug felony," as one type of requisite prior conviction for the enhancement to apply. *See* 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(A). A "serious drug felony" is a "serious drug offense" as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 924(e)(2) and one for which (1) "the offender served a term of imprisonment of more than 12 months," and (2) "the offender's release from any term of imprisonment was within 15 years of the commencement of the instant offense." 21 U.S.C. § 802(57). In addition, the FSA added that a "serious violent felony" would qualify for the enhancement; the prior offense must be a "serious violent felony" as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 3559(c)(2) and one in which "the offender served a term of imprisonment of more than 12 months." 21 U.S.C. § 802(58). But the FSA did not change 21 U.S.C. § 851, which provides that the facts related to a prior conviction shall be determined by the court without a jury. Pursuant to *Almendarez-Torres*, a judge, and not a jury, could make the determination whether there was a qualifying prior felony conviction. However, the FSA altered the type of proof required to trigger enhanced mandatory sentences under § 841(b)(1)(A) and (B) for serious drug felonies and added the serious violent felony provision. Note, however, that § 841(b)(1)(C) and (D) were not altered by the FSA and those provisions continue to require a prior conviction for a "felony drug offense" for the sentencing enhancement to apply, such that *Almendarez-Torres* would continue to apply.

Neither the Supreme Court nor the Ninth Circuit has addressed whether the *Almendarez-Torres* exception applies in a post-FSA world, when a defendant contests, factually and legally, whether a prior conviction qualifies as a "serious drug felony" or a "serious violent felony." Other courts are currently divided on whether the additional facts regarding the prior conviction must be submitted to a jury or if they can be determined by the court at sentencing. *See United States v. Fields*, 435 F. Supp. 3d 761 (E.D. Ky. 2020), *vacated and remanded*, 44 F.4th 490 (6th Cir. 2022), *and aff'd in part, vacated in part on other grounds, and remanded*, 53 F.4th 1027 (6th Cir. 2022) (holding that the jury, and not the judge, is required to make findings about the length of a defendant's prior imprisonment and the 15-year release window for a prior drug offense); *United States v. Fields*, 53 F.4th 1027, 1036-38 (6th Cir. 2022) (stating in dicta that lower court's finding that jury must decide the two factual predicates for a serious drug offense as "intuitive" and "persuasive," but ultimately not deciding the issue because the two factual predicates "were actually

submitted to the jury," so defendant "suffered no personal constitutional violation"); *United States v. Ruiz*, Case No. 1:21-CR-426-MLB, 2023 WL 3562970, at *5 (N.D. Ga. May 19, 2023) (indicating that "a jury will likely have to decide whether [the defendant] served a term of imprisonment of more than 12 months," the factual predicate for a "serious violent felony"); *United States v. Delpriore*, Case No. 3:18-cr-00136-SLG, 2023 WL 4735031, at *5 (D. Alaska Mar. 20, 2023) (granting defendant's motion to strike the enhanced statutory penalty because the government failed to submit the issue to a jury and prove beyond a reasonable doubt the two factual predicates of a "serious drug felony"); *but see United States v. Lee*, Case No. 7:18-CR-153-FL-1, 2021 WL 640028, at *5-7 (E.D.N.C. Feb. 18, 2021) (holding that the two factual predicates are "encompasse[d]" within "the fact 'of a prior conviction'" so as to fall within the *Apprendi* exception); *United States v. Fitch*, Case No. 1:19-CR-30-HAB, 2022 WL 1165000, at *2 (N.D. Ind. Apr. 19, 2022) (holding that the two factual predicates for a "serious drug felony" "fall under the umbrella of 'fact[s] of a prior conviction'" and did not need to be submitted to a jury (alteration in the original)).

A trial judge may consider whether to ask the jury to decide whether the prior conviction meets the current statutory criteria, after a finding of guilty on the new drug charge and before the defendant files a response to the government's information identifying a prior conviction. *See* 21 U.S.C. § 851(a)(1), (c)(1).

*Revised June 2024*

## 13. COUNTERFEITING

**Instruction**

13.1 Counterfeiting (18 U.S.C. § 471)
13.2 Passing or Attempting to Pass Counterfeit Obligations (18 U.S.C. § 472)
13.3 Connecting Parts of Genuine Instruments (18 U.S.C. § 484)
13.4 Falsely Making, Altering, Forging or Counterfeiting a Writing to Obtain Money from United States (18 U.S.C. § 495)
13.5 Uttering or Publishing False Writing (18 U.S.C. § 495)
13.6 Transmitting or Presenting False Writing to Defraud United States (18 U.S.C. § 495)
13.7 Forging Endorsement on Treasury Check, Bond, or Security of United States (18 U.S.C. § 510(a)(1))
13.8 Passing or Attempting to Pass Forged Endorsement on Treasury Check, Bond, or Security of United States (18 U.S.C. § 510(a)(2))

## 13.1 Counterfeiting (18 U.S.C. § 471)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with counterfeiting in violation of Section 471 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[falsely made] [forged] [counterfeited] [altered]] [*specify obligation or security of United States*]; and

Second, the defendant acted with intent to defraud.

To be counterfeit, [*specify item*] must have a likeness or resemblance to the genuine [*specify obligation or security of United States*].

### Comment

For a definition of "intent to defraud," *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

*See United States v. Johnson*, 434 F.2d 827, 829 (9th Cir. 1970) (discussing requirement for likeness or resemblance to genuine obligation or security).

## 13.2 Passing or Attempting to Pass Counterfeit Obligations (18 U.S.C. § 472)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[passing] [uttering] [publishing] [selling]] [[attempting to [pass] [utter] [publish] [sell]] a counterfeit obligation in violation of Section 472 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[passed] [uttered] [published] [sold]] [[attempted to [pass] [utter] [publish] [sell]] a [[falsely made] [forged] [counterfeit] [altered]] [*specify obligation or security of United States*];

Second, the defendant knew that the [*specify obligation or security of United States*] was [falsely made] [forged] [counterfeited] [altered]; [and]

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud[.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

To be counterfeit, a bill must have a likeness or resemblance to the genuine [*specify obligation or security of United States*].

### Comment

For a definition of "intent to defraud," *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

An utterance has been described as "tantamount to an offer." *United States v. Chang*, 207 F.3d 1169, 1174 (9th Cir. 2000).

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that

strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 13.3 Connecting Parts of Genuine Instruments (18 U.S.C. § 484)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with connecting parts of two or more [*specify genuine instrument*] in violation of Section 484 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant connected together parts of two or more [*specify genuine instrument*] issued under the authority of [*specify issuer*]; and

Second, the defendant did so with the intent to defraud.

### Comment

For a definition of "intent to defraud," *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

## 13.4 Falsely Making, Altering, Forging, or Counterfeiting a Writing to Obtain Money from United States (18 U.S.C. § 495)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with falsely making, altering, forging, or counterfeiting [*specify writing*] in violation of Section 495 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [falsely made] [altered] [forged] [counterfeited] [*specify writing*]; and

Second, the defendant did so for the purpose [of obtaining or receiving] [enabling another person to obtain or receive] money from [the United States] [an officer of the United States] [an agent of the United States].

## 13.5 Uttering or Publishing False Writing (18 U.S.C. § 495)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [uttering] [publishing] as true a false writing with the intent to defraud the United States in violation of Section 495 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [uttered] [published] as true a [falsely made] [altered] [forged] [counterfeit] [*specify writing*];

Second, the defendant knew that the [*specify writing*] was [falsely made] [altered] [forged] [counterfeited]; and

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud the United States.

### Comment

For a definition of "intent to defraud," *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

An utterance has been described as "tantamount to an offer." *United States v. Chang*, 207 F.3d 1169, 1174 (9th Cir. 2000).

## 13.6 Transmitting or Presenting False Writing to Defraud United States (18 U.S.C. § 495)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [transmitting] [presenting] a false writing in support of or in relation to an account or claim with intent to defraud the United States. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [transmitted] [presented] a [[falsely made] [altered] [forged] [counterfeit]] [*specify writing*] to an [office] [officer] of the United States;

Second, the defendant knew that the [*specify writing*] was [falsely made] [altered] [forged] [counterfeit];

Third, the [*specify writing*] was [transmitted] [presented] in support of [*specify account or claim*];

Fourth, the defendant acted with intent to defraud the United States; and

Fifth, the [*specify writing*] was material to action on the [*specify account or claim*]; that is, the [*specify writing*] had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, action on the [*specify account or claim*].

### Comment

For a definition of "intent to defraud," *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

In *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 22-23 (1999), the Court explained that materiality is a necessary aspect of the legal concept of fraud which is incorporated into criminal statutes concerning fraud unless the statute says otherwise (holding materiality of falsehood must be proved in prosecution under bank, mail, and wire fraud statutes). The common law test for materiality in the false statement statutes, as reflected in the fifth element of this instruction, is the preferred formulation. *United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008).

## 13.7 Forging Endorsement on Treasury Check, Bond, or Security of United States (18 U.S.C. § 510(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with forging or falsely making [an endorsement] [a signature] on a Treasury [check] [bond] [security] of the United States in violation of Section 510 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant falsely made or forged [an endorsement] [a signature] on a Treasury [check] [bond] [security] of the United States; and

Second, the defendant did so with intent to defraud.

### Comment

For a definition of "intent to defraud," *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

## 13.8 Passing or Attempting to Pass Forged Endorsement on Treasury Check, Bond, or Security of United States (18 U.S.C. § 510(a)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[passing] [uttering] [publishing] [attempting to [pass] [utter] [publish]] a Treasury [check] [bond] [security] of the United States in violation of Section 510 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[passed] [uttered] [published]] [attempted to [pass] [utter] [publish]] a Treasury [check] [bond] [security] of the United States which bore a falsely made or forged [endorsement] [signature]; [and]

Second, the defendant did so with intent to defraud[.] [; and]

[Third, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

For a definition of "intent to defraud," *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

An utterance has been described as "tantamount to an offer." *United States v. Chang*, 207 F.3d 1169, 1174 (9th Cir. 2000).

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176

(9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 14. FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES

### Instruction


14.1 Firearms
14.2 Firearms—Fugitive from Justice Defined (18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(15))
14.3 Firearms—Dealing, Importing or Manufacturing Without License (18 U.S.C. § 922 (a)(1)(A), (B))
14.4 Firearms—Shipment or Transportation to a Person Not Licensed as a Dealer, Importer, Manufacturer, or Collector (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(2))
14.5 Firearms—Transporting or Receiving in State of Residence (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(3))
14.6 Firearms—Unlawful Transportation of Destructive Device, Machine Gun, Short-Barreled Shotgun or Short-Barreled Rifle (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(4))
14.7 Firearms—Unlawful Disposition by Unlicensed Dealer (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(5))
14.8 Firearms—False Statement or Identification in Acquisition or Attempted Acquisition (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6))
14.9 Firearms—Unlawful Sale or Delivery (18 U.S.C. § 922(b)(1)-(3))
14.10 Firearms—Unlawful Sale or Delivery Without Specific Authority (18 U.S.C. § 922(b)(4))
14.11 Firearms—Unlawful Sale (18 U.S.C. § 922(d))
14.12 Firearms—Delivery to Carrier Without Written Notice (18 U.S.C. § 922(e))
14.13 Firearms—Unlawful Receipt (18 U.S.C. § 922(g))
14.14 Firearms—Unlawful Shipment or Transportation (18 U.S.C. § 922(g))
14.15 Firearms—Unlawful Possession (18 U.S.C. § 922(g))
14.16 Firearms— Armed Career Criminal Act (18 U.S.C. § 924(e))
14.17 Firearms—Unlawful Possession—Defense of Justification
14.18 Firearms—Transportation or Shipment of Stolen Firearm (18 U.S.C. § 922(i))
14.19 Firearms—Transportation, Shipment, Possession, or Receipt in Commerce with Removed or Altered Serial Number (18 U.S.C. § 922(k))
14.20 Firearms—Shipment or Transportation by Person Under Indictment for Felony (18 U.S.C. § 922(n))
14.21 Firearms—Receipt by Person Under Indictment for Felony (18 U.S.C. § 922(n))
14.22 Firearms—Using, Carrying, or Brandishing in Commission of Crime of Violence or Drug Trafficking Crime (18 U.S.C. § 924(c))
14.23 Firearms—Possession in Furtherance of Crime of Violence or Drug Trafficking Crime (18 U.S.C. § 924(c))
14.24 Firearms—Unlawful Possession of Body Armor (18 U.S.C. § 931(a))
14.25 Firearms—Possession of Unregistered Firearm (26 U.S.C. § 5861(d))
14.26 Firearms—Destructive Devices—Component Parts (26 U.S.C. § 5861(d))
14.27 Firearms—Possession Without Serial Number (26 U.S.C. § 5861(i))
14.28 Transportation of an Explosive or Attempted Transportation of an Explosive (18 U.S.C. § 844(d))

## 14.1 Firearms

### Comment

Definitions of many of the terms used in the firearms statutes are found in 18 U.S.C. § 921 and 26 U.S.C. § 5845. The Committee recommends that definitional instructions be used sparingly. Many of the terms defined are of common significance and really require no definition. Some examples are "pistol," "rifle," "importer," and "manufacturer." While jurors will readily recognize that one who is engaged in the business of buying and selling firearms is a dealer, they probably do not know that one engaged in the business of repairing firearms is also a dealer, 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(11)(B), and in that case a definition would be necessary.

The most effective way to avoid definitions relating to firearms is to use the most specific designation available. For example, assume that a defendant is being tried for transporting a rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(4). Examples of the ways the judge might instruct the jury on one of the elements are as follows:

(1) "The defendant transported a firearm." It will then be necessary to have an additional instruction that a rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces is a firearm. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(3)(D) (defining "firearm" as including "destructive device") and 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(4)(A)(iii) (defining "destructive device" as including a "rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces); or

(2) "The defendant transported a destructive device." Even here, it will then be necessary to instruct that a "rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces" is a destructive device. *Id.*; or

(3) "The defendant transported a rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces." Using the third alternative, no additional instruction is necessary.

## 14.2 Firearms—Fugitive from Justice Defined (18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(15))

A fugitive from justice is a person who has fled from any state to avoid prosecution for a crime or to avoid giving testimony in any criminal proceeding.

### Comment

This instruction is appropriate when a firearms offense involves a fugitive from justice. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 922(d)(2) and (g)(2).

## 14.3 Firearms—Dealing, Importing, or Manufacturing Without License (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(1)(A), (B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [dealing] [importing] [manufacturing] firearms without a license, in violation of Section 922(a)(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was willfully engaged in the business of [dealing in] [importing] [manufacturing] firearms within the dates specified in the indictment; and

Second, the defendant did not then have a license as a firearms [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer].

### Comment

The government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant "engaged in a greater degree of activity than the occasional sale of a hobbyist or collector, and that [the defendant] devoted time, attention, and labor to selling firearms" as a trade or business with the intent of making profits through the repeated purchase and sale of firearms. *See United States v. King*, 735 F.3d 1098, 1106 (9th Cir. 2013) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(21)(C)). For a person to engage in the business of dealing in firearms, it is not necessary to prove an actual sale of firearms. *Id.* at 1107 n.8.

Willfully, as used in this statute, requires proof that the defendant knew that his or her conduct was unlawful, but does not require proof that the defendant knew of the federal licensing requirement. *Bryan v. United States*, 524 U.S. 184, 198-99 (1998).

*Revised May 2020*

## 14.4 Firearms—Shipment or Transportation to a Person Not Licensed as a Dealer, Importer, Manufacturer, or Collector (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with the [shipment] [transportation] of a firearm to a person not licensed as a [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer] [collector] of firearms, in violation of Section 922(a)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was a licensed firearms [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer] [collector];

Second, the defendant willfully [shipped] [transported] a [*specify firearm*] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]]; and

Third, the defendant [shipped] [transported] the [*specify firearm*] to a person who was not licensed as a firearms [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer] [collector].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 24.8 (False Impersonation of Citizen of United States).

While § 922(a)(2) also prohibits shipment or transportation of a firearm to a person not licensed as a firearms collector, a firearms collector's license authorizes transactions only in curio and relic firearms. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 923(b); 27 C.F.R. §§ 478.41(c) and (d), 478.50, and 478.93. Moreover, the prohibition in § 922(a)(2) does not apply to returning a firearm or replacing a firearm of the same kind or type to a person from whom it was received. It also does not prohibit "depositing a firearm for conveyance in the mails to any officer, employee, agent, or watchman" who is authorized to receive such firearms for use in connection with that person's official duty. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(2)(A) and (B).

*Revised May 2020*

## 14.5 Firearms—Transporting or Receiving in State of Residence (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [transporting] [receiving] a firearm [into] [in] the state of [his] [her] residence in violation of Section 922(a)(3) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was not licensed as a firearms [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer] [collector]; and

Second, the defendant willfully [transported into] [received in] the state in which the defendant resided a [*specify firearm*] that the defendant purchased or otherwise obtained outside that state.

A person acts "willfully" if [he] [she] acts knowingly and purposely and with the intent to do something that the law forbids. Willfulness can be proved by direct evidence or by circumstantial evidence.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms); Comment to Instruction 14.4 (Firearms—Shipment or Transportation to a Person Not Licensed as a Dealer, Importer, Manufacturer, of Collector); Instruction 4.6 (Willfully). *But see* 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(3) (listing exceptions).

The government is not required to prove that a defendant knew that transporting or receiving firearms into his or her state of residence violated a specific legal duty or particular law, but the government is required to prove that the defendant acted willfully in committing the charged conduct. *United States v. Hernandez*, 859 F.3d 817, 822-23 (9th Cir. 2017) (per curiam).

*Revised May 2020*

## 14.6 Firearms—Unlawful Transportation of Destructive Device, Machine Gun, Short-Barreled Shotgun, or Short-Barreled Rifle (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(4))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with the unlawful transportation of a [destructive device] [machine gun] [short-barreled shotgun] [short-barreled rifle] in violation of Section 922(a)(4) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was not licensed as a firearms [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer] [collector];

Second, the defendant knowingly transported a [*specify destructive device or firearm*] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]]; and

Third, that the defendant did so without specific authorization by the Attorney General of the United States.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms); Comment to Instruction 14.4 (Firearms—Shipment or Transportation to a Person Not Licensed as a Dealer, Importer, Manufacturer, or Collector).

The term "destructive device" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(4)(A)-(C) as:

> (A) any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas--(i) bomb, (ii) grenade, (iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (v) mine, or (vi) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses;
>
> (B) any type of weapon (other than a shotgun or a shotgun shell which the Attorney General finds is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes) by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter; and
>
> (C) any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in subparagraph (A) or (B) and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

The definition of "machine gun" is provided in 26 U.S.C. § 5845(b). *United States v. Kuzma*, 967 F.3d 959, 967 (9th Cir. 2020). "[A] weapon is 'designed to shoot' automatically if it has a specific configuration of objective structural features that, in the absence of any minor defect, would give the weapon the capacity to shoot automatically." *Id.* at 969-70.

*See United States v. Schaefer*, 13 F.4th 875, 893-95 (9th Cir. 2021) (explaining "destructive device" as that term is used in both 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(4) and 26 U.S.C. § 5845(f)).

## 14.7 Firearms—Unlawful Disposition by Unlicensed Dealer (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(5))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with the unlawful disposition of a firearm in violation of Section 922(a)(5) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant willfully [sold] [traded] [gave] [transported] [delivered] [transferred] a [*specify firearm*] to [*name of unlicensed dealer*];

Second, neither the defendant nor [*name of unlicensed dealer*] was licensed as a firearm [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer] [collector]; and

Third, the defendant knew or had reasonable cause to believe that [*name of unlicensed dealer*] was not a resident of the same state in which the defendant resided.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms); Comment to Instruction 14.4 (Firearms—Shipment or Transportation to a Person Not Licensed as a Dealer, Importer, Manufacturer, or Collector).

*Revised May 2020*

## 14.8 Firearms—False Statement or Identification in Acquisition or Attempted Acquisition (18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [making a false statement] [giving false identification] in [[acquiring] [attempting to acquire]] [*specify firearm*] in violation of Section 922(a)(6) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*specify seller*] was a licensed firearms [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer] [collector];

Second, in connection with [acquiring] [attempting to acquire] a [*specify firearm*] from [*specify seller*], the defendant [made a false statement] [furnished or exhibited false identification];

Third, the defendant knew the [statement] [identification] was false; and

Fourth, the false [statement] [identification] was material; that is, the false [statement] [identification] had a natural tendency to influence or was capable of influencing [*specify seller*] into believing that the [*specify firearm*] could be lawfully sold to the defendant.

### Comment

As to the fourth element of this instruction, the identity of the "actual" buyer is material to the lawfulness of the sale of a firearm. *Abramski v. United States*, 573 U.S. 169, 179 (2014). A "straw" buyer's false indication on ATF gun sales Form 4473 that he is the "actual" buyer is material, even if the true buyer was legally eligible to own the firearm. *Id.* at 189-90; *see also United States v. Manney*, 114 F.4th 1048, 1053-54 (9th Cir. 2024) (holding that *Abramksi* foreclosed the defendant's argument that her statement falsely claiming to be the actual purchaser was immaterial because the true buyer could legally possess a firearm).

*Revised November 2024*

## 14.9 Firearms—Unlawful Sale or Delivery (18 U.S.C. § 922(b)(1)-(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with unlawfully [selling] [delivering] a firearm in violation of Section 922(b)[(1)][(2)][(3)] of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was licensed as a firearms [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer] [collector];

Second, the defendant willfully [[sold] [delivered]] [*specify firearm*] to [*specify unauthorized purchaser*]; and

Third, the defendant knew or had reasonable cause to believe that [[*specify unauthorized purchaser*] was less than eighteen years of age] [purchase or possession of the firearm by [*specify unauthorized purchaser*] would be in violation of [*applicable state law or published ordinance*]] [*specify unauthorized purchaser*] did not reside in the same state in which the defendant's place of business was located]].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms).

If ammunition is for or the firearm is a shotgun or rifle, it is unlawful to sell or deliver it to a person the licensee knows or has reason to believe is under eighteen years of age; the minimum age is twenty-one if the ammunition is for or the firearm is not a shotgun or rifle. 18 U.S.C. § 922(b)(1).

Section 922(b)(3) has been interpreted to mean that a dealer licensed in one state, who attends a gun show in another state, may display and possess guns, negotiate price, and receive money for guns as long as the transfer of the firearm is through a licensee of the state in which the gun show is located fills out the appropriate forms. *United States v. Ogles*, 406 F.3d 586, 590 (9th Cir. 2005), *adopted by* 440 F.3d 1095, 1099 (9th Cir. 2006) (en banc).

*Revised May 2020*

## 14.10 Firearms—Unlawful Sale or Delivery Without Specific Authority (18 U.S.C. § 922(b)(4))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [selling] [delivering] a [destructive device] [machine gun] [short-barreled shotgun] [short-barreled rifle] without specific authority in violation of Section 922(b)(4) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was licensed as a firearms [dealer] [importer] [manufacturer] [collector];

Second, the defendant willfully [[sold] [delivered]] [*specify destructive device or firearm*] to [*name of purchaser*]; and

Third, the defendant did so without specific authorization by the Attorney General of the United States.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms).

The term "destructive device" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(4)(A)-(C) as:

> (A) any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas--(i) bomb, (ii) grenade, (iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (v) mine, or (vi) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses;
>
> (B) any type of weapon (other than a shotgun or a shotgun shell which the Attorney General finds is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes) by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter; and
>
> (C) any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in subparagraph (A) or (B) and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

*See United States v. Schaefer*, 13 F.4th 875, 893-95 (9th Cir. 2021) (explaining "destructive device" as that term is used in both 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(4) and 26 U.S.C. § 5845(f)).

*Revised Dec. 2021*

## 14.11 Firearms—Unlawful Sale (18 U.S.C. § 922(d))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with selling [a firearm] [ammunition] in violation of Section 922(d) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly sold [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*] to [*name of unauthorized purchaser*]; and

Second, the defendant knew or had reasonable cause to believe that [*name of unauthorized purchaser*] was [*specify applicable prohibited status from 18 U.S.C. § 922(d)(1)-(9)*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms).

Section 922(d) makes it unlawful "to sell or otherwise dispose" of a firearm or ammunition. The instruction is written only in terms of a sale. If the facts are that the defendant "otherwise disposed" of the firearm or ammunition (for example, by gift or trade), the instruction should be modified accordingly.

Section 922(d)(1) makes it unlawful to sell or otherwise dispose of a firearm to a person who "is under indictment for, or has been convicted in any court of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year." The Committee recommends that the specific crime be stated in the instruction. *Cf.* Comment to Instruction 14.16 (Firearms—Unlawful Possession—Convicted Felon). Whether a particular crime is punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year is a matter of law.

For a definition of "fugitive from justice," *see* Instruction 14.2 (Firearms—Fugitive from Justice Defined).

*Revised May 2020*

### 14.12 Firearms—Delivery to Carrier Without Written Notice (18 U.S.C. § 922(e))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with delivery of a firearm to a carrier without written notice in violation of Section 922(e) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [delivered] [caused to be delivered] to [*specify carrier*] a package or other container in which there was [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*];

Second, the package or container was to be [[shipped] [transported]] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]];

Third, the package or container was to be [shipped] [transported] to a person who was not licensed as a firearms dealer, manufacturer, importer, or collector; and

Fourth, the defendant did not give written notice to [*specify carrier*] that there was [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*] in the package or container.

#### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms).

*Revised May 2020*

## 14.13 Firearms—Unlawful Receipt (18 U.S.C. § 922(g))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with receiving [a firearm] [ammunition] in violation of Section 922(g) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly received [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*];

Second, the [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*] had been [[shipped] [transported]] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]];

Third, at the time the defendant received the [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*], the defendant [*specify applicable prohibited status from 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(g)(1)-(9)*]; and

Fourth, at the time the defendant received the [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*], the defendant knew [he] [she] was [*specify applicable prohibited status from 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1)-(9)*].

If a person knowingly takes possession of [a firearm] [ammunition], [he] [she] has "received" it.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms).

Under 18 U.S.C. § 922(g) individuals falling into certain categories, such as fugitives from justice, are prohibited from receiving, shipping, or transporting firearms or ammunition. This instruction covers receipt for shipment or transportation, *see* Instruction 14.14 (Firearms—Unlawful Shipment or Transportation), and for possession, *see* Instruction 14.15 (Firearms—Unlawful Possession).

To establish "knowingly" under the first element, the government need not prove the defendant's knowledge of the law, only "that the defendant consciously possessed [received, shipped, or transported] what he knew to be a firearm." *United States v. Benamor*, 937 F.3d 1182, 1186 (9th Cir. 2019) (quoting *United States v. Beasley*, 346 F.3d 930, 934 (2003)). . Moreover, a defendant prosecuted under § 922(g)(1) need not be aware that the firearm or ammunition traveled in interstate commerce. . *United States v. Stone*, 706 F.3d 1145, 1146 (9th Cir. 2013) ("there is no mens rea for the affecting commerce element of the felon-in-possession statute."); *United States v. Walker*, 68 F.4th 1227 (9th Cir. 2023) (holding that the Supreme Court's decision in *Rehaif v. United States*, 139 S. Ct. 2191 (2019), does not overrule and is not clearly irreconcilable with the Ninth Circuit's decision in *Stone*); *see also United States v. Nevils*, 598 F.3d 1158, 1168-70 (9th Cir. 2010) (en banc) (concluding sufficient evidence established sleeping defendant had knowing possession of firearms). . The antique firearm exception, codified at 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(16), is an affirmative defense and the government need not prove that the defendant knew a firearm was not antique to establish knowing possession. *Benamor*, 973 F.3d at 1186-87.

The third and fourth elements refer to 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1)-(9), which sets forth nine categories of individuals prohibited from receiving, shipping, transporting, or possessing firearms and ammunition. Those categories are: (1) convicted felons; (2) fugitives from justice; (3) unlawful users and addicts of controlled substances defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802; (4) individuals who have been adjudicated as mentally ill or who have been committed to a mental institution; (5) aliens without authorization to be in the United States, and (subject to certain exceptions set forth at 18 U.S.C. § 922(y)(2)) aliens lawfully in the United States but with non-immigrant visas; (6) individuals who have been dishonorably discharged from the Armed Forces; (7) individuals who have renounced their citizenship; (8) individuals who are subject to certain restraining orders issued after the individuals have been provided notice and opportunity to be heard and supported by specific factual findings that the individuals represent a credible threat to their intimate partners or children; and (9) individuals who have been convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.

In addition to proving that the defendant falls into one of the categories listed in § 922(g)(1)-(9), the defendant must have known of his or her relevant status at the time of the offense. *Rehaif*, 139 S. Ct. at 2200 ("[I]n a prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 922(g) and § 924(a)(2), the Government must prove both that the defendant knew he possessed a firearm and that he knew he belonged to the relevant category of persons barred from possessing a firearm."); *see also United States v. Door*, 996 F.3d 606, 614-16 (9th Cir. 2021) (holding that government must prove defendant's knowledge of prohibited status). . If a defendant is charged under § 922(g)(5)(B), the government must prove that the defendant knew he had a nonimmigrant visa at the time of the offense. *See United States v. Gear*, 9 F.4th 1040, 1042 (9th Cir. 2021) (per curiam) (as amended).

If the defendant is charged under § 922(g)(1) (convicted felon), the instruction should be modified if the defendant stipulates to the third element of the offense rather than have evidence of prior convictions presented to the jury. *See Old Chief v. United States*, 519 U.S. 172, 190-92 (1997) (holding that in case where "proof of convict status is at issue," it is "an abuse of discretion to admit the record of conviction" when defendant offers to stipulate to the prior conviction). If the defendant so stipulates, the third element should be modified as follows:

> Third, at the time the defendant [received] [shipped] [transported] [possessed] the [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*], the defendant had been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year. The defendant stipulates that on [*date*], the defendant was convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

If the defendant does not stipulate to the third element, the following instruction should be given:

> Third, at the time the defendant [received] [shipped] [transported] [possessed] the [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*], the defendant had been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

A conviction in a foreign court does not satisfy the element of prior conviction under § 922(g)(1). *Small v. United States*, 544 U.S. 385, 387 (2005).

For a definition of "fugitive from justice" as used in § 922(g)(2), *see* Instruction 14.2 (Firearms—Fugitive from Justice Defined).

Despite some indication in the case law that aliens who have been released on bail pending deportation or pending a removal hearing, but who have filed applications to legalize their immigration status, are not subject to the prohibition of § 922(g)(5), such a conclusion is incorrect under current versions of removability statutes. *See United States v. Latu*, 479 F.3d 1153, 1158 (9th Cir. 2007).

The term "misdemeanor crime of domestic violence" used in § 922(g)(9) is separately defined in § 921(a)(33)(A). The Supreme Court has interpreted that definition to include two requirements: first, the crime must have as an element "the use or attempted use of physical force, or the threatened use of a deadly weapon," and second, the victim of the offense must have been in a "specified domestic relationship" with the defendant. *United States v. Hayes*, 555 U.S. 415, 421 (2009). . The first requirement, the use or attempted use of force, or threatened use of a deadly weapon, must be an element of the underlying offense. *Id.* Conversely, the second requirement, the domestic relationship, need not be an element of the underlying offense. *Id.* A conviction under a statute that does not require a domestic relationship may thus be a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence if the government proves that the "prior conviction . . . was, in fact, for an offense . . . committed by the defendant against a spouse or other domestic victim." *Id.* (internal quotation marks omitted).

In determining whether a statute has as an element the "use . . . of physical force" for purposes of § 922(g)(9), the Supreme Court has held that "Congress incorporated the common-law meaning of 'force'—namely, offensive touching—in § 921(a)(33)(A)'s definition of a 'misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.'" *United States v. Castleman*, 572 U.S. 157, 161-63 (2014). . Accordingly, the statute under which the defendant is convicted need not prohibit *violent* force, so long as it prohibits "the degree of force that supports a common-law battery conviction." *Id.* at 168; *see id.* at 168-79 (holding that Tennessee statute prohibiting "intentionally or knowingly caus[ing] bodily injury" to family or household member necessarily has as element use of physical force in common-law sense).

*Revised March 2026*

## 14.14 Firearms—Unlawful Shipment or Transportation (18 U.S.C. § 922(g))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[shipping] [transporting]] [[a firearm] [ammunition]] in violation of Section 922(g) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[shipped] [transported]] [[*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*]] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]];

Second, at the time of [shipment] [transportation] the defendant was [*specify applicable prohibited status from 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(g)(1)-(9)*]; and

Third, at the time the defendant [[shipped] [transported]] [[*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*]] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]], the defendant knew [he] [she] was *[specify applicable prohibited status from 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1)-(9)*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms).

For a discussion of both knowledge elements for a prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 922(g), *see Rehaif v. United States*, 139 S. Ct. 2191, 2200 (2019) ("[T]he Government must prove both that the defendant knew he possessed a firearm and that he knew he belonged to the relevant category of persons barred from possessing a firearm."). For a discussion of the nine categories of prohibited status set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1)-(9), *see* Comment to Instruction 14.13 (Firearms—Unlawful Receipt).

*Revised May 2023*

## 14.15 Firearms—Unlawful Possession (18 U.S.C. § 922(g))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with the possession of [a firearm] [ammunition] in violation of Section 922(g) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*];

Second, the [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*] had been [[shipped] [transported]] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]];

Third, at the time the defendant possessed the [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*], the defendant [*specify applicable prohibited status from 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1)-(9)*]; and

Fourth, at the time the defendant possessed the [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*], the defendant knew [he] [she] was [*specify applicable prohibited status from 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1)-(9)*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 14.1 (Firearms).

For a discussion of both knowledge elements for a prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 922(g), see *Rehaif v. United States*, 588 U.S. 225, 237 (2019) ("the Government must prove both that the defendant knew he possessed a firearm and that he knew he belonged to the relevant category of persons barred from possessing a firearm."). For a discussion of the nine categories of prohibited status set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1)-(9), *see* Comment to Instruction 14.13 (Firearms—Unlawful Receipt). For a definition of "possession," *see* Instruction 6.15 (Possession—Defined).

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity as to when the possession occurred. *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity); *United States v. Garcia-Rivera*, 353 F.3d 788, 792 (9th Cir. 2003). For instance, an indictment may allege that the possession occurred at some point within an imprecise time frame. In such a case, and if there was evidence that the defendant possessed the weapon or ammunition on more than one occasion during the interval, the jury should be instructed to find unanimously as follows: "You must unanimously agree that the possession occurred on or about a particular date." In such a case, it is advisable to require the jurors to answer a special interrogatory specifying the date(s) upon which all agreed that the possession occurred.

The Ninth Circuit does not recognize an "innocent possession" affirmative defense. *See United States v. Johnson*, 459 F.3d 990, 995-98 (9th Cir. 2006).

Although brief handling of a weapon does not always satisfy the element of possession, a short length of possession does not preclude conviction. *See id*. at 996. The commission of the

crime requires no "act" other than the knowing possession of a firearm or ammunition by someone not authorized to do so. *United States v. Beasley*, 346 F.3d 930, 934 (9th Cir. 2003).

Constructive or joint possession may satisfy the possession element. To show constructive possession, the government must prove a connection between the defendant and the firearm or ammunition sufficient "to support the inference that the defendant exercised dominion and control over" it. *United States v. Carrasco*, 257 F.3d 1045, 1049 (9th Cir. 2001) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted); *see generally*, *United States v. Tucker*, 641 F.3d 1110 (9th Cir. 2011). Similarly, joint control of the premises where the firearm or ammunition was found may be sufficient to establish possession where a defendant "has knowledge of the weapon and both the power and the intention to exercise dominion and control over it." *Carrasco*, 257 F.3d at 1049 (internal quotation marks and citation omitted).

For a defendant to be convicted of multiple counts under 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1) for possession of multiple firearms and/or ammunition, the government must prove that the firearms and/or ammunition at issue were acquired or possessed at different times or stored in different places. *United States v. Keen*, 96 F.3d 425, 432 n.11 (9th Cir. 1996); *United States v. Wiga*, 662 F.2d 1325, 1336 (9th Cir. 1981). If a defendant is charged with multiple counts, the jury should be instructed to make a finding of fact as to separate acquisition or possession. *United States v. Ankeny*, 502 F.3d 829, 838 (9th Cir. 2007); *United States v. Szalkiewicz*, 944 F.2d 653, 653-54 (9th Cir. 1991) (per curiam). A possible instruction could be:

> If you have found the defendant guilty of Count I, you may not find [him][her] guilty of Count II unless you also find that the government has proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the [firearm[s]] [and] [ammunition] charged in Counts I and II [were][was] acquired or possessed at different times or stored in different places.

18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(8)(C)(i) is not facially unconstitutional "[w]hen an individual poses a clear threat of physical violence to another, the threatening individual may be disarmed." *United States v. Rahimi*, 602 U.S. 680, 688-700 (2024). *See also United States v. VanDyke*, 157 F.4th 1082, 1085-89 (9th Cir. 2025) (upholding an as-applied constitutional challenge to § 922(g)(8)(C)(ii) using a similar rationale as *Rahimi*); *United States v. Martinez*, 169 F.4th 1147, 1152-58 (9th Cir. 2026) (upholding the constitutionality of § 922(g)(9) and rejecting both a facial challenge and an as-applied challenge to the law under the Second Amendment).

Section 922(g)(3) (prohibiting an unlawful drug user from possessing a firearm) survived a facial Second Amendment challenge in *United States v. Stennerson*, 150 F.4th 1276, 1285 (9th Cir. 2025). Section 922(g)(3) survived an as-applied challenge involving occasional marijuana use with no evidence of danger in *United States v. Hemani*, 608 U.S. 772 (2026).

*Revised August 2026*

## 14.16 Firearms— Armed Career Criminal Act (18 U.S.C. § 924(e))

### Comment

The Armed Career Criminal Act ("ACCA"), 18 U.S.C. § 924(e)(1), provides that a defendant who violates 18 U.S.C. § 922(g) and has "three previous convictions by any court referred to in section 922(g)(1) of this title for a violent felony or a serious drug offense, or both, committed on occasions different from one another," is subject to a fifteen-year mandatory minimum sentence. In *Erlinger v. United States*, 602 U.S. 821, 835 (2024), the Supreme Court held that a defendant charged with an enhanced mandatory minimum under the ACCA is constitutionally "entitled to have a jury resolve ACCA's occasions inquiry unanimously and beyond a reasonable doubt." The Court relied on *Wooden v. United States*, which held that "deciding whether those past offenses occurred on three or more different occasions is a fact-laden task" and involves questions such as "Were the crimes 'committed close in time'? How about the '[p]roximity' of their 'location[s]'? Were the offenses 'similar or intertwined' in purpose and character?" *Erlinger*, 602 U.S. at 834 (quoting *Wooden v. United States*, 595 U.S. 360, 369 (2022)). "In many cases, a single factor–especially of time or place–can decisively differentiate occasions." *Wooden*, 595 U.S. at 369-70. When offenses are committed "close in time, in an uninterrupted course of conduct," they "will often count as part of one occasion." *Id.* at 369. Offenses generally occur on separate occasions if a person committed them "a day or more apart." *Id.* at 370. Place is also often a decisive factor. *Id.* Where crimes are committed "at a 'significant distance,'" they "nearly always" are treated as having occurred on separate occasions. *Id.*

Considering the "multi-factored" nature of the separate occasions inquiry, the trial court should instruct the jury to consider the timing of the offenses, the proximity of each offense location, and the character and relationship of the offenses. *Id.* at 369. As part of its instruction, the trial court could also advise the jury that, consistent with *Wooden*:

> Offenses committed close in time or place, in an uninterrupted course of conduct, will often count as part of one occasion; not so crimes committed a day or more apart or at a significant distance. Proximity in time and of location are important; the further away crimes take place and the more time that elapses between offenses, the less likely they are components of the same criminal event. And the character and relationship of the offenses may make a difference: The more similar or intertwined the conduct giving rise to the offenses—the more, for example, they share a common scheme or purpose—the more apt they are to compose one occasion.

*See id.* at 369-70.

*Revised September 2025*

## 14.17 Firearms—Unlawful Possession—Defense of Justification

The defendant claims that [he] [she] was justified in committing the crime of [*specify unlawful possession offense charged*]. Justification is a defense to that charge. The defendant is justified in committing the crime of [*specify unlawful possession offense charged*] if:

First, the defendant was under unlawful and present threat of death or serious bodily injury;

Second, the defendant did not recklessly place [himself] [herself] in a situation where he would be forced to engage in criminal conduct;

Third, the defendant had no reasonable legal alternative; and

Fourth, there was a direct causal relationship between the criminal activity and the avoidance of the threatened harm.

The defendant has the burden of proving each of the elements of this defense by a preponderance of the evidence.

### Comment

The defense usually arises when a defendant is charged as a felon in possession of a firearm. It is based on the theory that criminal conduct may be justified if necessary to prevent a greater wrong. The defendant is entitled to the instruction when there is any foundation in the evidence. However, a "mere scintilla" of evidence supporting a theory of justification is not sufficient. *United States v. Wofford*, 122 F.3d 787, 789 (9th Cir. 1997). The justification instruction should be given only in exceptional circumstances. *United States v. Gomez*, 92 F.3d 770, 774-75 (9th Cir. 1996).

The burden is on the defendant to prove the elements of the defense. *United States v. Beasley*, 346 F.3d 930, 935 (9th Cir. 2003). Where the defendant is involved in illegal activities and his or her fear is a result of engaging in those activities, the justification defense is not permitted. *United States v. Phillips*, 149 F.3d 1026, 1030 (9th Cir. 1998).

*Revised May 2020*

### 14.18 Firearms—Transportation or Shipment of Stolen Firearm (18 U.S.C. § 922(i))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[transporting] [shipping]] [a stolen [*specify firearm*] [stolen ammunition]] in violation of Section 922(i) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[transported] [shipped]] [a stolen [*specify firearm*] [stolen *specify ammunition*]] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]]; and

Second, the defendant knew or had reasonable cause to believe that the [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*] had been stolen.

*Revised May 2020*

## 14.19 Firearms—Transportation, Shipment, Possession, or Receipt in Commerce with Removed or Altered Serial Number (18 U.S.C. § 922(k))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [transporting] [shipping] [receiving] [possessing] a firearm that had the serial number removed, obliterated, or altered in violation of Section 922(k) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knew that [he] [she] had [transported] [shipped] [received] [possessed] a [*specify firearm*] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]];

Second, the serial number of the [*specify firearm*] had been removed, obliterated, or altered; and

Third, the defendant knew that the serial number had been removed, obliterated, or altered.

### Comment

A serial number is "altered" if the serial number is changed in a manner that makes it appreciably more difficult to discern; it need not make tracing the gun impossible or extraordinarily difficult. *United States v. Carter*, 421 F.3d 909, 916 (9th Cir. 2005).

*Revised May 2020*

## 14.20 Firearms—Shipment or Transportation by Person Under Indictment for Felony (18 U.S.C. § 922(n))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[shipping] [transporting]] [[a firearm] [ammunition]] while under indictment for a felony in violation of Section 922(n) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was under indictment for [*specify felony*]; and

Second, the defendant willfully [[shipped] [transported]] [[*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*]] [[from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States]].

### Comment

The willfulness requirement is not found in the statutory text of § 922(n); rather, it is found in the relevant statutory sentencing provision, § 924(a)(1)(D). *See Dixon v. United States*, 548 U.S. 1, 5 n.3 (2006).

*Revised May 2020*

## 14.21 Firearms—Receipt by Person Under Indictment for Felony (18 U.S.C. § 922(n))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with receiving [a firearm] [ammunition] while under indictment for a felony in violation of Section 922(n) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was under indictment for [*specify felony*]; and

Second, the defendant willfully received [*specify firearm*] [*specify ammunition*] that had been shipped or transported [from one state to another] [between a foreign nation and the United States].

### Comment

Federal law prohibits receipt of a firearm by anyone charged with a felony, whether under state or federal law, or whether by indictment or information. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(14) (defining "indictment" as including information).

Section 922(n) survived a facial Second Amendment challenge when the Ninth Circuit held that "history and tradition . . . support prohibiting those under felony indictment from receiving firearms." *United States v. Stennerson*, 150 F.4th 1276, 1289-90 (9th Cir. 2025).

*Revised March 2026*

## 14.22 Firearms–Using, Carrying, or Brandishing in Commission of Crime of Violence or Drug Trafficking Crime (18 U.S.C. § 924(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count ____ of] the indictment with [using] [carrying] [brandishing] a firearm during and in relation to [*specify applicable crime of violence or drug trafficking crime*] in violation of Section 924(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant committed the crime of [*specify crime*] as charged in [Count ____ of] the indictment, which I instruct you is a [crime of violence] [drug trafficking crime]; and

Second, the defendant knowingly [used] [carried] [brandished] the [*specify firearm*] during and in relation to that crime.

[A defendant "used" a firearm if [he] [she] actively employed the firearm during and in relation to [*specify crime*].]

[A defendant "carried" a firearm if [he] [she] knowingly possessed it and held, moved, conveyed, or transported it in some manner on [his] [her] person or in a vehicle.]

[A defendant "brandished" a firearm if [he] [she] displayed all or part of the firearm, or otherwise made the presence of the firearm known to another person, to intimidate that person, regardless of whether the firearm was directly visible to that person.]

A defendant [used] [carried] [brandished] a firearm "during and in relation to" the crime if the firearm facilitated or played a role in the crime.

### Comment

In *United States v. Thongsy*, 577 F.3d 1036, 1043 n.5 (9th Cir. 2009), the Ninth Circuit held that the former version of this instruction "should be revised to clarify there are two ways to prove an offense under § 924(c): the defendant either (1) used or carried a firearm 'during and in relation to' a crime or (2) possessed a firearm 'in furtherance of' a crime." Use this instruction when the defendant is charged with using, carrying, or brandishing a firearm during and in relation to a crime. When the defendant is charged with possessing a firearm in furtherance of a crime, use Instruction 14.23 (Firearms—Possession in Furtherance of Crime of Violence or Drug Trafficking Crime).

The trial judge may want to consider having separate instructions regarding using and brandishing a firearm, depending on how the case is charged.

Whether a particular crime is a crime of violence is a question of law. *See United States v. Amparo*, 68 F.3d 1222, 1226 (9th Cir. 1995). A "crime of violence" is "an offense that is a felony" and "has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another." *United States v. Davis*, 588 U.S. 445, 449 (2019) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(3)(A)). "Physical force" is "force capable of causing physical pain or injury," and

includes "the amount of force necessary to overcome a victim's resistance." *Stokeling v. United States*, 586 U.S. 73, 82-87 (2019) (citing *Johnson v. United States*, 559 U.S. 133, 140 (2010)).

In *United States v. Elmore*, 118 F.4th 1193 (9th Cir. 2024), the Ninth Circuit concluded that the VICAR statute is divisible. *Id*. at 1199-1200. Where a defendant is charged with an offense that is based on a predicate VICAR offense, and the VICAR offense itself is based on a predicate state law offense, the court must determine if the state law predicate offense "constitutes a crime of violence under § 924(c)(3)(A)." *Id.* at 1200-01.

Specifically, in *Elmore*, the defendant was convicted in Count 8 of use or possession of a firearm in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(j)(1) ("[a] person who, in the course of a violation of [§ 924(c)], causes the death of a person through the use of a firearm"). *Id.* at 1196. As charged, Count 8 was predicated on Counts 6 and 7, VICAR murder, 18 U.S.C. § 1959(a)(1). *Id.* Counts 6 and 7 charged the defendant with VICAR murders predicated on murders set forth in California Penal Code Sections 187, 188, 189, and 31-33. *Id.* at 1197. Counts 6 and 7 were later dismissed. *Id.*

In a federal habeas action, defendant filed a motion to vacate his § 924(j)(1) conviction (Count 8) because the predicate VICAR murder offenses (Counts 6 and 7) were predicated on California offenses that were not crimes of violence under § 924(c). *Id.* The court addressed the question whether the VICAR murder charges in Counts 6 and 7, which were the predicate to the § 924(j)(1) conviction (Count 8), were crimes of violence under § 924(c)(3)(A) (defining "crime of violence" for purposes of § 924(j)(1) as including a felony that "has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another"). *Id.* at 1198.

The court first held that VICAR murder, 18 U.S.C. § 1959(a), was not categorically a crime of violence, but was divisible, and so it applied the modified categorical approach. *Id.* at 1199-1200. *Elmore* then held that a substantive VICAR offense (as charged in Counts 6 and 7) is a crime of violence under § 924(c)(3)(A) when predicated on at least one crime of violence in aid of racketeering. *Id.* at 1200. *Elmore* concluded that, under the modified categorical approach, defendant was charged with VICAR murder predicated on murder in violation of California law. *Id.* In order to determine if the charged VICAR murder was a crime of violence, the district court must look through to the predicate to VICAR murder (in this case, the California murder offenses) to determine whether they constituted a crime of violence under § 924(c)(3)(A). *Id.* at 1200-01. Because the district court had not done so, *Elmore* remanded for future proceedings.

"[A]iding and abetting a crime of violence . . . is also a crime of violence." *Young v. United States*, 22 F.4th 1115, 1123 (9th Cir. 2022); *see also United States v. Eckford*, 77 F.4th 1228, 1236-37 (9th Cir. 2023). Regardless whether a completed offense is a crime of violence, an attempted offense is not a crime of violence when "no element of [the attempted offense] requires the government to prove that the defendant used, attempted to use, or threatened to use [physical] force" against "another person or his property" beyond a reasonable doubt. *United States v. Taylor*, 596 U.S. 845, 849, 851 (2022). An attempt to kill is an attempted use of force and therefore is a crime of violence. *United States v. Howald*, 104 F.4th 732, 742-43 (9th Cir. 2024) (distinguishing *Taylor* from an attempt to kill in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 249(a)(2)(ii)(II) because *Taylor*'s holding was based on the fact that a person can commit Hobbs Act robbery by attempting to *threaten* force).

If the crime of violence or drug trafficking crime is not charged in the same indictment, the elements of the crime must also be listed, and the jury must be instructed that each element must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. When the crime of violence or drug trafficking crime is charged in the same indictment, the government's failure to prove the elements underlying the crime of violence or drug trafficking crime beyond a reasonable doubt will mean that the government has failed to prove the underlying crime element of § 924(c). *See United States v. Mendoza*, 25 F.4th 730, 740-42 (9th Cir. 2022). This does not mean the government must separately charge and convict the defendant of any underlying crime of violence or drug trafficking crime, but when a jury acquits the defendant of any underlying crime of violence or drug trafficking crime or when the government's evidence of the underlying offense is insufficient as a matter of law, that offense cannot serve as a § 924(c) predicate. *See id.*

The Supreme Court has construed the term "use" to require proof that "the defendant actively employed the firearm during and in relation to the predicate crime." *Bailey v. United States*, 516 U.S. 137, 150 (1995). "The active-employment understanding of 'use' certainly includes brandishing, displaying, bartering, striking with, and, most obviously, firing or attempting to fire a firearm." *Id.* at 148. "[A] reference to a firearm calculated to bring about a change in the circumstances of the predicate offense is a 'use,' just as the silent but obvious and forceful presence of a gun on a table can be a 'use.'" *Id.* Although a person uses a firearm when he or she trades it for drugs, *Smith v. United States*, 508 U.S. 223, 241 (1993), a person does not "use" a firearm when he or she receives it in trade for drugs, *Watson v. United States*, 552 U.S. 74, 83 (2007).

The Supreme Court has construed the term "carry" to include carrying on a person or vehicle. *Muscarello v. United States*, 524 U.S. 125, 130-33 (1998). "'Carry' implies personal agency and some degree of possession . . . ." *Id.* at 134. However, the firearm need not be "immediately accessible." *Id.* at 138; *see also id.* at 126-27 (carrying "applies to a person who knowingly possesses and conveys firearms in a vehicle, including in the locked glove compartment or trunk of a car, which the person accompanies"); *United States v. Long*, 301 F.3d 1095, 1106 (9th Cir. 2002).

"[T]he term 'brandish' means, with respect to a firearm, to display all or part of the firearm, or otherwise make the presence of the firearm known to another person, to intimidate that person, regardless of whether the firearm is directly visible to that person." 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(4). The "brandishing" of a firearm is a type of "use," but carries a greater penalty. *Compare id.* § 924(c)(1)(A)(i) (setting statutory minimum penalty for "use" at five years) *with id.* § 924(c)(1)(A)(ii) (setting statutory minimum penalty for "brandishing" at seven years). *See also United States v. Carter*, 560 F.3d 1107, 1114 (9th Cir. 2009) (remanding for re-sentencing when it was unclear whether court found the defendant "used" or "brandished" a firearm).

Discharging a firearm is another type of "use" that carries a penalty greater than that for brandishing. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(A)(iii) (setting statutory minimum penalty for "discharge" of a firearm at ten years). Therefore, when discharging is alleged, this instruction should be modified accordingly. The statute does not contain a definition of the term "discharge." The Supreme Court has held that discharge of a firearm does not require proof of intent to discharge. *Dean v. United States*, 556 U.S. 568, 577 (2009) (discharge of firearm does not require separate

proof of intent; "10-year mandatory minimum applies if a gun is discharged in the course of a violent or drug trafficking crime, whether on purpose or by accident").

Whether the defendant brandished or discharged a firearm is a question that must be submitted to the jury and found beyond a reasonable doubt. *See Alleyne v. United States*, 133 S. Ct. 2151, 2155 (2013) (holding that "any fact that increases the mandatory minimum [sentence] is an 'element' that must be submitted to the jury"). Similarly, whether the defendant used, carried, or brandished any of the firearm types listed in 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(B) is an element of a separate, aggravated crime to be proved to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt. *Castillo v. United States*, 530 U.S. 120, 131 (2000); *United States v. O'Brien*, 560 U.S. 218, 231-35 (2010) (fact that firearm is machinegun is element of offense to be proved to jury beyond a reasonable doubt); *United States v. Woodberry*, 987 F.3d 1231, 1236 (9th Cir. 2021) (stating that fact that firearm is short-barrel rifle is element of offense). In appropriate cases, a special interrogatory may be used to determine the jury's findings as to whether the defendant used, carried, or brandished particular firearm types listed in 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(B). *See Castillo*, 530 U.S. at 128. With respect to 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(B)(i), there is no mens rea requirement that the defendant knew the rifle barrel's length. *See Woodberry*, 987 F.3d at 1239 (holding "§ 924(c)(1)(B)(i) requires no showing of mens rea as to the rifle barrel's length to sustain a conviction").

To convict under § 924(c), the government must prove the firearm was real. *United States v. Baker*, 58 F.4th 1109, 1123 (9th Cir. 2023); *see also United States v. Garrido*, 596 F.3d 613, 617 (9th Cir. 2010) ("'Possession of a toy or replica gun cannot sustain a conviction under § 924(c).'"). A real firearm under § 924(c), "is a weapon that 'expel[s] a projectile by the action of an explosive,' and '[t]oys, replicas, antiques,' and 'blank firing prop gun[s]' do not qualify." *Baker*, 58 F.4th at 1123.

A conviction based on an accomplice theory of liability may serve as a predicate for a § 924(c) conviction. *See United States v. Henry*, 984 F.3d 1343, 1356 (9th Cir. 2021).

*Revised November 2024*

## 14.23 Firearms—Possession in Furtherance of Crime of Violence or Drug Trafficking Crime (18 U.S.C. § 924(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possessing a firearm in furtherance of [*specify applicable crime of violence or drug trafficking crime*] in violation of Section 924(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant committed the crime of [*specify crime*] [as charged in Count _____ of] the indictment, which I instruct you is a [crime of violence] [drug trafficking crime];

Second, the defendant knowingly possessed the [*specify firearm*]; and

Third, the defendant possessed the firearm in furtherance of the crime of [*specify crime*].

A person "possesses" a firearm if the person knows of its presence and has physical control of it, or knows of its presence and has the power and intention to control it.

The phrase "in furtherance of" means that the defendant possessed the firearm with the subjective intent of promoting or facilitating the crime of [*specify crime*].

### Comment

In *United States v. Thongsy*, 577 F.3d 1036, 1043 n.5 (9th Cir. 2009), the Ninth Circuit held that the former version of this instruction "should be revised to clarify there are two ways to prove an offense under § 924(c): the defendant either (1) used or carried a firearm 'during and in relation to' a crime or (2) possessed a firearm 'in furtherance of' a crime'." Use this instruction when the defendant is charged with possessing a firearm in furtherance of a crime. When the defendant is charged with using or carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime, use Instruction 14.22 (Firearms—Using or Carrying in Commission of Crime of Violence or Drug Trafficking Crime).

The definition of possession comes from Instruction 6.15 (Possession—Defined). *See also Thongsy*, 577 F.3d at 1041 (defining constructive possession). The joint possession language from Instruction 6.15 may be used if appropriate to the circumstances of the case.

A district court does not err in failing separately to define "in furtherance of" in its instruction to the jury on possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. *United States v. Lopez*, 477 F.3d 1110, 1115-16 (9th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 552 U.S. 855 (2007) (instruction that separately listed requirements of possession and possession in furtherance of the crime eliminated the possibility that rational juror would convict defendant upon finding mere possession). "The question whether possession of a firearm is 'in furtherance of' a crime is a 'fact-based inquiry into the nexus between possession of the firearm and the drug crime.'" *Thongsy*, 577 F.3d at 1041 (citation omitted); *see United States v. Mahan*, 586 F.3d 1185, 1187-89 n.3 (9th Cir. 2009) (holding that defendant who receives guns in exchange for drugs possesses those guns "in furtherance of" his drug trafficking offense).

If the crime of violence or drug trafficking crime is not charged in the same indictment, the elements of the crime must also be listed, and the jury must be instructed that each element must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. *See United States v. Mendoza*, 11 F.3d 126 (9th Cir. 1993).

When the crime of violence or drug trafficking crime is charged in the same indictment, the government's failure to prove the elements underlying the crime of violence or drug trafficking crime beyond a reasonable doubt will mean that the government has failed to prove the underlying crime element of § 924(c). *See United States v. Mendoza*, 25 F.4th 730, 740-742 (9th Cir. 2022). This does not mean the government must separately charge and convict the defendant of any underlying crime of violence or drug trafficking crime, but when a jury acquits the defendant of any underlying crime of violence or drug trafficking crime or when the government's evidence of the underlying offense is insufficient as a matter of law, that offense cannot serve as a § 924(c) predicate. *See id.*

Neither attempt nor conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery is a predicate crime of violence for a § 924(c) offense. *See United States v. Taylor*, 596 U.S. 845, 850-51 (2022) (attempt); *United States v. Reed*, 48 F.4th 1082 (9th Cir. 2022) (conspiracy). An attempt to kill is an attempted use of force and therefore is a crime of violence. *United States v. Howald*, 104 F.4th 732, 742-43 (9th Cir. 2024) (distinguishing *Taylor* from an attempt to kill in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 249(a)(2)(ii)(II) because *Taylor*'s holding was based on the fact that a person can commit Hobbs Act robbery by attempting to *threaten* force). "Because Hobbs Act robbery is a crime of violence, Hobbs Act robbery under a *Pinkerton* theory of liability is a valid predicate crime of violence for purposes of § 924(c)." *United States v. Johnson*, 139 F.4th 830, 839 (9th Cir. 2025) (relying on *United States v. Henry*, 984 F.3d 1343, 1356 (9th Cir. 2021)) (citation omitted).

In appropriate cases, a special interrogatory may be used to determine the jury's findings as to whether the defendant possessed the particular firearm types listed in 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1). *See Castillo v. United States*, 530 U.S. 120, 128 (2000); *United States v. O'Brien*, 560 U.S. 218, 231-33 (2010) (fact that firearm is machinegun is element of offense to be proved to jury beyond reasonable doubt); *United States v. Woodberry*, 987 F.3d 1231, 1236 (9th Cir. 2021) (stating that fact that firearm is short-barrel rifle is element of offense). In considering a general verdict form, the Ninth Circuit stated this jury instruction "did not allow the jury to convict Johnson of § 924(c) solely based on his participation in the conspiracy." *Johnson*, 139 F.4th at 840. With respect to 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(B)(i), there is no mens rea requirement that the defendant knew the rifle barrel's length. *See Woodberry*, 987 F.3d at 1239 (holding "§ 924(c)(1)(B)(i) requires no showing of mens rea as to the rifle barrel's length to sustain a conviction").

To convict under § 924(c), the government must prove the firearm was real. *United States v. Baker*, 58 F.4th 1109, 1123 (9th Cir. 2023); *see also United States v. Garrido*, 596 F.3d 613, 617 (9th Cir. 2010) ("'Possession of a toy or replica gun cannot sustain a conviction under § 924(c).'"). A real firearm under § 924(c), "is a weapon that 'expel[s] a projectile by the action of an explosive,' and '[t]oys, replicas, antiques,' and 'blank firing prop gun[s]' do not qualify." *Baker*, 58 F.4th at 1123.

Whether a particular crime is a crime of violence is a question of law. *See United States v. Amparo*, 68 F.3d 1222, 1226 (9th Cir. 1995) (crime of violence).

*See United States v. Potter*, 630 F.3d 1260, 1261 (9th Cir. 2011) (defendant charged under § 924(c)(1)(A) not entitled to "Second Amendment defense" instruction).

*Revised September 2025*

## 14.24 Firearms—Unlawful Possession of Body Armor (18 U.S.C. § 931(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possessing body armor in violation of Section 931(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed body armor;

Second, the defendant had previously been convicted of a felony; and

Third, the defendant knew that [his][her] felony conviction had as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force.

### Comment

"The term body armor means any product sold or offered for sale, in interstate or foreign commerce, as personal protective body covering intended to protect against gunfire, regardless of whether the product is to be worn alone or is sold as a complement to another product or garment." 18 USC § 921(a)(35).

In *United States v. Door*, 996 F.3d 606, 615 (9th Cir. 2021), the Ninth Circuit held that "the government must prove that a defendant who possessed body armor knew that (1) he was convicted of a felony and, (2) the felony of which he was convicted had as an element 'the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force.'"

*Revised June 2021*

## 14.25 Firearms—Possession of Unregistered Firearm (26 U.S.C. § 5861(d))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [possession] [receipt] of an unregistered firearm in violation of Section 5861(d) of Title 26 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[possessed] [received]] [*specify firearm*]; and

Second, the defendant was aware that the [*specify firearm*] was [*specify statutory features or characteristics of the firearm that bring it within the statute*];

Third, the defendant had not registered the [*specify firearm*] with the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record.

The government need not prove that the defendant knew that possessing the firearm was illegal.

### Comment

For a definition of "firearm," *see* 26 U.S.C. § 5845(a).

The government must prove that the defendant knew of those features of the firearm which brought it within the scope of the statute. *See Staples v. United States*, 511 U.S. 600, 619 (1994) ("[T]o obtain a conviction, the Government should have been required to prove that petitioner knew of the features of his AR-15 that brought it within the scope of the Act."); *see also United States v. Montoya-Gaxiola*, 796 F.3d 1118, 1122 (9th Cir. 2015) ("The law then is clear that, in order to convict under § 5861(d) . . . the Government must prove that the defendant knew the specific characteristics that made it a firearm within the Act . . ."). The government need not prove that the defendant knew that possessing the firearm was illegal. *See United States v. Summers*, 268 F.3d 683, 688 (9th Cir. 2001).

*Revised Sept. 2015*

## 14.26 Firearms—Destructive Devices— Component Parts (26 U.S.C. § 5861(d))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possession of an unregistered firearm—specifically, components from which a destructive device such as a bomb, grenade, or mine can be readily assembled—in violation of Section 5861(d) of Title 26 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed components that could be readily assembled into a destructive device such as a bomb, grenade, or mine;

Second, the defendant intended to use the components as a weapon; and

Third, the components were not registered to the defendant in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record.

### Comment

The statutory definition of "destructive device" includes "any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device . . . and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled." 26 U.S.C. § 5845(f). For unassembled components to qualify as a "firearm" there must be proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the components were intended for use as a weapon. *United States v. Fredman*, 833 F.2d 837, 839 (9th Cir. 1987); *see United States v. Schaefer*, 13 F.4th 875, 893-95 (9th Cir. 2021) (explaining "destructive device" as that term is used in both 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(4) and 26 U.S.C. § 5845(f)).

*Revised Dec. 2021*

## 14.27 Firearms—Possession Without Serial Number (26 U.S.C. § 5861(i))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [possession] [receipt] of a firearm without a serial number in violation of Section 5861(i) of Title 26 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [possessed] [received] a [*specify firearm*]; and

Second, there was no serial number on the [*specify firearm*].

### Comment

For a definition of "knowingly," *see* Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly).

For a definition of "firearm," *see* 26 U.S.C. § 5845(a).

*Revised Mar. 2018*

## 14.28 Transportation of an Explosive or Attempted Transportation of an Explosive (18 U.S.C. § 844(d))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [attempted] transportation of an explosive in interstate or foreign commerce in violation of Section 844(d) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [transported] [received] [attempted to [transport] [receive]] in [interstate commerce] [foreign commerce] any explosive; and

Second, the defendant [did so] [attempted to do so] with the knowledge or intent that it would be used to [kill, injure, or intimidate any individual] [unlawfully damage or destroy any building, vehicle, or other real or personal property];

[Third, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime and that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime, meaning that it strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime.

Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

Concerning the elements of the crime, *see, e.g.*, *United States v. Linehan*, 56 F.4th 693, 699 (9th Cir. 2022) (citing *United States v. Michaels*, 796 F.2d 1112, 1118 (9th Cir. 1986)).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

Section 844(d)'s intent requirement relates "only to the use of the device to kill, injure, or intimidate, and not to the transportation element." *Michaels*, 796 F.2d at 1117. Thus, section 844(d) does not require specific intent to transport in interstate commerce. *See id.*

The term "explosive" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 844(j); see *Linehan*, 56 F.4th at 702 ("For purposes of § 844(d), the term 'explosive' means any device or chemical 'in such proportions, quantities, or packing that ignition by fire, by friction, by concussion, by percussion, or by detonation of the compound, mixture, or device or any part thereof may cause an explosion.'" (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 844(j)).

The bracketed language regarding an "attempt" or "substantial step" applies only when the charge is an attempt. *See* Comment to Instruction 4.4 (Attempt).

## 15. FRAUD, ACCESS DEVICE, AND COMPUTER OFFENSES

**Instruction**


15.1 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Production (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(1))
15.2 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Transfer (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(2))
15.3 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Possession of Five or More Documents (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(3))
15.4 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Possession of Identification Document to Defraud United States (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(4))
15.5 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Document-Making Implements (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(5))
15.6 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Possession (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(6))
15.7 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Possessing Another's Means of Identification (18 U.S.C. § 1028 (a)(7))
15.8 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Trafficking (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(8))
15.9 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Aggravated Identity Theft (18 U.S.C. § 1028A)
15.10 Counterfeit Access Devices—Producing, Using, or Trafficking (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(1))
15.11 Unauthorized Access Devices—Using or Trafficking (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(2))
15.12 Access Devices—Unlawfully Possessing Fifteen or More (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(3))
15.13 Device-Making Equipment—Illegal Possession or Production (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(4))
15.14 Access Devices—Illegal Transactions (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(5))
15.15 Access Devices—Unauthorized Solicitation (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(6))
15.16 Access Device—Defined (18 U.S.C. § 1029)
15.17 Telecommunications Instrument—Illegal Modification (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(7))
15.18 Use or Control of Scanning Receiver (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(8))
15.19 Illegally Modified Telecommunications Equipment—Possession or Production (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(9))
15.20 Credit Card Transaction Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(10))
15.21 Without Authorization—Defined
15.22 Obtaining Information by Computer—Injurious to United States or Advantageous to Foreign Nation (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(1))
15.23 Obtaining Information by Computer—From Financial Institution or Government Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(2)(A), (B))
15.24 Obtaining Information by Computer—"Protected" Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(2)(C))
15.25 Unlawfully Accessing Nonpublic Computer Used by the Government (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(3))
15.26 Computer Fraud—Use of Protected Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(4))
15.27 Intentional Damage to a Protected Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(5)(A))
15.28 Reckless Damage to a Protected Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(5)(B))
15.29 Damage to a Protected Computer Causing Loss (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(5)(C))
15.30 Trafficking in Passwords (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(6)(A), (B))
15.31 Threatening to Damage a Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(7))
15.32 Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud or to Obtain Money or Property by False Promises (18

U.S.C. § 1341)
15.33 Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud—Vicarious Liability (18 U.S.C. §§ 1341, 1343, 1344, 1346)
15.34 Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud—Deprivation of Intangible Right of Honest Services (18 U.S.C. §§ 1341, 1346)
15.35 Wire Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1343)
15.36 Bank Fraud—Scheme to Defraud Bank (18 U.S.C. § 1344(1))
15.37 Bank Fraud—Scheme to Deprive Bank of Intangible Right of Honest Services (18 U.S.C. §§ 1344(1), 1346)
15.38 Attempted Bank Fraud—Scheme to Deprive Bank of Intangible Right of Honest Services (18 U.S.C. §§ 1344(1), 1346)
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15.40 Attempted Bank Fraud—Scheme to Defraud by False Promises (18 U.S.C. § 1344)
15.41 False Statement to a Bank or Other Federally Insured Institution (18 U.S.C. § 1014)
15.42 Health Care Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1347)
15.43 Immigration Fraud—Forged, Counterfeited, Altered, or Falsely Made Immigration Document (18 U.S.C. § 1546(a))
15.44 Immigration Fraud—Use or Possession of Immigration Document Procured by Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1546(a))
15.45 Immigration Fraud—False Statement on Immigration Document (18 U.S.C. § 1546(a))
15.46 Bankruptcy Fraud—Scheme or Artifice to Defraud (18 U.S.C. § 157)
15.47 Securities Fraud (15 U.S.C. §§ 78j(b), 78ff; 17 C.F.R. § 240.10b-5)
15.48 Sale of Unregistered Securities

## 15.1 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents —Production (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with producing without legal authority [an identification document] [an authentication feature] [a false identification document] in violation of Section 1028(a)(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly produced [an identification document] [an authentication feature] [a false identification document];

Second, the defendant produced the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] without lawful authority; and

[Third, the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was or appeared to be issued by or under authority of [the United States] [*specify issuing authority*].]

*or*

[Third, the production of the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was in or affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.]

*or*

[Third, in the course of production, the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was transported in the mail.]

### Comment

The first and second elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(2); the alternative third elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. §§ 1028(c)(1), (c)(3)(A) and (c)(3)(B). A defendant knowingly produces an identification document "without lawful authority" if the defendant produces the document knowing that the recipient has not completed the eligibility requirements for the document. *United States v. Turchin*, 21 F.4th 1192, 1197 (9th Cir. 2022).

It is plain error to instruct the jury "that the federal nexus required by § 1028(c)(1) was automatically satisfied merely by showing that the identification document in question was issued by a *state* government." *United States v. Turchin*, 21 F.4th 1192, 1202 (9th Cir. 2022).

Section 1028(d) provides definitions for the terms: "identification document," "authentication feature," "false identification document," "issuing authority," and "produce." An "authentication feature" need not be a physical thing affixed to or imprinted on another physical thing. *United States v. Barrogo*, 59 F.4th 440, 446 (9th Cir. 2023) (holding non-physical PIN constituted "authentication feature" even though it was not physically on EBT card). Private

financial institutions do not fit within the definition of "issuing authority," which means "'any governmental entity or agency that is authorized to issue identification documents, means of identification, or authentication features.'" *United States v. Kirilyuk*, 29 F.4th 1128, 1139 (9th Cir. 2022) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 1028(d)(6)(A)).

Section 1028(b) provides for various enhanced statutory maximum penalties in certain circumstances, such as when particular types of identification documents are involved or when their use occurs in connection with certain other criminal conduct. In the event that such enhanced penalties are charged, a special verdict form may need to be submitted to the jury regarding the presence or absence of such facts.

When a defendant presents false information to a government agent to obtain an identification document, it is unnecessary to show that the government agent who actually produced the identification document intended to commit identification fraud. *United States v. Lee*, 602 F.3d 974, 976 (9th Cir. 2010).

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.2 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents —Transfer (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with transferring [an identification document] [an authentication feature] [a false identification document] in violation of Section 1028(a)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly transferred [an identification document] [an authentication feature] [a false identification document];

Second, the defendant knew the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was [stolen] [produced without lawful authority]; and

[Third, the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was or appeared to be issued by or under the authority of [the United States] [*specify issuing authority*].]

*or*

[Third, the production of the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was in or affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.]

*or*

[Third, in the course of production, the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was transported in the mail.]

### Comment

The first and second elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(2); the alternative third elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(c)(1), (c)(3)(A), and (c)(3)(B).

Section 1028(d) provides definitions for the terms: "identification document," "authentication feature," "false identification document," "issuing authority," and "transfer." An "authentication feature" need not be a physical thing affixed to or imprinted on another physical thing. *United States v. Barrogo*, 59 F.4th 440, 446 (9th Cir. 2023) (holding non-physical PIN constituted "authentication feature" even though it was not physically on EBT card). Private financial institutions do not fit within the definition of "issuing authority," which means "'any governmental entity or agency that is authorized to issue identification documents, means of identification, or authentication features.'" *United States v. Kirilyuk*, 29 F.4th 1128, 1139 (9th Cir. 2022) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 1028(d)(6)(A)).

Section 1028(b) provides for various enhanced statutory maximum penalties in certain circumstances, such as when particular types of identification documents are involved or when their use occurs in connection with certain other criminal conduct. In the event that such enhanced

penalties are charged, a special verdict form may need to be submitted to the jury regarding the presence or absence of such facts.

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.3 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Possession of Five or More Documents (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possessing five or more [identification documents] [authentication features] [false identification documents] for unlawful use or transfer in violation of Section 1028(a)(3) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed five or more [identification documents] [authentication features] [false identification documents];

Second, the defendant intended to [use] [transfer] unlawfully those [identification documents] [authentication features] [false identification documents]; and

[Third, the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was or appeared to be issued by or under the authority of [the United States] [*specify issuing authority*].]

*or*

[Third, the production of the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was in or affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.]

*or*

[Third, in the course of production, the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] was transported in the mail.]

[In determining whether the defendant possessed five or more identification documents, you should not count any that were issued lawfully for the use of the defendant.]

### Comment

The first and second elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(2); the alternative third elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. §§ 1028(c)(1), (c)(3)(A) and (c)(3)(B).

Section 1028(d) provides definitions for the terms: "identification document," "authentication feature," "false identification document," "issuing authority," and "transfer." An "authentication feature" need not be a physical thing affixed to or imprinted on another physical thing. *United States v. Barrogo*, 59 F.4th 440, 446 (9th Cir. 2023) (holding non-physical PIN constituted "authentication feature" even though it was not physically on EBT card). Private financial institutions do not fit within the definition of "issuing authority," which means "'any governmental entity or agency that is authorized to issue identification documents, means of

identification, or authentication features.'" *United States v. Kirilyuk*, 29 F.4th 1128,1139 (9th Cir. 2022) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 1028(d)(6)(A)).

Section 1028(b) provides for various enhanced statutory maximum penalties in certain circumstances, such as when particular types of identification documents are involved or when their use occurs in connection with certain other criminal conduct. In the event that such enhanced penalties are charged, a special verdict form may need to be submitted to the jury regarding the presence or absence of such facts.

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.4 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Possession of Identification Document to Defraud United States (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(4))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possessing [an identification document] [an authentication feature] [a false identification document] for use in defrauding the United States in violation of Section 1028(a)(4) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed [an identification document] [an authentication feature] [a false identification document]; and

Second, the defendant intended the [identification document] [authentication feature] [false identification document] to be used to defraud the United States.

[In determining whether the defendant possessed an identification document, you should not count any that were issued lawfully for the use of the defendant.]

### Comment

The first and second elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(4) in light of 18 U.S.C. § 1028(c)(2).

Violation of a federal, state, or local law is not an essential element of an offense under § 1028(a)(4). *United States v. McCormick*, 72 F.3d 1404, 1407 (9th Cir. 1995) (affirming trial court's instruction that government must prove (1) that defendant knowingly possessed false identification document, and (2) that he did so with intent to defraud United States).

Section 1028(d) provides definitions for the terms: "identification document," "authentication feature," and "false identification document." An "authentication feature" need not be a physical thing affixed to or imprinted on another physical thing. *United States v. Barrogo*, 59 F.4th 440, 446 (9th Cir. 2023) (holding non-physical PIN constituted "authentication feature" even though it was not physically on EBT card).

Section 1028(b) provides for various enhanced statutory maximum penalties in certain circumstances such as when particular types of identification documents are involved or when their use occurs in connection with certain other criminal conduct. In the event that such enhanced penalties are charged, a special verdict form may need to be submitted to the jury regarding the presence or absence of such facts.

*See* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.5 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Document-Making Implements (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(5))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[possessing] [producing] [transferring]] [[a document-making implement] [an authentication feature]] in violation of Section 1028(a)(5) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[produced] [transferred] [possessed]] [[a document-making implement] [an authentication feature]];

Second, the defendant intended the [document-making implement] [authentication feature] to be used in the production of [another document-making implement] [another authentication feature], which was to be used in producing a false identification document; and

[Third, the authentication feature was or appeared to be issued by or under authority of [the United States] [*specify issuing authority*].]

*or*

[Third, the document-making implement was designed or suited for making [an identification document] [an authentication feature] [a false identification document].]

*or*

[Third, the [production] [transfer] [possession] [use] of the [document-making implement] [authentication feature] was in or affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country].]

*or*

[Third, in the course of defendant's [production] [transfer] [possession] [use] of the document-making implement, it was transported in the mail.]

### Comment

The first and second elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(5); the alternative third elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(c)(1), (c)(3)(A), and (c)(3)(B).

Section 1028(d) provides definitions for the terms: "identification document," "authentication feature," "false identification document," "document-making implement," "issuing authority," and "transfer." An "authentication feature" need not be a physical thing affixed to or imprinted on another physical thing. *United States v. Barrogo*, 59 F.4th 440, 446 (9th Cir. 2023) (holding non-physical PIN constituted "authentication feature" even though it was not physically on EBT card). Private financial institutions do not fit within the definition of "issuing authority,"

which means "'any governmental entity or agency that is authorized to issue identification documents, means of identification, or authentication features.'" *United States v. Kirilyuk*, 29 F.4th 1128, 1139 (9th Cir. 2022) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 1028(d)(6)(A)).

Section 1028(b) provides for various enhanced statutory maximum penalties in certain circumstances, such as when particular types of identification documents are involved or when their use occurs in connection with certain other criminal conduct. In the event that such enhanced penalties are charged, a special verdict form may need to be submitted to the jury regarding the presence or absence of such facts.

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.6 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Possession (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(6))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possessing an [identification document] [authentication feature] in violation of Section 1028(a)(6) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed an [identification document] [authentication feature];

Second, the [identification document] [authentication feature] was or appeared to be an [identification document] [authentication feature] of [the United States] [*specify issuing authority*];

Third, the [identification document] [authentication feature] was [stolen] [produced without lawful authority]; and

Fourth, the defendant knew the [identification document] [authentication feature] was [stolen] [produced without lawful authority].

### Comment

The elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(6).

Section 1028(d) provides definitions for the terms: "identification document," "authentication feature," "issuing authority," and "produce." An "authentication feature" need not be a physical thing affixed to or imprinted on another physical thing. *United States v. Barrogo*, 59 F.4th 440, 446 (9th Cir. 2023) (holding non-physical PIN constituted "authentication feature" even though it was not physically on EBT card). Private financial institutions do not fit within the definition of "issuing authority," which means "'any governmental entity or agency that is authorized to issue identification documents, means of identification, or authentication features.'" *United States v. Kirilyuk*, 29 F.4th 1128, 1139 (9th Cir. 2022) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 1028(d)(6)(A)).

Section 1028(b) provides for various enhanced statutory maximum penalties in certain circumstances such as when particular types of identification documents are involved or when their use occurs in connection with certain other criminal conduct. In the event that such enhanced penalties are charged, a special verdict form may need to be submitted to the jury regarding the presence or absence of such facts.

In *United States v. Fuller*, 531 F.3d 1020, 1027-28 (9th Cir. 2008), the Ninth Circuit, in a case under § 1028(a)(6), approved the use of an instruction that the identification document "was or appeared to be an identification document of the United States." In so doing, the court rejected the argument that the language of the instruction operated to relieve the government of the burden of showing that the identification document be issued by or under the authority of the United States. *Id.* at 1028.

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.7 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Possessing Another's Means of Identification (18 U.S.C. § 1028 (a)(7))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [possessing] [transferring] [using] another person's means of identification without lawful authority in violation of Section 1028(a)(7) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [transferred] [possessed] [used] a means of identification of another person;

Second, the defendant did so without lawful authority;

[Third, the defendant intended to commit [*specify unlawful activity*]; and]

*or*

[Third, the defendant aided or abetted [*specify unlawful activity*]; and]

*or*

[Third, the defendant [transferred] [possessed] [used] the means of identification in connection with [*specify unlawful activity*]; and]

[Fourth, [transfer] [possession] [use] of the means of identification of another person was in or affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country];

*or*

[Fourth, in the course of [transfer] [possession] [use], the means of identification was transported in the mail.]

### Comment

The first, second, and third elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(7); the fourth element is drawn from § 1028(c)(3). The unlawful activity must be a violation of federal law or be a felony under applicable state or local law. 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(7).

A § 1028(a)(7) conviction requires no evidence of an underlying crime. *United States v. Sutcliffe*, 505 F.3d 944, 960 (9th Cir. 2007) ("[T]he government must only prove that the defendant committed the unlawful act with the requisite criminal intent, not that the defendant's crime actually caused another crime to be committed.").

Section 1028(d) provides definitions for the terms: "means of identification" and "transfer." A "means of identification" need not be a physical thing. *United States v. Barrogo*, 59

F.4th 440, 446 (9th Cir. 2023). The Ninth Circuit has held that a signature qualifies as a "means of identification." *United States v. Blixt*, 548 F.3d 882, 887 (9th Cir. 2008). A test account (i.e., an account created to test the functionality of a software application) may qualify as a "means of identification" provided that the accounts could be used to "'identify a specific individual.'" *United States v. Kvashuk*, 29 F.4th 1077, 1089 (9th Cir. 2022). Because Congress "intended 'to construct an expansive definition' of the term 'means of identification,'" the "purpose, prerequisites, and functionality" of a name or number "does not bear on whether they 'identify a specific individual.'" *Id*.

Section 1028(b) provides for various enhanced statutory maximum penalties in certain circumstances, such as when particular types of identification documents are involved or when their use occurs in connection with certain other criminal conduct. In the event that such enhanced penalties are charged, a special verdict form may need to be submitted to the jury regarding the presence or absence of such facts.

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.8 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Trafficking (18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(8))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with trafficking in authentication features in violation of Section 1028(a)(8) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly trafficked in [false] authentication features;

Second, the [false] authentication features were for use in [false identification documents] [document-making implements] [means of identification]; and

[Third, the authentication feature was or appeared to be issued by or under authority of [the United States] [*specify issuing authority*].]

*or*

[Third, the transfer of the [false] authentication feature was in or affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.]

*or*

[Third, in the course of transferring the authentication feature, it was transported in the mail.]

### Comment

The first and second elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(8); the alternative third elements are drawn from 18 U.S.C. § 1028(c)(1), (c)(3)(A), and (c)(3)(B).

Section 1028(d) provides definitions for the terms: "authentication feature," "false authentication feature," "false identification document," "document-making implement," "means of identification," "traffic," "issuing authority," and "transfer." A "means of identification" need not be a physical thing, and an "authentication feature" need not be a physical thing affixed to or imprinted on another physical thing. *United States v. Barrogo*, 59 F.4th 440, 446 (9th Cir. 2023). "A non-physical association between the 'authentication feature' and the 'means of identification' can therefore be sufficient." *Id.* (holding non-physical PIN constituted "authentication feature" even though it was not physically on EBT card). The Ninth Circuit has held that a signature qualifies as a "means of identification." *United States v. Blixt*, 548 F.3d 882, 887 (9th Cir. 2008). A test account (i.e., an account created to test the functionality of a software application) may qualify as a "means of identification" provided that the accounts could be used to "'identify a specific individual.'" *United States v. Kvashuk*, 29 F.4th 1077, 1089 (9th Cir. 2022). Because Congress "intended 'to construct an expansive definition' of the term 'means of identification,'" the "purpose, prerequisites, and functionality" of a name or number "does not bear on whether they 'identify a specific individual.'" *Id*. Private financial institutions do not fit within the definition of

"issuing authority," which means "'any governmental entity or agency that is authorized to issue identification documents, means of identification, or authentication features.'" *United States v. Kirilyuk*, 29 F.4th 1128, 1139 (9th Cir. 2022) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 1028(d)(6)(A)).

Section 1028(b) provides for various enhanced statutory maximum penalties in certain circumstances, such as when particular types of identification documents are involved or when their use occurs in connection with certain other criminal conduct. In the event that such enhanced penalties are charged, a special verdict form may need to be submitted to the jury regarding the presence or absence of such facts.

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.9 Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents—Aggravated Identity Theft (18 U.S.C. § 1028A)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with aggravated identity theft in violation of Section 1028A of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [transferred] [possessed] [used] without legal authority [a means of identification of another person] [a false identification document]; [and]

[Second, the defendant knew that the means of identification belonged to a real person; and]

[Second] [Third], the defendant did so during and in relation to [*specify felony violation*].

A means of identification is [transferred] [possessed] [used] "during and in relation to" a crime when the means of identification is [transferred] [possessed] [used] in a manner that is fraudulent or deceptive and is at the crux of what makes the conduct criminal.

[The government need not establish that the [means of identification of another person] [false identification document] was stolen or used without the other person's consent.]

### Comment

*See United States v. Doe*, 842 F.3d 1117, 1119-20 (9th Cir. 2016) (setting out elements for a §1028A violation). Both direct and circumstantial evidence can establish that a defendant knew that the means of identification belonged to a real person. *Id*. at 1120-22. If the case involves circumstantial evidence of knowledge, consider the following instruction from *Doe* at 1121:

> Repeated and successful testing of the authenticity of a victim's identifying information by submitting it to a government agency, bank or other lender is circumstantial evidence that you may consider in deciding whether the defendant knew the identifying information belonged to a real person as opposed to a fictitious one. It is up to you to decide whether to consider any such evidence and how much weight to give it.

For offenses charged under § 1028A(a)(1), use only "a means of identification of another person" under the first element and select the applicable felony from § 1028A(c)(1)-(11) for insertion in the last element. For offenses charged under § 1028A(a)(2) [terrorism offense], select the applicable felony from 18 U.S.C. § 2332b(g)(5) for insertion in the last element. Do not use the bracketed second element in cases charging a false identification document under § 1028A(a)(2).

Section 1028(d) provides definitions for the terms: "false identification document" and "means of identification." A "means of identification" need not be a physical thing. *United States v. Barrogo*, 59 F.4th 440, 446 (9th Cir. 2023). The Ninth Circuit has held that a signature qualifies as a "means of identification." *United States v. Blixt*, 548 F.3d 882, 887 (9th Cir. 2008). A test

account (i.e., an account created to test the functionality of a software application) may qualify as a "means of identification" provided that the accounts could be used to "'identify a specific individual.'" *United States v. Kvashuk*, 29 F.4th 1077, 1089 (9th Cir. 2022). Because Congress "intended 'to construct an expansive definition' of the term 'means of identification,'" the "purpose, prerequisites, and functionality" of a name or number "does not bear on whether they 'identify a specific individual.'" *Id*.

In *Flores-Figueroa v. United States*, 556 U.S. 646, 647 (2009), the Supreme Court held that § 1028A requires that the government prove the defendant knew that the "means of identification" he or she unlawfully transferred, possessed or used belonged to a real person. The word "person" includes both living and deceased persons, and the government is not required to prove that the defendant knew the person was living when the defendant committed the crime of aggravated identity theft. *United States v. Maciel-Alcala*, 612 F.3d 1092, 1100-02 (9th Cir. 2010).

If the government offers evidence at trial of uncharged identity theft against victims not included in the indictment, or if the government's proof at trial includes uncharged conduct that would satisfy an element of the offense charged in the indictment, it may be necessary for the court to modify this instruction to name the specific victims whose identities the indictment accuses the defendant of stealing or to instruct the jury that it must find the conduct charged in the indictment before it may convict. *See United States v. Ward*, 747 F.3d 1184, 1192 (9th Cir. 2014) (holding it was reversible error to permit jury to convict on counts of aggravated identity theft against two victims named in indictment based on evidence presented at trial of uncharged conduct against identity-theft victims not named in indictment). *See* Instruction 6.10 (Activities Not Charged).

The government need not prove that the identification document was stolen. *United States v. Osuna-Alvarez*, 788 F.3d 1183, 1185 (9th Cir. 2015). In addition, the government need not prove that the means of identification was used without the other person's consent. *United States v. Gagarin*, 950 F.3d 596, 604-05 (9th Cir. 2020); *United States v. Parviz*, 131 F.4th 966, 972 (9th Cir. 2025).

"Use" of another person's means of identification "in relation to" a predicate offense under § 1028A requires that the use of the means of identification is "at the crux of what makes the conduct criminal." *Dubin v. United States*, 599 U.S. 110, 131 (2023). This requires more than a causal relationship, so facilitating the commission of the offense or being a but-for cause of its success is insufficient. Instead, "the means of identification specifically must be used in a manner that is fraudulent or deceptive." *Id*.; *see United States v. Motley*, 168 F.4th 588, 598 (9th Cir. 2026) ("[T]he fraudulent or deceitful aspect of the identity use must be distinct from—and not duplicative of—the fraud in the underlying healthcare crime. The use of identifiers, in other words, must stand on its own as fraudulent or deceitful . . . ."). For example, the forging of someone else's signature on a fraudulent life insurance application constitutes a "use" within the meaning of § 1028A. *See Gagarin*, 950 F.3d at 603-04. Further, the use of a nurse practitioner's identifying information was a "use" within the meaning of § 1028A where the defendant prepared a fraudulent letter in the nurse practitioner's name, aimed at establishing a medical excuse from a requirement that passport applicants appear in person as part of a passport fraud scheme. *See Parviz*, 131 F.4th at 970-72.

But employing a patient's Medicare identification information to file Medicare claims that falsely identified the treatments as Medicare-eligible physical therapy services rather than as massages does not constitute a "use" within the meaning of § 1028A. *See United States v. Hong*, 938 F.3d 1040, 1051 (9th Cir. 2019). And employing a patient's Medicare identification information to file a Medicare claim that misrepresents the qualifications of the treating healthcare provider is not a "use" of the patient's identification information for purposes of § 1028A because the patient's name was an ancillary feature of the fraudulent billing method employed. *Dubin*, 599 U.S. at 132. Similarly, "possession" of another person's means of identification "in relation to" a predicate offense under § 1028A requires that the possession of the means of identification be "at the crux of the criminality" of the predicate offense. *See United States v. Ovsepian*, 13 F.4th 1193, 1209 (9th Cir. 2024) (internal quotations and citation omitted) (explaining that the same is true for all three verb prongs of § 1028A(a)(1)).

*Revised June 2026*

## 15.10 Counterfeit Access Devices—Producing, Using, or Trafficking (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [production of] [use of] [trafficking in] [a] counterfeit access device[s] in violation of Section 1029(a)(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [used] [produced] [trafficked in] a counterfeit access device;

Second, the defendant acted with intent to defraud; and

Third, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

A "counterfeit access device" means any access device that is counterfeit, fictitious, altered or forged, or an identifiable component of an access device or a counterfeit access device.

[To "produce" a telecommunications instrument means to design, alter, authenticate, duplicate, or assemble it.]

[To "traffic" in a telecommunications instrument means to transfer or otherwise dispose of it to another, or to obtain control of it with intent to transfer or dispose of it.]

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instruction 15.16 (Access Device—Defined).

For a definition of "intent to defraud," *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

18 U.S.C. § 1029(e) defines the terms "access device," "counterfeit access device," "produce," and "traffic."

For a definition of "knowingly," *see* Instructions 4.8 (Knowingly) and 4.9 (Deliberate Ignorance).

Regarding a jury finding that commerce was affected, consult *United States v. Gomez*, 87 F.3d 1093, 1096-97 (9th Cir. 1996) (discussing role of jury in determining fact which is both element of offense and jurisdictional fact). *See also United States v. Lopez*, 514 U.S. 549, 558-63 (1995) (discussing "affecting" commerce requirement); *United States v. Clayton*, 108 F.3d 1114, 1117-18 (9th Cir. 1997) (applying test in *Lopez* to alleged violation of § 1029).

18 U.S.C. § 1029(b)(1) and (b)(2) specify penalties for an attempt or a conspiracy to violate any subsection of § 1029(a). Where the indictment charges such an attempt or conspiracy, adjust this instruction accordingly, using relevant elements from Instructions 4.4 (Attempt) or 11.1 (Conspiracy—Elements).

For specific cases referring to counterfeit access devices, see the following: *United States v. McCormick*, 72 F.3d 1404, 1408 (9th Cir. 1995) (holding that submission of credit card application containing false or inflated information produces counterfeit access device); *United States v. Brannan*, 898 F.2d 107, 109 (9th Cir. 1990) (submitting fictitious credit card applications to bank was functional equivalent to manufacture of counterfeit access devices); *United States v. Luttrell*, 889 F.2d 806, 810 (9th Cir. 1989) (discussing distinction between unauthorized and counterfeit access devices) *opinion amended in part, vacated in part on rehearing*, 923 F.2d 764 (9th Cir. 1991).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

*Revised Mar. 2021*

## 15.11 Unauthorized Access Devices—Using or Trafficking (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [using] [trafficking in] unauthorized access devices during a period of one year in violation of Section 1029(a)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [used] [trafficked in] the unauthorized access devices at any time during a one-year period [beginning [*date*], and ending [*date*]];

Second, by [using] [trafficking in] the unauthorized access devices during that period, the defendant obtained [anything of value worth $1,000 or more] [things of value, their value together totaling $1,000 or more] during that period;

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud; and

Fourth, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

An "unauthorized access device" is any access device that is lost, stolen, expired, revoked, canceled, or obtained with intent to defraud.

[To "traffic" in an access device means to transfer or otherwise dispose of it to another, or to obtain control of it with intent to transfer or dispose of it.]

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instruction 15.16 (Access Device—Defined). *See United States v. Brannan*, 898 F.2d 107, 108-10 (9th Cir. 1990) (distinguishing "unauthorized access device" from "counterfeit access device").

For a definition of "intent to defraud," see Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

For a definition of "knowingly," *see* Instructions 4.8 (Knowingly) and 4.9 (Deliberate Ignorance).

When parties dispute the "affecting commerce" requirement, *see* Comment to Instruction 15.10 (Counterfeit Access Devices—Producing, Using, or Trafficking). *See also* Comment to Instruction 15.10 for changes to this instruction when attempt or conspiracy is alleged in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1029(a).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

18 U.S.C. § 1029(e) defines "access device," "traffic," and "unauthorized access device."

## 15.12 Access Devices—Unlawfully Possessing Fifteen or More (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with unlawful possession of counterfeit or unauthorized access devices in violation of Section 1029(a)(3) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed at least fifteen [counterfeit] [unauthorized] access devices at the same time;

Second, the defendant knew that the devices were [counterfeit] [unauthorized];

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud; and

Fourth, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

[An "unauthorized access device" is any access device that is lost, stolen, expired, revoked, canceled, or obtained with intent to defraud.]

[A "counterfeit access device" is any device that is counterfeit, fictitious, altered or forged, or an identifiable component of an access device or a counterfeit access device.]

A defendant acts with the intent to defraud if [he] [she] had the intent to deprive [*victim*] of money or property by deception.

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instruction 15.16 (Access Device—Defined).

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.10 (Counterfeit Access Devices—Producing, Using, or Trafficking) and Comment to Instruction 15.11 (Unauthorized Access Devices—Using or Trafficking).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

18 U.S.C. § 1029(e) defines "access device," "counterfeit access device," and "unauthorized access device."

"Intent to defraud" for purposes of § 1029(a)(3) requires the intent to "deceive *and* cheat," which means "the government must prove that the defendant had the intent to deprive a victim of money or property by deception." *United States v. Saini*, 23 F.4th 1155, 1160 (9th Cir. 2022).

## 15.13 Device-Making Equipment—Illegal Possession or Production (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(4))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [production] [trafficking in] [having control or custody of] [possessing] device-making equipment in violation of Section 1029(a)(4) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [produced] [trafficked in] [had control or custody of] [possessed] device-making equipment;

Second, the defendant acted with intent to defraud; and

Third, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

"Device-making equipment" is any equipment, mechanism, or impression designed or primarily used for making an access device or a counterfeit access device.

[A "counterfeit access device" is any device that is counterfeit, fictitious, altered, or forged, or an identifiable component of an access device or a counterfeit access device.]

[To "traffic" in device-making equipment means to transfer or otherwise dispose of it to another, or to obtain control of it with intent to transfer or dispose of it to another.]

[To "produce" device-making equipment means to design, alter, authenticate, duplicate, or assemble it.]

A defendant acts with the intent to defraud if [he] [she] had the intent to deprive [*victim*] of money or property by deception.

**Comment**

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instruction 15.16 (Access Device—Defined).

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.10 (Counterfeit Access Devices—Producing, Using, or Trafficking) and Comment to Instruction 15.11 (Unauthorized Access Devices—Using or Trafficking).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

18 U.S.C. § 1029(e) defines "access device," "counterfeit access device," "trafficking," "produce," and "unauthorized access device."

"Intent to defraud" for purposes of § 1029(a)(4) requires the intent to "deceive *and* cheat," which means "the government must prove that the defendant had the intent to deprive a victim of money or property by deception." *United States v. Saini*, 23 F.4th 1155, 1160 (9th Cir. 2022).

## 15.14 Access Devices—Illegal Transactions (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(5))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with effecting transactions with an access device issued to another person in violation of Section 1029(a)(5) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, with [an access device] [access devices] issued to [another person] [other persons], the defendant knowingly effected transactions;

Second, the defendant obtained through such transactions [at any time during a one-year period beginning [*date*], and ending [*date*]] a total of at least $1,000 in payment[s] or [any other thing] [other things] of value;

Third, the defendant acted with intent to defraud; and

Fourth, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instruction 15.16 (Access Device—Defined).

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.10 (Counterfeit Access Devices—Producing, Using, or Trafficking) and Comment to Instruction 15.11 (Unauthorized Access Devices—Using or Trafficking).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

## 15.15 Access Devices—Unauthorized Solicitation (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(6))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with soliciting persons for the purpose of [offering] [selling information regarding] an access device in violation of Section 1029(a)(6) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly solicited a person for the purpose of [offering an access device] [selling information regarding an access device] [selling information regarding an application to obtain an access device];

Second, the defendant solicited that person without authorization of the issuer of the access device;

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud; and

Fourth, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instruction 15.16 (Access Device—Defined).

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.10 (Counterfeit Access Devices—Producing, Using, or Trafficking) and Comment to Instruction 15.11 (Unauthorized Access Devices—Using or Trafficking).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

## 15.16 Access Device—Defined (18 U.S.C. § 1029)

An "access device" means any card, plate, code, account number, electronic serial number, mobile identification number, personal identification number, or other telecommunications service, equipment, or instrument identifier, or other means of account access, that can be used, alone or in conjunction with another access device, to obtain money, goods, services, or any other thing of value, or that can be used to initiate a transfer of funds (other than a transfer originated solely by paper instrument).

### Comment

18 U.S.C. § 1029(e)(1) defines "access device." *See also United States v. Gainza*, 982 F.3d 762, 764 (9th Cir. 2020) ("The term 'access device' includes the information needed to access funds from a debit or credit card, such as the account number and the PIN."). *United States v. Barrogo*, 59 F.4th 440, 445 (9th Cir. 2023) ("an EBT card is an 'access device'"). Use this instruction in conjunction with Instructions 15.10 through 15.16.

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.17 Telecommunications Instrument—Illegal Modification (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(7))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [use of] [production of] [trafficking in] a telecommunications instrument that had been modified to obtain unauthorized telecommunications services in violation of Section 1029(a)(7) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [used] [produced] [trafficked in] [had custody or control of] [possessed] a telecommunications instrument that had been modified or altered to obtain unauthorized use of telecommunications services;

Second, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud; and

Third, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

[To "produce" a telecommunications instrument means to design, alter, authenticate, duplicate, or assemble it.]

[To "traffic" in a telecommunications instrument means to transfer or otherwise dispose of it to another, or to obtain control of it with intent to transfer or dispose of it.]

### Comment

Section 1029 does not define the term "telecommunications instrument." Section 1029(e)(9) provides that "telecommunications service" has the meaning given in the Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. § 153, which defines "telecommunications service" as: "the offering of telecommunications for a fee directly to the public, or to such classes of users as to be effectively available directly to the public, regardless of the facilities used." 47 U.S.C. § 153(53).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

18 U.S.C. § 1029(e)(4) and (5) define "produce" and "traffic."

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 15.18 Use or Control of Scanning Receiver (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(8))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [using] [producing] [trafficking in] [possessing] a scanning receiver in violation of Section 1029(a)(8) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [used] [produced] [trafficked in] [had custody or control of] [possessed] a scanning receiver;

Second, the defendant acted with intent to defraud; and

Third, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

[A "scanning receiver" is a device or apparatus that can be used to intercept illegally a wire or electronic communication or to intercept illegally an electronic serial number, mobile identification number, or other identifier of any telecommunications service, equipment, or instrument.]

[To "produce" a scanning receiver means to design, alter, authenticate, duplicate, or assemble it.]

[To "traffic" in a scanning receiver means to transfer or otherwise dispose of it to another, or to obtain control of it with intent to transfer or dispose of it.]

### Comment

For a definition of "intent to defraud," *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

For a definition of "knowingly," *see* Instructions 4.8 (Knowingly) and 4.9 (Deliberate Ignorance).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

18 U.S.C. § 1029(e)(8) defines the term "scanning receiver" to be a device or apparatus that can be used to intercept a wire or electronic communication in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510-2522. 18 U.S.C. § 2510(4) defines "intercept" to mean the aural or other acquisition of the contents of any wire, electronic, or oral communication through the use of any electronic, mechanical, or other device. When parties dispute whether the device involved is a "scanning receiver," the court should add the following sentence to the instruction concerning the meaning of that term:

The government has the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that [*specify device*] is a scanning receiver.

Section 1029 does not define the term "telecommunications instrument." Section 1029(e)(9) provides that "telecommunications service" has the meaning given in the

Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. § 153, that carries the definition: "transmission between or among points specified by the user, of information of the user's choosing, without change in the form or content of the information as sent and received." 47 U.S.C. § 153(53).

Sections 1029(b)(1) and (b)(2) specify penalties for an attempt or a conspiracy to violate any subsection of § 1029(a). When the indictment charges an attempt or conspiracy, modify this instruction accordingly, using relevant elements from Instruction 4.4 (Attempt) or 11.1 (Conspiracy—Elements).

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 15.19 Illegally Modified Telecommunications Equipment—Possession or Production (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(9))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [use of] [production of] [having possession, custody, or control of] [trafficking in] hardware or software configured to [insert] [modify] telecommunication identifying information [contained within] [associated with] a telecommunications instrument, so that such instrument could be used to obtain telecommunications services without authorization, in violation of Section 1029(a)(9) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [used] [produced] [trafficked in] [had custody or control of] [possessed] hardware or software configured to [insert] [modify] telecommunication identifying information, so that a telecommunications instrument could be used to obtain telecommunications services without authorization;

Second, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud; and

Third, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

"Telecommunication identifying information" means an electronic serial number or any other number or signal that identifies a specific telecommunications instrument or account, or a specific communication transmitted from a telecommunications instrument.

[To "produce" a telecommunications instrument means to design, alter, authenticate, duplicate, or assemble it.]

[To "traffic" in a telecommunications instrument means to transfer or otherwise dispose of it to another, or to obtain control of it with intent to transfer or dispose of it.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.17 (Telecommunications Instrument—Illegal Modification). For discussion of the definition of "telecommunications instrument"*See also* Comment to Instruction 15.10 (Counterfeit Access Devices—Producing, Using, or Trafficking) and Comment to Instruction 15.11 (Unauthorized Access Devices—Using or Trafficking) for discussion of intent to defraud, and affecting interstate commerce.

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

## 15.20 Credit Card Transaction Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1029(a)(10))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with arranging for another person to present a record of a transaction made by an access device to a credit card system for payment in violation of Section 1029(a)(10) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [arranged for] [caused] another person to present, for payment to a credit card system [member] [agent], one or more [records] [evidences] of transactions made by an access device;

Second, the defendant was not authorized by the credit card system [member] [agent] to [arrange] [cause] such a claim to be presented for payment;

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud; and

Fourth, the defendant's conduct in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between a state of the United States and a foreign country.

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instruction 15.16 (Access Device—Defined).

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.10 (Counterfeit Access Devices—Producing, Using, or Trafficking) and Comment to Instruction 15.11 (Unauthorized Access Devices—Using or Trafficking).

A "credit card system member" is a "financial institution or other entity that is a member of a credit card system, including an entity, whether affiliated with or identical to the credit card issuer, that is the sole member of a credit card system." 18 U.S.C. § 1029(e)(7).

18 U.S.C. § 10 defines interstate and foreign commerce.

## 15.21 Without Authorization—Defined

A person uses a computer "without authorization" when the person has not received permission from the [owner] [[person who] or [entity which] controls the right of access to the computer] for any purpose, or when the [owner] [[person who] or [entity which] controls the right of access to the computer] has withdrawn or rescinded permission to use the computer and the person uses the computer anyway.

## Comment

Use this instruction with Instructions 15.22, 15.23, 15.24, 15.25, 15.26, 15.27, 15.28, 15.29, 15.30, and 15.31. Where appropriate, substitute "government," "financial institution," or other specific entity where called for by the accompanying CFAA instructions. *See*, *e.g.*, Instruction 15.23 (Obtaining Information by Computer—from Financial Institution or Government Computer).

A person uses a computer "without authorization" under the CFAA when the owner of the computer, or a person or entity who controls the right of access to the computer, has rescinded permission to access the computer and the defendant uses the computer anyway. *United States v. Nosal*, 844 F.3d 1024, 1034 (9th Cir. 2016).

"An actor's authorization, or lack thereof, is assessed at the moment of access." *United States v. Sullivan*, 159 F.4th 579, 589 (9th Cir. 2025), *amending on denial of reh'g en banc*, 131 F.4th 776, 785 (9th Cir. 2025).

*Revised December 2025*

## 15.22 Obtaining Information by Computer— Injurious to United States or Advantageous to Foreign Nation (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with obtaining and transmitting injurious information by computer in violation of Section 1030(a)(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [accessed without authorization] [exceeded authorized access to] a computer;

Second, by [accessing without authorization] [exceeding authorized access to] a computer, the defendant obtained [information that had been determined by the United States government to require protection against disclosure for reasons of national defense or foreign relations] [data regarding the design, manufacture, or use of atomic weapons];

Third, the defendant had reason to believe that the [information] [data] obtained could be used to the injury of the United States or to the benefit of a foreign nation; and

[Fourth, the defendant willfully [caused to be] [[communicated] [delivered] [transmitted]] the [information] [data] to any person not entitled to receive it.]

*or*

[Fourth, the defendant willfully [caused to be] retained and failed to deliver the information or data to an officer or employee of the United States entitled to receive it.]

### Comment

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) provides definitions of the terms "computer," "exceeds authorized access," and "person." As to "knowingly," *see* Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly), and as to "willfully," *see* Comment in Instruction 4.6 (Willfully).

The Ninth Circuit has held that the phrase "exceeds [or exceeded] authorized access" is limited to violations of restrictions on *access* to information and not restrictions on the *use* of information that is permissibly accessed. *United States v. Nosal*, 676 F.3d 854, 864 (9th Cir. 2012); *see also United States v. Christensen*, 828 F.3d 763, 786-87 (9th Cir. 2015), *as amended on denial of reh'g* (2016).

*Revised June 2019*

## 15.23 Obtaining Information by Computer—From Financial Institution or Government Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(2)(A), (B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with unlawfully obtaining information of a [financial institution] [card issuer] [consumer reporting agency] [government department or agency] in violation of Section 1030(a)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intentionally [accessed without authorization] [exceeded authorized access to] a computer; and

[Second, by [accessing without authorization] [exceeding authorized access to] a computer, the defendant obtained information contained in a financial record of [*specify financial institution or card issuer*].]

*or*

[Second, by [accessing without authorization] [exceeding authorized access to] a computer, the defendant obtained information contained in a file [of *specify consumer reporting agency*] on a consumer.]

*or*

[Second, by [accessing without authorization] [exceeding authorized access to] a computer, the defendant obtained information from [*specify department or agency of the United States*].]

### Comment

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) provides definitions of the terms "computer," "financial institution," "financial record," "exceeds authorized access," and "department of the United States."

Interpreting the civil counterpart to § 1030 and expressly finding such interpretation equally applicable in the criminal context, the Ninth Circuit held that "a person uses a computer 'without authorization' under §§ 1030(a)(2) and (4) when the person has not received permission to use the computer for any purpose (such as when a hacker accesses someone's computer without any permission), or when the employer has rescinded permission to access the computer and the defendant uses the computer anyway." *LVRC Holdings LLC v. Brekka*, 581 F.3d 1127, 1135 (9th Cir. 2009). The court further held that an employee's use of a computer contrary to the employer's interest does not alone satisfy the "without authorization" prong of the statute. *Id.*

The Ninth Circuit has held that the phrase "exceeds [or exceeded] authorized access" is limited to violations of restrictions on *access* to information and not restrictions on the *use* of information that is permissibly accessed. *United States v. Nosal*, 676 F.3d 854, 864 (9th Cir. 2012); *see also United States v. Christensen*, 828 F.3d 763, 786-87 (9th Cir. 2015), *as amended on denial of reh'g* (2016).

## 15.24 Obtaining Information by Computer—"Protected" Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(2)(C))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with unlawfully obtaining information from a protected computer in violation of Section 1030(a)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intentionally [accessed without authorization] [exceeded authorized access to] a computer; and

Second, by [accessing without authorization] [exceeding authorized access to] a computer, the defendant obtained information from a computer that was [[exclusively for the use of a financial institution or the United States government] [not exclusively for the use of a financial institution or the United States government, but the defendant's access affected the computer's use by or for the financial institution or the United States government] [used in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce or communication] [located outside the United States but that computer was used in a manner that affected interstate or foreign commerce or communication of the United States]].

### Comment

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) provides definitions of the terms "computer," "financial institution," and "exceeds authorized access." While the term "protected computer" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e), that term is not used in the elements of this instruction because that definition has been incorporated into the second element. Accordingly, it is not necessary to provide a separate definition of "protected computer."

The first element is satisfied when a defendant intentionally accesses a computer without authorization *or* exceeds authorized access. *Musacchio v. United States*, 577 U.S. 237, 241 (2016).

Interpreting the civil counterpart to § 1030 and expressly finding such interpretation equally applicable in the criminal context, the Ninth Circuit held that "a person uses a computer 'without authorization' under §§ 1030(a)(2) and (4) when the person has not received permission to use the computer for any purpose (such as when a hacker accesses someone's computer without any permission), or when the employer has rescinded permission to access the computer and the defendant uses the computer anyway." *LVRC Holdings LLC v. Brekka*, 581 F.3d 1127, 1135 (9th Cir. 2009). The court further held that an employee's use of a computer contrary to the employer's interest does not alone satisfy the "without authorization" prong of the statute. *Id.*

The Ninth Circuit has held that the phrase "exceeds [or exceeded] authorized access" is limited to violations of restrictions on *access* to information and not restrictions on the *use* of information that is permissibly accessed. *United States v. Nosal*, 676 F.3d 854, 864 (9th Cir. 2012); *see also United States v. Christensen*, 828 F.3d 763, 786-87 (9th Cir. 2015), *as amended on denial of reh'g* (2016).

*Revised June 2019*

## 15.25 Unlawfully Accessing Nonpublic Computer Used by the Government (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with unlawfully accessing a computer in violation of Section 1030(a)(3) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intentionally accessed a nonpublic computer of [*specify department or agency of the United States*];

Second, the defendant accessed that computer without authorization; and

Third, the computer accessed by the defendant [was exclusively for the use of the United States government] [was used nonexclusively by or for the United States government, but the defendant's conduct affected that computer's use by or for the United States government].

### Comment

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) provides definitions of the terms "computer" and "department of the United States."

## 15.26 Computer Fraud—Use of Protected Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(4))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with computer fraud in violation of Section 1030(a)(4) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [accessed without authorization] [exceeded authorized access to] a computer [that was exclusively for the use of a financial institution or the United States government] [that was not exclusively for the use of a financial institution or the United States government, but the defendant's access affected the computer's use by or for the financial institution or the United States government] [used in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce or communication] [located outside the United States but using it in a manner that affected interstate or foreign commerce or communication of the United States];

Second, the defendant did so with the intent to defraud;

Third, by [accessing the computer without authorization] [exceeding authorized access to the computer], the defendant furthered the intended fraud; [and]

Fourth, the defendant by [accessing the computer without authorization] [exceeding authorized access to the computer] obtained anything of value[.] [; and]

[Fifth, the total value of the defendant's computer use exceeded $5,000 during [*specify applicable period*.]]

### Comment

As to intent to defraud, *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

Use the fifth element of this instruction when the prosecution's theory is that the object of the defendant's alleged fraud was only the use of the computer, and the value of that computer use was "more than $5,000 in any 1-year period." This fifth element reflects the requirements of 18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(4), which apply where the defendant's purpose and the thing of value the defendant obtained by the fraud was only the use of the computer.

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) provides definitions of the terms "computer," "financial institution," and "exceeds authorized access." While the term "protected computer" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e), that term is not used in the elements of this instruction because that definition has been incorporated into the first element of the instruction. Accordingly, it is not necessary to provide a separate definition of "protected computer."

Interpreting the civil counterpart to § 1030 and expressly finding such interpretation equally applicable in the criminal context, the Ninth Circuit held that "a person uses a computer 'without authorization' under §§ 1030(a)(2) and (4) when the person has not received permission to use the computer for any purpose (such as when a hacker accesses someone's computer without any permission), or when the employer has rescinded permission to access the computer and the

defendant uses the computer anyway." *LVRC Holdings LLC v. Brekka*, 581 F.3d 1127, 1135 (9th Cir. 2009). The court further held that an employee's use of a computer contrary to the employer's interest does not alone satisfy the "without authorization" prong of the statute. *Id.*

The Ninth Circuit has held that the phrase "exceeds [or exceeded] authorized access" is limited to violations of restrictions on *access* to information and not restrictions on the *use* of information that is permissibly accessed. *United States v. Nosal*, 676 F.3d 854, 864 (9th Cir. 2012); *see also United States v. Christensen*, 828 F.3d 763, 786-87 (9th Cir. 2015), *as amended on denial of reh'g* (2016).

*Revised June 2019*

## 15.27 Intentional Damage to a Protected Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(5)(A))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with transmitting [a program] [information] [a code] [a command] to a computer, intending to cause damage, in violation of Section 1030(a)(5) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly caused the transmission of [a program] [information] [a code] [a command] to a computer;

Second, as a result of the transmission, the defendant intentionally impaired without authorization the [integrity] [availability] of [data] [a program] [a system] [information]; and

Third, the computer was [exclusively for the use of a financial institution or the United States government] [not exclusively for the use of a financial institution or the United States government, but the defendant's transmission affected the computer's use by or for a financial institution or the United States government] [used in or affected interstate or foreign commerce or communication] [located outside the United States but was used in a manner that affects interstate or foreign commerce or communication of the United States].

### Comment

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) provides definitions of the terms "computer" and "financial institution." While the term "protected computer" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1030, that term is not used in the elements of this introduction because that definition has been incorporated into the third element of the instruction. Accordingly, it is not necessary to provide a separate definition of "protected computer." Similarly, the term "damage" is defined at 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e), but because the common usage of that term could be broader and therefore conducive to confusion, the definition has been incorporated into the second element.

In *United States v. Middleton*, 231 F.3d 1207, 1211-12 (9th Cir. 2000), the Ninth Circuit discussed the definitions of "protected computer" and "damage." However, it is uncertain whether the conclusions drawn by the circuit are still applicable after amendments to § 1030 in USA PATRIOT Act, Pub. L. 107-56, Title V, § 506(a), Title VIII, § 814, 115 Stat. 366, 382 (2001) (codified as amended at 18 U.S.C. § 1030). *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) ("protected computer" and "damage").

*Revised June 2019*

## 15.28 Reckless Damage to a Protected Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(5)(B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with accessing a computer and recklessly damaging it in violation of Section 1030(a)(5) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intentionally accessed a computer without authorization;

Second, as a result of the defendant's access, the defendant recklessly impaired the [integrity] [availability] of [data] [a program] [a system] [information]; and

Third, the computer was [exclusively for the use of a financial institution or the United States government] [not exclusively for the use by or for a financial institution or the United States government, but the defendant's transmission affected the computer's use by or for a financial institution or the United States government] [used in or affected interstate or foreign commerce or communication] [located outside the United States but was used in a manner that affects interstate or foreign commerce or communication of the United States].

### Comment

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) provides definitions of the terms "computer" and "financial institution." While the term "protected computer" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e), that term is not used in the elements of this instruction because that definition has been incorporated into the third element of the instruction. Accordingly, it is not necessary to provide a separate definition of "protected computer." Similarly, the term "damage" is defined at 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) but because the common usage of that term could be broader and therefore conducive to confusion, the definition has been incorporated into the second element.

In *United States v. Middleton*, 231 F.3d 1207, 1211-12 (9th Cir. 2000), the Ninth Circuit discussed the definitions of "protected computer" and "damage." However, it is uncertain whether the conclusions drawn by the circuit are still applicable after amendments to § 1030 in USA PATRIOT Act, Pub. L. 107-56, Title V, § 506(a), Title VIII, § 814, 115 Stat. 366, 382 (2001) (codified as amended at 18 U.S.C. § 1030). *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) ("protected computer" and "damage").

*Revised June 2019*

## 15.29 Damage to a Protected Computer Causing Loss (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(5)(C))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with accessing a computer which resulted in its damage in violation of Section 1030(a)(5) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intentionally accessed a computer without authorization;

Second, as a result of the defendant's access, the defendant caused the impairment of the [integrity] [availability] of [data] [a program] [a system] [information];

Third, as a result of the defendant's access, the defendant caused a loss; and

Fourth, the computer was [exclusively for the use of a financial institution or the United States government] [not exclusively for the use by or for a financial institution or the United States government, but the defendant's transmission affected the computer's use by or for a financial institution or the United States government] [used in or affected interstate or foreign commerce or communication] [located outside the United States but was used in a manner that affects interstate or foreign commerce or communication of the United States].

### Comment

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) provides definitions of the terms "computer," "financial institution" and "loss." While the term "protected computer" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e), that term is not used in the elements of this instruction because that definition has been incorporated into the third element of the instruction. Accordingly, it is not necessary to provide a separate definition of "protected computer." Similarly, the term "damage" is defined at 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) but as the common usage of that term could be broader and therefore conducive to confusion, the definition has been incorporated into the second lements.

In *United States v. Middleton*, 231 F.3d 1207, 1211-12 (9th Cir. 2000), the Ninth Circuit discussed the definitions of "protected computer" and "damage." However, it is uncertain whether the conclusions drawn by the circuit are still applicable after amendments to § 1030 in USA PATRIOT Act, Pub. L. 107-56, Title V, § 506(a), Title VIII, § 814, 115 Stat. 366, 382 (2001) (codified as amended at 18 U.S.C. § 1030). *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) ("protected computer" and "damage").

*Revised June 2019*

## 15.30 Trafficking in Passwords (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(6)(A), (B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with trafficking in [a] password[s] or similar information through which a computer may be accessed without authorization, in violation of Section 1030(a)(6) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[transferred to another] [disposed of to another] [obtained control of with intent to transfer or dispose of]] [a] password[s] or similar information through which a computer may be accessed without authorization;

Second, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud; and

Third, [the defendant's conduct affected commerce between [one state and another] [a foreign nation and the United States]] [the computer was used by or for the government of the United States].

### Comment

As to intent to defraud, *see* Instruction 4.13 (Intent to Defraud).

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e)(1) provides a definition of "computer," and 18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(6) incorporates the definition of "traffic" from 18 U.S.C. § 1029(e).

*Revised June 2019*

## 15.31 Threatening to Damage a Computer (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(7))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with transmitting a threat to damage a computer, in violation of Section 1030(a)(7) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant transmitted a communication in interstate or foreign commerce;

Second, the defendant acted with intent to extort money or any other thing of value from any individual, firm, corporation, educational institution, financial institution, government entity, or legal or other entity;

[Third, the communication contained a threat to cause damage to a computer; and]

*or*

[Third, the communication contained a threat to [obtain] [impair the confidentiality of] information from a computer [without authorization] [in excess of authorization]; and]

*or*

[Third, the communication contained a demand or request for money or other thing of value in relation to damage to a computer, and damages were caused to facilitate the extortion; and]

Fourth, the defendant's threat concerned a computer that was [exclusively for the use of a financial institution or the United States government] [not exclusively for the use by or for a financial institution or the United States government, but the defendant's transmission affected the computer's use by or for a financial institution or the United States government] [used in or affected interstate or foreign commerce or communication] [located outside the United States but was used in a manner that affects interstate or foreign commerce or communication of the United States].

### Comment

18 U.S.C. § 1030(e) provides definitions of the terms "computer," "financial institution," and "government entity."

*Revised June 2019*

## 15.32 Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud or to Obtain Money or Property by False Promises (18 U.S.C. § 1341)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with mail fraud in violation of Section 1341 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [participated in] [devised] [intended to devise] a scheme or plan to defraud for the purpose of obtaining money or property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises[, or omitted facts.] [Deceitful statements of half-truths may constitute false or fraudulent representations];

Second, the statements made [or facts omitted] as part of the scheme were material; that is, they had a natural tendency to influence, or were capable of influencing, a person to part with money or property;

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud; that is, the intent to deceive and cheat; and

Fourth, the defendant used, or caused to be used, the mails to carry out or attempt to carry out an essential part of the scheme.

In determining whether a scheme to defraud exists, you may consider not only the defendant's words and statements, but also the circumstances in which they are used as a whole.

[To convict the defendant of mail fraud based on omission[s] of material fact[s], you must find that the defendant had a duty to disclose the omitted fact[s] arising out of a relationship of trust. That duty can arise either out of a formal fiduciary relationship, or an informal, trusting relationship in which one party acts for the benefit of another and induces the trusting party to relax the care and vigilance that it would ordinarily exercise.]

[To convict [a] defendant[s] of mail fraud based on a scheme to induce a victim to enter a bargain, the false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises[, or omitted facts] must directly or indirectly deceive the victim about the nature of the bargain. A misrepresentation will go to the nature of the bargain if it goes to price or quality, or otherwise to essential aspects of the transaction. [Whether a misrepresentation goes to the nature of the bargain may depend on the specific transaction at issue.]]

[An oral or written statement is material if it has a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, a person to part with money or property. Neither proof of reliance on a false statement nor actual harm is needed to show materiality.]

A mailing is caused when one knows that the mails will be used in the ordinary course of business or when one can reasonably foresee such use. It does not matter whether the material mailed was itself false or deceptive so long as the mail was used as a part of the scheme, nor does it matter whether the scheme or plan was successful or that any money or property was obtained.

**Comment**

Use this instruction with respect to a crime charged under the second clause of 18 U.S.C. § 1341.

In *Ciminelli v. United States*, 598 U.S. 306, 308-09 (2023), the Supreme Court held that a jury was improperly instructed that the term "property" in 18 U.S.C. § 1343 "includes intangible interests such as the right to control the use of one's assets" because "the federal fraud statutes criminalize only schemes to deprive people of traditional property interests." The Court explained that despite the inclusion of the term "or" in the phrase "or for obtaining money or property," the Court has "consistently understood the 'money or property' requirement to limit the 'scheme or artifice to defraud' element because the 'common understanding' of the words 'to defraud' when the statute was enacted referred 'to wrongdoing one in his property rights.'" *Id.* at 312 (quoting *Cleveland v. United States*, 531 U.S. 12, 19 (2000)). "Accordingly, the Government must prove not only that wire fraud defendants 'engaged in deception,' but also that money or property was 'an object of their fraud.'" *Id*.

The validity of this instruction was initially confirmed in *United States v. Holden*, 908 F.3d 395, 399-401 (9th Cir. 2018), *as amended on denial of reh'g* (Oct. 30, 2018). However, in *United States v. Miller*, 953 F.3d 1095, 1101-03 (9th Cir. 2020), the Ninth Circuit expressly considered the intent language in Instruction 15.35 (Wire Fraud), which mirrors the intent language for mail fraud in this instruction and held that wire fraud (and thus mail fraud) requires the intent to "deceive *and* cheat." The *Miller* Court thus overruled prior holdings approving the "deceive *or* cheat" language in light of the Supreme Court's decision in *Shaw v. United States*, 580 U.S. 63, 71-72 (2016). *Miller,* 953 F.3d at 1102*. Miller* does not disturb *Holden*'s ruling that, although the mail and wire fraud statutes expressly punish only those who "devise . . . or intend . . . to devise" a fraudulent scheme, those who "participate in" such a scheme also fall within the statute's ambit. *Holden*, 908 F.3d at 399-401.

A defendant who "intentionally [lies] to induce a victim into a transaction that will cost her money or property," even if the defendant did not seek to hurt the victim's bottom line, violates the wire fraud statute. *Kousisis v. United States*, 145 S. Ct. 1382, 1398 (2025) (concluding that the government's fraudulent-inducement theory is consistent with the text of § 1343 and the Court's precedent interpreting it). That is, a defendant violates § 1343 "whenever he uses a material misstatement to trick a victim into a contract that requires handing over her money or property—regardless of whether the fraudster, who often provides something in return, seeks to cause the victim *net* pecuniary loss." *Id.* at 1388.

Much of the language in this instruction comes from the instructions approved in *United States v. Woods*, 335 F.3d 993 (9th Cir. 2003). Materiality is an essential element of the crime of mail fraud. *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1 (1999). Materiality of statements or promises must be established, *United States v. Halbert*, 640 F.2d 1000, 1007 (9th Cir. 1981), but the jury need not unanimously agree that a specific material false statement was made. *United States v. Lyons*, 472 F.3d 1055, 1068 (9th Cir. 2007). Materiality is a question of fact for the jury. *United States v. Carpenter*, 95 F.3d 773, 776 (9th Cir. 1996). The common law test for materiality in the false-statement statutes, as reflected in the second element of this instruction, is the preferred

formulation. *United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008). For cases involving a scheme to induce a victim to enter a bargain, in order for a misrepresentation to constitute fraud, the misrepresentation "must . . . go to the nature of the bargain." *United States v. Milheiser*, 98 F.4th 935, 938, 944-45 (9th Cir. 2024) ("The nature of the bargain requirement properly excludes from liability cases in which a defendant's misrepresentations about collateral matters may have led to the transaction but the buyer still got the product that she expected at the price she expected.").

For cases involving the failure to disclose material information, *see United States v. Shields*, 844 F.3d 819, 822-23 (9th Cir. 2016); *United States v. Milovanovic*, 678 F.3d 713, 723-24 (9th Cir. 2012). For a definition of "fiduciary" duty, *see* Instruction 15.34 (Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud—Deprivation of Intangible Right of Honest Services).

Success of the scheme is immaterial. *United States v. Rude*, 88 F.3d 1538, 1547 (9th Cir. 1996); *United States v. Utz*, 886 F.2d 1148, 1150-51 (9th Cir. 1989).

"[M]ailings designed to avoid detection or responsibility for a fraudulent scheme"—even if sent after the proceeds of the fraud have been obtained—may satisfy the fourth element of the instruction if "they are sent prior to the scheme's completion." *United States v. Tanke*, 743 F.3d 1296, 1305 (9th Cir. 2014). To determine when the scheme ends, the jury must look to the scope of the scheme as devised by the perpetrator. *Id.* But allowance must be made for the reality that fraudulent schemes "may evolve over time, contemplate no fixed end date or adapt to changed circumstances." *Id.; see also Schmuck v. United States*, 489 U.S. 705, 712 (1989) (holding that mailing that is "incident to an essential part of the scheme" or "a step in the plot" satisfies mailing element of offense); *United States v. Hubbard*, 96 F.3d 1223, 1228-29 (9th Cir. 1996) (same).

*See United States v. LeVeque*, 283 F.3d 1098, 1102 (9th Cir. 2002) (holding that government-issued license does not constitute property for purposes of § 1341).

A charge of mail fraud can be premised on a mailing that, although not sent by the defendant, was "incident to an essential part of the scheme." *United States v. Eglash*, 813 F.3d 882, 886 (9th Cir. 2016) (quoting *Schmuck*, 489 U.S. at 721) (affirming conviction for mail fraud premised on Social Security Administration's mailing of notice of disability award); *see also United States v. Brown*, 771 F.3d 1149, 1158 (9th Cir. 2014) (affirming conviction for mail fraud based on mailings by bankruptcy court of Notice of Chapter 7 Bankruptcy Case and Notice of Discharge).

*Revised March 2026*

## 15.33 Scheme to Defraud—Vicarious Liability (18 U.S.C. §§ 1341, 1343, 1344, 1346)

If you decide that the defendant was a member of a scheme to defraud and that the defendant had the intent to defraud, the defendant may be responsible for other co-schemers' actions during the course of and in furtherance of the scheme, even if the defendant did not know what the other co-schemers said or did.

For the defendant to be guilty of an offense committed by a co-schemer in furtherance of the scheme, the offense must be one that the defendant could reasonably foresee as a necessary and natural consequence of the scheme to defraud.

### Comment

This instruction is based on the co-schemer liability instruction approved in *United States v. Stapleton*, 293 F.3d 1111, 1115-18 (9th Cir. 2002) (holding that there was no error of law in court's instruction on elements of co-schemer vicarious liability when court also correctly instructed on scheme to defraud), and the Ninth Circuit's guidance on vicarious liability in *United States v. Green*, 592 F.3d 1057, 1070-71 (9th Cir. 2010).

When this instruction is appropriate, it should be given in addition to Instructions 15.32 (Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud or to Obtain Money or Property by False Promises), 15.34 (Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud—Deprivation of Intangible Right of Honest Services), 15.35 (Wire Fraud), or 15.39 (Bank Fraud—Scheme to Defraud by False Promises). *See Stapleton*, 293 F.3d at 1118-20.

On co-schemer liability generally, *see United States v. Blitz*, 151 F.3d 1002, 1006 (9th Cir. 1998) (stating that knowing participant in scheme to defraud is liable for fraudulent acts of co-schemers); *United States v. Lothian*, 976 F.2d 1257, 1262-63 (9th Cir. 1992) (discussing similarity of co-conspirator and co-schemer liability); and *United States v. Dadanian*, 818 F.2d 1443, 1446 (9th Cir. 1987), *modified*, 856 F.2d 1391 (9thb Cir. 1988) (like co-conspirators, "knowing participants in the scheme are legally liable" for their co-schemer's use of mails or wires).

*Revised June 2021*

## 15.34 Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud—Deprivation of Intangible Right of Honest Services (18 U.S.C. §§ 1341, 1346)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with mail fraud in violation of Section 1341 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant devised or knowingly participated in a scheme or plan to deprive [*name of victim*] of [his] [her] right of honest services;

Second, the scheme or plan consisted of a [bribe] [kickback] in exchange for the defendant's services. The "exchange" may be express or may be implied from all the surrounding circumstances;

Third, the defendant owed a fiduciary duty to [*name of victim*];

Fourth, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud by depriving [*name of victim*] of [his] [her] right of honest services. A deprivation of the right of honest services does not require tangible harm;

Fifth, the defendant's act was material; that is, it had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, [a person's] [an entity's] acts; and

Sixth, the defendant used, or caused someone to use, the mails to carry out or to attempt to carry out the scheme or plan.

A "fiduciary" duty exists whenever one [person] [entity] places special trust and confidence in another person—the fiduciary—in reliance that the fiduciary will exercise [his] [her] discretion and expertise with the utmost honesty and forthrightness in the interests of the [person] [entity], such that the [person] [entity] relaxes the care and vigilance that [he] [she] [it] would ordinarily exercise, and the fiduciary knowingly accepts that special trust and confidence and thereafter undertakes to act on behalf of the other [person] [entity] based on such reliance.

The mere fact that a business relationship arises between two persons does not mean that either owes a fiduciary duty to the other. If one person engages or employs another and thereafter directs, supervises, or approves the other's actions, the person so employed is not necessarily a fiduciary. Rather, as previously stated, it is only when one party places, and the other accepts, a special trust and confidence—usually involving the exercise of professional expertise and discretion—that a fiduciary relationship exists.

A mailing is caused when one knows that the mails will be used in the ordinary course of business or when one can reasonably foresee such use. It does not matter whether the material mailed was itself false or deceptive so long as the mail was used as a part of the scheme, nor does it matter whether the scheme or plan was successful or that any money or property was obtained.

### Comment

Honest services fraud criminalizes only schemes to defraud that involve bribery or kickbacks. *Skilling v. United States*, 561 U.S. 358, 408-09 (2010); *Black v. United States*, 561 U.S. 465, 471 (2010). Undisclosed conflicts of interest, or undisclosed self-dealing, is not sufficient. *Skilling*, 561 U.S. at 409-10. This instruction is limited to honest services schemes to defraud that involve a bribe or kickback because there is as yet no controlling case law subsequent to *Skilling* that extends honest services fraud to any other circumstance. *See id.* at 412 ("[N]o other misconduct falls within § 1346's province").

The "prohibition on bribes and kickbacks draws content not only from the pre-*McNally* case law, but also from federal statutes proscribing—and defining—similar crimes." *Id.* (citing 18 U.S.C. §§ 201(b) (bribery), 666(a)(2) (receiving stolen property within maritime jurisdiction); 41 U.S.C. § 52(2) (kickbacks)); *see also McNally v. United States*, 483 U.S. 350 (1987). However, conduct constituting a bribe or kickback under either state law or federal law establishes the second element of a charge of services fraud. *See United States v. Christensen*, 828 F.3d 763, 785 (9th Cir. 2015), *as amended on denial of reh'g* (2016) (affirming RICO conviction when honest services fraud predicate act under § 1346 was premised on violation of California state bribery law). Although it did not define bribery or kickbacks, the Supreme Court in *Skilling* cited three appellate decisions that reviewed jury instructions on the bribery element of honest services fraud. *Skilling*, 561 U.S. at 413 (citing *United States v. Ganim*, 510 F.3d 134, 147-49 (2d Cir. 2007); *United States v. Whitfield*, 590 F.3d 325, 352-53 (5th Cir. 2009); and *United States v. Kemp*, 500 F.3d 257, 281-86 (3d Cir. 2007)). In the Ninth Circuit, bribery requires at least an implicit *quid pro quo*. *United States v. Kincaid-Chauncey*, 556 F.3d 923, 941 (9th Cir. 2009). "Only individuals who can be shown to have had the specific intent to trade official actions for items of value are subject to criminal punishment on this theory of honest services fraud." *Id.* at 943 n.15. The *quid pro quo* need not be explicit, and an implicit *quid pro quo* need not concern a specific official act. *Id.* at 945-46 (citing *Kemp*, 500 F.3d at 282 ("[T]he government need not prove that each gift was provided with the intent to prompt a specific official act.")). A *quid pro quo* requirement is satisfied if the evidence shows a course of conduct of favors and gifts flowing to a public official in exchange for a pattern of official acts favorable to the donor. *Id.* at 943. Bribery is to be distinguished from legal lobbying activities. *Id.* at 942, 946 (citing *Kemp*, 500 F.3d at 281-82). These principles are consistent with the appellate decisions cited by the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court in *Skilling* cited a statutory definition of kickbacks. *Skilling*, 561 U.S. at 412 ("'The term 'kickback' means any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation of any kind which is provided, directly or indirectly, to [enumerated persons] for the purpose of improperly obtaining or rewarding favorable treatment in connection with [enumerated circumstances].'" (quoting 41 U.S.C. § 52(2))).

Relying on *Skilling*, the Ninth Circuit determined that breach of a fiduciary duty is an element of honest services fraud. *United States v. Milovanovic*, 678 F.3d 713 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc). The fiduciary duty required is not limited to the classic definition of the term but also extends to defendants who assume a comparable duty of loyalty, trust, or confidence with the victim. *Id*. at 723-24; *see also United States v. Solakyan*, 119 F.4th 575, 585 (9th Cir. 2024) (holding that "[t]he physician-patient relationship falls squarely within [*Milovanovic*'s] definition of a fiduciary relationship"). "The existence of a fiduciary duty in a criminal prosecution is a fact-based determination that must ultimately be determined by a jury properly instructed on this

issue." *Id.* at 723; *see also Solakyan*, 119 F.4th at 586 (stating that a jury must decide "[w]hether a particular doctor-patient relationship gives rise to a fiduciary duty").

Honest services fraud requires a "specific intent to defraud." *Kincaid-Chauncey*, 556 F.3d at 941; *see also Solakyan*, 119 F.4th at 593 (approving the intent language stated in Model Jury Instruction 15.34).

The Ninth Circuit has expressly adopted the "materiality test" to bring § 1346 in line with the mail, wire, and bank fraud statutes. *Milovanovic*, 678 F.3d at 726-27. The common law test for materiality in the false statement statutes, as reflected in the fifth element of this instruction, is the preferred formulation. *United States v. Peterson,* 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008). In a public sector case, the government need not prove that the fraud involved any foreseeable economic harm. *Milovanovic*, 678 F.3d at 727 ("We do not need to decide whether in a private sector case there might be a requirement that economic damages be shown.").

In the case of mail or wire fraud, the government need not prove a specific false statement was made. *United States v. Woods*, 335 F.3d 993, 999 (9th Cir. 2003). "Under the mail fraud statute the government is not required to prove any particular false statement was made. Rather, there are alternative routes to a mail fraud conviction, one being proof of a scheme or artifice to defraud, which may or may not involve any specific false statements." *Id.* (quoting *United States v. Munoz*, 233 F.3d 1117, 1131 (9th Cir. 2000)).

In *Percoco v. United States*, 598 U.S. 319 (2023), the Supreme Court held that a private citizen could be convicted of depriving the public of honest services. But the Court invalidated as unconstitutionally vague the trial court's instruction that the jury could find that the defendant "had a duty to provide honest services to the public during the time when he was not serving as a public official if the jury concluded, first that 'he dominated and controlled any governmental business' and, second, that 'people working in the government actually relied on him because of a special relationship he had with the government.'" *Id*. at 324-25.

*Revised November 2024*

## 15.35 Wire Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1343)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with wire fraud in violation of Section 1343 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [participated in] [devised] [intended to devise] a scheme or plan to defraud for the purpose of obtaining money or property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises [, or omitted facts.] [Deceitful statements of half-truths may constitute false or fraudulent representations];

Second, the statements made [or facts omitted] as part of the scheme were material; that is, they had a natural tendency to influence, or were capable of influencing, a person to part with money or property;

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud, that is, the intent to deceive and cheat; and

Fourth, the defendant used, or caused to be used, an interstate [or foreign] wire communication to carry out or attempt to carry out an essential part of the scheme.

In determining whether a scheme to defraud exists, you may consider not only the defendant's words and statements but also the circumstances in which they are used as a whole.

[To convict the defendant of wire fraud based on omission[s] of material fact[s], you must find that the defendant had a duty to disclose the omitted fact[s] arising out of a relationship of trust. That duty can arise either out of a formal fiduciary relationship, or an informal, trusting relationship in which one party acts for the benefit of another and induces the trusting party to relax the care and vigilance that it would ordinarily exercise.]

A wiring is caused when one knows that a wire will be used in the ordinary course of business or when one can reasonably foresee such use.

[To convict [a] defendant[s] of wire fraud based on a scheme to induce a victim to enter a bargain, the false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises[, or omitted facts] must directly or indirectly deceive the victim about the nature of the bargain. A misrepresentation will go to the nature of the bargain if it goes to price or quality, or otherwise to essential aspects of the transaction. [Whether a misrepresentation goes to the nature of the bargain may depend on the specific transaction at issue.]]

[A half-truth is a representation that states the truth only so far as it goes, while omitting critical qualifying information.]

[An oral or written statement is material if it has a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, a person to part with money or property. Neither proof of reliance on a false statement nor actual harm is needed to show materiality.]

It need not have been reasonably foreseeable to the defendant that the wire communication would be interstate [or foreign] in nature. Rather, it must have been reasonably foreseeable to the defendant that some wire communication would occur in furtherance of the scheme, and an interstate [or foreign] wire communication must have actually occurred in furtherance of the scheme.

**Comment**

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.32 (Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud or to Obtain Money or Property by False Promises). For cases involving wire fraud by deprivation of honest services, *see* Instruction 15.34 (Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud—Deprivation of Intangible Right of Honest Services).

In *Ciminelli v. United States*, 598 U.S. 306, 308-09 (2023), the Supreme Court held that a jury was improperly instructed that the term "property" in 18 U.S.C. § 1343 "includes intangible interests such as the right to control the use of one's assets" because "the federal fraud statutes criminalize only schemes to deprive people of traditional property interests." The Court explained that despite the inclusion of the term "or" in the phrase "or for obtaining money or property," the Court has "consistently understood the 'money or property' requirement to limit the 'scheme or artifice to defraud' element because the 'common understanding' of the words 'to defraud' when the statute was enacted referred 'to wrongdoing one in his property rights.'" *Id.* at 312 (quoting *Cleveland v. United States*, 531 U.S. 12, 19 (2000)). "Accordingly, the Government must prove not only that wire fraud defendants 'engaged in deception,' but also that money or property was 'an object of their fraud.'" *Id*.

The validity of this instruction was initially confirmed in *United States v. Holden*, 908 F.3d 395, 399-401 (9th Cir. 2018), *as amended on denial of reh'g* (9th Cir. 2018). However, in *United States v. Miller*, 953 F.3d 1095, 1101-03 (9th Cir. 2020), the Ninth Circuit expressly considered this instruction and held that wire fraud requires the intent to "deceive *and* cheat," thereby overruling prior holdings approving the "deceive *or* cheat" language in light of the Supreme Court's decision in *Shaw v. United States*, 580 U.S. 63, 71-72 (2016). *Miller*, 953 F.3d at 1102. *Miller* reasoned that "to be guilty of wire fraud, a defendant must act with the intent not only to make false statements or utilize other forms of deception, but also to deprive a victim of money or property by means of those deceptions. In other words, a defendant must intend to deceive *and* cheat." *Id.* at 1101. *Miller* does not disturb *Holden*'s ruling that although the mail and wire fraud statutes expressly punish only those who "devise . . . or intend . . . to devise" a fraudulent scheme, those who "participate in" such a scheme also fall within the statute's ambit. *Holden*, 908 F.3d at 399-401. *Miller* also left unchanged the precedent that intent to repay "is not a defense to wire fraud." *Miller*, 953. F.3d at 1103.

In *United States v. Jesenik*, 152 F.4th 924, 940-43 (9th Cir. 2025), the Ninth Circuit affirmed the accuracy of the half-truths and materiality Instructions. "False statements can include 'misleading half-truths,' representations that are partly true but misleading 'because of [the defendant's] failure to state additional or qualifying matter.'" *Id*. at 938 (alteration in original) (internal citations omitted) (quoting *Universal Health Servs., Inc. v. United States ex rel. Escobar*, 579 U.S. 176, 188 (2016)). "A half-truth is a representation that states the truth only so far as it

goes, while omitting critical qualifying information." *Id*. at 940. For cases involving an investor or investment advisor, consider adding the following to a materiality instruction:

> It is not a defense to a charge of mail or wire fraud or a charge of conspiracy to commit mail or wire fraud that an investor or registered investment advisor may have been gullible, careless, naive, or negligent or even that an investor or registered investment advisor intentionally disregarded information.

*Id*. at 944-45.

A defendant who "intentionally [lies] to induce a victim into a transaction that will cost her money or property," even if the defendant did not seek to hurt the victim's bottom line, violates the wire fraud statute. *Kousisis v. United States*, 145 S. Ct. 1382, 1398 (2025) (concluding that the government's fraudulent-inducement theory is consistent with the text of § 1343 and the Court's precedent interpreting it). That is, a defendant violates § 1343 "whenever he uses a material misstatement to trick a victim into a contract that requires handing over her money or property—regardless of whether the fraudster, who often provides something in return, seeks to cause the victim *net* pecuniary loss." *Id.* at 1388.

A defendant acts with the intent to *deceive* when he "make[s] false statements or utilize[s] other forms of deception[.]" *Miller*, 953 F.3d at 1101. A defendant acts with the intent to *cheat* when he engages in "a scheme or artifice to defraud or obtain money or property" and "deprive[s] a victim of money or property" thereby "cheat[ing] someone out of something valuable." *Id.*

In clarifying the distinction between "deceive" and "cheat," *Miller* cites *United States v. Walters*, 997 F.2d 1219 (7th Cir. 1993). In *Walters*, the court reviewed the conviction for mail fraud of a sports agent who had defrauded the NCAA, not by stealing its property, but by inducing college athletes to sign secret representation contracts in violation of the Association's rules. *Walters*, 997 F.2d at 1221. Finding that the agent had deceived, but not cheated, his victim, the Seventh Circuit reversed the agent's conviction, holding that the statute requires "a scheme to obtain money or other property from the victim," and that while a deprivation of money or property is a necessary condition of mail fraud, "[l]osses that occur as byproducts of a deceitful scheme do not satisfy the statutory requirement." *Id.* at 1227.

The only difference between mail fraud and wire fraud is that the former involves the use of the mails and the latter involves the use of wire, radio, or television communication in interstate or foreign commerce. Much of the language of this instruction comes from the instructions approved in *United States v. Jinian*, 712 F.3d 1255, 1265-67 (9th Cir. 2013).

As with mail fraud, materiality is an essential element of the crime of wire fraud. *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1 (1999); *United States v. Milovanovic*, 678 F.3d 713, 726-27 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc).

For cases involving a scheme to induce a victim to enter a bargain, in order for a misrepresentation to constitute fraud, the misrepresentation "must . . . go to the nature of the bargain." *United States v. Milheiser*, 98 F.4th 935, 938, 944-45 (9th Cir. 2024) ("The nature of the bargain requirement properly excludes from liability cases in which a defendant's

misrepresentations about collateral matters may have led to the transaction but the buyer still got the product that she expected at the price she expected.").

For a case involving wire fraud that "affects a financial institution" within the meaning of 18 U.S.C. § 1343, *see United States v. Stargell*, 738 F.3d 1018, 1022-23 (9th Cir. 2013) (defining term "affects").

For cases involving the failure to disclose material information, *see United States v. Shields*, 844 F.3d 819, 822-23 (9th Cir. 2016); *Milovanovic*, 678 F.3d 723-24.

For a definition of "fiduciary" duty, *see* Instruction 15.34 (Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud—Deprivation of Intangible Right to Honest Services).

**Cases Involving Mortgage Fraud**. In prosecutions for mortgage fraud under this statute, lender negligence in verifying loan application information, or even intentional disregard of the information, is not a defense to fraud, and so evidence of such negligence or intentional disregard is inadmissible as a defense against charges of mortgage fraud. *See United States v. Lindsey*, 850 F.3d 1009, 1015 (9th Cir. 2017). Also, when a lender requests specific information in its loan applications, that information is objectively material as a matter of law, regardless of the lenders' policies or practices with respect to use of that information. *Id*. at 1015. Evidence of general lending standards in the mortgage industry, however, is admissible to disprove materiality. "This difference matters because materiality measures natural capacity to influence, not whether the statement actually influenced any decision." *Id*. at 1016.

*Revised March 2026*

## 15.36 Bank Fraud—Scheme to Defraud Bank (18 U.S.C. § 1344(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with bank fraud in violation of Section 1344(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly executed or attempted to execute a scheme to defraud a financial institution of something of value;

Second, that the statements made [or facts omitted] as part of the scheme were material; that is, they had a natural tendency to influence, or were capable of influencing, a person to part with money or property;

Third, the defendant did so with the intent to defraud the financial institution; and

Fourth, the financial institution was insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

A "scheme to defraud" means any deliberate plan of action or course of conduct by which someone intends to deceive and cheat, in other words to deprive the victim of money or property by means of deception. It is not necessary for the government to prove that a financial institution was the only or sole victim of the scheme to defraud. It is also not necessary for the government to prove that the defendant was actually successful in defrauding any financial institution. Finally, it is not necessary for the government to prove that any financial institution lost any money or property as a result of the scheme to defraud.

An "intent to defraud" means to act willfully and with the specific intent to deceive and cheat.

[An oral or written statement is material if it has a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, a person to part with money or property. Neither proof of reliance on a false statement nor actual harm is needed to show materiality.]

### Comment

When the scheme or artifice to defraud is a scheme or artifice to deprive another of the intangible right to honest services under 18 U.S.C. § 1346, use Instruction 15.37 (Bank Fraud—Scheme to Deprive Bank of Intangible Right of Honest Services).

A "scheme to defraud" under 18 U.S.C. § 1344(1) "must be one to [both] deceive the bank *and* deprive it of something of value." *Shaw v. United States*, 137 S. Ct. 462, 469 (2016).

In *Shaw*, the defendant created a scheme to siphon off funds from a bank depositor's account through the use of PayPal, an online payment and money transfer service. The defendant argued that because the losses were eventually borne by the depositor and PayPal, and not the bank, he had not defrauded a "financial institution" within the meaning of § 1344(1). The Supreme Court rejected this argument, holding that

> for purposes of the bank fraud statute, a scheme fraudulently to obtain funds from a bank depositor's account normally is also a scheme fraudulently to obtain property from a "financial institution," at least where, as here, the defendant knew that the bank held the deposits, the funds obtained came from the deposit account, and the defendant misled the bank in order to obtain those funds.

*Id*. at 466. The Court also clarified that in a prosecution under § 1344(1), the government is not required to prove that the bank ultimately suffered a financial loss, that the defendant intended the bank to suffer a financial loss, or that the defendant was aware the bank had a property interest in its customer accounts. *Id*. at 467; *see also United States v. Shaw*, 885 F.3d 1217, 1219 (9th Cir. 2018) ("As the Supreme Court has now clarified, an intent to obtain money from a depositor's bank account is sufficient to constitute bank fraud under 18 U.S.C. § 1344(1). It is not necessary to show an intent to cause the bank itself a financial loss."). Although the government need not prove an intent for a bank to suffer a financial loss, the government must prove an intent to "defraud a financial institution." *Loughrin v. United States*, 573 U.S. 351, 355–57 (2014). The Supreme Court has explained that a key difference between § 1344(1) and (2) is that subsection (1) requires an intent to defraud a bank, "indeed, that is § 1344(1)'s whole sum and substance"; whereas subsection (2) does not require proof of specific intent to defraud the financial institution, only the intent to "obtain bank property." *Id*.

"Materiality of the scheme is an essential element of bank fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1344(1)." *United States v. Omer*, 395 F.3d 1087, 1089 (9th Cir. 2005); *see also Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 25 (1999) ("[M]ateriality of falsehood is an element of the federal mail fraud, wire fraud, and bank fraud statutes.").

*S*ee *United States v. Miller*, F.3d 1095 (9th Cir. 2020), defining "intent to defraud".

In *United States v. Yates*, 16 F.4th 256 (9th Cir. 2021), the Ninth Circuit vacated and remanded a conviction of two bank executives for bank fraud. The court rejected the government's theories that the deprivation of "accurate information" or the officers' salaries and bonuses could constitute the requisite deprivation of "something of value." *Id*. at 264-66. The court explained that "property deprivation 'must play more than some bit part in a scheme'—the loss to the victim 'must be an "object of the fraud,"' not a mere 'implementation cost [ ]' or 'incidental byproduct of the scheme.'" *Id.* at 264, quoting *Kelly v. United States*, 140 S. Ct. 1565, 1573-74 (2020). The court, however, agreed with the government's third theory of deprivation of something of value. "[W]e agree with the government that a bank has a property interest in its funds and that it 'has the right to use [its] funds as a source of loans that help the bank earn profits.'" *Id*. at 268, quoting *Shaw* (alterations in original). "In addition, a bank's right to its funds extends to the right to decide how to use those funds. So the fraudulent diversion of a bank's funds for unauthorized purposes certainly could be the basis for a conviction under section 1344." *Id*.

The final element concerns proof that the institution's deposits were federally insured. For a definition of "financial institution," see 18 U.S.C. § 20.

Effective May 20, 2009, the definition of "financial institution" set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 20 was broadened substantially by the Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act, Pub. L. 111-21, to include several types of financial institutions the assets of which might not be federally insured.

The definition of the term "financial institution" set forth in § 20 is incorporated into § 1344, as well as into other statutes such as 18 U.S.C. § 215 (bank bribery), and is also addressed in 18 U.S.C. §§ 1341 and 1343 in connection with mail or wire fraud schemes that affect a financial institution. *See United States v. Grasso*, 724 F.3d 1077, 1089 n.13 (9th Cir. 2013) (explaining that Congress amended 18 U.S.C. § 20 to expand the definition of "financial institution" for purposes of § 1344(1) to cover "mortgage lending businesses"). This instruction should be appropriately modified if the indictment charges a scheme directed at the money or property of a financial institution other than a federally insured bank.

*Revised March 2026*

## 15.37 Bank Fraud—Scheme to Deprive Bank of Intangible Right of Honest Services (18 U.S.C. §§ 1344(1), 1346)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with bank fraud in violation of Section 1344(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant devised or knowingly participated in a scheme or plan to deprive the [*specify financial institution*] of the right of honest services;

Second, the scheme or plan consisted of a [bribe] [kickback] in exchange for the defendant's services. The "exchange" may be express or may be implied from all the surrounding circumstances;

Third, the defendant owed a fiduciary duty to [*specify financial institution*];

Fourth, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud by depriving the [*specify financial institution*] of the right of honest services;

Fifth, the defendant's act was material; that is, the act had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the decisionmaker or decision-making body to which it was directed; and

Sixth, the [*specify financial institution*] was federally [chartered] [insured].

A "fiduciary" duty exists whenever one [person] [entity] places special trust and confidence in another person—the fiduciary—in reliance that the fiduciary will exercise [his] [her] discretion and expertise with the utmost honesty and forthrightness in the interests of the [person] [entity], such that the [person] [entity] relaxes the care and vigilance that [he] [she] [it] would ordinarily exercise, and the fiduciary knowingly accepts that special trust and confidence and thereafter undertakes to act on behalf of the other [person] [entity] based on such reliance.

The mere fact that a business relationship arises between two persons does not mean that either owes a fiduciary duty to the other. If one person engages or employs another and thereafter directs, supervises, or approves the other's actions, the person so employed is not necessarily a fiduciary. Rather, as previously stated, it is only when one party places, and the other accepts, a special trust and confidence—usually involving the exercise of professional expertise and discretion—that a fiduciary relationship exists.

### Comment

**Caution**: Honest services fraud criminalizes only schemes to defraud that involve bribery or kickbacks. *Skilling v. United States*, 561 U.S. 358, 408-09 (2010); *Black v. United States*, 561 U.S. 465, 471 (2010).

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.34 (Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud—Deprivation of Intangible Right of Honest Services).

For a definition of "financial institution," *see* 18 U.S.C. § 20.

*Revised June 2021*

## 15.38 Attempted Bank Fraud—Scheme to Deprive Bank of Intangible Right of Honest Services (18 U.S.C. §§ 1344(1), 1346)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted bank fraud in violation of Section 1344(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant devised or knowingly participated in a scheme or plan to deprive the [*specify financial institution*] of the right of honest services;

Second, the scheme or plan consisted of a [bribe] [kickback] in exchange for the defendant's services. The "exchange" may be express or may be implied from all the surrounding circumstances;

Third, the defendant owed a fiduciary duty to [*specify financial institution*];

Fourth, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud by depriving the [*specify financial institution*] of the right of honest services;

Fifth, the plan or scheme was material; that is, it had a natural tendency to, or was capable of depriving the [*specify financial institution*] of the right of honest services;

Sixth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward carrying out the plan or scheme to deprive the [*specify financial institution*] of the right of honest services, and that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit that crime; and

Seventh, the [*specify financial institution*] was federally [chartered] [insured].

A "fiduciary" duty exists whenever one [person] [entity] places special trust and confidence in another person—the fiduciary—in reliance that the fiduciary will exercise [his] [her] discretion and expertise with the utmost honesty and forthrightness in the interests of the [person] [entity], such that the [person] [entity] relaxes the care and vigilance that [he] [she] [it] would ordinarily exercise, and the fiduciary knowingly accepts that special trust and confidence and thereafter undertakes to act on behalf of the other [person] [entity] based on such reliance.

The mere fact that a business relationship arises between two persons does not mean that either owes a fiduciary duty to the other. If one person engages or employs another and thereafter directs, supervises, or approves the other's actions, the person so employed is not necessarily a fiduciary. Rather, as previously stated, it is only when one party places, and the other accepts, a special trust and confidence—usually involving the exercise of professional expertise and discretion—that a fiduciary relationship exists.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

## Comment

**Caution**: Honest services fraud criminalizes only schemes to defraud that involve bribery or kickbacks. *Skilling v. United States*, 561 U.S. 358, 408-09 (2010); *Black v. United States*, 561 U.S. 465, 471 (2010).

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.34 (Mail Fraud—Scheme to Defraud—Deprivation of Intangible Right of Honest Services).

For a definition of "financial institution," *see* 18 U.S.C. § 20.

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances.' " *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 15.39 Bank Fraud—Scheme to Defraud by False Promises (18 U.S.C. § 1344(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with bank fraud in violation of Section 1344(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly carried out a scheme or plan to obtain money or property from the [*specify financial institution*] by making false statements or promises;

Second, the defendant knew that the statements or promises were false;

Third, the statements or promises were material; that is, they had a natural tendency to influence, or were capable of influencing, a financial institution to part with money or property;

Fourth, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud; and

Fifth, [*specify financial institution*] was federally [chartered] [insured].

[An oral or written statement is material if it has a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, a person to part with money or property. Neither proof of reliance on a false statement nor actual harm is needed to show materiality.]

### Comment

In *United States v. Molinaro*, 11 F.3d 853, 863 (9th Cir. 1993), the Ninth Circuit approved the following instruction in a case involving the crime of bank fraud:

> You may determine whether a defendant had an honest, good faith belief in the truth of the specific misrepresentations alleged in the indictment in determining whether or not the defendant acted with intent to defraud. However, a defendant's belief that the victims of the fraud will be paid in the future or will sustain no economic loss is no defense to the crime.

Materiality is an essential element of the crime of bank fraud. *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1 (1999). The common law test for materiality in the false statement statutes, as reflected in the third element of this instruction, is the preferred formulation. *United States v. Peterson,* 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008).

In *Loughrin v. United States*, 573 U.S. 351 (2014), the defendant used a forged, stolen check to buy merchandise from a store, which he immediately returned for cash. On appeal he contended there was no evidence he intended to defraud a bank, only evidence that he intended to defraud the store. The Supreme Court held that the government need not prove the defendant intended to defraud a bank, and that § 1344(2)'s "by means of" language is satisfied when "the defendant's false statement was the mechanism naturally inducing a bank (or custodian of bank property) to part with money in its control." *Id.* at 363.

The government need not prove the defendant knowingly made false representations directly to a bank. *United States v. Cloud*, 872 F.2d 846, 851 n.5 (9th Cir. 1989).

For a definition of "financial institution," *see* 18 U.S.C. § 20.

*Revised March 2026*

## 15.40 Attempted Bank Fraud—Scheme to Defraud by False Promises (18 U.S.C. § 1344)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted bank fraud in violation of Section 1344 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly devised a plan or scheme to obtain money or property from the [*specify financial institution*] by false promises or statements;

Second, the promises or statements were material; that is, they had a natural tendency to influence, or were capable of influencing, a financial institution to part with money or property;

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud;

Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward carrying out the plan or scheme; and

Fifth, [*specify financial institution*] was federally [chartered] [insured].

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

[An oral or written statement is material if it has a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, a person to part with money or property. Neither proof of reliance on a false statement nor actual harm is needed to show materiality.]

### Comment

In *United States v. Molinaro*, 11 F.3d 853, 863 (9th Cir. 1993), the Ninth Circuit approved the following instruction in a case involving the crime of bank fraud:

> You may determine whether a defendant had an honest, good faith belief in the truth of the specific misrepresentations alleged in the indictment in determining whether or not the defendant acted with intent to defraud. However, a defendant's belief that the victims of the fraud will be paid in the future or will sustain no economic loss is no defense to the crime.

The government need not prove the defendant knowingly made false representations directly to a bank. *United States v. Cloud*, 872 F.2d 846, 851 n.5 (9th Cir. 1989).

Materiality is an essential element of the crime of bank fraud. *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1 (1999). The common law test for materiality in the false statement statutes, as reflected in

the second element of this instruction, is the preferred formulation. *United States v. Peterson,* 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008).

For a definition of "financial institution," *see* 18 U.S.C. § 20.

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised March 2026*

## 15.41 False Statement to a Bank or Other Federally Insured Institution (18 U.S.C. § 1014)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with making a false statement to a federally insured [*specify institution*] for the purpose of influencing the [*specify institution*] in violation of Section 1014 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [made a false statement or report] [willfully overvalued any land, property or security] to a federally insured [*specify institution*];

Second, the defendant made the false statement or report to the [*specify institution*] knowing it was false; and

Third, the defendant did so for the purpose of influencing in any way the action of the [*specify institution*].

It is not necessary, however, to prove that the [*specify institution*] involved was, in fact, influenced or misled, or that [*specify institution*] was exposed to a risk of loss. What must be proved is that the defendant intended to influence the [*specify institution*] by the false statement.

### Comment

*See generally* Comment to Instruction 24.10 (False Statement to Government Agency). Materiality is not an element of the crime of knowingly making a false statement to a federally insured bank in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1014. *United States v. Wells*, 519 U.S. 482, 496-97 (1997). Compare bank fraud under § 1344(2) where materiality is an element. *United States v. Nash*, 115 F.3d 1431 (9th Cir. 1997); *see* Instruction 15.39 (Bank Fraud—Scheme to Defraud by False Promises).

The term "false" in § 1014 means "not true" and, thus, does not encompass misleading but true statements. *Thompson v. United States*, 604 U.S. __, 145 S. Ct. 821, 826 (2025). Similarly, "[i]f a material omission renders a statement misleading, § 1014 still does not cover that statement unless it can be characterized as 'false' and not 'true.'" *Id.* at 828. Further, at least some of the context in which a statement was made "is relevant to determining whether a statement is false under § 1014." *Id.*

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity. *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

Federally insured status is an element of the crime. *United States v. Davoudi*, 172 F.3d 1130, 1133 (9th Cir. 1999).

Proof of a risk of loss to a financial institution is not an element of the crime. *United States v. Taylor*, 808 F.3d 1202, 1205 (9th Cir. 2015).

*Revised June 2025*

## 15.42 Health Care Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1347)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with health care fraud in violation of Section 1347 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly and willfully [executed] [attempted to execute] a scheme or plan to [defraud a health care benefit program] [obtain [[money][property]] [[owned by] [under the custody or control of]] a health care benefit program by means of material false or fraudulent [pretenses] [representations] [promises]];

Second, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud;

Third, [*name of victim or attempted victim*] was a health care benefit program; and

Fourth, the [scheme][plan] was executed in connection with the [delivery][payment] for health care [benefits][items][services].

[An oral or written statement is material if it has a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, a person to part with money or property. Neither proof of reliance on a false statement nor actual harm is needed to show materiality.]

### Comment

*See* Instructions 4.6 (Willfully) and 4.8 (Knowingly); *see also* Instruction 4.9 (Deliberate Ignorance). In *United States v. Hong*, 938 F.3d 1040 (9th Cir. 2019), the Ninth Circuit discussed when it might be appropriate to give a deliberate ignorance (or willful blindness) instruction in the context of a charge of health care fraud.

The required showing regarding a defendant's intent may be satisfied by circumstantial evidence that he acted with reckless indifference to the truth or falsity of his statements. *United States v. Dearing*, 504 F.3d 897, 902 (9th Cir. 2007).

"Health care benefit program" means any public or private plan or contract, affecting commerce, under which any medical benefit, item, or service is provided to any individual, and includes any individual or entity who is providing a medical benefit, item, or service for which payment may be made under the plan or contract. 18 U.S.C. § 24(b).

*Revised March 2026*

## 15.43 Immigration Fraud—Forged, Counterfeited, Altered, or Falsely Made Immigration Document (18 U.S.C. § 1546(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with fraud in the [use] [misuse] of an immigration document in violation of Section 1546(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[forged] [counterfeited] [altered] [falsely made]] [[an immigrant] [a non-immigrant]] [[visa] [permit] [border crossing card] [alien registration receipt card] [other document prescribed by statute or regulation for entry into or as evidence of authorized stay or employment in the United States]]; and

Second, the defendant acted knowingly.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 15.44 (Immigration Fraud—Use or Possession of Immigration Document Procured by Fraud).

Use this instruction with respect to a crime charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a), first paragraph, first clause. Use Instruction 15.44 (Immigration Fraud—Use or Possession of Immigration Document Procured by Fraud) for an instruction as to a crime charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a), first paragraph, second clause. Use Instruction 15.45 (Immigration Fraud—False Statement on Immigration Document) for an instruction as to a crime charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a), fourth paragraph.

## 15.44 Immigration Fraud—Use or Possession of Immigration Document Procured by Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1546(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with fraud in the [use] [misuse] of an immigration document in violation of Section 1546(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[uttered] [used] [attempted to use] [possessed] [obtained] [accepted] [received]] [[an immigrant] [a non-immigrant]] [[visa] [permit] [border crossing card] [alien registration receipt card] [other document prescribed by statute or regulation for entry into or as evidence of authorized stay or employment in the United States]]; and

Second, the defendant knew the document [[to be [forged] [counterfeited] [altered] [falsely made]] [[to have been [procured by means of any false claim or statement] [otherwise procured by fraud] [unlawfully obtained]].

### Comment

Use this instruction with respect to a crime charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a), first paragraph, second clause. Use Instruction 15.43 (Immigration Fraud—Forged, Counterfeited, Altered, or Falsely Made Immigration Document) for an instruction as to a crime charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a), first paragraph, first clause. Use Instruction 15.45 (Immigration Fraud—False Statement on Immigration Document) for an instruction as to a crime charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a), fourth paragraph.

In *United States v. Krstic*, 558 F.3d 1010 (9th Cir. 2009), the Ninth Circuit held the first paragraph, second clause of the statute criminalizes both the possession of authentic immigration documents procured unlawfully and the possession of forged or other falsely made immigration documents.

The Fourth Circuit has held that the statute reaches documents that may be insufficient, in and of themselves, to authorize entry into the United States, when they are plainly prescribed by law as a prerequisite thereof. *United States v. Ryan-Webster*, 353 F.3d 353, 361-62 (4th Cir. 2003).

Mistake or ignorance of the law is no defense to a charge of "knowingly . . . accept[ing], or receiv[ing]" forged documents in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a). *United States v. De Cruz*, 82 F.3d 856, 867 (9th Cir. 1996).

## 15.45 Immigration Fraud—False Statement on Immigration Document (18 U.S.C. § 1546(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with a false statement on an immigration document in violation of Section 1546(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [made] [subscribed as true] a false statement;

Second, the defendant acted with knowledge that the statement was untrue;

Third, the statement was material to the activities or decisions of the [*specify immigration agency*]; that is, it had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the agency's decisions or activities;

Fourth, the statement was made under [oath] [penalty of perjury]; and

Fifth, the statement was made on an [application] [affidavit] [other document] required by immigration laws or regulations.

### Comment

Use this instruction in connection with crimes charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a), fourth paragraph.

The term "oath" as used in § 1546 should be construed the same as "oath" as used in the perjury statute, 18 U.S.C. § 1621. *United States v. Chu*, 5 F.3d 1244, 1247 (9th Cir. 1993).

Materiality is a requirement of visa fraud under subsection (a) and presents a mixed question of fact and law to be decided by the jury. *United States v. Matsumaru*, 244 F.3d 1092, 1101 (9th Cir. 2001). The common law test for materiality in the false statement statutes, as reflected in the third element of this instruction, is the preferred formulation. *United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008); *see, e.g.*, *United States v. Amintobia*, 57 F.4th 687, 703 (9th Cir. 2023) ("We have described § 1546(a)'s materiality requirement as requiring only proof that the statement in question was 'capable of affecting or influencing a governmental decision.'" (quoting *Matsumaru*, 244 F.3d at 1101)). Nevertheless, it is an open question whether this definition of § 1546(a)'s materiality requirement must be revised in light of the Supreme Court's analysis of the requirements of § 1425(a) in *Maslenjak v. United States*, 137 S. Ct. 1918 (2017). *See Amintobia*, F.4th at 703. A statement need not have actually influenced the agency decision to meet the materiality requirement. *Amintobia*, 57 F.4th at 703 (citing *Matsumaru*, 244 F.3d at 1101).

*Revised March 2023*

## 15.46 Bankruptcy Fraud—Scheme or Artifice to Defraud (18 U.S.C. § 157)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with bankruptcy fraud in violation of Section 157 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant devised or intended to devise a scheme or plan to defraud;

Second, the defendant acted with the intent to defraud;

Third, the defendant's act was material; that is, it had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing the acts of an identifiable person, entity, or group; and

Fourth, the defendant [filed a petition] [filed a document in a proceeding] [made a false or fraudulent representation, claim, or promise concerning or in relation to a proceeding] under a Title 11 bankruptcy proceeding to carry out or attempt to carry out an essential part of the scheme.

It does not matter whether the document, representation, claim, or promise was itself false or deceptive so long as the bankruptcy proceeding was used as a part of the scheme or plan to defraud, nor does it matter whether the scheme or plan was successful or that any money or property was obtained.

### Comment

Unlike the historic bankruptcy crimes described in 18 U.S.C. § 152, bankruptcy fraud under § 157 concerns a fraudulent scheme outside the bankruptcy that uses the bankruptcy as a means of executing or concealing the fraud or artifice. *United States v. Milwitt*, 475 F.3d 1150, 1155-56 (9th Cir. 2007) (bankruptcy fraud requires specific intent to defraud identifiable victim or class of victims of identified fraudulent scheme).

This statute is modeled after the mail and wire fraud statutes and therefore requires a specific intent to defraud and deceive. *Id*. (citing *United States v. Bonallo*, 858 F.2d 1427, 1433 (9th Cir. 1988)); *see also United States v. Miller*, 953 F.3d 1095, 1103 (9th Cir. 2020) (holding that wire fraud requires the intent to "deceive *and* cheat—in other words, to deprive the victim of money or property by means of deception").

*Revised Sept. 2020*

## 15.47 Securities Fraud (15 U.S.C. §§ 78j(b), 78ff; 17 C.F.R. § 240.10b-5)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with securities fraud in violation of federal securities law. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant willfully [used a device or scheme to defraud someone] [made an untrue statement of a material fact] [failed to disclose a material fact that resulted in making the defendant's statements misleading] [engaged in any act, practice, or course of business that operates or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon any person];

Second, the defendant's [acts were undertaken] [statement was made**]** [failure to disclose was done] in connection with the [purchase] [sale] of [*specify security*];

Third, the defendant directly or indirectly used the [*specify instrument or facility*] in connection with [these acts] [making this statement] [this failure to disclose]; and

Fourth, the defendant acted knowingly.

"Willfully" means intentionally [undertaking an act] [making an untrue statement] [failing to disclose] for the wrongful purpose of defrauding or deceiving someone. Acting willfully does not require that the defendant know that the conduct was unlawful. You may consider evidence of the defendant's words, acts, or omissions, along with all the other evidence, in deciding whether the defendant acted willfully.

"Knowingly" means [[to make a statement or representation that is untrue and known to the defendant to be untrue] [to fail to state something that the defendant knows is necessary to make other statements true] [to make a statement with reckless disregard as to its truth or falsity] [to fail to make a statement with reckless disregard that the statement is necessary to make other statements true] in respect to a material fact] [intentional conduct that is undertaken to control or affect the price of securities]. [An act is done] [A statement is made] [A failure to disclose is done] knowingly if the defendant is aware of [the act] [making the statement] [the failure to disclose] and did not [act or fail to act] [make the statement] [fail to disclose] through ignorance, mistake, or accident. The government is not required to prove that the defendant knew that [[his] [her] acts were unlawful] [it was unlawful to make the statement] [[his] [her] failure to disclose was unlawful]. You may consider evidence of the defendant's words, acts, or omissions, along with all the other evidence, in deciding whether the defendant acted knowingly.

["Reckless" means highly unreasonable conduct that is an extreme departure from ordinary care, presenting a danger of misleading investors, which is either known to the defendant or so obvious that the defendant must have been aware of it.]

[A fact is material if there is a substantial likelihood that a reasonable investor would consider it important in making the decision to [purchase] [sell] securities.]

It is not necessary that an untrue statement passed [through] [over] the [*specify instrument or facility*] so long as the [*specify instrument or facility*] was used as a part of the [purchase] [sale] transaction.

It is not necessary that the defendant made a profit or that anyone actually suffered a loss.

**Comment**

"Willfully" as used in 15 U.S.C. § 78ff(a) does not require the actor to know that the conduct was unlawful. *United States v. Tarallo*, 380 F.3d 1174, 1188 (9th Cir. 2004); *see also United States v. Reyes*, 577 F.3d 1069, 1079 (9th Cir. 2009) (holding that jury need only find defendant acted knowing the falsification to be wrongful).

The Ninth Circuit has held reckless disregard for truth or falsity to be sufficient to sustain a conviction for securities fraud. *See Tarallo*, 380 F.3d at 1188 (stating that government need only prove that defendant made false representation with reckless indifference to its falsity); *United States v. Farris*, 614 F.2d 634, 638 (9th Cir. 1980).

As in the Securities Exchange Act §10(b) context, 18 U.S.C. § 1348's requirement of "in connection with" is broadly construed and can be met by proof of dissemination and materiality of the misrepresentation or omission. *See United States v. Hussain*, 972 F.3d 1138, 1147 (9th Cir. 2020).

For Rule 10b-5(a) and (c) violations for schemes or practices designed to defraud investors by controlling or artificially manipulating the market, such as in "pump and dump" cases, use the bracketed language in the instruction defining "knowingly" as: "intentional conduct that is undertaken to control or affect the price of securities" and omit the paragraph as to the meaning of "to be material." Such cases may also proceed under Rule 10b-5(b) for omitting to state a material fact. *United States v. Charnay*, 537 F.2d 341, 351 (9th Cir. 1976) (holding that failure to disclose that market prices are being artificially depressed operates as deceit on marketplace *and* is omission of material fact, which is actionable under Rule 10b-5(b)). But there must be a duty to disclose such as that arising from a fiduciary or quasi-fiduciary relationship between the defendant and his or her victim. *Chiarella v. United States*, 445 U.S. 222, 231 (1980) (reversing conviction when trial court failed to instruct jury as to need for fiduciary duty).

Materiality, in the context of securities fraud, is measured by a reasonable investor standard. *United States v. Berger*, 473 F.3d 1080, 1100 (9th Cir. 2007); *Tarallo*, 380 F.3d at 1182.

*Apprendi v. New Jersey,* 530 U.S. 466 (2000) does not apply to the § 78ff penalty provision that "no person shall be subject to imprisonment under this section for a violation of a rule or regulation if he proves that he had no knowledge of such rule or regulation" because it is an affirmative defense that may mitigate the defendant's sentence. *Tarallo*, 380 F.3d at 1192.

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity. *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity). *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Weiner*, 578 F.2d 757, 788 (9th Cir. 1978) (explaining distinction between scheme to defraud, which is theory of liability under Rule 10b-5, and means adopted to effectuate

scheme; unanimity is required for former, but not latter); *United States v. Lyons*, 472 F.3d 1055, 1068 (9th Cir. 2007) (holding that there was no need for unanimity instruction where there is simply more than one alleged false promise).

For insider trading schemes, Rule 10b-5(b) prohibits individuals owing a fiduciary duty to a source from using material, undisclosed insider information from that source for their personal benefit. *See Dirks v. S.E.C.*, 463 U.S. 646, 653-54 (1983). Thus, tipping inside information to others for one's own personal benefit violates Rule 10b-5. *Id*. at 659 ("Not only are insiders forbidden by their fiduciary relationship from personally using undisclosed corporate information to their advantage, but they may not give such information to an outsider for the same purpose of exploiting the information for their personal gain."). In such a situation, the person receiving the undisclosed, material inside information (the "tippee") is equally liable under Rule 10b-5(b) if: (1) "the tippee knows or should know" that the person disclosing the information (the "tipper") did so for their personal benefit; and (2) the tippee trades on that information anyway. *Id*. at 662-63; *see also Salman v. United States*, 137 S. Ct. 420, 421 (2016). A jury can infer the tipper personally benefitted "where the tipper receives something of value in exchange for the tip or 'makes a gift of confidential information to a trading relative or friend.'" *Salman*, 137 S. Ct. at 423 (quoting *Dirks*, 463 U.S. at 664). But if the tipper did not personally benefit from tipping the undisclosed inside information, then the tippee is not liable under Rule 10b-5(b). *See, e.g.*, *Dirks*, 463 U.S. at 665 (holding that there was no tippee liability because tipper was whistleblower who did not personally benefit from tipping material, undisclosed inside information).

*Revised Dec. 2020*

## 15.48 Sale of Unregistered Securities (15 U.S.C. § 77e)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with the sale of unregistered securities in violation of federal securities law. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant sold securities;

Second, the securities that were sold were required to be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission—that is, the transactions were not exempt from registration;

Third, the securities that were sold were not registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission;

Fourth, knowing the shares were not registered and not exempt, the defendant willfully sold or caused the shares to be sold to the public; and

Fifth, the defendant knowingly, directly or indirectly, used or caused to be used the mails or the means and instrumentalities of interstate commerce for the purpose of selling the securities.

### Comment

This instruction is for use in any case involving a violation of 15 U.S.C. § 77e, involving the offer or sale of an unregistered security in interstate commerce.

"Security" is defined at 15 U.S.C. § 77b(a)(1).

As to the fifth element, 15 U.S.C. § 77e also applies to a defendant who uses the mails or interstate commerce for the delivery after sale of an unregistered security. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 77e(a)(2).

"To establish a prima facie case for violation of Section 5, the [government] must show that (1) no registration statement was in effect as to the securities; (2) the defendant directly or indirectly sold or offered to sell securities; and (3) the sale or offer was made through interstate commerce." *SEC v. CMKM Diamonds, Inc.*, 729 F.3d 1248, 1255 (9th Cir. 2013) (citing *SEC v. Phan*, 500 F.3d 895, 902 (9th Cir. 2007)).

"'Once the [government] introduces evidence that a defendant has violated the registration provisions, the defendant then has the burden of proof in showing entitlement to an exemption.'" *CMKM Diamonds, Inc.*, 729 F.3d at 1255 (quoting *SEC v. Murphy*, 626 F.2d 633, 641 (9th Cir. 1980)). Exemptions to 15 U.S.C. § 77e are listed in 15 U.S.C. § 77d. "Exemptions from registration provisions are construed narrowly 'in order to further the purpose of the Act: To provide full and fair disclosure of the character of the securities, and to prevent frauds in the sale thereof.'" *SEC v. Platforms Wireless Int'l Corp.*, 617 F.3d 1072, 1086 (9th Cir. 2010) (quoting *Murphy*, 626 F.2d at 641).

Scienter is not an element of liability for civil enforcement of 15 U.S.C. § 77e. *See Aaron v. Sec. & Exch. Comm'n*, 446 U.S. 680, 714 n.5 (1980) ("The prohibition in § 5 of the 1933 Act, 15

U.S.C. § 77e, against selling securities without an effective registration statement has been interpreted to require no showing of scienter."). However, a criminal prosecution under 15 U.S.C. § 77x for the violation of § 77e requires a showing that the sale or offer of unregistered securities was done "willfully." "Willfully" in this context does not require that the actor know specifically that the conduct was unlawful. *See United States v. Lloyd*, 807 F.3d 1128, 1166 (9th Cir. 2015).

*Revised Dec. 2021*

## 16. HOMICIDE

**Instruction**

16.1 Murder—First Degree (18 U.S.C. § 1111)
16.2 Murder—Second Degree (18 U.S.C. § 1111)
16.3 Manslaughter—Voluntary (18 U.S.C. § 1112)
16.4 Manslaughter—Involuntary (18 U.S.C. § 1112)
16.5 Attempted Murder (18 U.S.C. § 1113)
16.6 Killing or Attempting to Kill Federal Officer or Employee (18 U.S.C. § 1114)
16.7 Murder for Hire (18 U.S.C. § 1958)

## 16.1 Murder—First Degree (18 U.S.C. § 1111)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with murder in the first degree in violation of Section 1111 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant unlawfully killed [*name of victim*];

Second, the defendant killed [*name of victim*] with malice aforethought;

Third, the killing was premeditated; and

Fourth, the killing occurred at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

To kill with malice aforethought means to kill either deliberately and intentionally or recklessly with extreme disregard for human life.

Premeditation means with planning or deliberation. The amount of time needed for premeditation of a killing depends on the person and the circumstances. It must be long enough, after forming the intent to kill, for a killer to have been fully conscious of the intent and to have considered the killing.

### Comment

The applicable statute, 18 U.S.C. § 1111, also contains a first-degree felony murder provision. When felony murder is charged, the instruction relevant to premeditation should be appropriately modified. For examples, see the Tenth Circuit's Criminal Pattern Jury Instructions 2.52.1 (2011 ed., updated Feb. 2018) and the Eleventh Circuit's Pattern Jury Instructions O45.2 (2019 ed.).

The elements for first degree murder are discussed in *United States v. Free*, 841 F.2d 321, 325 (9th Cir. 1988) ("The essential elements of first-degree murder are: (1) the act . . . of killing a human being; (2) doing such act . . . with malice aforethought; and (3) doing such act . . . with premeditation.").

As to the second element, in *United States v. Houser*, 130 F.3d 867, 872 (9th Cir. 1997), the Ninth Circuit approved the use of a jury instruction that defined malice aforethought as "either deliberately and intentionally or recklessly with extreme disregard for human life."

Killing with "extreme disregard" refers not only to acts endangering the public at large, but also to acts directed solely to the person killed. *Houser*, 130 F.3d at 890. In addition, the court should exercise caution regarding the "troublesome issue" of providing a permissive inference instruction on malice aforethought. *Id*. at 869-71.

As to the fourth element, whether the crime alleged occurred at a particular location is a question of fact. *United States v. Warren*, 984 F.2d 325, 327 (9th Cir. 1993). Whether the location

is within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or a federal prison is a question of law. *See United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982).

If there is evidence that the defendant acted in self-defense or with some other justification or excuse, *see* Instruction 5.10 (Self-Defense).

Voluntary and involuntary manslaughter are lesser included offenses of murder. *United States v. Arnt*, 474 F.3d 1159, 1163 (9th Cir. 2007). However, they are not lesser included offenses of felony murder. *United States v. Miguel*, 338 F.3d 995, 1004-06 (9th Cir. 2003).

The trial judge may be obligated to give an instruction on involuntary manslaughter in a murder case even when the defense does not offer the instruction. In *United States v. Anderson*, 201 F.3d 1145, 1150 (9th Cir. 2000), the Ninth Circuit held that it was plain error for the court not to instruct the jury on involuntary manslaughter, even though the defendant had not requested such an instruction, because there was evidence in the record to support the theory that the killing was accidental. A defendant is not automatically entitled to a voluntary manslaughter instruction. There must be some evidence that supports the proposition that the defendant was acting out of passion rather than malice, such as evidence of provocation. *United States v. Begay*, 673 F.3d 1038 (9th Cir. 2011) (en banc). The district court, which instructed the jury following Instruction 8.89 (2003) (now this instruction), properly instructed the jury on the correct definition of premeditation. *Id.* at 1043.

The trial judge is obligated to give an instruction on a lesser included offense in a murder case if the law and evidence satisfy a two-part test. *Arnt*, 474 F.3d at 1163. The first step is a legal question: "Is the offense for which the instruction is sought a lesser-included offense of the charged offense?" *Id.* "The second step is a factual inquiry: Does the record contain evidence that would support conviction of the lesser offense?" *Id.*

*Revised June 2019*

## 16.2 Murder—Second Degree (18 U.S.C. § 1111)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with murder in the second degree in violation of Section 1111 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant unlawfully killed [*name of victim*];

Second, the defendant killed [*name of victim*] with malice aforethought; and

Third, the killing occurred at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

To kill with malice aforethought means to kill either deliberately and intentionally or recklessly with extreme disregard for human life.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 16.1 (Murder—First Degree). Because the difference between first- and second-degree murder is the element of premeditation, *United States v. Quintero,* 21 F.3d 885, 890 (9th Cir. 1994), most of that Comment is applicable to second degree murder.

This instruction is derived from several sources. It is primarily based upon *Ornelas v. United States*, 236 F.2d 392, 394 (9th Cir. 1956) (defendant could be convicted of second-degree murder at most when premeditation not part of murder charge). *See also Quintero,* 21 F.3d at 890.

As to the second element, the standard of malice was approved in *United States v. Houser*, 130 F.3d 867, 871 (9th Cir. 1997) (in second degree murder prosecution, malice aforethought means "to kill either deliberately and intentionally or recklessly with extreme disregard for human life"), and *United States v. Begay*, 33 F.4th 1081, 1091 (9th Cir. 2022) (en banc) (quoting standard of malice aforethought in Ninth Cir. Model Crim. Jury Instruction 16.2).

As to the third element, that a jurisdiction element is necessary is suggested by *United States v. Warren,* 984 F.2d 325, 327 (9th Cir. 1993). Whether the crime alleged occurred at a particular location is a question of fact. *Warren*, 984 F.2d at 327. Whether the location is within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or a federal prison is a question of law. *See United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982).

The necessity for an additional element if a defense is raised is considered in *United States v. Lesina,* 833 F.2d 156, 160 (9th Cir. 1987) (when defendant raised defense of accident to second degree murder charge, government bore burden of proving lack of heat of passion).

If there is evidence that the defendant acted in self-defense, *see* Instruction 5.10 (Self-Defense).

Evidence that the defendant acted upon a sudden quarrel or heat of passion "acts in the nature of a defense to the murder charge . . . . Once such evidence is raised, the burden is on the government to prove . . . the absence of sudden quarrel or heat of passion before a conviction for

murder can be sustained." *Quintero*, 21 F.3d at 890; *see Begay*, 33 F.4th at 1088. The following language might be added to address such circumstances:

> The defendant claims to have acted in sudden quarrel or in the heat of passion caused by adequate provocation, and therefore without malice aforethought. Heat of passion may be provoked by fear, rage, anger, or terror. Provocation, to be adequate, must be such as might arouse a reasonable and ordinary person to kill someone.
>
> To show that the defendant acted with malice aforethought, the government must prove the absence of heat of passion beyond a reasonable doubt.

The heat of passion standard set forth above is suggested by *United States v. Roston*, 986 F.2d 1287, 1291 (9th Cir. 1993).

The Ninth Circuit has noted that heat of passion is not the only condition that might serve as a defense to a murder charge and reduce the offense to manslaughter. In *Kleeman v. United States Parole Commission*, 125 F.3d 725, 732 (9th Cir. 1997), the circuit suggested that an "extremely irrational and paranoid state of mind that severely impairs a defendant's capacity for self control" may also negate the malice attached to an intentional killing. If such a defense is raised, it may be appropriate to instruct the jury regarding the effect of such a theory. A defendant is not automatically entitled to a voluntary manslaughter instruction. There must be some evidence which supports the proposition that the defendant was acting out of passion rather than malice, such as evidence of provocation. *United States v. Begay*, 673 F.3d 1038 (9th Cir. 2011) (en banc). The district court, which instructed the jury following Instruction 8.89 (2003) (now this instruction), properly instructed the jury on the correct definition of premeditation. *Id.* at 1043.

The trial judge may be obligated to give an instruction on involuntary manslaughter in a murder case even when the defense does not offer the instruction. In *United States v. Anderson*, 201 F.3d 1145, 1150 (9th Cir. 2000), the court of appeals held that it was plain error for the court not to instruct the jury on involuntary manslaughter, even though the defendant had not requested such an instruction, because there was evidence in the record to support the theory that the killing was accidental.

The trial judge is obligated to give an instruction on involuntary manslaughter in a murder case if the law and evidence satisfy a two part test. *United States v. Arnt*, 474 F.3d 1159, 1163 (9th Cir. 2007). The first step is a legal question: "Is the offense for which the instruction is sought a lesser-included offense of the charged offense?" *Id.* "The second step is a factual inquiry: Does the record contain evidence that would support conviction of the lesser offense?" *Id.*

It is reversable error if the instructions "make it appear as though there is no difference between the severity of second degree murder and manslaughter . . . ." *United States v. Lesina*, 833 F.2d 156, 158-59 (9th Cir. 1987) (language used in instructions did not provide meaningful distinction between second degree murder and involuntary manslaughter).

Voluntary and involuntary manslaughter are lesser included offenses of murder. *Arnt*, 474 F.3d at 1163, however they are not lesser included offenses of felony murder. *United States v.*

*Miguel*, 338 F.3d 995, 1004-06 (9th Cir. 2003). If any construction of the evidence would rationally support a jury's conclusion that the killing was unintentional or accidental, even if there is conflicting evidence, an involuntary manslaughter instruction must be given. *United States v. Anderson*, 201 F.3d 1145, 1150 (9th Cir. 2000).

*Revised June 2022*

## 16.3 Manslaughter—Voluntary (18 U.S.C. § 1112)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with voluntary manslaughter in violation of Section 1112 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant unlawfully killed [*name of victim*];

Second, while in a sudden quarrel or heat of passion, caused by adequate provocation:

a) the defendant intentionally killed [*name of victim*]; or

b) the defendant killed [*name of victim*] recklessly with extreme disregard for human life; and

Third, the killing occurred at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

Heat of passion may be provoked by fear, rage, anger, or terror. Provocation, to be adequate, must be such as might arouse a reasonable and ordinary person to kill someone.

### Comment

As to the first element, if there is evidence of justification or excuse, the following language should be added: "A killing is unlawful within the meaning of this instruction if it was [not justifiable] [not excusable] [neither justifiable nor excusable]."

As to the second element, the United States Code defines manslaughter as an "unlawful killing of a human being without malice." 18 U.S.C. § 1112. Such killing is voluntary manslaughter when it occurs "[u]pon a sudden quarrel or heat of passion." *Id*. However, noting tension between the common law and the boundaries of these statutory definitions, the circuit has suggested that courts have leeway to reconcile the "apparent language" of the statute with the common law of homicide. *See United States v. Quintero*, 21 F.3d 885, 890-91 (9th Cir. 1994) (holding that intent without malice, not heat of passion, is essential element of voluntary manslaughter, despite "apparent" statutory language). *But see United States v. Paul*, 37 F.3d 496, 499 n.1 (9th Cir. 1994) (suggesting language from *Quintero* that intent to kill is necessary element of voluntary manslaughter is dicta; while most voluntary manslaughter cases involve intent to kill, it is possible that a defendant who killed unintentionally but recklessly with extreme disregard for human life may have acted in a heat of passion with adequate provocation, so as to commit voluntary manslaughter).

Regardless of whether the mental state of a defendant was to kill intentionally or to kill with extreme recklessness, the circuit has explained that acting under a heat of passion serves to negate the malice that otherwise would attach to an intentional or extremely reckless killing. *United States v. Roston*, 986 F.2d 1287, 1291 (9th Cir. 1993) (holding defendant's showing of heat of passion negates presence of malice); *Paul*, 37 F.3d at 499 n.1 (holding heat of passion and adequate provocation negates malice that would otherwise attach if defendant killed with mental

state required for murder—intent to kill or extreme recklessness—so that it would not be murder but manslaughter); *Quintero*, 21 F.3d at 890-91 (holding sudden quarrel or heat of passion are not essential elements of voluntary manslaughter but may demonstrate that the defendant acted without malice).

The heat of passion standard found in the last paragraph of this instruction was suggested by *Roston*, 986 F.2d at 1291.

As to the third element, whether the crime alleged occurred at a particular location is a question of fact. *United States v. Warren*, 984 F.3d 325, 327 (9th Cir. 1993). Whether the location is within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or a federal prison is a question of law. *See United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982).

Heat of passion is not the only condition that might serve as a defense to a murder charge and reduce the offense to manslaughter. In *Kleeman v. United States Parole Commission*, 125 F.3d 725, 732 (9th Cir. 1997), the circuit suggested that an "extremely irrational and paranoid state of mind that severely impairs a defendant's capacity for self control" may also negate the malice attached to an intentional killing.

If there is evidence that the defendant acted in self-defense, *see* Instruction 5.10 (Self-Defense).

Voluntary and involuntary manslaughter are lesser included offenses of murder. *United States v. Arnt*, 474 F.3d 1159, 1163 (9th Cir. 2007). However, they are not lesser included offenses of felony murder. *United States v. Miguel*, 338 F.3d 995, 1004-06 (9th Cir. 2003).

Second degree murder is reduced to voluntary manslaughter if the unlawful killing is done upon a sudden quarrel or in the heat of passion caused by adequate provocation. *Roston*, 986 F.2d 1290-91.

*Revised June 2019*

## 16.4 Manslaughter—Involuntary (18 U.S.C. § 1112)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with involuntary manslaughter in violation of Section 1112 of Title 18 of the United States Code. [Involuntary manslaughter is the unlawful killing of a human being without malice aforethought and without an intent to kill.] For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant committed an act that might produce death;

Second, the defendant acted with gross negligence, defined as wanton or reckless disregard for human life;

Third, the defendant's act was the proximate cause of the death of the victim. A proximate cause is one that played a substantial part in bringing about the death, so that the death was the direct result or a reasonably probable consequence of the defendant's act;

Fourth, the killing was unlawful;

Fifth, the defendant either knew that such an act was a threat to the lives of others or knew of circumstances that would reasonably cause the defendant to foresee that such an act might be a threat to the lives of others; and

Sixth, the killing occurred at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

### Comment

With respect to the first and second elements, *see United States v. Garcia*, 729 F.3d 1171 (9th Cir. 2013); *see also United States v. Boylan*, 167 F.4th 1266, 1270 (9th Cir. 2026) (explaining that gross negligence is an essential element of involuntary manslaughter under § 1112).

While the third element is not in the statute, it is required by *United States v. Main*, 113 F.3d 1046, 1049-50 (9th Cir. 1997) ("When the jury is not told that it must find that the victim's death was within the risk created by the defendant's conduct an element of the crime has been erroneously withdrawn from the jury . . . It is not relevant that § 1112 does not expressly mention proximate cause.").

As to the fourth element, if there is evidence of justification or excuse, the following language should be added: "A killing is unlawful within the meaning of this instruction if it was [not justifiable] [not excusable] [neither justifiable nor excusable]."

While the fifth element is not in the statute, it is required by *United States v. Keith*, 605 F.2d 462, 463 (9th Cir. 1979).

As to the sixth element, whether the crime alleged occurred at a particular location is a question of fact. *United States v. Warren*, 984 F.2d 325, 327 (9th Cir. 1993). Whether the location

is within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States or a federal prison is a question of law. *See United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982).

The trial judge may be obligated to give an instruction on involuntary manslaughter in a murder case even when the defense does not offer the instruction. In *United States v. Anderson*, 201 F.3d 1145, 1150 (9th Cir. 2000), the Ninth Circuit held that it was plain error for the court not to instruct the jury on involuntary manslaughter, even though the defendant had not requested such an instruction, because there was evidence in the record to support the theory that the killing was accidental.

A two-step test applies to determine whether the trial judge is obligated to give an instruction on involuntary manslaughter in a murder case. *United States v. Arnt*, 474 F.3d 1159, 1163 (9th Cir. 2007). The first step is a legal question: "Is the offense for which the instruction is sought a lesser-included offense of the charged offense?" *Id.* "The second step is a factual inquiry: Does the record contain evidence that would support conviction of the lesser offense?" *Id.* Voluntary and involuntary manslaughter are lesser included offenses of murder. *Id.* However, they are not lesser included offenses of felony murder. *United States v. Miguel*, 338 F.3d 995, 1004-06 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised June 2026*

## 16.5 Attempted Murder (18 U.S.C. § 1113)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted murder in violation of Section 1113 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward killing [*name of intended victim*];

Second, when the defendant took that substantial step, the defendant intended to kill [*name of intended victim*]; and

Third, the attempted killing occurred at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

### Comment

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

*See Braxton v. United States*, 500 U.S. 344, 351 (1991) ("Although a murder may be committed without an intent to kill, an attempt to commit murder requires a specific intent to kill." (citations omitted)). Although one acting "recklessly with extreme disregard for human life" can be convicted of murder if a killing results (*see* Instruction 16.1 (Murder—First Degree) and 16.2 (Murder—Second Degree)), that same recklessness cannot support a conviction of attempted murder if, fortuitously, no one is killed. *See United States v. Kwong*, 14 F.3d 189, 194-95 (2d Cir. 1994) (holding that under 18 U.S.C. § 1113, attempted murder conviction requires proof of

specific intent to kill; recklessness and wanton conduct, grossly deviating from a reasonable standard of care such that defendant was aware of the serious risk of death, would not suffice as proof of an intent to kill).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 16.6 Killing or Attempting to Kill Federal Officer or Employee (18 U.S.C. § 1114)

### Comment

If a defendant is charged with murder, manslaughter, attempted murder, or attempted manslaughter of an officer or employee of the United States in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1114, the appropriate murder instruction (16.1 (Murder—First Degree) or 16.2 (Murder—Second Degree)), manslaughter instruction (16.3 (Manslaughter—Voluntary) or 16.4 (Manslaughter—Involuntary)), or attempted murder instruction (16.5 (Attempted Murder)) should be used but modified to require the jury to find that the victim was a federal officer or employee and that at the time of the killing the victim was engaged in the victim's official duties or was killed on account of the performance of his/her official duties. An element alleging that the killing or attempted killing occurred at a place of federal jurisdiction, that is, within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, is not necessary here.

For an instruction defining "official duties," *see United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138, 1149 (9th Cir. 2018) (upholding "official duties" instruction stating that test for determining whether officer is "[e]ngaged in the performance of official duties" is "whether the officer is acting within the scope of his employment, that is, whether the officer's actions fall within his agency's overall mission, in contrast to engaging in a personal frolic of his own"). *See also United States v. Juvenile Female*, 566 F.3d 943, 950 (9th Cir. 2009) (describing official duties test as "whether [the officer] is acting within the scope of what he is employed to do, as distinguished from engaging in a personal frolic of his own").

*Revised June 2019*

## 16.7 Murder for Hire (18 U.S.C. § 1958)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with using interstate commerce facilities in the commission of a murder-for-hire in violation of Section 1958 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

[First, the defendant [used] [caused another to use] [conspired to use] [conspired to cause another to use] a [*specify facility in interstate or foreign commerce*]];

*or*

[First, the defendant [traveled] [caused another to travel] [conspired to travel] [conspired to cause another to travel] via [*specify method of travel in interstate or foreign commerce*]];

Second, the defendant did so with the intent that murder be committed; and

Third, the defendant intended that the murder be committed in exchange for [*specify thing of pecuniary value*].

### Comment

Concerning the elements of the crime, *see, e.g.*, *United States v. Linehan*, 56 F.4th 693, 707 (9th Cir. 2022) (citing Ninth Cir. Model Crim. Jury Instruction No. 16.7 (2022)).

As to the first element, a "facility in interstate or foreign commerce" includes means of transportation and communication. 18 U.S.C. § 1958(b)(2).

As to the second element, the intent that murder be committed must have existed when the defendant used or conspired to use the facility of interstate commerce. *United States v. Driggers*, 559 F.3d 1021, 1023 (9th Cir. 2009).

"State" includes a State of the United States as well as the District of Columbia, and any commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States. 18 U.S.C. § 1958(b)(2).

"Pecuniary value" means anything of value, whether in the form of money, a negotiable instrument, a commercial interest, or anything else the primary significance of which is economic advantage. 18 U.S.C. § 1958(b)(1). The defendant must have clearly understood he or she would give or receive the thing of pecuniary value in exchange for the murderous act. *United States v. Chong*, 419 F.3d 1076, 1082 (9th Cir. 2005). A promise of economic advantage may constitute a thing of pecuniary value even if it is not enforceable under contract law. *United States v. Phillips*, 929 F.3d 1120, 1124 (9th Cir. 2019).

*Revised March 2023*

## 17. KIDNAPPING

**Instruction**


17.1 Kidnapping (18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(1))
17.2 Kidnapping—Within Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of United States (18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(2))
17.3 Kidnapping—Foreign Official or Official Guest (18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(4))
17.4 Kidnapping—Federal Officer or Employee (18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(5))
17.5 Attempted Kidnapping—Foreign Official or Official Guest (18 U.S.C. § 1201(d))
17.6 Attempted Kidnapping—Federal Officer or Employee (18 U.S.C. § 1201(d))
17.7 Hostage Taking (18 U.S.C. § 1203(a))

## 17.1 Kidnapping (18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with kidnapping in violation of Section 1201(a)(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [seized] [confined] [inveigled] [decoyed] [kidnapped] [abducted] [carried away] [*name of kidnapped person*];

Second, the defendant [held] [detained] [*name of kidnapped person*] against [his] [her] [other pronoun] will; and

[Third, the defendant intentionally transported [*name of kidnapped person*] across state lines]

*or*

[Third, the defendant traveled in [interstate][foreign] commerce [in committing] [in furtherance of committing] the offense].

*or*

[Third, the defendant used [[the mail] [any [means] [facility] [instrumentality] of [interstate][foreign] commerce]] [[in committing] [in furtherance of committing]] the offense].

[The government is not required to prove that the defendant kidnapped [*name of kidnapped person*] for reward or ransom, or for any other purpose.]

[The fact that [*name of kidnapped person*] [may have] initially voluntarily accompanied the defendant does not necessarily [prevent the occurrence] [negate the existence] of a later kidnapping.]

To "kidnap" a person means to unlawfully hold, keep, detain, or confine the person against their will and without their consent. Involuntariness or coercion in connection with the victim's detention is an essential part of the offense.

[To "inveigle" a person means to lure, entice or lead the person astray by false representations, promises, or other deceitful means. In an inveiglement case, physical force is not required; an individual may be "held" against their will through means of deception.]

### Comment

"The act of holding a kidnapped person . . . necessarily implies an unlawful physical or mental restraint for an appreciable period against the person's will and with a willful intent so to confine the victim. If the victim is of such an age or mental state as to be incapable of having a recognizable will, the confinement then must be against the will of the parents or legal guardian of

the victim." *Chatwin v. United States*, 326 U.S. 455, 460 (1946). The "involuntariness of seizure and detention . . . is the very essence of the crime of kidnaping." *Id*. at 464.

As to the last paragraph of the instruction, *see United States v. Redmond*, 803 F.2d 438, 439 (9th Cir. 1986) ("The fact that one originally accompanies another without being forced does not prevent the occurrence of a kidnapping where force is later used to seize or confine the victim.").

The act of holding in an inveiglement kidnapping case does not require a use of physical force. A person may be "held" against their will through means of deception. *United States v. Chapman*, 175 F.4th 1118, 1128 (9th Cir. 2026).

Under 18 U.S.C. § 1201, there are three bases for federal jurisdiction: (1) transporting the victim across state lines, (2) the offender's interstate movement in committing or in furtherance of committing the offense, or (3) using instrumentalities of interstate commerce in committing or in furtherance of committing the offense. *United States v. Stackhouse*, 105 F.4th 1193, 1199 (9th Cir. 2024); *see also id*. at 1200-02 (holding that the Commerce Clause permits Congress to regulate intrastate kidnappings where an instrumentality of interstate commerce (a cellphone) is used intrastate).

See Comment to Instruction 17.2 (Kidnapping—Within Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of United States) concerning the need for an instruction distinguishing kidnapping from other offenses involving seizure, confinement, detention, or asportation.

*Revised August 2026*

## 17.2 Kidnapping—Within Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of United States (18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with kidnapping [*name of kidnapped person*] within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States in violation of Section 1201(a)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [seized] [confined] [inveigled] [decoyed] [kidnapped] [abducted] [carried away] [*name of kidnapped person*] within [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*]; and

Second, the defendant [held] [detained] [*name of kidnapped person*] against [his][her] will.

[The government is not required to prove that the defendant kidnapped [*name of kidnapped person*] for reward or ransom, or for any other purpose.]

[The fact that [*name of kidnapped person*] [may have] initially voluntarily accompanied the defendant does not necessarily [prevent the occurrence] [negate the existence] of a later kidnapping.]

[Not every seizure of a person against his or her will is a kidnapping. To decide whether such a seizure in this case amounts to a kidnapping, you should consider the following factors:

First, the duration of the [seizure] [confinement] [detention] [asportation],

Second, whether the [seizure] [confinement] [detention] [asportation] occurred during the commission of a separate offense,

Third, whether the [seizure] [confinement] [detention] [asportation] that occurred is an essential part of in the separate offense, and

Fourth, whether the [seizure] [confinement] [detention] [asportation] created a significant danger to the victim independent of that posed by the separate offense.]

To "kidnap" a person means to unlawfully hold, keep, detain, or confine the person against their will and without their consent. Involuntariness or coercion in connection with the victim's detention is an essential part of the offense.

[To "inveigle" a person means to lure, entice or lead the person astray by false representations, promises, or other deceitful means.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 17.1 (Kidnapping—Interstate Transportation).

"Special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 7. While federal jurisdiction over the place may be determined as a matter of law, the locus of the

offense within that place is an issue for the jury. *United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982).

The bracketed language beginning with "Not every seizure of a person" is derived from *United States v. Jackson*, 24 F.4th 1308 (9th Cir. 2022), which also illustrates when such an instruction would be appropriate.

In *Jackson*, the defendant was charged with kidnapping under 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(2) after he violently assaulted his then-girlfriend. *Id.* at 1309-10. The defendant moved for acquittal under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 29, arguing that the facts could not support a kidnapping conviction because there was no "seizure" of the victim, and whatever "seizure" occurred "didn't occur beyond whatever beating there was." *Id.* at 1310. The attack on the victim lasted about six or seven minutes, during which the defendant "dragged her around by her hair, yanked her arms, punched her, and tried to pull her into" a small dwelling. *Id.*

Citing Supreme Court and Ninth Circuit precedent, the court reasoned that "kidnapping requires more than a transitory holding, and more than a simple mugging or assault" because "the facts must reflect the 'essence of the crime of kidnaping.'" *Id.* at 1312 (quoting *Chatwin v. United States*, 326 U.S. 455, 464 (1946)); *see also id.* at 1311-12 (discussing *United States v. Etsitty*, 130 F.3d 420 (9th Cir. 1997)). Accordingly, in *Jackson* the court held that four factors should be evaluated when determining whether charged conduct constitutes kidnapping. *Id.* at 1312. This "factual inquiry" may be taken up by a court in response to a Rule 29 motion, or "if appropriate based on the circumstances of the case, incorporated into jury instructions." *Id.* at 1314. The factors, derived from the Third Circuit's opinion in *Government of the Virgin Islands v. Berry*, 604 F.2d 221, 224 (3d Cir. 1979), are:

> (1) the duration of the detention or asportation;
>
> (2) whether the detention or asportation occurred during the commission of a separate offense;
>
> (3) whether the detention or asportation which occurred is inherent in the separate offense; and
>
> (4) whether the asportation or detention created a significant danger to the victim independent of that posed by the separate offense.

*Id.* at 1312 (quoting *Berry*, 604 F.2d at 227)). The *Berry* factors are the basis for the proposed optional jury instruction, to be applied when appropriate, to distinguish kidnapping from other offenses.

*Revised June 2026*

## 17.3 Kidnapping—Foreign Official or Official Guest (18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(4))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with kidnapping [a foreign official] [an internationally protected person] [an official guest] in violation of Section 1201(a)(4) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[seized] [confined] [inveigled] [decoyed] [kidnapped] [abducted] [carried away]] [*name of kidnapped person*];

Second, [*name of kidnapped person*] was [*specify status*]; and

Third, the defendant [[held] [detained]] [*name of kidnapped person*] against [his][her] will.

[The government is not required to prove that the defendant kidnapped [*name of kidnapped person*] for reward or ransom, or for any other purpose.]

[The fact that [*name of kidnapped person*] [may have] initially voluntarily accompanied the defendant does not necessarily [prevent the occurrence] [negate the existence] of a later kidnapping.]

To "kidnap" a person means to unlawfully hold, keep, detain, or confine the person against their will and without their consent. Involuntariness or coercion in connection with the victim's detention is an essential part of the offense.

[To "inveigle" a person means to lure, entice or lead the person astray by false representations, promises, or other deceitful means.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 17.1 (Kidnapping—Interstate Transportation).

"Foreign official," "internationally protected person," and "official guest" are defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1116(b).

*See* Comment to Instruction 17.2 (Kidnapping—Within Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of United States) concerning the need for an instruction distinguishing kidnapping from other offenses involving seizure, confinement, detention, or asportation.

*Revised June 2026*

## 17.4 Kidnapping—Federal Officer or Employee (18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(5))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with kidnapping a federal officer or employee in violation of Section 1201(a)(5) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[seized] [confined] [inveigled] [decoyed] [kidnapped] [abducted] [carried away]] [*name of kidnapped person*];

Second, at the time [*name of kidnapped person*] was [*specify federal office or employment position*];

Third, the defendant acted while [*name of kidnapped person*] was engaged in, or on account of, the performance of official duties; and

Fourth, the defendant [[held] [detained]] [*name of kidnapped person*] against [his][her] will.

[The government is not required to prove that the defendant kidnapped [*name of kidnapped person*] for reward or ransom, or for any other purpose.]

[The fact that [*name of kidnapped person*] [may have] initially voluntarily accompanied the defendant does not necessarily [prevent the occurrence] [negate the existence] of a later kidnapping.]

To "kidnap" a person means to unlawfully hold, keep, detain, or confine the person against their will and without their consent. Involuntariness or coercion in connection with the victim's detention is an essential part of the offense.

[To "inveigle" a person means to lure, entice or lead the person astray by false representations, promises, or other deceitful means.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 17.1 (Kidnapping—Interstate Transportation).

Federal officers or employees who may be the victim of a kidnapping are described in 18 U.S.C. § 1114.

As to the third element, for an instruction defining "official duties," *see United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138, 1149 (9th Cir. 2018) (upholding "official duties" instruction providing that test for determining whether officer is "[e]ngaged in the performance of official duties" is "whether the officer is acting within the scope of his employment, that is, whether the officer's actions fall within his agency's overall mission, in contrast to engaging in a personal frolic of his own"). *See also United States v. Juvenile Female*, 566 F.3d 943, 950 (9th Cir. 2009) (describing

official duties test as "whether [the officer] is acting within the scope of what he is employed to do, as distinguished from engaging in a personal frolic of his own").

*See* Comment to Instruction 17.2 (Kidnapping—Within Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of United States) concerning the need for an instruction distinguishing kidnapping from other offenses involving seizure, confinement, detention, or asportation.

*Revised June 2026*

## 17.5 Attempted Kidnapping—Foreign Official or Official Guest (18 U.S.C. § 1201(d))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempting to kidnap [a foreign official] [an official guest] [an internationally protected person] in violation of Section 1201(d) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to [seize] [confine] [inveigle] [decoy] [kidnap] [abduct] [carry away] and hold [a foreign official] [an official guest] [an internationally protected person] against [his] [her] will; and

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

To "kidnap" a person means to unlawfully hold, keep, detain, or confine the person against their will and without their consent. Involuntariness or coercion in connection with the victim's detention is an essential part of the offense.

[To "inveigle" a person means to lure, entice or lead the person astray by false representations, promises, or other deceitful means.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 17.1 (Kidnapping—Interstate Transportation).

"Foreign official," "official guest," and "internationally protected person" are defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1116(b).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances.'" *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting United States v. Nelson, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (pe curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*See* Comment to Instruction 17.2 (Kidnapping—Within Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of United States) concerning the need for an instruction distinguishing kidnapping from other offenses involving seizure, confinement, detention, or asportation.

*Revised June 2026*

## 17.6 Attempted Kidnapping—Federal Officer or Employee (18 U.S.C. § 1201(d))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempting to kidnap a [federal officer] [federal employee] in violation of Section 1201(d) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to [seize] [confine] [inveigle] [decoy] [kidnap] [abduct] [carry away] and to hold a [federal officer] [federal employee] against [his] [her] will, on account of or during the performance of [his] [her] official duties; and

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

To "kidnap" a person means to unlawfully hold, keep, detain, or confine the person against their will and without their consent. Involuntariness or coercion in connection with the victim's detention is an essential part of the offense.

[To "inveigle" a person means to lure, entice or lead the person astray by false representations, promises, or other deceitful means.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 17.1 (Kidnapping—Interstate Transportation).

Federal officers or employees who may be victims of kidnapping are described in 18 U.S.C. § 1114.

As to the first element, for an instruction defining "official duties," *see United States v. Ornelas*, 906 F.3d 1138, 1149 (9th Cir. 2018) (upholding "official duties" instruction providing that test for determining whether officer is "[e]ngaged in the performance of official duties" is "whether the officer is acting within the scope of his employment, that is, whether the officer's actions fall within his agency's overall mission, in contrast to engaging in a personal frolic of his own"). *See also United States v. Juvenile Female*, 566 F.3d 943, 950 (9th Cir. 2009) (describing official duties test as "whether [the officer] is acting within the scope of what he is employed to do, as distinguished from engaging in a personal frolic of his own").

As to the second element, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances.'" *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d

1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*See* Comment to Instruction 17.2 (Kidnapping—Within Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of United States) concerning the need for an instruction distinguishing kidnapping from other offenses involving seizure, confinement, detention, or asportation.

*Revised June 2026*

## 17.7 Hostage Taking (18 U.S.C. § 1203(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with taking a person hostage in violation of Section 1203(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intentionally seized or detained a person;

Second, the defendant threatened to kill, injure, or continue to detain that person; and

Third, the defendant did so with the purpose and intention of compelling [a third person] [a government organization] to act, or refrain from acting, in some way, as an explicit or implicit condition for the release of the seized or detained person.

A person is "seized" or "detained" when the person is held or confined against his or her will by physical restraint, fear, or deception for an appreciable period of time.

[The fact that the person may initially agree to accompany the hostage taker does not prevent a later "seizure" or "detention."]

### Comment

In a case involving foreign national defendants, the Ninth Circuit has held that along with these three elements, 18 U.S.C. § 1203(b) "requires some international element," but does not require proof of nexus to international terrorism. *United States v. Mikhel*, 889 F.3d 1003, 1022 (9th Cir. 2018).

The crime of hostage taking is not limited to taking aliens as hostages. *United States v. Sierra-Velasquez*, 310 F.3d 1217, 1220 (9th Cir. 2002). In the context of alien smuggling, it is not necessary that the smuggler demand an increase in fee for the smuggler to be found guilty of hostage taking. *Id.; see* 18 U.S.C. § 1203(b)(1), (2) limiting the application of this offense).

As to the specific intent element, *see United States v. Fei Lin*, 139 F.3d 1303, 1305-06 (9th Cir. 1998) (holding that statute "does contemplate that the defendant must not merely engage in conduct knowingly, but purposefully and intentionally").

As to the penultimate paragraph of the instruction, *see United States v. Carrion-Caliz*, 944 F.2d 220, 225 (5th Cir. 1991) (holding that hostage is "seized" or "detained" within meaning of Hostage Taking Act "when she is held or confined against her will for an appreciable period of time").

As to the last paragraph of the instruction, *see United States v. Lopez-Flores,*63 F.3d 1468, 1477 (9th Cir. 1995) ("[T]hat the hostage may initially agree to accompany the hostage taker does not prevent a later 'seizure' or 'detention' within the meaning of the Hostage Taking Act" (quoting *Carrion-Caliz,* 944 F.2d at 226)); *see also Sierra-Valasquez*, 310 F.3d at 1220 ("There was a seizure or detention within the meaning of § 1203(a) from the time the defendants began to hold

the aliens in a manner that was not contemplated in the alien smuggling agreement. At that point, the aliens were no longer consensually in the custody of the smuggling defendants.").

*Revised June 2019*

## 18. MONEY LAUNDERING AND RACKETEERING OFFENSES

**Instruction**


18.1 Travel Act—Interstate or Foreign Travel in Aid of Racketeering Enterprise (18 U.S.C. § 1952(a)(3))
18.2 Illegal Gambling Business (18 U.S.C. § 1955)
18.3 Financial Transaction or Attempted Transaction to Promote Unlawful Activity (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(1)(A))
18.4 Laundering or Attempting to Launder Monetary Instruments (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(1)(B))
18.5 Transporting or Attempting to Transport Funds to Promote Unlawful Activity (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(A))
18.6 Transporting or Attempting to Transport Monetary Instruments for the Purpose of Laundering (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(B))
18.7 Money Laundering (18 U.S.C. § 1957)
18.7A Money Laundering Conspiracy (18 U.S.C. § 1956(h))
18.8 Violent Crime or Attempted Violent Crime in Aid of Racketeering Enterprise (18 U.S.C. § 1959)
18.9 Racketeering Enterprise—Enterprise Affecting Interstate Commerce—Defined (18 U.S.C. § 1959)
18.10 Racketeering Activity—Defined (18 U.S.C. § 1959)
18.11 Racketeering Enterprise—Proof of Purpose (18 U.S.C. § 1959)
18.12 RICO—Racketeering Act—Charged as Separate Count in Indictment (18 U.S.C. § 1961(1))
18.13 RICO—Racketeering Act—Not Charged as Separate Count in Indictment (18 U.S.C. § 1961(1))
18.14 RICO—Pattern of Racketeering Activity (18 U.S.C. § 1961(5))
18.15 RICO—Using or Investing Income from Racketeering Activity (18 U.S.C. § 1962(a))
18.16 RICO—Acquiring Interest in Enterprise (18 U.S.C. § 1962(b))
18.17 RICO—Conducting Affairs of Commercial Enterprise or Union (18 U.S.C. § 1962(c))
18.18 RICO—Conducting Affairs of Association–in–Fact (18 U.S.C. § 1962(c))

## 18.1 Travel Act—Interstate or Foreign Travel in Aid of Racketeering Enterprise (18 U.S.C. § 1952(a)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with violating Section 1952(a)(3) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [traveled in interstate or foreign commerce] [used the mail] [used [*specify facility*] in interstate or foreign commerce] with the intent to [[promote, manage, establish, or carry on] [facilitate the promotion, management, establishment, or carrying on of]] [*specify unlawful activity*]; and

Second, after doing so the defendant [performed [*specify act*]] [attempted to perform [*specify act*]][.] [; and]

[Third, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

In *United States v. Nader*, 542 F.3d 713, 722 (9th Cir. 2008), the Ninth Circuit held that telephone calls that were entirely intrastate in nature and were made using a facility in interstate commerce were adequate to support the conviction.

In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances.' " *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 18.2 Illegal Gambling Business (18 U.S.C. § 1955)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [conducting] [financing] [managing] [supervising] [directing] [owning] an illegal gambling business in violation of Section 1955 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [conducted] [financed] [managed] [supervised] [directed] [owned] a business consisting of [*specify illegal gambling business*];

Second, [*specify illegal gambling business*] is illegal gambling in [*specify state or political subdivision*];

Third, the business involved five or more persons who [conducted] [financed] [managed] [supervised] [directed] [owned] all or part of the business; and

Fourth, the business [had been in substantially continuous operation by five or more persons for more than thirty days] [had a gross revenue of $2,000 in any single day].

### Comment

Where jurors could find from the evidence two separate thirty-day periods, the jury must be instructed that they must unanimously agree on the same period. *United States v. Gilley,* 836 F.2d 1206, 1211-12 (9th Cir. 1988).

*Revised June 2021*

## 18.3 Financial Transaction or Attempted Transaction to Promote Unlawful Activity (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(1)(A))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [conducting] [attempting to conduct] a financial transaction to promote [*unlawful activity*] in violation of Section 1956(a)(1)(A) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [conducted] [intended to conduct] a financial transaction involving property that represented the proceeds of [*specify prior, separate criminal activity*];

Second, the defendant knew that the property represented the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity; [and]

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to promote the carrying on of [*specify unlawful activity being promoted*] [.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

A financial transaction is a transaction involving [the movement of funds by wire or other means that] [one or more monetary instruments that] [the use of a financial institution that is engaged in, or the activities of which] affect[s] interstate or foreign commerce in any way.

The phrase "knew that the property represented the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity" means that the defendant knew that the property involved in the transaction represented proceeds from some form, though not necessarily which form, of activity that constitutes a felony. I instruct you that [*specify relevant unlawful activity*] is a felony.

### Comment

*See United States v. Sayakhom*, 186 F.3d 928, 940 (9th Cir. 1999), approving a similar version of this instruction.

For cases involving conduct on or after May 20, 2009, "proceeds" means "any property derived from or obtained or retained, directly or indirectly, through some form of unlawful activity, including the gross receipts of such activity." 18 U.S.C. § 1956(c)(9) (subsection (c)(9) was added by Pub. L. 111-21, 123 Stat. 1618). For cases involving conduct prior to May 20, 2009, consider *United States v. Santos*, 553 U.S. 507, 513-14 (2008) (plurality opinion) (stating that

when prior, separate criminal activity is gambling, "proceeds" must be defined as "profits"), and *United States v. Van Alstyne*, 584 F.3d 803, 814 (9th Cir. 2009) ("We therefore view the holding that commanded five votes in *Santos* as being that 'proceeds' means 'profits' where viewing 'proceeds' as 'receipts' would present a 'merger' problem of the kind that troubled the plurality and concurrence in *Santos*.").

Because it is a specific intent crime, it is reversible error to give Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly) in a money laundering case. *United States v. Stein*, 37 F.3d 1407, 1410 (9th Cir. 1994); s*ee also United States v. Turman*, 122 F.3d 1167, 1170 (9th Cir. 1997) (applying *Stein* retroactively).

In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (internal quotations omitted).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 18.4 Laundering or Attempting to Launder Monetary Instruments (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(1)(B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [laundering] [attempting to launder] money in violation of Section 1956(a)(1)(B) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [conducted] [intended to conduct] a financial transaction involving property that represented the proceeds of [*specify prior, separate criminal activity*];

Second, the defendant knew that the property represented the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity; and

Third, the defendant knew that the transaction was designed in whole or in part [[to conceal or disguise the [nature] [location] [source] [ownership] [control] of the proceeds]] [to avoid a transaction reporting requirement under state or federal law] [.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

A financial transaction is a transaction involving [the movement of funds by wire or other means that] [one or more monetary instruments that] [the use of a financial institution that is engaged in, or the activities of which] affect[s] interstate or foreign commerce in any way.

The phrase "knew that the property represented the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity" means that the defendant knew that the property involved in the transaction represented proceeds from some form, though not necessarily which form, of activity that constitutes a felony. I instruct you that [*specify relevant unlawful activity*] is a felony.

[The laws of the [United States] [State of _____] require the reporting of [*specify reporting requirement*].]

### Comment

"Proceeds" means "any property derived from or obtained or retained, directly or indirectly, through some form of unlawful activity, including the gross receipts of such activity." 18 U.S.C. § 1956(c)(9) (subsection (c)(9) was added by Pub. L. 111-21, 123 Stat. 1618 on May 20, 2009).

For cases involving conduct before May 20, 2009, consider *United States v. Santos*, 553 U.S. 507, 513-14 (2008) (plurality opinion) (stating that when prior, separate criminal activity is gambling, "proceeds" must be defined as "profits"), and *United States v. Van Alstyne*, 584 F.3d 803, 814 (9th Cir. 2009) ("We therefore view the holding that commanded five votes in *Santos* as being that 'proceeds' means 'profits' where viewing 'proceeds' as 'receipts' would present a 'merger' problem of the kind that troubled the plurality and concurrence in *Santos*."). *See also United States v. Webster*, 623 F.3d 901, 906 (9th Cir. 2010) (reading *Santos* as holding that where money laundering count is based on transfers among co-conspirators of money from sale of drugs, "proceeds" includes all "receipts" from such sales).

If the defendant is charged with laundering a monetary instrument other than cash, *see* 18 U.S.C. § 1956(c)(5), the instruction should be modified accordingly.

Because it is a specific intent crime, it is reversible error to give Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly) in a money laundering case. *United States v. Stein*, 37 F.3d 1407, 1410 (9th Cir. 1994); s*ee also United States v. Turman*, 122 F.3d 1167, 1169 (9th Cir. 1997) (applying *Stein* retroactively).

The government is required to prove "that the defendant knew that the underlying acts which provided the sources of the laundered proceeds were illegal," but not that "the defendant knew that his money-laundering acts were illegal." *United States v. Golb*, 69 F.3d 1417, 1428 (9th Cir. 1999).

With respect to the third element of the instruction, *see Cuellar v. United States*, 553 U.S. 550, 561-68 (2008) (stating that evidence of how money was moved was insufficient to prove knowledge. *See also United States v. Wilkes*, 662 F.3d 524, 547 (9th Cir. 2011) (stating that evidence that defendant's transactions were "convoluted" rather than "simple transactions that can be followed with relative ease, or transactions that involve nothing but the initial crime," was sufficient to prove transaction designed to conceal (citation omitted)); *United States v. Singh*, 995 F.3d 1069 (9th Cir. 2021) (describing hawala operation as designed at least "in part" to conceal proceeds and determining that the operation was used to transfer and launder drug trafficking proceeds).

The "nexus with interstate commerce is both a jurisdictional requirement and an essential element of the offense." *United States v. Bazuaye*, 240 F.3d 861, 863 (9th Cir. 2001) (quoting *United States v. Ladum*, 141 F.3d 1328, 1339 n.2 (9th Cir. 1998)). "But the connection need not be extensive; the prosecution need only show that the transaction affected interstate or foreign commercie 'in any way or degree.'" *United States v. Costanzo*, 956 F.3d 1088, 1091 (9th Cir. 2020) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 1956(c)(4)).

The bracketed language regarding reporting requirements in the last paragraph of the instruction only applies if the defendant is charged with laundering funds to avoid a transaction reporting requirement under state or federal law.

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take

place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 18.5 Transporting or Attempting to Transport Funds to Promote Unlawful Activity (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(A))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [transporting] [attempting to transport] funds to promote unlawful activity in violation of Section 1956(a)(2)(A) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [transported] [intended to transport] money [from a place in the United States to or through a place outside the United States] [to a place in the United States from or through a place outside the United States]; [and]

Second, the defendant acted with the intent to promote the carrying on of [*specify criminal activity charged in the indictment*] [.] [; and]

[Third, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person

may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 18.6 Transporting or Attempting to Transport Monetary Instruments for the Purpose of Laundering (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [transporting] [attempting to transport] money for the purpose of laundering in violation of Section 1956(a)(2)(B) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [transported] [intended to transport] money [from a place in the United States to or through a place outside the United States] [to a place in the United States from or through a place outside the United States];

Second, the defendant knew that the money represents the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity; [and]

Third, the defendant knew the transportation was designed in whole or in part [to conceal or disguise the [nature] [location] [source] [ownership] [control] of the proceeds of [*specify criminal activity charged in the indictment*]] [to avoid a transaction reporting requirement under state or federal law] [.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime of transporting money for the purpose of laundering.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

[The laws of the [United States] [State of _____] require the reporting of [*reporting requirement*].]

### Comment

For cases involving conduct on or after May 20, 2009, "proceeds" means "any property derived from or obtained or retained, directly or indirectly, through some form of unlawful activity, including the gross receipts of such activity." 18 U.S.C. § 1956(c)(9) (subsection (c)(9) was added by Pub. L. 111-21, 123 Stat. 1618).

For cases involving conduct before May 20, 2009, consider *United States v. Santos*, 553 U.S. 507, 513-14 (2008) (plurality opinion) (discussing where the prior, separate criminal activity is gambling, "proceeds" must be defined as "profits."), and *United States v. Van Alstyne*, 584 F.3d 803, 814 (9th Cir. 2009) ("We therefore view the holding that commanded five votes in *Santos* as being that 'proceeds' means 'profits' where viewing 'proceeds' as 'receipts' would present a 'merger' problem of the kind that troubled the plurality and concurrence in *Santos*."). *See also United States v. Phillips*, 704 F.3d 754 (9th Cir. 2012) (stating when money laundering activity did

not further predicate criminal scheme or occur during normal course of running scheme, "proceeds" were correctly defined as "gross receipts" under 18 U.S.C. § 1957); *United States v. Webster*, 623 F.3d 901, 906 (9th Cir. 2010) (reading *Santos* as holding that when money laundering count is based on transfers among co-conspirators of money from sale of drugs, "proceeds" includes all "receipts" from such sales).

Because it is a specific intent crime, it is reversible error to give Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly) in a money laundering case. *United States v. Stein*, 37 F.3d 1407, 1410 (9th Cir. 1994). *See also United States v. Turman*, 122 F.3d 1167, 1169 (9th Cir. 1997) (applying *Stein* retroactively).

The elements of this instruction follow the language of the statute, although in most cases the crime described in each element would be the same. *See United States v. Jenkins*, 633 F.3d 788, 806-07 (9th Cir. 2011).

With respect to the third element of the instruction, *see Cuellar v. United States*, 553 U.S. 550, 561-68 (2008) (evidence of how money was moved insufficient to prove knowledge).

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (internal quotations omitted).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 18.7 Money Laundering (18 U.S.C. § 1957)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with money laundering in violation of Section 1957 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly engaged or attempted to engage in a monetary transaction;

Second, the defendant knew the transaction involved criminally derived property;

Third, the property had a value greater than $10,000;

Fourth, the property was, in fact, derived from [*describe the specified unlawful activity alleged in the indictment*]; and

Fifth, the transaction occurred [[in the [United States] [special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States]] [*specify defendant's status which qualifies under 18 U.S.C. § 1957(d)(2)*].

The term "monetary transaction" means the [deposit] [withdrawal] [transfer] [exchange], in or affecting interstate commerce, of funds or a monetary instrument by, through, or to a financial institution. [The term "monetary transaction" does not include any transaction necessary to preserve a person's right to representation as guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution.]

The term "financial institution" means [*identify type of institution listed in 31 U.S.C. § 5312 as alleged in the indictment*].

The term "criminally derived property" means any property constituting, or derived from, the proceeds obtained from a criminal offense. The government must prove that the defendant knew that the property involved in the monetary transaction constituted, or was derived from, proceeds obtained by some criminal offense. The government does not have to prove that the defendant knew the precise nature of that criminal offense, or knew the property involved in the transaction represented the proceeds of [*specified unlawful activity as alleged in the indictment*].

Although the government must prove that, of the property at issue, more than $10,000 was criminally derived, the government does not have to prove that all the property at issue was criminally derived.

### Comment

The above definition of "criminally derived property" refers to the "proceeds" of a criminal offense. For cases involving conduct on or after May 20, 2009, "proceeds" means "any property derived from or obtained or retained, directly or indirectly, through some form of unlawful activity, including the gross receipts of such activity." 18 U.S.C. § 1957(f)(3); 18 U.S.C. § 1956(c)(9) (Section 1957 subsection (f)(3) was modified by Pub. L. 111-21, 123 Stat. 1618, which

also added § 1956 subsection (c)(9)). For cases involving conduct before May 20, 2009, "proceeds" means "gross receipts" unless the money laundering transactions were a "central component" of the criminal scheme. *United States v. Phillips*, 704 F.3d 754, 765-66 (9th Cir. 2012); *see also United States v. Van Alstyne*, 584 F.3d 803, 814 (9th Cir. 2009) (stating that when defining "proceeds" as "receipts" would present a merger problem, "proceeds" means "profits"); Instruction 18.6 (Transporting or Attempting to Transport Monetary Instruments for the Purpose of Laundering (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(B))).

The term "specified unlawful activity" in 18 U.S.C. § 1957 has the same meaning as that term is given in 18 U.S.C. § 1956. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1957(f)(3). In § 1956(c)(7)(B)(iv), the "specified unlawful activity" of bribery of a public official "should be interpreted to take the ordinary, contemporary, common meaning" of that phrase at the time Congress enacted the statute. *See United States v. Chi*, 936 F.3d 888, 893-97 (9th Cir. 2019) (applying term "bribery of a public official" to include bribery under foreign law and not restricted to federal bribery statute, 18 U.S.C. § 201, or foreign law that mirrors federal bribery statute).

Because it is a specific intent crime, it is reversible error to give Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly) in a money laundering case in a manner that indicates the defendant need not know that the money being laundered was proceeds of criminal transactions. *United States v. Stein*, 37 F.3d 1407, 1410 (9th Cir. 1994); *see also United States v. Turman*, 122 F.3d 1167, 1169 (9th Cir. 1997) (applying *Stein* retroactively), *abrogated on other grounds by Henderson v. United States*, 568 U.S. 266 (2013). *But see United States v. Lonich*, 23 F.4th 881, 899-901 (9th Cir. 2022) (concluding district court did not err by using general "knowingly" instruction in money laundering case because district court modified instruction to clarify that it applies only to act of engaging in monetary transactions); *see also United States v. Jaimez*, 45 F.4th 1118, 1123 (9th Cir. 2022).

*Revised Sept. 2022*

## 18.7A Money Laundering Conspiracy (18 U.S.C. § 1956(h))

The defendant is charged in [Count of] the indictment with money laundering conspiracy in violation of Section 1956(h) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, there was an agreement to commit money laundering;

Second, the defendant knew the objective of the agreement;

Third, the defendant joined the agreement with the intent to further its unlawful purpose.

### Comment

The above elements were set out in *United States Jaimez*, 45 F.4th 1118, 1123 (9th Cir. 2022). *See also United States Collazo*, 984 F.3d 1308, 1319 (9th Cir. 2021) (en banc). *See United States v. Kimbrew*, 406 F.3d 1149, 1152 (9th Cir. 2005), and *United States v. Alghazouli*, 517 F.3d 1179, 1189 (9th Cir. 2008), regarding element one. *See United States v. Moreland*, 622 F.3d 1147, 1169 (9th Cir. 2010), regarding element two.

## 18.8 Violent Crime or Attempted Violent Crime in Aid of Racketeering Enterprise (18 U.S.C. § 1959)

The defendant is charged in Count _____ of the indictment with [committing] [threatening to commit] [attempting to commit] [conspiring to commit] a crime of violence, specifically, [*specify crime of violence*] in aid of a racketeering enterprise in violation of Section 1959 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, on or about the time period described in Count _____, an enterprise affecting interstate commerce existed;

Second, the enterprise engaged in racketeering activity;

Third, the defendant [committed] [threatened to commit] [attempted to commit] [conspired to commit] the following crime of violence: [*specify crime of violence*] as defined in [*specify jury instruction stating all elements of predicate crime of violence*]; [and]

Fourth, the defendant's purpose in [[committing] [threatening to commit] [attempting to commit] [conspiring to commit]] [*specify crime of violence*] was to gain entrance to, or to maintain, or to increase [his] [her] position in the enterprise[.] [and]

[Fifth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instructions 18.9 (Racketeering Enterprise—Enterprise Affecting Interstate Commerce—Defined), 18.10 (Racketeering Activity—Defined), 18.11 (Racketeering Enterprise—Proof of Purpose); and an instruction setting forth the elements of the predicate crime of violence. When the charge alleges an attempt or conspiracy to commit a crime of violence, include an appropriate instruction as to attempt or conspiracy. *See* Instruction 4.4 (Attempt) and Instruction 11.1 (Conspiracy—Elements).

The four elements required for a conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 1959 are "(1) that the criminal organization exists; (2) that the organization is a racketeering enterprise; (3) that the defendant [ ] committed a violent crime; and (4) that [the defendant] acted for the purpose of promoting [his] position in a racketeering enterprise." *United States v. Banks*, 514 F.3d 959, 964

(9th Cir. 2008) (quoting *United States v. Bracy*, 67 F.3d 1421, 1429 (9th Cir. 1995)); *see also United States v. Fernandez,* 388 F.3d 1199, 1220 (9th Cir. 2004).

The third element identified in *Banks* "incorporates the elements of the relevant predicate violation." *United States v. Elmore*, 118 F.4th 1193, 1199 (9th Cir. 2024). In *Elmore*, the Ninth Circuit held that the VICAR statute is divisible. 118 F.4th at 1199-1200. Therefore, when considering whether a charged or convicted VICAR offense qualifies as a predicate crime of violence under 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(3)(A), courts employ a "modified categorical approach" and determine whether the VICAR offense charged or convicted "has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another." *Id.* at 1201-02 (quoting § 924(c)(3)(A)).

In *United States v. Houston*, 648 F.3d 806, 819-20 (9th Cir. 2011), the Ninth Circuit held it was not error to refuse to instruct on second degree murder as a lesser predicate to VICAR first degree murder.

A charge under § 1959 also applies to violent crimes committed "as consideration for the receipt of, or as consideration for a promise or agreement to pay, anything of pecuniary value from an enterprise engaged in racketeering activity." 18 U.S.C. § 1957(f)(3); 18 U.S.C. § 1956(c)(9) (Section 1957 subsection (f)(3) was modified by Pub. L. 111-21, 123 Stat. 1618, which also added § 1956 subsection (c)(9)). For cases involving conduct prior to May 20, 2009, "proceeds" means "gross receipts" unless the money laundering transactions were a "central component" of the criminal scheme. *United States v. Phillips*, 704 F.3d 754, 765-66 (9th Cir. 2012); *see also United States v. Van Alstyne*, 584 F.3d 803, 814 (9th Cir. 2009) (when defining "proceeds" as "receipts" would present a merger problem, "proceeds" means "profits"); Instruction 18.6 (Transporting or Attempting to Transport Monetary Instruments for the Purpose of Laundering (18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(B))).

District courts are not permitted to bifurcate the elements of a single federal offense, like VICAR murder, into separate trials by element. *See United States v. Manning*, 151 F.4th 1144, 1152 (9th Cir. 2025) (noting that evidence of prior racketeering activity is "not prejudicial when it is an element of the charged crime") (quoting *United States v. Barker*, 1 F.3d 957, 959 n.3 (9th Cir. 1993)). District courts may employ other strategies, such as "limiting instructions" or "sequencing of the government's case," to mitigate any risk of unfair prejudice. *Id.* at 1156.

*Revised March 2026*

## 18.9 Racketeering Enterprise—Enterprise Affecting Interstate Commerce—Defined (18 U.S.C. § 1959)

With respect to the first element in Instruction _____ [*insert cross reference to pertinent instruction, e.g., Instruction 18.8*], the government must prove that an "enterprise" existed that was engaged in or had an effect on interstate commerce. An enterprise is a group of people who have associated together for a common purpose of engaging in a course of conduct over a period of time. This group of people, in addition to having a common purpose, must have an ongoing organization, either formal or informal. The personnel of the enterprise, however, may change and need not be associated with the enterprise for the entire period alleged in the indictment. This group of people does not have to be a legally recognized entity, such as a partnership or corporation. This group may be organized for a legitimate and lawful purpose, or it may be organized for an unlawful purpose. [The name of the organization itself is not an element of the offense and does not have to be proved.]

Therefore, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that this was a group of people (1) associated for a common purpose of engaging in a course of conduct; (2) that the association of these people was an ongoing formal or informal organization, and (3) the group was engaged in or had an effect upon interstate or foreign commerce. The government need not prove that the enterprise had any particular organizational structure.

Interstate commerce includes the movement of goods, services, money, and individuals between states. These goods can be legal or illegal. Only a minimal effect on commerce is required and the effect need only be probable or potential, not actual. It is not necessary to prove that the defendant's own acts affected interstate commerce as long as the enterprise's acts had such effect.

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instructions 18.8 (Violent Crime or Attempted Violent Crime in Aid of Racketeering Enterprise), 18.10 (Racketeering Activity—Defined), and 18.11 (Racketeering Enterprise—Proof of Purpose).

Definitions of "enterprise" are found in 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(b)(2) and 1961(4). *See also United States v. Turkette*, 452 U.S. 576, 583 (1981); *Odom v. Microsoft Corp.*, 486 F.3d 541, 550-52 (9th Cir. 2000); *United Energy Owners Comm., Inc. v. U.S. Energy Mgmt. Sys., Inc.*, 837 F.2d 356, 362 (9th Cir. 1988).

## 18.10 Racketeering Activity—Defined (18 U.S.C. § 1959)

With respect to the second element in Instruction _____ [*insert cross reference to pertinent instruction, e.g. Instruction 18.8*], the government must prove that the enterprise was engaged in racketeering activity. "Racketeering activity" means the commission of certain crimes. These include [*insert applicable statutory definitions of state or federal crimes at issue as listed in 18 U.S.C. § 1961].*

The government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the enterprise was engaged in [at least one of] the crime[s] named [above] [previously].

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instructions 18.8 (Violent Crime or Attempted Violent Crime in Aid of Racketeering Enterprise), 18.9 (Racketeering Enterprise—Enterprise Affecting Interstate Commerce—Defined), and 18.11 (Racketeering Enterprise—Proof of Purpose).

For a definition of "racketeering activity," *see* 18 U.S.C. § 1959(b)(1), which states that term has the meaning set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 1961(1). *See also United States v. Banks*, 514 F.3d 959, 968 (9th Cir. 2008).

## 18.11 Racketeering Enterprise—Proof of Purpose (18 U.S.C. § 1959)

With respect to the fourth element in Instruction _____ [*insert cross reference to pertinent instruction, e.g. Instruction 18.8*], the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant's purpose was to gain entrance to, or to maintain, or to increase [his] [her] position in the enterprise.

It is not necessary for the government to prove that this motive was the defendant's sole purpose, or even the primary purpose, in committing the charged crime. You need only find that enhancing [his] [her] status in [*name of enterprise*] was a substantial purpose of the defendant or that [he] [she] committed the charged crime as an integral aspect of membership in [*name of enterprise*].

In determining the defendant's purpose in committing the alleged crime, you must determine what [he] [she] had in mind. Because you cannot look into a person's mind, you have to determine purpose by considering all the facts and circumstances before you.

### Comment

Use this instruction in conjunction with Instructions 18.8 (Violent Crime or Attempted Violent Crime in Aid of Racketeering Enterprise), 18.9 (Racketeering Enterprise—Enterprise Affecting Interstate Commerce—Defined), and 18.10 (Racketeering Activity—Defined). *See* Comment to Instruction 18.8. If the fourth element of Instruction 18.8 is modified, this instruction should also be modified.

"[T]he purpose element is met if 'the jury could properly infer that the defendant committed his violent crime because he knew it was expected of him by reason of his membership in the enterprise or that he committed it in furtherance of that membership.'" *United States v. Banks*, 514 F.3d 959, 965 (9th Cir. 2008) (quoting *United States v. Pimentel*, 346 F.3d 285, 295-96 (2d Cir. 2003)).

"VICAR's purpose element is satisfied even if the maintenance or enhancement of his position in the criminal enterprise was not the defendant's sole or principal purpose." *Banks*, 514 F.3d at 965. The law, however, requires a defendant's purpose be "more than merely incidental." *Id.* at 969. "[T]he gang or racketeering enterprise purpose does not have to be the only purpose or the main purpose of [a] murder or assault. But it does have to be a substantial purpose." *Id.* "Murder *while* a gang member is not necessarily a murder *for the purpose* of maintaining or increasing position in a gang, even if it would have the effect of maintaining or increasing position in a gang." *Id.*

The Ninth Circuit held that it was not error to instruct on an alternate *Pinkerton* theory (co-conspirator's liability), even though under *Pinkerton* it is not necessary that the defendant personally act for the purpose of maintaining his position in the enterprise provided that he had that intent when he joined the conspiracy. *United States v. Houston*, 648 F.3d 806, 818-19 (9th Cir. 2011).

In *United States v. Smith*, 831 F.3d 1207, 1217-18 (9th Cir. 2016), the Ninth Circuit considered whether it was error for the district court to instruct the jury that the defendant's purpose "must be more than merely incidental." The court noted this phrasing could imply a standard that was too low, which could result in error. *Id*. at 1219. The court noted, however, that the instruction should not use the word "dominant" to describe the defendant's purpose because it "has a flavor" "suggest[ing] that the standard is very high." *Id*. Ultimately, the court declined to decide which word should be used but said that "[s]ubstantial would convey the idea with more precision." *Id*.

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*Revised Jan. 2019*

## 18.12 RICO—Racketeering Act—Charged as Separate Count in Indictment (18 U.S.C. § 1961(1))

The crimes of [*specify crimes charged*] charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment are racketeering acts. If you find the defendant guilty of [at least two of] the crimes charged in Counts _____ you must then decide whether those counts formed a pattern of racketeering activity.

All of you must agree on the same two crimes which form a pattern of racketeering activity.

### Comment

Unanimity as to the crimes forming a pattern of racketeering activity is appropriate under the reasoning of *Richardson v. United States*, 526 U.S. 813, 815 (1999) (explaining that in continuing criminal enterprise prosecution, there must be unanimity as to specific violations that make up the "continuing series of violations"). *See also* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

## 18.13 RICO—Racketeering Act—Not Charged as Separate Count in Indictment (18 U.S.C. § 1961(1))

The crime of [specify crime charged] is a racketeering act. For you to find that the defendant [committed] [aided and abetted others in committing] the crime of [*specify crime charged*], the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

[*Specify elements of the crime*.]

[All of you must agree on the same two racketeering acts that the defendant [committed] [aided and abetted in committing].]

### Comment

There is no requirement that the defendant must have been convicted of the crime constituting an act of racketeering activity before the act can be used as part of the pattern of racketeering activity. *Sedima, S.P.R.L. v. Imrex Co.,* 473 U.S. 479, 495-97 (1985). Even though a defendant has previously been acquitted of a crime in a state court, he or she can still be charged with violating the RICO statute "with the [same] crime as predicate acts." *United States v. Licavoli*, 725 F.2d 1040, 1047 (6th Cir. 1984).

A pattern of racketeering activity requires at least two acts of racketeering activity. 18 U.S.C. § 1961(5). More than one crime may be charged as a racketeering act.

## 18.14 RICO—Pattern of Racketeering Activity (18 U.S.C. § 1961(5))

To establish a pattern of racketeering activity, the government must prove each of the following beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, at least two acts of racketeering were committed within a period of ten years of each other;

Second, the acts of racketeering were related to each other, meaning that there was a relationship between or among the acts of racketeering; and

Third, the acts of racketeering amounted to or posed a threat of continued criminal activity.

With respect to the second element, acts of racketeering are related if they embraced the same or similar purposes, results, participants, victims, or methods of commission, or were otherwise interrelated by distinguishing characteristics.

Sporadic, widely separated, or isolated criminal acts do not form a pattern of racketeering activity.

Two racketeering acts are not necessarily enough to establish a pattern of racketeering activity.

### Comment

In determining whether two racketeering activities occurred within ten years, any period of imprisonment after the commission of a prior act must be excluded. 18 U.S.C. § 1961(5).

*See United States v. Camez*, 839 F.3d 871, 876 (9th Cir. 2016) (holding that pattern of racketeering activity requires at least two predicate acts, one of which may have occurred while defendant was minor if criminal conduct in issue continued past age of majority); *United States v. Jaimez,* 45 F.4th 1118 (9th Cir. 2022) (holding that even if insufficient evidence presented for other predicate acts, if jury finds two predicate acts RICO conviction stands); *Sedima, S.P.R.L. v. Imrex Co.*, 473 U.S. 479, 496 n.14 (1985) (explaining that although at least two acts are necessary under the definition of "pattern of racketeering activity," two acts may not be sufficient to constitute a pattern); s*ee also H.J. Inc. v. NW Bell Tel. Co.*, 492 U.S. 229, 239 (1989) (pattern of racketeering activity requires a "showing that the racketeering predicates are related, *and* that they amount to or pose a threat of continued criminal activity"); *Sever v. Alaska Pulp Corp.*, 978 F.2d 1529, 1535-36 (9th Cir. 1992) (applying *Northwestern Bell*); *Ikuno v. Yip*, 912 F.2d 306, 309 (9th Cir. 1990) (same); *United States v. Rodriguez*, 971 F.3d 1007, 1013-14 (9th Cir. 2020) (holding that pattern of racketeering activity extends to attempts and conspiracies, even if no racketeering offense is completed).

*Revised Sept. 2022*

## 18.15 RICO—Using or Investing Income from Racketeering Activity (18 U.S.C. § 1962(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with using or investing income from racketeering activity in violation of Section 1962(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant received income, directly or indirectly, from a pattern of racketeering activity, or through collection of an unlawful debt;

Second, the defendant used or invested, directly or indirectly, any part of that income or the proceeds of such income to [[buy an interest or invest in] [establish] [operate]] [*specify enterprise*]; and

Third, [*specify enterprise*] was engaged in or its activities in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between the United States and a foreign country.

### Comment

When the predicate racketeering acts are charged as separate counts in the indictment, use this instruction in combination with Instructions 18.12 (RICO—Racketeering Act—Charged as Separate Count in Indictment) and 18.14 (RICO—Pattern of Racketeering Activity). When the predicate racketeering acts are not charged as separate counts in the indictment, use this instruction in combination with Instructions 18.13 (RICO—Racketeering Act—Not Charged as Separate Count in Indictment) and 18.14 (RICO—Pattern of Racketeering Activity).

Unlike a case in which a corporation is charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1962(c), "where a corporation engages in racketeering activities and is the direct or indirect beneficiary of the pattern of racketeering activity, it can be both the 'person' and the 'enterprise' under section 1962(a)." *Schreiber Distrib. Co. v. Serv–Well Furniture Co.*, 806 F.2d 1393, 1396, 1398 (9th Cir. 1986).

*Revised Dec. 2016*

## 18.16 RICO—Acquiring Interest in Enterprise (18 U.S.C. § 1962(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with acquiring or maintaining an interest in or control of an enterprise in violation of Section 1962(b) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant, directly or indirectly, acquired or maintained an interest in or control of [*specify enterprise*];

Second, the defendant did so through a pattern of racketeering activity or through collection of an unlawful debt; and

Third, [*specify enterprise*] engaged in or its activities in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or the United States and a foreign country.

### Comment

When the predicate racketeering acts are charged as separate counts in the indictment, use this instruction in combination with Instructions 18.12 (RICO—Racketeering Act—Charged as Separate Count in Indictment) and 18.14 (RICO—Pattern of Racketeering Activity). When the predicate racketeering acts are not charged as separate counts in the indictment, use this instruction in combination with Instructions 18.13 (RICO—Racketeering Act—Not Charged as Separate Count in Indictment) and 18.14 (RICO—Pattern of Racketeering Activity).

The enterprise in which a defendant invests must be an entity distinct from the defendant.

RICO predicate acts only require a de minimus impact on interstate commerce. *United States v. Fernandez*, 388 F.3d 1199, 1218 (9th Cir. 2004); *United States v. Juv., Male*, 118 F.3d 1344, 1347 (9th Cir. 1997).

Control under § 1962(b) does not require "formal control." *Ikuno v. Yip*, 912 F.2d 306, 310 (9th Cir. 1990).

## 18.17 RICO—Conducting Affairs of Commercial Enterprise or Union (18 U.S.C. § 1962(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with having [conducted] [participated in the conduct of] the affairs of [*specify enterprise or union*] through a pattern of racketeering activity in violation of Section 1962(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was employed by or associated with [*specify enterprise or union*];

Second, the defendant [conducted] [participated, directly or indirectly, in the conduct of] the affairs of [*specify enterprise or union*] through a pattern of racketeering activity or collection of unlawful debt. To conduct or participate means that the defendant had to be involved in the operation or management of the [*specify enterprise or union*]; and

Third, [*specify enterprise or union*] engaged in or its activities in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between the United States and a foreign country.

### Comment

When racketeering acts are charged as separate counts in the indictment, use this instruction in combination with Instructions 18.12 (RICO—Racketeering Act—Charged as Separate Count in Indictment) and 18.14 (RICO—Pattern of Racketeering Activity). When the racketeering acts are not charged as separate counts in the indictment, use this instruction in combination with Instructions 18.13 (RICO—Racketeering Act—Not Charged as Separate Count in the Indictment) and 18.14 (RICO—Pattern of Racketeering Activity).

As defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1961(4), an enterprise "includes any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal entity, and any union or group of individuals associated in fact although not a legal entity"; therefore, the name of the legal entity should be used when applicable.

The enterprise cannot also be the RICO defendant when the charge is that the defendant violated 18 U.S.C. § 1962(c). *See Schreiber Distrib. Co. v. Serv–Well Furniture Co., Inc.*, 806 F.2d 1393 (9th Cir. 1986).

*See United States v. Shryock*, 342 F.3d 948, 985-86 (9th Cir. 2003) (defining "conducts or participates" in the affairs of the enterprise).

*See Reves v. Ernst & Young*, 507 U.S. 170, 184 (1993) (holding that liability under § 1962(c) may also extend to lower-rung participants who are under the direction of upper management).

*Revised Jan. 2019*

## 18.18 RICO—Conducting Affairs of Association–in–Fact (18 U.S.C. § 1962(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with having [conducted] [participated in the conduct of] the affairs of an enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity in violation of Section 1962(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, there was an ongoing enterprise with some sort of formal or informal framework for carrying out its objectives consisting of a group of persons associated together for a common purpose of engaging in a course of conduct;

Second, the defendant was employed by or associated with the enterprise;

Third, the defendant [conducted] [participated, directly or indirectly, in the conduct of] the affairs of the enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity or collection of unlawful debt. To conduct or participate means that the defendant had to be involved in the operation or management of the enterprise; and

Fourth, the enterprise engaged in or its activities in some way affected commerce between one state and [an]other state[s], or between the United States and a foreign country.

An enterprise need not be a formal entity such as a corporation and need not have a name, regular meetings, or established rules.

### Comment

When racketeering acts are charged as separate counts in the indictment, use this instruction in combination with Instructions 18.12 (RICO–Racketeering Act–Charged as Separate Count in Indictment) and 18.14 (RICO–Pattern of Racketeering Activity). When the racketeering acts are not charged as separate counts in the indictment, use this instruction in combination with Instructions 18.13 (RICO–Racketeering Act–Not Charged as Separate Count in the Indictment) and 18.14 (RICO–Pattern of Racketeering Activity).

RICO requires that an association-in-fact enterprise must have a structure, but the word "structure" need not be used in the jury instruction. *Boyle v. United States*, 556 U.S. 938, 946 (2009). The definition of "enterprise" in the first element of the instruction is based on *Boyle*, 556 U.S. at 949, and *United States v. Turkette*, 452 U.S. 576, 583 (1981).

For RICO purposes, an association-in-fact enterprise "need not have a name, regular meetings, dues, established rules and regulations, disciplinary procedures, or induction or initiation ceremonies." *Boyle*, 556 U.S. at 948.

Defendants in RICO actions must have had "some knowledge of the nature of the enterprise . . . to avoid an unjust association of the defendant[s] with the crimes of others," but the requirement of a common purpose may be met so long as the defendants were "each aware of the essential nature and scope of [the] enterprise and intended to participate in it." *United States v.*

*Christensen*, 828 F.3d 763, 780-81 (9th Cir. 2015), *as amended on denial of reh'g* (9th Cir. 2016). A RICO enterprise is not defeated even when some of the enterprise's participants lack detailed knowledge of all of the other participants or their activities. Instead, "it is sufficient that the defendant knows the general nature of the enterprise and know that the enterprise extends beyond his individual role." *Id.* at 780.

*See United States v. Shryock*, 342 F.3d 948, 985-86 (9th Cir. 2003) (defining "conducts or participates" in the affairs of the enterprise).

*Revised Dec. 2015*

## 19. OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

**Instruction**


19.1 Obstruction of Justice—Influencing Juror (18 U.S.C. § 1503)
19.2 Obstruction of Justice—Injuring Juror (18 U.S.C. § 1503)
19.3 Obstruction of Justice—Omnibus Clause of 18 U.S.C. § 1503
19.4 Obstruction of Justice—Destruction, Alteration, or Falsification of Records in Federal Investigations and Bankruptcy (18 U.S.C. § 1519)
19.5 Obstruction of Justice—Official Proceeding (18 U.S.C § 1512(c))

## 19.1 Obstruction of Justice—Influencing Juror (18 U.S.C. § 1503)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with obstruction of justice in violation of Section 1503 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*name of juror*] was a [prospective] [grand] juror;

Second, the defendant tried to influence, intimidate, or impede [*name of juror*] in the discharge of [his] [her] duties as a [grand] juror; and

Third, the defendant acted corruptly, or by threats or force, or by any threatening communication, with the intent to obstruct justice.

[The government need not prove that the defendant's sole or even primary intention was to obstruct justice so long as the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that one of the defendant's intentions was to obstruct justice. The defendant's intention to obstruct justice must be substantial.]

### Comment

*See* Comment at Instruction 4.12 (Corruptly).

If the corrupt act at issue involved the making of a false statement, materiality of the false statement is a required element of the crime. *See United States v. Thomas*, 612 F.3d 1107, 1128-29 (9th Cir. 2010).

As used in § 1503, "'corruptly' . . . means that the act must be done with the purpose of obstructing justice." *United States v. Rasheed*, 663 F.2d 843, 852 (9th Cir. 1981).

Include the last paragraph if the evidence shows the defendant may have had more than one intention when engaging in the challenged conduct. *See United States v. Smith*, 831 F.3d 1207, 1218 (9th Cir. 2016).

Section 1503 also applies to venire members who have not been sworn or selected as jurors and are prospective jurors. *United States v. Russell*, 255 U.S. 138 (1921).

*Revised June 2021*

## 19.2 Obstruction of Justice—Injuring Juror (18 U.S.C. § 1503)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with obstruction of justice in violation of Section 1503 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*name of juror*] was a [grand] juror [who assented to a [verdict] [indictment]]; and

Second, the defendant injured [*name of juror*] [or [his] [her] property] on account of [his] [her] having [been] [assented to the [verdict] [indictment] as] a [grand] juror.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 19.1 (Obstruction of Justice—Influencing Juror (18 U.S.C. § 1503)).

## 19.3 Obstruction of Justice—Omnibus Clause of 18 U.S.C. § 1503

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with obstruction of justice in violation of Section 1503 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant influenced, obstructed, or impeded, or tried to influence, obstruct, or impede the due administration of justice; and

Second, the defendant acted corruptly, or by threats or force, or by any threatening communication, with the intent to obstruct justice.

[The government need not prove that the defendant's sole or even primary intention was to obstruct justice so long as the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that one of the defendant's intentions was to obstruct justice. The defendant's intention to obstruct justice must be substantial.]

### Comment

*See* Comment at Instruction 4.12 (Corruptly).

If the corrupt act at issue involved the making of a false statement, materiality of the false statement is a required element of the crime. *See United States v. Thomas*, 612 F.3d 1107, 1128-29 (9th Cir. 2010).

As used in § 1503, "'corruptly' . . . means that the act must be done with the purpose of obstructing justice." *United States v. Rasheed*, 663 F.2d 843, 852 (9th Cir. 1981).

Include the last paragraph if the evidence shows the defendant may have had more than one intention when engaging in the challenged conduct. *See United States v. Smith*, 831 F.3d 1207, 1218 (9th Cir. 2016).

"The 'omnibus clause' of § 1503 . . . provides: 'Whoever . . . corruptly or by threats or force, or by any threatening letter or communication, influences, obstructs, or impedes, or endeavors to influence, obstruct, or impede, the due administration of justice, shall be [punished].'" *United States v. Aguilar*, 515 U.S. 593, 609-10 (1995) (Scalia, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 1503(a)).

*Revised June 2021*

## 19.4 Obstruction of Justice—Destruction, Alteration, or Falsification of Records in Federal Investigations and Bankruptcy (18 U.S.C. § 1519)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with obstruction of justice in violation of Section 1519 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly altered, destroyed, concealed, or falsified a record, document, or tangible object; and

Second, the defendant acted with the intent to impede, obstruct, or influence an actual or contemplated investigation of a matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of the United States.

[The government need not prove that the defendant's sole or even primary intention was to obstruct justice so long as the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that one of the defendant's intentions was to obstruct justice. The defendant's intention to obstruct justice must be substantial.]

### Comment

For a definition of "knowingly," *see* Instructions 4.8 (Knowingly) and 4.9 (Deliberate Ignorance).

Include the last paragraph if the evidence shows the defendant may have had more than one intention when engaging in the challenged conduct. *See United States v. Smith*, 831 F.3d 1207, 1218 (9th Cir. 2016).

Reports prepared by law enforcement officers qualify as "records" or "documents" under § 1519. *United States v. Gonzalez*, 906 F.3d 784, 794 (9th Cir. 2018).

To qualify as a "tangible object" under the meaning of § 1519, an item must be "one used to record or preserve information." *Yates v. United States*, 574 U.S. 528, 549 (2015) (holding fisherman's undersized fish were not "tangible objects" under § 1519).

Even when a defendant intends to obstruct justice, the government still must prove that the defendant *actually* altered, destroyed, concealed, or falsified a record, document, or other tangible object used to record or preserve information, to secure a conviction under § 1519. *United States v. Katakis*, 800 F.3d 1017, 1030 (9th Cir. 2015) (affirming judgment of acquittal because government failed to prove that defendant who meant to delete emails successfully did so and holding that moving emails into "deleted items" folder did not qualify as concealment under § 1519).

To sustain a conviction under § 1519, it is enough for the government to prove that the defendant intended to obstruct the investigation of any matter if that matter falls within the jurisdiction of a federal department or agency. The defendant need not know that the matter in

question falls within the jurisdiction of a federal department or agency. *Gonzalez*, 906 F.3d at 794-96.

*Revised June 2021*

## 19.5 Obstruction of Justice—Official Proceeding (18 U.S.C. § 1512(c))

### Comment

Section 1512(c)(2) prohibits impairing "the availability or integrity of records, documents, or objects used in an official proceeding in ways other than those specified in (c)(1)" and "the availability or integrity of *other* things used in an official proceeding beyond the 'record[s], document[s], or other object[s]' enumerated in (c)(1), such as witness testimony or intangible information," but does not extend to other obstructive conduct. *Fischer v. United States*, 603 U.S. __, 144 S. Ct. 2176, 2185-86 (2024).

Section 1512(c)(2) "requires a showing of nexus," namely that "(1) the obstructive conduct be connected to a specific official proceeding that was (2) either pending or was reasonably foreseeable to the defendant when he engaged in the conduct." *United States v. Lonich*, 23 F.4th 881, 905 (9th Cir. 2022) (alterations omitted) (quoting *United States v. Young*, 916 F.3d 368, 385 (9th Cir. 2019)).

*See* Comment to Instruction 4.12 (Corruptly). Although the Ninth Circuit has not yet defined "corruptly" for purposes of § 1512(c), the court has "affirmed an instruction stating that '"corruptly" meant acting with "consciousness of wrongdoing"' because it, 'if anything, . . . placed a higher burden of proof on the government than [§] 1512(c) demands.'" *Lonich*, 23 F.4th at 906 (quoting *United States v. Watters*, 717 F.3d 733, 735 (9th Cir. 2013)).

*Revised Sep 2024*

## 19.6 Obstruction of Justice—Pending Proceeding Before United States Departments or Agencies (18 U.S.C. § 1505)

The defendant [*name*] is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with obstruction of a proceeding pending before a department or agency of the United States in violation of Section 1505 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, there was a proceeding pending before a department or agency of the United States;

Second, the defendant [*name*] was aware of the pending proceeding; and

Third, the defendant [*name*] intentionally [and [corruptly] [by threats of force] [by threatening letter or communication] influenced, obstructed, or impeded] [endeavored to influence, obstruct, or impede] the pending proceeding's due and proper administration of the law.

### Comment

A version of this Instruction was approved by Ninth Circuit in *United States v. Sullivan*, 159 F.4th 576, 585-86 (9th Cir. 2025) (citing *United States v. Price*, 951 F.2d 1028, 1031 (9th Cir. 1991)), *amending on denial of reh'g en banc*, 131 F.4th 776 (9th Cir. 2025). As used in § 1505, "corruptly" means "'that the act must be done with the purpose of obstructing justice.'" *Price*, 951 F.2d at 1031 (quoting *United States v. Laurins*, 857 F.2d 529, 536-37 (9th Cir. 1988)). The Ninth Circuit has held that there is no need to supplement the above instruction with a "nexus" element (*i.e.*, an element requiring that there be a nexus between the defendant's conduct and the pending proceeding). *See Sullivan*, 159 F.4th at 586-87; *United States v. Bhagat*, 436 F.3d 1140, 1148 (9th Cir. 2006).

This instruction does not include two other ways 18 U.S.C. § 1505 can be violated. The first is set out in the first paragraph of § 1505 and concerns obstructing civil investigative demands made under the Antitrust Civil Process Act. The second is obstruction of the "due and proper exercise of the power of inquiry under which any inquiry or investigation is being had by either House, or any committee of either House or any joint committee of the Congress." 18 U.S.C. § 1505.

*Revised March 2026*

## 20. SEXUAL ABUSE, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY OFFENSES

**Instruction**


20.1 Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))
20.2 Attempted Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))
20.3 Aggravated Sexual Abuse—Administration of Drug, Intoxicant, or Other Substance (18 U.S.C. § 2241(b)(2))
20.4 Attempted Aggravated Sexual Abuse—Administration of Drug, Intoxicant, or Other Substance (18 U.S.C. § 2241(b)(2))
20.5 Aggravated Sexual Abuse of Child —Crossing State Line (18 U.S.C. § 2241(c))
20.5.A Aggravated Sexual Abuse of Child – Under Twelve Years of Age Within Federal Jurisdiction (18 U.S.C. § 2241(c))
20.5.B Aggravated Sexual Abuse of Child—By Certain Means Within Federal Jurisdiction (18U.S.C. § 2241(c))
20.7 Sexual Abuse—By Threat (18 U.S.C. § 2242(1))
20.8 Attempted Sexual Abuse—By Threat (18 U.S.C. § 2242(1))
20.9 Sexual Abuse—Incapacity of Victim (18 U.S.C. § 2242(2))
20.10 Attempted Sexual Abuse—Incapacity of Victim (18 U.S.C. § 2242(2))
20.11 Sexual Abuse of Minor (18 U.S.C. § 2243(a))
20.12 Attempted Sexual Abuse of Minor (18 U.S.C. § 2243(a))
20.13 Sexual Abuse of Person in Official Detention (18 U.S.C. § 2243(b))
20.14 Attempted Sexual Abuse of Person in Official Detention (18 U.S.C. § 2243(b))
20.15 Sexual Abuse—Defense of Reasonable Belief of Minor's Age (18 U.S.C. § 2243(c)(1))
20.16 Abusive Sexual Contact—General (18 U.S.C. § 2244(a))
20.17 Abusive Sexual Contact—Without Permission (18 U.S.C. § 2244(b))
20.18 Sexual Exploitation of Child (18 U.S.C. § 2251(a))
20.19 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Permitting or Assisting by Parent or Guardian (18 U.S.C. § 2251(b))
20.20 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Transportation of Visual Depiction into United States (18 U.S.C. § 2251(c))
20.21 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Notice or Advertisement Seeking or Offering (18 U.S.C. § 2251(d))
20.22 Sexual Exploitation of Child— Transportation of Child Pornography (18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(1))
20.23 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Possession of Child Pornography (18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(4)(B))
20.24 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Defense of Reasonable Belief of Age
20.25 Sex Trafficking of Children (18 U.S.C. § 1591(a)(1))
20.25A Sex Trafficking by Force, Fraud, or Coercion (18 U.S.C. § 1591(a)(1))
20.26 Sex Trafficking of Children or by Force, Fraud, or Coercion—Benefitting from Participation in Venture (18 U.S.C. § 1591(a)(2))
20.27 Transportation or Attempted Transportation for Prostitution or Criminal Sexual Activity (18 U.S.C. § 2421)
20.28 Persuading or Coercing to Travel to Engage in Prostitution or Sexual Activity (18 U.S.C. § 2422(a))
20.29 Using or Attempting to Use the Mail or a Means of Interstate Commerce to Persuade or Coerce a Minor to Travel to Engage in Prostitution or Sexual Activity (18 U.S.C. § 2422(b))
20.30 Transportation of Minor for Prostitution or Criminal Sexual Activity (18 U.S.C. § 2423(a))

20.30A Travel with Intent to Engage in Illicit Sexual Conduct (18 U.S.C. § 2423(b))
20.31 Engaging in Illicit Sexual Conduct Abroad (18 U.S.C. § 2423(c))
20.32 Transfer of Obscene Material to a Minor (18 U.S.C. § 1470)

## 20.1 Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with aggravated sexual abuse in violation of Section 2241(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [used force] [threatened or placed [*name of victim*] in fear that some person would be subject to death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping] to cause [*name of victim*] to engage in a sexual act; and

Second, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 2246(2) for the definition of sexual act referred to in the last paragraph of the instruction.

For a definition of "knowingly," *see* Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly).

Whether the crime alleged occurred at a particular location is a question of fact. Whether the location is within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, a federal prison, or a facility where federal detainees are held pursuant to a contract is a question of law. *See United States v. Mujahid*, 799 F.3d 1228, 1236-38 (9th Cir. 2015); *see also United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982) (per curiam).

*Revised Sept. 2015*

## 20.2 Attempted Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted aggravated sexual abuse in violation of Section 2241(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to [use force] [threaten or place [*name of victim*] in fear that some person would be subjected to [death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping] to cause [*name of victim*] to engage in a sexual act;

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime; and

Third, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a)).

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 2246(2) for the definition of sexual act referred to in the fifth paragraph of the instruction.

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's 'actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances'." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176-77 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 20.3 Aggravated Sexual Abuse—Administration of Drug, Intoxicant, or Other Substance (18 U.S.C. § 2241(b)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with aggravated sexual abuse in violation of Section 2241(b)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly administered a drug, intoxicant, or other similar substance to [*name of victim*] [[by force or threat of force] [without the knowledge or permission of [*name of victim*]]];

Second, as a result, [*name of victim*]'s ability to judge or control conduct was substantially impaired;

Third, the defendant then engaged in a sexual act with [*name of victim*]; and

Fourth, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a)).

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 2246(2) for the definition of sexual act referred to in the last paragraph of the instruction.

## 20.4 Attempted Aggravated Sexual Abuse—Administration of Drug, Intoxicant, or Other Substance (18 U.S.C. § 2241(b)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted aggravated sexual abuse in violation of Section 2241(b)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to engage in a sexual act with [*name of victim*] after substantially impairing [*name of victim*]'s ability to judge or control conduct by administering a drug, intoxicant, or other similar substance either by force or threat of force or without the knowledge or permission of [*name of victim*];

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime of aggravated sexual abuse.

Third, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a)).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176-77 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 20.5 Aggravated Sexual Abuse of Child—Crossing State Line (18 U.S.C. § 2241(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with aggravated sexual abuse of a child in violation of Section 2241(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly engaged in a sexual act with [*name of victim*];

Second, at the time, [*name of victim*] was under the age of twelve years; and

Third, the defendant crossed a state line with the intent to engage in a sexual act with [*name of victim*].

A defendant crosses a state line with the intent to engage in a sexual act if engaging in a sexual act was a dominant, significant, or motivating purpose of the defendant's travel across a state line.

The government need not prove that the defendant knew that [*name of victim*] was under the age of twelve years.

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))).

Although the Committee has not found any Ninth Circuit case explicitly holding that proof of a sexual act is an element of the offense under the first clause of § 2241(c), the court, when analyzing the mandatory life sentencing enhancement under the last sentence of the statute, stated a conviction under § 2241(c) "depend[s] on the commission of a 'sexual act.'" *United States v. Etimani*, 328 F.3d 493, 503-04 (9th Cir. 2003) (defining sexual act as "skin-to-skin touching" and finding that sentencing enhancement did not apply where previous conviction was pursuant to statute allowing conviction for touching over clothes).

"In interpreting the elements for transportation and travel offenses, we have consistently held that a dominant, significant, or motivating purpose to engage in criminal sexual activity satisfies the intent requirement." *United States v. Flucas*, 22 F.4th 1149, 1154 (9th Cir. 2022). In *Flucas*, the court held that the district court "correctly instructed the jury . . . with respect to the intent requirement[]" in § 2423(a) when the district court instructed that it was "sufficient if the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the sexual activity was a significant, dominating or motivating purpose." *Id.* at 1154-55, 1164. *See also United States v. Pepe*, 81 F.4th 961, 977 (9th Cir. 2023) (approving same standard for § 2241(c)) ("Ninth Circuit precedent clearly establishes that a defendant can have mixed motives for traveling.").

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 2241(d), as to the penultimate paragraph of the instruction. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2246(2) for the definition of sexual act referred to in the last paragraph of the instruction.

An alleged mistake as to the victim's age is not a defense to a charge of aggravated sexual abuse under a statute prohibiting anyone from knowingly engaging in sexual contact with another person who has not attained the age of twelve years. *United States v. Juv. Male*, 211 F.3d 1169, 1171-72 (9th Cir. 2000).

*Revised Dec. 2023*

## 20.5A Aggravated Sexual Abuse of Child – Under Twelve Years of Age Within Federal Jurisdiction (18 U.S.C. § 2241(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with aggravated sexual abuse of a child in violation of Section 2241(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly engaged in a sexual act with [*name of victim*];

Second, at the time, [*name of victim*] was under the age of twelve years; and

Third, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

The government need not prove that the defendant knew that [*name of victim*] was under the age of twelve years.

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

For a definition of "knowingly," *see* Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly).

Whether the crime alleged occurred at a particular location is a question of fact. Whether the location is within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, a federal prison, or a facility where federal detainees are held pursuant to a contract is a question of law. See *United States v. Mujahid*, 799 F.3d 1228, 1236-38 (9th Cir. 2015); see also *United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982) (per curiam).

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 2241(d) as to the penultimate paragraph of the instruction. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2246(2) for the definition of sexual act referred to in the last paragraph of the instruction.

An alleged mistake as to the victim's age is not a defense to a charge of aggravated sexual abuse under a statute prohibiting anyone from knowingly engaging in sexual contact with another person who has not attained the age of twelve years. *United States v. Juv. Male*, 211 F.3d 1169, 1171-72 (9th Cir. 2000).

## 20.5B Aggravated Sexual Abuse of Child—By Certain Means Within Federal Jurisdiction (18 U.S.C. § 2241(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with aggravated sexual abuse of a child in violation of Section 2241(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly engaged in a sexual act with [*name of victim*];

Second, the defendant knowingly [*specify means under 18 U.S.C. § 2241(a) or (b)*];

Third, [*name of victim*] had reached the age of twelve years but had not yet reached the age of sixteen years;

Fourth, [*name of victim*] was at least four years younger than the defendant; and

Fifth, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].
In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

For a definition of "knowingly," *see* Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly).

Whether the crime alleged occurred at a particular location is a question of fact. Whether the location is within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, a federal prison, or a facility where federal detainees are held pursuant to a contract is a question of law. *See United States v. Mujahid*, 799 F.3d 1228, 1236-38 (9th Cir. 2015); *see* also *United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982) (per curiam).

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 2246(2) for the definition of sexual act referred to in the last paragraph of the instruction.

## 20.7 Sexual Abuse—By Threat (18 U.S.C. § 2242(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with sexual abuse in violation of Section 2242(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly caused [*name of victim*] to engage in a sexual act by threatening or placing [*name of victim*] in fear; and

Second, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a)).

This instruction is appropriate when the defendant has placed the victim in fear of something other than death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping.

## 20.8 Attempted Sexual Abuse—By Threat (18 U.S.C. § 2242(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted sexual abuse in violation of Section 2242(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to cause [*name of victim*] to engage in a sexual act by threatening or placing [*name of victim*] in fear;

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime of sexual abuse; and

Third, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176-77 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

## 20.9 Sexual Abuse—Incapacity of Victim (18 U.S.C. § 2242(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with sexual abuse in violation of Section 2242(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly engaged in a sexual act with [*name of victim*];

Second, [*name of victim*] was [incapable of appraising the nature of the conduct] [physically incapable of declining participation in, or communicating unwillingness to engage in, that sexual act]; and

Third, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

[A person need not be physically helpless to be physically incapable of declining participation in or communicating unwillingness to engage in the sexual act.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))).

For purposes of a charge under § 2242(2)(B), establishing that a victim was physically incapable of declining participation in or communicating unwillingness to engage in the sexual act does not require proof that the victim was "physically helpless." *United States v. James*, 810 F.3d 674, 679 (9th Cir. 2016).

*Revised Jan. 2019*

## 20.10 Attempted Sexual Abuse—Incapacity of Victim (18 U.S.C. § 2242(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted sexual abuse in violation of Section 2242(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to engage in a sexual act with a person who was [incapable of appraising the nature of the conduct] [physically incapable of declining participation in or communicating unwillingness to engage in that, sexual act];

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime of sexual abuse; and

Third, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

## 20.11 Sexual Abuse of Minor (18 U.S.C. § 2243(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with sexual abuse of a minor in violation of Section 2243(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly engaged in a sexual act with [*name of victim*];

Second, [*name of victim*] had reached the age of twelve years but had not yet reached the age of sixteen years;

Third, [*name of victim*] was at least four years younger than the defendant; and

Fourth, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

The government need not prove that the defendant knew the age of [*name of victim*] or that the defendant knew that [*name of victim*] was at least four years younger than the defendant.

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))).

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 2243(d), as to the penultimate paragraph of this instruction. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2246(2) for the definition of sexual act referred to in the last paragraph of this instruction.

Sexual abuse of a minor is not a lesser included offense of aggravated sexual assault. *United States v. Rivera*, 43 F.3d 1291, 1297 (9th Cir. 1995).

## 20.12 Attempted Sexual Abuse of Minor (18 U.S.C. § 2243(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted sexual abuse of a minor in violation of Section 2243(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to engage in a sexual act with [*name of victim*], who had reached the age of twelve years but had not reached the age of sixteen years;

Second, [*name of victim*] was at least four years younger than the defendant;

Third, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime; and

Fourth, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

The government need not prove that the defendant knew the age of [*name of victim*] or that the defendant knew that [*name of victim*] was at least four years younger than the defendant.

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))).

*See* 18 U.S.C. § 2243(d), as to the penultimate paragraph of this instruction. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2246(2) for the definition of sexual act referred to in the last paragraph of this instruction.

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 20.13 Sexual Abuse of Person in Official Detention (18 U.S.C. § 2243(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with sexual abuse of a person in official detention in violation of Section 2243(b) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly engaged in a sexual act with [*name of victim*];

Second, at the time, [*name of victim*] was in official detention at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*]; and

Third, at the time, [*name of victim*] was under the custodial, supervisory, or disciplinary authority of the defendant.

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

In this case, "official detention" means [*official detention definition*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))).

"Official detention" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2246(5). "Official detention" includes a minor who is being held in a facility, who has been served with a Notice to Appear in Immigration Court, and who has been placed into removal proceedings that created the possibility of deportation. *United States v. Pacheco*, 977 F.3d 764, 766 (9th Cir. 2020).

*Revised Dec. 2020*

## 20.14 Attempted Sexual Abuse of Person in Official Detention (18 U.S.C. § 2243(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted sexual abuse of a person in official detention in violation of Section 2243(b) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to engage in a sexual act with [*name of victim*], who at the time was in official detention at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*] and was under the custodial, supervisory, or disciplinary authority of the defendant; and

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

In this case, "sexual act" means [*specify statutory definition*].

In this case, "official detention" means [*specify official detention definition*].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 20.1 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse (18 U.S.C. § 2241(a))).

"Official detention" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2246(5). "Official detention" includes a minor who is being held in a facility, who has been served with a Notice to Appear in Immigration Court, and who has been placed into removal proceedings that created the possibility of deportation. *United States v. Pacheco*, 977 F.3d 764, 766 (9th Cir. 2020).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a

substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 20.15 Sexual Abuse—Defense of Reasonable Belief of Minor's Age (18 U.S.C. § 2243(c)(1))

It is a defense to the charge of [attempted] sexual abuse of a minor that the defendant reasonably believed that the minor had reached the age of sixteen. The defendant has the burden of proving that it is more probably true than not true that the defendant reasonably believed that the minor had reached the age of sixteen.

If you find that the defendant reasonably believed that the minor had reached the age of sixteen, you must find the defendant not guilty.

### Comment

This defense applies only to offenses under 18 U.S.C. § 2243(a). *See* Instructions 20.11 (Sexual Abuse of Minor (18 U.S.C. § 2243(a))) and 20.12 (Attempted Sexual Abuse of Minor (18 U.S.C. § 2243(a))).

## 20.16 Abusive Sexual Contact—General (18 U.S.C. § 2244(a))

### Comment

The offenses defined in 18 U.S.C. §§ 2241, 2242, and 2243 as sexual abuse become abusive sexual contact under 18 U.S.C. § 2244 if there was not a "sexual act" but there was "sexual contact." Those terms are defined in § 2246(2) and (3). Accordingly, when it is necessary to instruct a jury on abusive sexual contact, the appropriate sexual abuse instruction should be used with "sexual contact" substituted for "sexual act."

Section 2244 does not make it a crime to attempt sexual contact.

## 20.17 Abusive Sexual Contact—Without Permission (18 U.S.C. § 2244(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with abusive sexual contact in violation of Section 2244(b) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly had sexual contact with [*name of victim*];

Second, the sexual contact was without [*name of victim*]'s permission; and

Third, the offense was committed at [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*].

In this case, "sexual contact" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

*See United States v. Price*, 980 F.3d 1211, 1217-24 (9th Cir. 2019) (approving Instruction 8.180 (now Instruction 20.17)). In this case, the Ninth Circuit held that the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant knowingly had sexual contact with the victim and that the sexual contact was without the victim's permission. "Permission" includes both explicit and implicit permission and may be proven by either direct or circumstantial evidence. The government is not required to prove that the defendant subjectively knew that the sexual contact was without the victim's permission. *Id.*

Acts that fall within the meaning of "sexual contact" are listed in 18 U.S.C. § 2246(3).

Whether the crime alleged occurred at a particular location is a question of fact. Whether the location is within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States or a federal prison is a question of law. *See United States v. Gipe,* 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982).

"[S]pecial maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States" includes, to the extent permitted by international law, a crime occurring on a foreign vessel during a voyage having a scheduled departure from or arrival in the United States, where the offense was committed by or against a United States national. *United States v. Neil*, 312 F.3d 419, 422 (9th Cir. 2002) (crime of sexual contact with minor in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2244(a) by noncitizen defendant on cruise ship in Mexican territorial waters was within special maritime and territorial jurisdiction where ship departed from and arrived in the United States and victim was a United States citizen).

*Revised Dec. 2020*

## 20.18 Sexual Exploitation of Child
## (18 U.S.C. § 2251(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with sexual exploitation of a child in violation of Section 2251(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, at the time, [*name of victim*] was under the age of eighteen years;

Second, the defendant

> [[employed] [used] [persuaded] [induced] [enticed] [coerced]] [*name of victim*] to take part in sexually explicit conduct]
>
> *or*
>
> [had [*name of victim*] assist any other person to engage in sexually explicit conduct]
>
> *or*
>
> [transported [*name of victim*] [[across state lines] [in foreign commerce] [in any Territory or Possession of the United States]] with the intent that [*name of victim*] engage in sexually explicit conduct]

[for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct] [for the purpose of transmitting a live visual depiction of such conduct]; and

Third,

> [the defendant knew or had reason to know that the visual depiction would be transported or transmitted across state lines or in foreign commerce or mailed.]
>
> *or*
>
> [the visual depiction was produced or transmitted using materials that had been mailed, shipped, or transported across state lines or in foreign commerce, including by computer.]
>
> *or*
>
> [the visual depiction was actually transported or transmitted across state lines or in foreign commerce using any means or facility of interstate or foreign commerce or in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce or mailed.]

In this case, "sexually explicit conduct" means [*specify statutory definition*].

In this case, "producing" means [*specify statutory definition*].

In this case, "visual depiction" means [*specify statutory definition*].

**Comment**

"Sexually explicit conduct" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(2).

"Producing" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(3).

"Visual depiction" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(5).

This instruction does not address that portion of the statute that prohibits "transmitting a live visual depiction." If that is the charge before the court, this instruction should be modified accordingly.

Knowledge of the age of the minor victim is not an element of the offense. *United States v. U.S. Dist. Ct.*, 858 F.2d 534, 538 (9th Cir. 1988); *see also United States v. X–Citement Video, Inc.*, 513 U.S. 64, 76 n.5 (1994) ("[P]roducers may be convicted under § 2251(a) without proof they had knowledge of age . . . .") (dicta). *But see* Instruction 20.24 (Sexual Exploitation of a Child—Defense of Reasonable Belief of Age).

Transportation in interstate or foreign commerce can be accomplished by any means, including by a computer. 18 U.S.C. § 2251(a). For a definition of computer, *see* 18 U.S.C. §§ 1030(e)(1) and 2256(6).

*See United States v McCalla*, 545 F.3d 750, 753-56 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that applying § 2251(a) to noncommercial intrastate production did not violate Commerce Clause; Congress had broad interest in preventing interstate sexual exploitation of children and it was rational for Congress "to conclude that homegrown child pornography affects interstate commerce").

A defendant who simply possesses, transports, reproduces, or distributes child pornography does not sexually abuse or exploit a minor in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2251, even though the materials possessed, transported, reproduced, or distributed "involve" such sexual exploitation by the producer. The defendant must also have been "directly involved in the actual sexual abuse or exploitation of minors." *See United States v. Kemmish*, 120 F.3d 937, 941-42 (9th Cir. 1997).

The term "used" in the second element of this instruction means "to put into action or service," "to avail oneself of," or "[to] employ." *United States v. Laursen*, 847 F.3d 1026, 1032 (9th Cir. 2017) (internal quotations omitted); *see also United States v. Boam*, 69 F.4th 601 (9th Cir. 2023) (surreptitious bathroom recordings that capture a minor's genitals can constitute "use" of minor); *United States v. Mendez*, 35 F.4th 1219 (9th Cir. 2022) (surreptitious filming of minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct satisfies "use" element).

The third element of this instruction reflects § 2251(a)'s three alternative grounds for federal jurisdiction. Only the first of the three grounds requires a particular mental state of the defendant. The "knows or has reason to know" language from the statute's first jurisdictional clause does not impute a knowledge requirement to the other two clauses. *United States v. Sheldon*, 755 F.3d 1047, 1049-50 (9th Cir. 2014) (testimony at trial that video recorder used in Montana was manufactured in China sufficient to satisfy jurisdictional element of § 2251(a)).

With respect to "lascivious exhibition of the anus, genitals, or pubic area of any person" as contained in the statutory definition of "sexually explicit conduct," when determining whether a picture or image is sexually explicit conduct, a jury may consider as a starting point the following six factors: (1) whether the focal point of the visual depiction is on the child's genitalia or pubic area; (2) whether the setting of the visual depiction is sexually suggestive, i.e., in a place or pose generally associated with sexual activity; (3) whether the child is depicted in an unnatural pose, or in inappropriate attire, considering the age of the child; (4) whether the child is fully or partially clothed, or nude; (5) whether the visual depiction suggests sexual coyness or a willingness to engage in sexual activity; and (6) whether the visual depiction is intended or designed to elicit a sexual response in the viewer. *United States v. Perkins*, 850 F.3d 1109, 1121 (9th Cir. 2017) (quoting *United States v. Dost*, 636 F. Supp. 828, 832 (S.D. Cal. 1986), *aff'd sub nom*, *United States v. Wiegand*, 812 F.2d 1239 (9th Cir. 1987)).

*Revised August 2023*

## 20.19 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Permitting or Assisting by Parent or Guardian (18 U.S.C. § 2251(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with sexual exploitation of a child in violation of Section 2251(b) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, at the time, [*name of victim*] was under the age of eighteen years;

Second, the defendant was a [parent] [legal guardian] [person having custody or control] of [*name of victim*];

Third, the defendant knowingly permitted [*name of victim*] to [engage in sexually explicit conduct] [assist any other person to engage in sexually explicit conduct] for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; and

Fourth,

> [the defendant knew or had reason to know that the visual depiction would be mailed or transported across state lines or in foreign commerce.]
>
> *or*
>
> [the visual depiction was produced using materials that had been mailed, shipped, or transported across state lines or in foreign commerce.]
>
> *or*
>
> [the visual depiction was actually mailed or transported across state lines or in foreign commerce.]
>
> *or*

[the visual depiction affected interstate commerce.]

The term "custody or control" includes temporary supervision over or responsibility for a minor, whether legally or illegally obtained.

In this case, "sexually explicit conduct" means [*specify statutory definition*].

In this case, "producing" means [*specify statutory definition*].

In this case, "visual depiction" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

"Sexually explicit conduct" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(2).

"Producing" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(3).

"Visual depiction" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(5).

"Custody or control" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(7).

This instruction does not address that portion of the statute that prohibits "transmitting a live visual depiction." If that is the charge before the court, this instruction should be modified accordingly.

Transportation in interstate or foreign commerce can be accomplished by any means, including by a computer. 18 U.S.C. § 2251(b). For a definition of computer, *see* 18 U.S.C. §§ 1030(e)(1) and 2256(6).

*See United States v McCalla*, 545 F.3d 750, 753-56 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that applying § 2251(a) to noncommercial intrastate production did not violate Commerce Clause; Congress had broad interest in preventing interstate sexual exploitation of children and it was rational for Congress "to conclude that homegrown child pornography affects interstate commerce").

A defendant who simply possesses, transports, reproduces, or distributes child pornography does not sexually abuse or exploit a minor in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2251, even though the materials possessed, transported, reproduced, or distributed "involve" such sexual exploitation by the producer. The defendant must also have been "directly involved in the actual sexual abuse or exploitation of minors." *See United States v. Kemmish*, 120 F.3d 937, 941-42 (9th Cir. 1997).

See Instruction 20.18 (Sexual Exploitation of Child (18 U.S.C. § 2251(a))) for the factors to consider regarding a "lascivious exhibition of the anus, genitals or pubic area of any person" as contained in the statutory definition of "sexually explicit conduct."

*Revised March 2026*

## 20.20 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Transportation of Visual Depiction into United States (18 U.S.C. § 2251(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with sexual exploitation of a child in violation of Section 2251(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, at the time, [*name of victim*] was under the age of eighteen years;

Second, the defendant [[employed] [used] [persuaded] [induced] [enticed] [coerced]] [*insert name of victim*] to engage in sexually explicit conduct or assist any other person to engage in sexually explicit conduct outside of the United States, its territories, or possessions, for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; and

Third, the defendant

> [intended that the visual depiction be mailed or transported into the United States, its territories, or possessions by any means, including by using any means or facility of interstate commerce or mail.]
>
> *or*
>
> [actually mailed or transported the visual depiction into the United States, its territories, or possessions by any means, including by using any means or facility of interstate commerce or mail.]

In this case, "sexually explicit conduct" means [*specify applicable statutory definition*].

In this case, "producing" means [*specify applicable statutory definition*].

In this case, "visual depiction" means [*specify applicable statutory definition*].

### Comment

"Sexually explicit conduct" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(2).

"Producing" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(3).

"Visual depiction" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(5).

The phrase "for the purpose of" requires only proof of motive. *United States v. Rosenow*, 50 F.4th 715, 740 (9th Cir. 2022). It does not require but-for causation. *Id.*

Transportation into the United States, its territories, or possessions can be accomplished by any means. 18 U.S.C. § 2251(c).

The age of the victim is a strict liability element; thus, a defendant may be properly

convicted of a completed violation of § 2251(c) without a finding by the jury that the defendant knew or should have known that the victim was a minor. *United States v. Jayavarman*, 871 F.3d 1050, 1058 (9th Cir. 2017).

A defendant may be properly convicted of an attempt to violate § 2251(c) if the defendant believes the victim is a minor, even if the victim is actually an adult. *Jayavarman*, 871 F.3d at 1059.

See Instruction 20.18 (Sexual Exploitation of Child (18 U.S.C. § 2251(a))) for the factors to consider regarding a "lascivious exhibition of the anus, genitals or pubic area of any person" as contained in the statutory definition of "sexually explicit conduct."

*Revised March 2026*

## 20.21 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Notice or Advertisement Seeking or Offering (18 U.S.C. § 2251(d))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with sexual exploitation of a child in violation of Section 2251(d) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, at the time, [*name of victim*] was under the age of eighteen years;

Second, the defendant knowingly [made] [printed] [published] [caused to be made] [caused to be printed] [caused to be published] a [notice] [advertisement];

Third, the [[notice] [advertisement]] [[sought] [offered]]

> [to [receive] [exchange] [buy] [produce] [display] [distribute] [reproduce] any visual depiction, if the production of the visual depiction utilized [*name of victim*] engaging in sexually explicit conduct and such visual depiction is of such conduct; and]
>
> *or*
>
> [participation in any act of sexually explicit conduct [[by] [with]] [*name of victim*] for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; and]

[Fourth, the defendant knew or had reason to know that the [notice] [advertisement] would be transported [using any means or facility of interstate commerce] [in or affecting interstate commerce] by any means including by computer or by mail.]

*or*

[Fourth, the [notice] [advertisement] was transported [using any means or facility of interstate commerce] [in or affecting interstate commerce] by any means including by computer or by mail.]

In this case, "sexually explicit conduct" means [*sexually explicit conduct definition*].

In this case, "producing" means [*producing definition*].

In this case, "visual depiction" means [*specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

"Sexually explicit conduct" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(2).

"Producing" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(3).

"Visual depiction" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(5).

"Notice" and "advertisement" are not defined in the statute, but what constitutes a notice or advertisement is a factual question, not a legal one. *See United States v. Brown*, 859 F.3d 730, 736-37 (9th Cir. 2017) (holding Sixth Amendment violated when trial court precluded defendant from arguing that charged postings, encrypted and on closed, password-protected online bulletin board, did not constitute notice or advertisement). One-to-one communication can satisfy the notice requirement under 18 U.S.C. § 2251(d)(1). *See United States v. Cox*, 963 F.3d 915, 922 (9th Cir. 2020).

*See United States v. McCalla*, 545 F.3d 750, 756 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that applying § 2251(a) to noncommercial intrastate production did not violate Commerce Clause; Congress had broad interest in preventing interstate sexual exploitation of children and it was rational for Congress "to conclude that homegrown child pornography affects interstate commerce").

A defendant who simply possesses, transports, reproduces, or distributes child pornography does not sexually exploit a minor in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2251, even though the materials possessed, transported, reproduced, or distributed "involve" such sexual exploitation by the producer. The defendant must also have been "directly involved in the actual sexual abuse or exploitation of minors." *See United States v. Kemmish*, 120 F.3d 937, 941-42 (9th Cir. 1997).

Under 18 U.S.C. § 2251(d)(1)(A) "[t]here is no requirement that a defendant personally produce child pornography in order for criminal liability to attach." *United States v. Williams*, 659 F.3d 1223, 1225 (9th Cir. 2011).

See Instruction 20.18 (Sexual Exploitation of Child (18 U.S.C. § 2251(a))) for the factors to consider regarding a "lascivious exhibition of the anus, genitals or pubic area of any person" as contained in the statutory definition of "sexually explicit conduct."

*Revised March 2026*

## 20.22 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Transportation of Child Pornography (18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [shipping] [transporting] child pornography in violation of Section 2252(a)(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [transported] [shipped] a visual depiction [using any means or facility of interstate commerce] [in or affecting interstate commerce] by any means including by computer or mail;

Second, the production of such visual depiction involved the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;

Third, such visual depiction was of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct;

Fourth, the defendant knew that such visual depiction was of sexually explicit conduct; and

Fifth, the defendant knew that at least one of the persons engaged in sexually explicit conduct in such visual depiction was a minor.

### Comment

"Interstate commerce" is defined by 18 U.S.C. § 10.

"Sexually explicit conduct" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(2).

"Producing" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(3).

"Visual depiction" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(5).

"Computer" is defined in 18 U.S.C. §§ 1030(e) and 2256(6).

Although the term "knowingly" in the text of 18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(1) and (2) appears only to modify the act of transportation or shipment, the Supreme Court has held that the knowledge requirement also applies to the sexually explicit nature of the material as well as the minority status of the persons depicted. *See United States v. X–Citement Video, Inc.*, 513 U.S. 64, 78 (1994).

*See United States v. McCalla*, 545 F.3d 750, 756 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that applying § 2251(a) to noncommercial intrastate production did not violate Commerce Clause; Congress had broad interest in preventing interstate sexual exploitation of children and it was rational for Congress "to conclude that homegrown child pornography affects interstate commerce").

*Free Speech Coalition v. Reno*, 198 F.3d 1083, 1087-97 (9th Cir. 1999), sets forth a legislative history of the various federal acts dealing with child pornography.

*See* Model Instruction 20.18 Sexual Exploitation of Child (18 U.S.C. § 2251(a)) for the factors to consider regarding a "lascivious exhibition of the anus, genitals or pubic area of any person" as contained in the statutory definition of "sexually explicit conduct."

*Revised August 2023*

## 20.23 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Possession of Child Pornography (18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(4)(B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possession of child pornography in violation of Section 2252(a)(4)(B) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly possessed [books] [magazines] [periodicals] [films] [video tapes] [matters] that the defendant knew contained [a] visual depiction[s] of [a] minor[s] engaged in sexually explicit conduct;

Second, the defendant knew [each] [the] visual depiction contained in the [[books] [magazines] [periodicals] [films] [video tapes] [matters]] [[was of] [showed]] [a] minor[s] engaged in sexually explicit conduct;

Third, the defendant knew that production of such [a] visual depiction[s] involved use of a minor in sexually explicit conduct; and

Fourth, [each] [the] visual depiction had been

> [[[mailed] [shipped] [transported]] [[using any means or facility of interstate commerce] [in or affecting interstate commerce]]]
>
> *or*
>
> [produced using material that had been [[mailed] [shipped] [transported]] [[using any means or facility of interstate commerce] [in or affecting interstate commerce]] by any means including by computer].

"Visual depiction" includes undeveloped film and video tape, and data stored on a computer disk or data stored by electronic means and capable of conversion into a visual image. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2256(5).

A "minor" is any person under the age of 18 years. 18 U.S.C. § 2256(1).

"Sexually explicit conduct" means actual or simulated sexual intercourse, bestiality, masturbation, sadistic or masochistic abuse, or lascivious exhibition of the genitals or pubic area of any person. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2256(2).

"Producing" means producing, directing, manufacturing, issuing, publishing, or advertising. 18 U.S.C. § 2256(3).

### Comment

Before 1998, 18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(4) required the possession of at least three visual depictions before an offense had occurred. As part of the Protection of Children from Sexual Predators Act of 1998, Congress amended § 2252(a) to prohibit possession of one visual depiction. At the same time, Congress added 18 U.S.C. § 2252(c), which provides an affirmative defense when, under certain circumstances, the defendant possessed "less than three matters containing any visual depiction." If such a defense has been raised, care should be taken in revising the instruction so that the jury is not confused.

The definitions of "minor," "sexually explicit conduct," "producing," and "visual depiction" are derived from 18 U.S.C. § 2256(1), (2), (3), and (5), respectively. Interstate or foreign commerce is defined by 18 U.S.C. § 10. "Matter" is a physical medium capable of containing images, such as a computer hard drive or disk. *United States v. Lacy*, 119 F.3d 742, 748 (9th Cir. 1997).

*See Lacy*, 119 F.3d at 748 (jury instruction for possession of child pornography must include as element whether defendant knew "matter" in question contained unlawful visual depictions; such depiction may be "produced" when defendant downloads visual depictions from Internet); *see also United States v. Romm,* 455 F.3d 990, 1002-05 (9th Cir. 2006) (addressing adequacy of jury instructions regarding "visual depiction" and "knowing possession").

*See United States v. McCalla*, 545 F.3d 750, 756 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that applying § 2251(a) to noncommercial intrastate production did not violate Commerce Clause; Congress had broad interest in preventing interstate sexual exploitation of children and it was rational for Congress "to conclude that homegrown child pornography affects interstate commerce").

*Free Speech Coalition v. Reno*, 198 F.3d 1083, 1087-97 (9th Cir. 1999), sets forth a legislative history of the various federal acts dealing with child pornography.

The statute was unconstitutionally applied to a mother who possessed a family photo showing herself and her young daughter exposed because the photo was meant entirely for personal use, no economic or commercial use was intended, and such possession had no connection with, or effect on, the national or international commercial child pornography market. *United States v. McCoy*, 323 F.3d 1114, 1132 (9th Cir. 2003). *But see McCalla*, 545 F.3d at 756 (holding that any reasoning in *McCoy* relying on local nature of activity was overruled by *Gonzalez v. Raich*, 545 U.S. 1 (2005)).

Expert testimony (e.g., that the images were not computer generated) is not required for the government to establish that the images depicted an actual minor. *United States v. Salcido*, 506 F.3d 729, 733-34 (9th Cir. 2007).

The simultaneous possession of different materials containing offending images at a single time and place constitutes a single violation of the statute. *United States v. Chilaca*, 909 F.3d 289, 295 (9th Cir. 2018).

Possession of materials involving the sexual exploitation of minors under § 2252(a)(4)(B) may be, but is not necessarily, a lesser included offense of distribution of such materials under § 2252(a)(2). *See United States v. McElmurry*, 776 F.3d 1061, 1063-65 (9th Cir. 2015). However, possession is always a lesser included offense of receiving child pornography, because "[i]t is impossible to 'receive' something without, at least at the very instant of 'receipt,' also 'possessing' it." *United States v. Davenport*, 519 F.3d 940, 943-44 (9th Cir. 2008). When possession is charged along with either receipt or distribution, the court should ensure that the "separate conduct" requirement under the Double Jeopardy Clause has been satisfied. *See generally United States v. Teague*, 722 F.3d 1187, 1190-93 (9th Cir. 2013). This could be done either with an appropriate instruction directing that separate conduct be found or by providing the jury with a special verdict form that requires the jury to identify the conduct supporting each conviction. *See id.* at 1193.

*See* Model Instruction 20.18 Sexual Exploitation of Child (18 U.S.C. § 2251(a)) for the factors to consider regarding a "lascivious exhibition of the anus, genitals, or pubic area of any person" as contained in the statutory definition of "sexually explicit conduct."

*Revised August 2023*

## 20.24 Sexual Exploitation of Child—Defense of Reasonable Belief of Age

It is a defense to a charge of sexual exploitation of a child that the defendant did not know, and could not reasonably have learned, that the child was under 18 years of age.

The defendant has the burden of proving by clear and convincing evidence—that is, that it is highly probable—that the defendant did not know and could not reasonably have learned that [*name of victim*] was under 18 years of age. Proof by clear and convincing evidence is a lower standard of proof than proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

If you find by clear and convincing evidence that the defendant did not know and could not reasonably have learned that the child was under 18 years of age, you must find the defendant not guilty of the charge of sexual exploitation of a child.

### Comment

Although 18 U.S.C. § 2251 is silent on whether reasonable mistake of age may serve as an affirmative defense, the Ninth Circuit has held that the defense is required by the First Amendment. *United States v. U.S. Dist. Ct.*, 858 F.2d 534, 540-42 (9th Cir. 1988). The defendant must establish this defense by clear and convincing evidence. *Id.* at 543.

## 20.25 Sex Trafficking of Children (18 U.S.C. § 1591(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with engaging in sex trafficking of children in violation of Section 1591 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [recruited] [enticed] [harbored] [transported] [provided] [obtained] [advertised] [maintained] [patronized] [or] [solicited] a person;

Second, the person had not attained the age of 18 years;

Third, the defendant [knew] [was in reckless disregard of the fact] that the person had not attained the age of 18 years;

Fourth, the defendant [knew] [was in reckless disregard of the fact] that the person would be caused to engage in a commercial sex act; and

Fifth, the defendant's acts were [in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce] [within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States].

[The government is not required to prove the third element – that the defendant knew, or recklessly disregarded the fact, that the person was under 18 years of age – if the defendant had a reasonable opportunity to observe the person.]

### Comment

"Commercial sex act" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1591(e)(3).

The "force, fraud, or coercion" elements may be applied for victims who are not minors.

The "reckless disregard" standard does not apply if the act is advertising. If the government charges "advertising," the mens rea element is knowing. 18 U.S.C. § 1591(a). Notwithstanding those two standards for mens rea, the statute defines only one offense and it is therefore not duplicitous to charge advertising and the other means (*e.g.*, recruited, enticed, harbored) by which a defendant can violate § 1591(a) in a single count. *United States v. Bradford*, 148 F.4th 699 (9th Cir. 2025).

*Revised September 2025*

## 20.25A Sex Trafficking by Force, Fraud, or Coercion (18 U.S.C. § 1591(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with engaging in sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion in violation of Section 1591 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [recruited] [enticed] [harbored] [transported] [provided] [obtained] [advertised] [maintained] [patronized] [or] [solicited] a person;

Second, the defendant [knew] [was in reckless disregard of the fact] that force, threats of force, fraud, coercion, or any combination would be used to cause the person to engage in a commercial sex act; and

Third, the defendant's acts were [in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce] [within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States].

### Comment

"Coercion" and "commercial sex act" are defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1591(e).

The victim need not be a minor when the charge is sex trafficking by "force, fraud, or coercion."

The "reckless disregard" standard does not apply if the act is advertising. If the government charges "advertising," the mens rea element is knowing. 18 U.S.C. § 1591(a). Notwithstanding those two standards for mens rea, the statute defines only one offense, and it is therefore not duplicitous to charge advertising and the other means (*e.g.*, recruited, enticed, harbored) by which a defendant can violate § 1591(a) in a single count. *United States v. Bradford*, 148 F.4th 699 (9th Cir. 2025).

"[T]he listed alternatives— 'means of force, threats of force, fraud, coercion . . . or any combination of such means'—are not elements but rather possible means to commit the crime of human trafficking." *United States v. Mickey*, 897 F.3d 1173, 1181 (9th Cir. 2018) (alteration in original) (emphases omitted). Therefore, the jury is not required to unanimously agree on the means used to traffic the victim. *Id*. (citing *Schad v. Arizona*, 501 U.S. 624, 631-32 (1991)). A special verdict form that asks the jury to identify which of the possible means the defendant used to traffic the victim is ill-advised because it has potential to create jury confusion, require further instruction, and cause the jury to "lose sight of what facts it is meant to find." *Id*. at 1182.

*Revised September 2025*

## 20.26 Sex Trafficking of Children or by Force, Fraud, or Coercion—Benefitting from Participation in Venture (18 U.S.C. § 1591(a)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with engaging in sex trafficking [of children] [by force, fraud, or coercion] in violation of Section 1591 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant benefitted [financially] [or] [by receiving anything of value] from participation in a venture that [recruited] [enticed] [harbored] [transported] [provided] [obtained] [advertised] [maintained] [patronized] [or] [solicited] a person to engage in a commercial sex act;

Second, the defendant [knew] [was in reckless disregard of the fact] that [force, threats of force, fraud, coercion, or any combination of such means would be used to cause the person to engage in a commercial sex act] [or] [the person had not attained the age of 18 years and would be caused to engage in a commercial sex act]; and

Third, the defendant's acts were [in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce] [within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States].

### Comment

"Coercion" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1591(e)(2).

The victim need not be a minor when the charge is sex trafficking by "force, fraud, or coercion."

The "reckless disregard" standard does not apply if the act is advertising. If the government charges "advertising," the mens rea element is knowing. 18 U.S.C. § 1591(a). Notwithstanding those two standards for mens rea, the statute defines only one offense, and it is therefore not duplicitous to charge advertising and the other means (*e.g.*, recruited, enticed, harbored) by which a defendant can violate § 1591(a) in a single count. *United States v. Bradford*, 148 F.4th 699 (9th Cir. 2025).

*Revised September 2025*

## 20.27 Transportation or Attempted Transportation for Prostitution or Criminal Sexual Activity (18 U.S.C. § 2421)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [transporting] [attempting to transport] a person with intent that the person engage in [prostitution] [criminal sexual activity] in violation of Section 2421 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [transported] [attempted to transport] a person in [interstate commerce] [foreign commerce] [*specify territory or possession of the United States*]; [and]

Second, the defendant [transported] [attempted to transport] a person with the intent that such person engage in [prostitution] [*describe criminal sexual activity*] [.] [;] [; and]

[Third, that [if the sexual activity had occurred] [based upon the sexual activity that occurred], the defendant could have been charged with a criminal offense under the laws of [the United States] [*insert the state or territory*]. [In [*state or territory*], it is a criminal offense to [*describe proposed sexual activity*]] [.] [; and]]

[*If the defendant is charged with attempt:* [Third] [Fourth], the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

A defendant transports a person with the intent that such person engage in [prostitution] [*describe criminal sexual activity*] if the intended [prostitution] [*describe criminal sexual activity*] was a dominant, significant, or motivating purpose of the transportation.

### Comment

The bracketed language setting forth the first option for the third element is to be used when the defendant is charged with transporting or attempting to transport an individual with the intent that the individual engages in "any sexual activity for which any person can be charged with a criminal offense." 18 U.S.C. § 2421(a). Further, "[w]here a federal prosecution hinges on an interpretation or application of state law, it is the district court's function to explain the relevant state law to the jury." *United States v. Lopez*, 4 F.4th 706, 730 (9th Cir. 2021) (quoting *United States v. Davila-Nieves*, 670 F.3d 1, 8 (1st Cir. 2012)). While the court in *Lopez* considered a conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b), its conclusions with respect to the jury instructions are also applicable here. In *Lopez*, the evidence against the defendant implicated a sexual conduct offense in Guam. 4 F.4th at 713, 724. The court held that while the district court was not required to instruct the jury on the elements of the particular predicate offense as if they were elements of the

offense charged, the district court nonetheless erred in failing to instruct the jury on the applicable criminal laws of Guam against which the defendant's proposed sexual conduct was to be evaluated. *Id.* at 729-31.

The bracketed language stating an additional element (starting "Third/Fourth") applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

"In interpreting the elements for transportation and travel offenses, we have consistently held that a dominant, significant, or motivating purpose to engage in criminal sexual activity satisfies the intent requirement." *United States v. Flucas*, 22 F.4th 1149, 1154 (9th Cir. 2022). In *Flucas*, the court held that the district court "correctly instructed the jury . . . with respect to the intent requirement[]" in § 2421(a) when the district court instructed that it was "sufficient if the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the sexual activity was a significant, dominating or motivating purpose." *Id.* at 1154-55, 1164. *See also United States v. Pepe*, 81 F.4th 961, 977 (9th Cir. 2023) ("Ninth Circuit precedent clearly establishes that a defendant can have mixed motives for traveling.").

A pattern of sexually assaultive conduct can support an inference of intent to commit sexual assault while traveling interstate. *United States v. Stackhouse*, 105 F.4th 1193, 1204 (9th Cir. 2024). Further, "conditional" intent to commit a sexual crime when crossing a state line is sufficient to satisfy the intent requirement. *Id*. at 1205-06 (holding that intent element was met by defendant's intent to have nonconsensual sex with the victim if she did not comply with his demands and directions).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised Sep 2024*

## 20.28 Persuading or Coercing to Travel to Engage in Prostitution or Sexual Activity (18 U.S.C. § 2422(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [persuading] [inducing] [enticing] [coercing] travel to engage in [prostitution] [sexual activity] in violation of Section 2422(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt:

[First, that [[on] [between]] [*insert dates alleged*] the defendant knowingly [persuaded] [induced] [enticed] [coerced] an individual to travel in [interstate] [foreign] commerce to engage in [prostitution] [*describe proposed sexual activity*] [.] [; and]]

[Second, that [if the sexual activity had occurred] [based upon the sexual activity that occurred], the defendant could have been charged with a criminal offense under the laws of [the United States] [*insert the state or territory*]. [In [*state or territory*], it is a criminal offense to [*describe proposed sexual activity*]]].

*or*

[First, that [[on] [between]] [*insert dates alleged*] the defendant knowingly attempted to [persuade] [induce] [entice] [coerce] an individual to travel in [interstate] [foreign] commerce to engage in [prostitution] [*describe proposed sexual activity*]; and

[Second, that [if the sexual activity had occurred] [based upon the sexual activity that occurred], the defendant could have been charged with a criminal offense under the laws of [the United States] [*insert the state or territory*]. [In [*state or territory*], it is a criminal offense to [*describe proposed sexual activity*]; [and]]

[[Second/Third], the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.]

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

Both 18 U.S.C. § 2422(a) and (b) use the common terms "persuade," "induce," and "entice." Those terms "have plain and ordinary meanings within the statute, and [a] court [has] no obligation to provide further definitions." *See United States v. Dhingra*, 371 F.3d 557, 567 (9th Cir. 2004).

The fact that women desired to leave Russia and travel to the United States did not preclude the finding that defendant persuaded, induced, enticed, or coerced them to do so. *United*

*States v. Rashkovski*, 301 F.3d 1133, 1136-37 (9th Cir. 2002). The statutory language does not require defendant to "have created out of whole cloth the women's desire to go to the United States; it merely requires that he have convinced or influenced [them] to actually undergo the journey or made the possibility more appealing." *Id.* at 1137. "[I]t is the defendant's intent that forms the basis for his criminal liability, not the victims'." *Id.*

The bracketed language setting forth the first option for the second element is to be used when the defendant is charged with persuading or coercing a minor to engage in "any sexual activity for which any person can be charged with a criminal offense." Further, "[w]here a federal prosecution hinges on an interpretation or application of state law, it is the district court's function to explain the relevant state law to the jury." *United States v. Lopez*, 4 F.4th 706, 730 (9th Cir. 2021) (quoting *United States v. Davila-Nieves*, 670 F.3d 1, 8 (1st Cir. 2012)). While the court in *Lopez* considered a conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b), its conclusions with respect to the jury instructions are also applicable here. In *Lopez*, the evidence against the defendant implicated a sexual conduct offense in Guam. 4 F.4th at 713, 724. The court held that while the district court was not required to instruct the jury on the elements of the particular predicate offense as if they were elements of the offense charged, the district court nonetheless erred in failing to instruct the jury on the applicable criminal laws of Guam against which the defendant's proposed sexual conduct was to be evaluated. *Id.* at 729-31.

The bracketed language stating alternative elements (starting with "Second/Third") applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 20.29 Using or Attempting to Use the Mail or a Means of Interstate Commerce to Persuade or Coerce a Minor to Engage in Prostitution or Sexual Activity (18 U.S.C. § 2422(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count ____ of] the indictment with Coercion and Enticement of a Minor in violation of Section 2422(b) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, that [on][between] [*insert dates alleged*] the defendant used [the mail] [*describe other means or facility of interstate or foreign commerce*], to knowingly [persuade] [induce] [entice] [coerce] an individual to engage in [prostitution][*describe proposed sexual activity*]; and

Second, the [individual was under the age of 18 and the defendant knew the person was under the age of 18] [defendant believed that the individual was under the age of 18];

[Third that [if the sexual activity had occurred] [based upon the sexual activity that occurred], any person could have been charged with a criminal offense under the laws of [the United States] [*insert the state or territory*]. [In [*state or territory*], it is a criminal offense to [*describe proposed sexual activity*]; [and]

Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

Concerning the elements of the crime, *see, e.g.*, *United States v. Eller*, 57 F.4th 1117, 1119 (9th Cir. 2023) (citing *United States v. McCarron*, 30 F.4th 1157, 1162 (9th Cir. 2022)).

Both 18 U.S.C. § 2422(a) and (b) use the common terms "persuade," "induce," and "entice." Those terms "have plain and ordinary meanings within the statute, and [a] court [has] no obligation to provide further definitions." *United States v. Dhingra*, 371 F.3d 557, 567 (9th Cir. 2004).

A minor's willingness to engage in sexual activity is irrelevant to the elements of § 2422(b). *United States v. Macapagal*, 56 F.4th 742, 747 (9th Cir. 2022) (rejecting challenge to jury instruction stating "'[a] minor's willingness to engage in sexual activity . . . is irrelevant to the elements of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2422(b)'"); *see Eller*, 57 F.4th 1117 at 1120-21. Under § 2422(b), "the relevant inquiry is the conduct of the defendant, not the minor." *Macapagal*, 56 F.4th at 747 (citing *Dhingra*, 371 F.3d at 567)); *see also United States v. Rashkovski*, 301 F.3d 1133, 1137 (9th Cir. 2002) ("[I]t is the defendant's intent that forms the basis for his criminal liability, not the victims'."). Section 2422(b) requires proof that the defendant's purpose was to

merely "confirm or exploit" the minor's will. *United States v. Williams*, 172 F.4th 791, 799 (9th Cir. 2026). It does not require proof that "defendant's purpose was to change the minor's will." *Id.*

"Where a federal prosecution hinges on an interpretation or application of state law, it is the district court's function to explain the relevant state law to the jury." *United States v. Lopez*, 4 F.4th 706, 730(9th Cir. 2021) (quoting *United States v. Davila-Nieves*, 670 F.3d 1, 8 (1st Cir. 2012)). For instance, in *Lopez*, the district courterred in failing to instruct the jury on the applicable criminal laws of Guam against which the defendant's proposed sexual conduct was to be evaluated. *Id.* at 730-31; *see also United States v. Guerrero*, 89 F.4th 694, 696 (9th Cir. 2023) (affirming defendant's § 2422(b) conviction by identifying on appeal "another predicate offense, not specified in the indictment, with which defendant could have been charged").

The bracketed language regarding an "attempt" or "substantial step" applies only when the charge is an attempt. *See* Comment to Instruction 4.4 (Attempt). In attempt cases, the crime at issue is "attempting to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce [a minor] to engage in sexual activity with him—not . . . attempting to engage in sexual activity with [a minor]." *McCarron*, 30 F.4th at 1163.

"'[A]n actual minor victim is not required for an attempt conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b).'" *McCarron*, 30 F.4th at 1165 (quoting *United States v. Meek*, 366 F.3d 705, 717 (9th Cir. 2004)); *see Eller*, 57 F.4th 1117 at 1121 ("The statute applies whether the minors are real or fictional . . . ."). If the charge is an attempt and the object of the defendant's inducement is an adult, use the bracketed language for the second element providing that the "defendant believed that the individual was under the age of 18." In addition, "the requisite intent to entice a minor is not defeated by use of an adult intermediary." *Macapagal*, 56 F.4th at 744; *see Eller*, 57 F.4th 1117 at 1121 ("[A]n attempt through an intermediary or an undercover officer still leads to criminal liability."). Section 2422(b) does not require the government to prove direct communication with someone the defendant believes to be a minor. *Macapagal*, 56 F.4th at 746.

The Ninth Circuit has not defined the term "sexual activity" for purposes of 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b). Moreover, there is a circuit split as to whether "sexual activity" requires "physical contact." *See United States v. Taylor*, 640 F.3d 255, 259-60 (7th Cir. 2011) (holding that "sexual activity" requires "physical contact"); *United States v. Fugit*, 703 F.3d 248, 255 (4th Cir. 2012) ("The primary evil that Congress meant to avert by enacting § 2422(b) was the psychological sexualization of children, and this evil can surely obtain in situations where the contemplated conduct does not involve interpersonal physical contact."); *United States v. Dominguez*, 997 F.3d 1121, 1123 (11th Cir. 2021) (no interpersonal contact required).

*Revised June 2026*

## 20.30 Transportation of Minor for Prostitution or Criminal Sexual Activity (18 U.S.C. § 2423(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with transporting a minor with intent that [he] [she] engage in [prostitution] [*criminal sexual activity*] in violation of Section 2423(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly transported [*name of victim*] from [*specify location*] to [*specify location*];

Second, the defendant did so with the intent that [*name of victim*] engage in [prostitution] [*describe criminal sexual activity*] [;] [; and]

[Third, that [if the sexual activity had occurred] [based upon the sexual activity that occurred], the defendant could have been charged with a criminal offense under the laws of [the United States] [*insert the state or territory*]. [In [*state or territory*], it is a criminal offense to [*describe proposed sexual activity*]; and]

[Third/Fourth], [*name of victim*] was under the age of eighteen years at the time.

A defendant transports a person with the intent that such person engage in [prostitution] [*describe criminal sexual activity*] if the intended [prostitution] [*describe criminal sexual activity*] was a dominant, significant, or motivating purpose of the transportation.

### Comment

The bracketed language setting forth the first option for the third element is to be used when the defendant is charged with transporting a minor with intent that the minor engages in "any sexual activity for which any person can be charged with a criminal offense." 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a). Further, "[w]here a federal prosecution hinges on an interpretation or application of state law, it is the district court's function to explain the relevant state law to the jury." *United States v. Lopez*, 4 F.4th 706, 730 (9th Cir. 2021) (quoting *United States v. Davila-Nieves*, 670 F.3d 1, 8 (1st Cir. 2012)). While the court in *Lopez* considered a conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b), its conclusions with respect to the jury instructions are also applicable here. In *Lopez*, the evidence against the defendant implicated a sexual conduct offense in Guam. 4 F.4th at 713, 724. The court held that while the district court was not required to instruct the jury on the elements of the particular predicate offense as if they were elements of the offense charged, the district court nonetheless erred in failing to instruct the jury on the applicable criminal laws of Guam against which the defendant's proposed sexual conduct was to be evaluated. *Id.* at 729-31.

"In interpreting the elements for transportation and travel offenses, we have consistently held that a dominant, significant, or motivating purpose to engage in criminal sexual activity satisfies the intent requirement." *United States v. Flucas*, 22 F.4th 1149, 1154 (9th Cir. 2022). In *Flucas*, the court held that the district court "correctly instructed the jury . . . with respect to the intent requirement[]" in § 2423(a) when the district court instructed that it was "sufficient if the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the sexual activity was a significant, dominating or motivating purpose." *Id.* at 1154-55, 1164. *See also United States v. Pepe*, 81 F.4th 961, 977 (9th

Cir. 2023) ("Ninth Circuit precedent clearly establishes that a defendant can have mixed motives for traveling.").

It is not a defense to the crime of transporting a minor for purposes of prostitution that the defendant was ignorant of the child's age. *United States v. Taylor*, 239 F.3d 994, 997 (9th Cir. 2001). "If someone knowingly transports a person for the purposes of prostitution or another sex offense, the transporter assumes the risk that the victim is a minor, regardless of what the victim says or how the victim appears." *Id.*

*Revised Dec. 2023*

## 20.30A Travel with Intent to Engage in Illicit Sexual Conduct (18 U.S.C. § 2423(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with traveling with intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct in violation of Section 2423(b) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [traveled in interstate commerce] [traveled into the United States] [is a United States citizen who traveled in foreign commerce] [is an alien admitted for permanent residence in the United States who traveled in foreign commerce]; and

Second, the defendant did so with a motivating purpose of engaging in any illicit sexual conduct with another person.

A defendant travels with a motivating purpose of engaging in illicit sexual conduct if engaging in the intended sexual conduct was a dominant, significant, or motivating purpose of the travel.

In this case, "illicit sexual conduct" means [*specify sexual act(s)* with a person under 18 years of age] [a commercial sex act with a person under 18 years of age, meaning a sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person] [the production of child pornography, that is, *specify statutory definition*].

### Comment

Further definitions for "sexual act," "commercial sex act," and "child pornography" are referenced in the statute. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2423(f).

"In interpreting the elements for transportation and travel offenses, we have consistently held that a dominant, significant, or motivating purpose to engage in criminal sexual activity satisfies the intent requirement." *United States v. Flucas*, 22 F.4th 1149, 1154 (9th Cir. 2022). In *Flucas*, the court held that the district court "correctly instructed the jury . . . with respect to the intent requirement[]" in § 2423(a) when the district court instructed that it was "sufficient if the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the sexual activity was a significant, dominating or motivating purpose." *Id.* at 1154-55, 1164. *See also United States v. Pepe*, 81 F.4th 961, 977 (9th Cir. 2023) ("Ninth Circuit precedent clearly establishes that a defendant can have mixed motives for traveling.").

Effective December 2018, Congress amended 18 U.S.C. § 2423(b) to prohibit travel in foreign commerce "with a motivating purpose of engaging in any illicit sexual conduct" rather than simply "for the purpose of" so engaging. Pub. L. 115-392, 132 Stat. 5256. The Ninth Circuit had approved using "motivating purpose" as an instruction for the pre-2018 version of the statute. *Pepe*, 81 F.4th at 978 (citing *United States v. Lindsay*, 931 F.3d 852, 864 (9th Cir. 2019), and *Flucas*, 22 F.4th at 1156-57).

## 20.31 Engaging in Illicit Sexual Conduct Abroad (18 U.S.C. § 2423(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with engaging in illicit sexual conduct while traveling in foreign commerce or residing in a foreign country in violation of Section 2423(c) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant is a[n] [United States citizen] [alien admitted for permanent residence];

Second, the defendant [traveled in foreign commerce] [resided, either temporarily or permanently, in a foreign country]; and

Third, while [traveling in foreign commerce] [residing in a foreign country] the defendant engaged in illicit sexual conduct.

[Illicit sexual conduct is a sexual act with a person under 18 years of age that would be illegal if it occurred in the United States, any commercial sex act with a person under 18 years of age, or the production of child pornography.]

### Comment

Further definitions for "sexual act," "commercial sex act," and "child pornography" are referenced in the statute. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2423(f).

The government is not required to prove that the defendant intended to engage in illicit sexual conduct while traveling. *See United States v. Pepe*, 895 F.3d 679, 689 n.4 (9th Cir. 2018) ("While § 2423(c) doesn't itself require a mens rea, 'illicit sexual conduct' can be established through offenses that do.").

When a conviction under this section is based on travel in foreign commerce, the government must prove that "the illicit sexual conduct occurred while the defendant was traveling." *Pepe*, 895 F.3d at 691. Prior to Congress' amendment of the statute to include persons who reside in a foreign country, the "and engages" language of this subsection was interpreted to include instances in which a defendant traveled to a foreign country and thereafter engaged in illicit sexual conduct. *See id.* at 685-88 (explaining that Ninth Circuit's interpretation of § 2324(c) in *United States v. Clark*, 435 F.3d 1100 (9th Cir. 2006), is not controlling in light of congressional amendment).

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 20.32 Transfer of Obscene Material to a Minor (18 U.S.C. § 1470)

The defendant is charged in [Count ____ of] the indictment with Transfer of Obscene Material to a Minor in violation of Section 1470 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly transferred [*name the material charged in the indictment*];

Second, the defendant transferred [*name the material charged in the indictment*] to an individual less than sixteen years old;

Third, the defendant knew the other individual was less than sixteen years old;

Fourth, the defendant knew at the time of the transfer the content, character, and nature of the material;

Fifth, [*name the material charged in the indictment*] is obscene; and

Sixth, the defendant knowingly used the [mail]; [*any means or facility of interstate commerce*] to transfer [*name the material charged in the indictment*].

### Comment

The definitions of "interstate commerce" and "foreign commerce" are found at 18 U.S.C. § 10.

This instruction is modeled on the Seventh Circuit's Model Criminal Instruction for 18 U.S.C. § 1470. *See United States v. Lopez*, 4 F.4th 706 (9th Cir. 2021) (affirming, without considering, defendant's conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 1470 using Seventh Circuit instructions).

## 21. SMUGGLING

**Instruction**

21.1 Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods (18 U.S.C. § 545)
21.2 Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods from the United States (18 U.S.C. § 554)
21.3 Passing or Attempting to Pass False Papers Through Customhouse (18 U.S.C. § 545)
21.4 Importing Merchandise Illegally (18 U.S.C. § 545)
21.5 Receiving, Concealing, Buying, or Selling Smuggled Merchandise (18 U.S.C. § 545)

## 21.1 Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods (18 U.S.C. § 545)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [smuggling] [attempting to smuggle] in violation of Section 545 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [smuggled] [attempted to smuggle] merchandise into the United States without declaring the merchandise for invoicing as required by United States Customs law;

Second, the defendant knew that the merchandise was of a type that should have been declared; [and]

Third, the defendant acted willfully with intent to defraud the United States[.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

*See* Comment in Instruction 4.6 (Willfully).

This instruction may be used when the defendant is charged with the crime of smuggling goods or attempting to smuggle goods. The bracketed fourth element should be used when the defendant is charged with an attempt to smuggle goods.

This instruction relates to the first clause of the first paragraph of 18 U.S.C. § 545. If the charge is based on the second clause of the first paragraph, use Instruction 21.3 (Passing or Attempting to Pass False Papers Through Customhouse). Instructions 21.4 (Importing Merchandise Illegally) and 21.5 (Receiving, Concealing, Buying, or Selling Smuggled Merchandise) concern violations of the second paragraph of § 545.

*See United States v. Garcia-Paz*, 282 F.3d 1212, 1214-15 (9th Cir. 2002) (court properly instructed jury that marijuana constitutes "merchandise" for purposes of 18 U.S.C. § 545).

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231,

1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 21.2 Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods from the United States (18 U.S.C. § 554)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [smuggling] [attempting to smuggle] merchandise from the United States in violation of Section 554 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[knowingly] [fraudulently]] [exported] [sent] [attempted to export] [attempted to send] from the United States merchandise [or received, concealed, bought, sold, or in any manner facilitated the transportation, concealment, or sale of such merchandise prior to exportation, knowing the same to be intended for exportation]; and

Second, the [exportation] [sending] was contrary to [*describe applicable United States law(s) or regulation(s)*]; and

Third, the defendant knew the [exportation] [sending] was contrary to law or regulation[.]; [and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

"Merchandise" means objects, items, goods, and wares of every description.

### Comment

This instruction may be used when the defendant is charged under 18 U.S.C. § 554 with the crime of smuggling or attempting to smuggle goods from the United States. The bracketed fourth element should be used when the defendant is charged with an attempt to smuggle goods from the United States. *See* Comment to Instruction 21.1 (Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods).

To convict under 18 U.S.C. § 554, the government need only prove the defendant knew he or she was exporting merchandise that was unlawful to export, not that the defendant knew the nature of the merchandise. *United States v. Rivero*, 889 F.3d 618, 621-22 (9th Cir. 2018).

18 U.S.C. § 554 references "any merchandise, article, or object." The definition of "merchandise" is found in 19 U.S.C. § 1401(c). *See United States v. Garcia-Paz*, 282 F.3d 1212, 1214 (9th Cir. 2002) (defining "merchandise" as "goods, wares and chattels of every description").

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the

line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 21.3 Passing or Attempting to Pass False Papers Through Customhouse (18 U.S.C. § 545)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [passing] [attempting to pass] a [[false] [forged] [fraudulent]] [*specify writing*] in violation of Section 545 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[passed] [attempted to pass]] [*specify writing*] through a customhouse of the United States;

Second, the defendant knew that the [*specify writing*] was [false] [forged] [fraudulent];

Third, the defendant acted willfully with intent to defraud the United States; [and]

Fourth, the [*specify writing*] had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, action by the United States[.] [; and]

[Fifth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 4.6 (Willfully).

This instruction may be used when the defendant is charged with the crime of passing false papers through a customhouse. The bracketed fifth element should be used when defendant is charged with an attempt to do so. For an attempt to commit the crime, jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of the crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

This instruction relates to the second clause of the first paragraph of 18 U.S.C. § 545. If the charge is based on the first clause of the first paragraph, use Instruction 21.1 (Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods). Instructions 21.4 (Importing Merchandise Illegally) and 21.5 (Receiving, Concealing, Buying, or Selling Smuggled Merchandise) concern violations of the second paragraph of § 545.

In *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1 (1999), the Court explained that materiality is a necessary aspect of the legal concept of fraud, which is incorporated into criminal statutes concerning fraud unless the statute says otherwise. *Id*. at 22-23 (holding materiality of falsehood must be proved in prosecution under bank, mail, and wire fraud statutes). The common law test for

materiality in the false statement statutes, as reflected in the third element of this instruction, is the preferred formulation. *United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008).

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent.") and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 21.4 Importing Merchandise Illegally (18 U.S.C. § 545)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[fraudulently] [knowingly]] [[importing] [bringing]] into the United States merchandise in violation of Section 545 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant [[fraudulently] [knowingly]] [[imported] [brought]] merchandise into the United States contrary to [*specify law*].

### Comment

This instruction deals with the first clause of the second paragraph of 18 U.S.C. § 545. If the charge is a violation of the second clause of the second paragraph, use Instruction 21.5 (Receiving, Concealing, Buying, or Selling Smuggled Merchandise). Instructions 21.1 (Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods) and 21.3 (Passing or Attempting to Pass False Papers Through Customhouse) deal with violations of the first paragraph of § 545.

The term "law" in § 545 includes a regulation as well as a statute, but only when there is a statute that specifies that a violation of the regulation is a crime. *United States v. Alghazouli*, 517 F.3d 1179, 1183 (9th Cir. 2008).

*See United States v. Garcia-Paz*, 282 F.3d 1212, 1214-15 (9th Cir. 2002) (court properly instructed jury that marijuana constitutes "merchandise" for purposes of 18 U.S.C. § 545).

## 21.5 Receiving, Concealing, Buying, or Selling Smuggled Merchandise (18 U.S.C. § 545)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[receiving] [concealing] [buying] [selling] [facilitating [the transportation] [concealment] [sale] of]] smuggled merchandise in violation of Section 545 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, merchandise had been brought into the United States contrary to [*specify law*]; and

Second, the defendant [[received] [concealed] [bought] [sold] [facilitated the [transportation] [concealment] [sale] of] the merchandise knowing that it had been brought into the United States contrary to law.

### Comment

This instruction relates to the second clause of the second paragraph of 18 U.S.C. § 545. If the charge is a violation of the first clause of the second paragraph, use Instruction 21.4 (Importing Merchandise Illegally). Instructions 21.1 (Smuggling or Attempting to Smuggle Goods) and 21.3 (Passing or Attempting to Pass False Papers Through Customhouse) deal with violations of the first paragraph of § 545.

The term "law" in § 545 includes a regulation as well as a statute, but only when there is a statute that specifies that a violation of the regulation is a crime. *United States v. Alghazouli*, 517 F.3d 1179, 1183 (9th Cir. 2008).

*See United States v. Garcia-Paz*, 282 F.3d 1212, 1214-15 (9th Cir. 2002) (court properly instructed jury that marijuana constitutes "merchandise" for purposes of 18 U.S.C. § 545).

## 22. TAX AND BULK SMUGGLING OFFENSES

**Instruction**

22.1 Attempt to Evade or Defeat Income Tax (26 U.S.C. § 7201)
22.2 Willful Failure to Pay Tax or File Tax Return (26 U.S.C. § 7203)
22.3 Filing False Tax Return (26 U.S.C. § 7206(1))
22.4 Aiding or Advising False Income Tax Return (26 U.S.C. § 7206(2))
22.5 Filing False Tax Return (Misdemeanor) (26 U.S.C. § 7207)
22.6 Willfully—Defined (26 U.S.C. §§ 7201, 7203, 7206, 7207)
22.7 Forcible or Attempted Rescue of Seized Property (26 U.S.C. § 7212(b))
22.8 Failure to Report Exporting or Importing Monetary Instruments (31 U.S.C. §§ 5316(a)(1), 5324(c))
22.9 Bulk Cash Smuggling (31 U.S.C. § 5332(a))

## 22.1 Attempt to Evade or Defeat Income Tax (26 U.S.C. § 7201)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [*specify charge*] in violation of Section 7201 of Title 26 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant owed more federal income tax for the calendar year [*specify year*] than was declared due on the defendant's income tax return for that calendar year;

Second, the defendant knew that more federal income tax was owed than was declared due on the defendant's income tax return;

Third, the defendant made an affirmative attempt to evade or defeat such additional tax; and

Fourth, in attempting to evade or defeat such additional tax, the defendant acted willfully.

### Comment

*See* Instruction 22.6 (Willfully—Defined) as to "willfully" in the context of prosecutions for violations of Title 26.

The elements of attempted tax evasion under 26 U.S.C. § 7201 are stated in *United States v. Kayser*, 488 F.3d 1070, 1073 (9th Cir. 2007), as follows: (1) willfulness; (2) the existence of a tax deficiency; and (3) an affirmative act constituting an evasion or attempted evasion of the tax. *Id*. (citing *Sansone v. United States*, 380 U.S. 343, 351 (1965); *United States v. Marashi*, 913 F.2d 724, 735 (9th Cir. 1990)). "A tax deficiency occurs when a defendant owes more federal income tax for the applicable tax year than was declared due on the defendant's income tax return." *Id.* At 1073.

The first element requires the government to prove there was a tax deficiency, but the deficiency need not be "substantial." *Marashi*, 913 F.2d at 735.

"A defendant may negate the element of tax deficiency in a tax evasion case with evidence of unreported deductions." *Kayser*, 488 F.3d at 1073-74 (rejecting argument that defendant was precluded from offering evidence that is inconsistent with information he reported on his tax returns).

When a corporation makes a distribution to a stockholder initially characterized as a "distribution," that "distribution" may subsequently be legitimately characterized as a non-taxable "return of capital" if the corporation has no earnings. *Boulware v. United States*, 552 U.S. 421, 430-31 (2008).

A defendant accused of tax evasion is not entitled to a lesser included offense instruction based on § 7203 if the act constituting evasion was the filing of a false return. *Sansone*, 380 U.S. at 351-52. In addition, because failure to file a return is an element of a § 7203 failure to file charge

but is not an element of a § 7201 tax evasion charge, the offense of failure to file is not a lesser included offense of tax evasion. *United States v. Nichols*, 9 F.3d 1420, 1422 (9th Cir. 1993). *See* Instruction 6.14 (Lesser Included Offense); Instruction 22.2 (Willful Failure to Pay Tax or File Tax Return).

## 22.2 Willful Failure to Pay Tax or File Tax Return (26 U.S.C. § 7203)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with willful failure [to pay tax] [to file an income tax return] in violation of Section 7203 of Title 26 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [owed taxes] [was required to file a return] [was required to keep records] [was required to supply information] for the calendar year ending December 31, [*specify year*];

Second, the defendant failed to [[pay the tax] [file an income tax return]] [[by April 15, [*specify year*]] as required by Title 26 of the United States Code; and

Third, in failing to do so, the defendant acted willfully.

### Comment

*See* Instruction 22.6 (Willfully—Defined) as to the meaning of "willfully" in the context of prosecutions for violations of Title 26.

## 22.3 Filing False Tax Return (26 U.S.C. § 7206(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with filing a false tax return in violation of Section 7206(1) of Title 26 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant signed and filed a tax return for the year [*specify year*] that [he] [she] knew contained [false] [incorrect] information as to a material matter;

Second, the return contained a written declaration that it was being signed subject to the penalties of perjury; and

Third, in filing the false tax return, the defendant acted willfully.

A matter is material if it had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the decisions or activities of the Internal Revenue Service.

### Comment

*See* Instruction 22.6 (Willfully—Defined) as to the meaning of "willfully" in the context of prosecutions for violations of Title 26.

Section 7206 creates several distinct crimes. This instruction applies to § 7206(1) and should be modified if the charge arises under § 7206(3), (4), or (5). If the charge arises under § 7206(2), *see* Instruction 22.4 (Aiding or Advising False Income Tax Return).

False information is material if it had a natural tendency to influence or was capable of influencing or affecting the ability of the IRS to audit or verify the accuracy of the tax return or a related return. *See United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995) (explaining material statement has "natural tendency to influence, or [be] capable of influencing, the decision of the decision making body to which it was addressed" (quoting *Kungys v. United States,* 485 U.S. 759, 770 (1988))); *see also United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1067 (9th Cir. 2008) (suggesting district courts should use materiality language approved in *Gaudin*). A false statement "need not have actually influenced the agency, and the agency need not rely on the information in fact for it to be material." *United States v. Matsumaru*, 244 F.3d 1092, 1101 (9th Cir. 2001) (quoting *United States v. Serv. Deli Inc*., 151 F.3d 938, 941 (9th Cir. 1998)).

When a corporation makes a distribution to a stockholder initially characterized as a "distribution," that "distribution" may subsequently be legitimately characterized as a non-taxable "return of capital" if the corporation has no earnings. *Boulware v. United States*, 552 U.S. 421, 430-31 (2008).

The tax return must have been filed. *See United States v. Boitano*, 796 F.3d 1160, 1163 (9th Cir. 2015).

*Revised Sept. 2015*

## 22.4 Aiding or Advising False Income Tax Return (26 U.S.C. § 7206(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [aiding] [assisting] [advising] [procuring] [counseling] the preparation of a false income tax return in violation of Section 7206(2) of Title 26 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[aided] [assisted] [advised] [procured] [counseled]] [*specify person*(*s*)] in the [preparation] [presentation] of an income tax return that was [false] [fraudulent];

Second, the income tax return was [false] [fraudulent] as to any material matter necessary to a determination of whether income tax was owed; and

Third, the defendant acted willfully.

The government is not required to prove that the taxpayer knew that the return was false.

A matter is material if it had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the decisions or activities of the Internal Revenue Service.

### Comment

*See* Instruction 22.6 (Willfully—Defined) as to the meaning of "willfully" in the context of prosecutions for violations of Title 26.

"Under § 7206(2), the government must prove that '(1) the defendant aided, assisted, or otherwise caused the preparation and presentation of a return; (2) that the return was fraudulent or false as to a material matter; and (3) the act of the defendant was willful.'" *United States v. Smith*, 424 F.3d 992, 1009 (9th Cir. 2005) (quoting *United States v. Salerno,* 902 F.2d 1429, 1432 (9th Cir. 1990)).

False information is material if it had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing or affecting, the ability of the IRS to audit or verify the accuracy of the tax return or a related return. *See United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995) (explaining material statement has "natural tendency to influence, or [be] capable of influencing, the decision of the decision making body to which it was addressed") (quoting *Kungys v. United States,* 485 U.S. 759, 770 (1988)); *see also United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1067 (9th Cir. 2008) (suggesting district courts should use materiality language approved in *Gaudin*). A false statement "need not have actually influenced the agency, and the agency need not rely on the information in fact for it to be material." *United States v. Matsumaru*, 244 F.3d 1092, 1101 (9th Cir. 2001) (quoting *United States v. Serv. Deli Inc*., 151 F.3d 938, 941 (9th Cir. 1998)).

## 22.5 Filing False Tax Return (Misdemeanor) (26 U.S.C. § 7207)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with filing a false tax return in violation of Section 7207 of Title 26 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [delivered] [disclosed] a tax return knowing that it contained [false] [fraudulent] information as to any material matter; and

Second, the defendant acted willfully.

A matter is material if it had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the decisions or activities of the Internal Revenue Service.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 22.1 (Attempt to Evade or Defeat Income Tax).

*See* Instruction 22.6 (Willfully—Defined) as to the meaning of "willfully" in the context of prosecutions for violations of Title 26.

False information is material if it had a natural tendency to influence or was capable of influencing or affecting the ability of the IRS to audit or verify the accuracy of the tax return or a related return. *See United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995) (explaining material statement has "natural tendency to influence, or [be] capable of influencing, the decision of the decision making body to which it was addressed") (quoting *Kungys v. United States,* 485 U.S. 759, 770 (1988)); *see also United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1067 (9th Cir. 2008) (suggesting district courts should use materiality language approved in *Gaudin*). A false statement "need not have actually influenced the agency, and the agency need not rely on the information in fact for it to be material." *United States v. Matsumaru*, 244 F.3d 1092, 1101 (9th Cir. 2001) (quoting *United States v. Serv. Deli Inc*., 151 F.3d 938, 941 (9th Cir. 1998)).

## 22.6 Willfully—Defined (26 U.S.C. §§ 7201, 7203, 7206, 7207)

To prove that the defendant acted "willfully," the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant knew federal tax law imposed a duty on [him] [her], and the defendant intentionally and voluntarily violated that duty.

[If the defendant acted on a good faith misunderstanding as to the requirements of the law, [he] [she] did not act willfully even if [his] [her] understanding of the law was wrong or unreasonable. Nevertheless, merely disagreeing with the law does not constitute a good faith misunderstanding of the law because all persons have a duty to obey the law whether or not they agree with it. Thus, to prove that the defendant acted willfully, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant did not have a good faith belief that [he] [she] was complying with the law.]

### Comment

Sections 7201-7207 of the Internal Revenue Code use the term "willfully." In *Cheek v. United States*, 498 U.S. 192, 201 (1991), the Supreme Court set forth the following definition: "Willfulness, as construed by our prior decisions in criminal tax cases, requires the Government to prove that the law imposed a duty on the defendant, that the defendant knew of this duty, and that he voluntarily and intentionally violated that duty." This same definition applies to both misdemeanors and felonies in the Revenue Code. *See United States v. Pomponio*, 429 U.S. 10, 12 (1976) (citing *United States v. Bishop*, 412 U.S. 346, 359–60 (1973)). "In other words, if you know that you owe taxes and you do not pay them, you have acted willfully." *United States v. Easterday*, 564 F.3d 1004, 1006 (9th Cir. 2009). Despite earlier case law suggesting the contrary, the element of willfulness does not require that the defendant have the financial ability to pay the taxes. *See id.* at 1005 (holding that *United States v. Poll*, 521 F.2d 329 (9th Cir. 1975), is no longer controlling authority in light of intervening Supreme Court decisions). In a prosecution alleging a failure to file a tax return, the government is not required to prove an intent to evade or defeat a tax. *United States v. Meredith*, 685 F.3d 814, 826 (9th Cir. 2012). "Intent to evade or defeat taxes is merely one possible way to establish willfulness," and "[a]ny voluntary act committed with the specific intent to disobey or disregard the law qualifies as willfulness." *Id.*

The bracketed second paragraph of this instruction may be used when there is evidence the defendant acted on a good faith but erroneous belief as to the requirements of the tax laws. In *United States v. Trevino*, 419 F.3d 896, 901 (9th Cir. 2005), the Ninth Circuit explained:

> The government's burden of proving willfulness requires negating [1] a defendant's claim of ignorance of the law ***or*** [2] a claim that because of a *misunderstanding of the law,* he had a *good-faith belief* that he was not violating any of the provisions of the tax laws. This is so because one cannot be aware that the law imposes a duty upon him and yet be ignorant of it, misunderstand the law, or believe that the duty does not exist. *Cheek v. United States,* 498 U.S. 192, 202 (1991) (emphasis added) . . . In order to rely on a good faith defense, the defendant must in fact have some "belief;" either that her own understanding was correct, or that she in good faith relied on the tax advice of a qualified tax professional. *See United States v. Bishop,* 291 F.3d 1100, 1106–07 (9th Cir. 2002).

Nonetheless, Ninth Circuit precedent forecloses the argument that the defendant is entitled to a separate "good faith" instruction "when the jury has been adequately instructed with regard to the intent required to be found guilty of the crime charged." *United States v. Hickey*, 580 F.3d 922, 931 (9th Cir. 2009) (holding no good faith instruction needed when jury properly instructed on intent to defraud).

The defendant's views regarding the validity of a tax statute are irrelevant to the issue of willfulness and, if heard, the jury can be instructed to disregard such views. *See United States v. Powell*, 955 F.2d 1206, 1212 (9th Cir. 1992) (concluding that district court did not plainly err in instructing that "[m]ere disagreement with the law, in and of itself, does not constitute good faith misunderstanding under the requirements of law[ ] [b]ecause it is the duty of all persons to obey the law whether or not they [agree with it]").

Willfulness is a state of mind that may be established by evidence of fraudulent acts. *See United States v. Voorhies*, 658 F.2d 710, 715 (9th Cir. 1981); *see also United States v. Conforte,* 624 F.2d 869, 875 (9th Cir. 1980).

*Revised Dec. 2012*

## 22.7 Forcible or Attempted Rescue of Seized Property (26 U.S.C. § 7212(b))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [forcibly rescuing] [attempting to rescue forcibly] seized property in violation of Section 7212(b) of Title 26 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*specify property*] was seized as authorized by the Internal Revenue Code;

Second, the defendant knew that the property had been seized as authorized by the Internal Revenue Code; and

Third, the defendant [forcibly retook] [caused to be retaken forcibly] [attempted to retake forcibly] the property without the consent of the United States.

"Forcibly" is not limited to force against persons but includes any force that enables the defendant to retake the seized property.

[A defendant "attempts to retake" seized property when that defendant does something that is a substantial step toward retaking the property.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, the defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward the commission of attempting to rescue seized property.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.]

### Comment

In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam)("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."); and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

*Revised May 2023*

## 22.8 Failure to Report Exporting or Importing Monetary Instruments (31 U.S.C. §§ 5316(a)(1), 5324(c))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with failure to report [exporting] [importing] monetary instruments in violation of Sections 5316(a)(1) and 5324(c) of Title 31 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [transported] [was about to transport] more than $10,000 in [*specify monetary instrument*] [[from a place in the United States to or through a place outside the United States] [to a place in the United States from or through a place outside the United States]];

Second, the defendant knew that a report of the amount [transported] [about to be transported] was required to be filed with the Secretary of Treasury; and

Third, the defendant intentionally evaded the reporting requirement.

### Comment

This instruction covers a violation of 31 U.S.C. § 5316(a)(1), regarding the reporting requirement for exporting or importing monetary instruments. The reporting requirement for receipt of such instruments after their importation into the United States is codified in 31 U.S.C. § 5316(a)(2).

*See United States v. Del Toro-Barboza*, 673 F.3d 1136, 1144 (9th Cir. 2012) (setting forth the elements of the offense).

Knowing concealment is not an element of failure to report under 31 U.S.C. § 5316(a) but is an element of bulk cash smuggling under 31 U.S.C. § 5332(a). Therefore, where the defendant's conduct constitutes a violation of both statutory provisions, the offenses do not merge, and cumulative punishment may be imposed. *United States v. Tatoyan*, 474 F.3d 1174, 1181-82 (9th Cir. 2007). As to violations of § 5332(a), *see* Instruction 22.9 (Bulk Cash Smuggling).

*Revised Aug. 2012*

## 22.9 Bulk Cash Smuggling (31 U.S.C. § 5332(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with bulk cash smuggling in violation of Section 5332(a) of Title 31 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly concealed more than $10,000 in [*specify monetary instrument*] [[on his or her person] [in any conveyance, article of luggage, merchandise, or other container]];

Second, the defendant [transported] [attempted to transport] the [*specify monetary instrument*] [[from a place within the United States to a place outside the United States] [from a place outside the United States to a place within the United States]];

Third, the defendant knew that a report of the amount concealed was required to be filed with the Secretary of Treasury; and

Fourth, the defendant intended to evade filing such a report.

The intent to evade the reporting requirement can arise at any time prior to (and including) the moment of [attempted] transportation. It is not necessary that the defendant have such intent at the time the actual concealment occurred.

### Comment

The authority for the last paragraph in the instruction is found in *United States v. Tatoyan*, 474 F.3d 1174, 1180 (9th Cir. 2007).

The penalties set forth in 31 U.S.C. § 5322—in particular a fine of up to $250,000—do not apply unless the jury makes an additional explicit finding that the defendant acted "willfully." *Tatoyan*, 474 F.3d at 1180. Absent such a finding, the applicable penalties are found in 31 U.S.C. § 5332(b) and include a forfeiture provision, but not a fine. *Id.* at 1183.

## 23. THEFT AND STOLEN PROPERTY OFFENSES

**Instruction**


23.1 Theft of Government Money or Property (18 U.S.C. § 641)
23.2 Receiving Stolen Government Money or Property (18 U.S.C. § 641)
23.3 Theft, Embezzlement or Misapplication of Bank Funds (18 U.S.C. § 656)
23.4 Embezzlement or Misapplication by Officer or Employee of Lending, Credit or Insurance Institution (18 U.S.C. § 657)
23.5 Theft from Interstate or Foreign Shipment (18 U.S.C. § 659)
23.6 Interstate Transportation of Stolen Vehicle, Vessel, or Aircraft (18 U.S.C. § 2312)
23.7 Sale or Receipt of Stolen Vehicle, Vessel, or Aircraft (18 U.S.C. § 2313)
23.8 Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property (18 U.S.C. § 2314)
23.9 Sale or Receipt of Stolen Goods, Securities, and Other Property (18 U.S.C. § 2315)
23.10 Mail Theft (18 U.S.C. § 1708)
23.11 Attempted Mail Theft (18 U.S.C. § 1708)
23.12 Possession of Stolen Mail (18 U.S.C. § 1708)
23.13 Embezzlement of Mail by Postal Employee (18 U.S.C. § 1709)
23.14 Economic Espionage (18 U.S.C. § 1831)
23.15 Theft of Trade Secrets (18 U.S.C. § 1832)
23.16 Trade Secret—Defined (18 U.S.C. § 1839(3)

## 23.1 Theft of Government Money or Property (18 U.S.C. § 641)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with theft of government [money] [property] in violation of Section 641 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[embezzled] [stole] [converted to the defendant's use] [converted to the use of another]] [money] [property of value] with the intention of depriving the owner of the use or benefit of the [money] [property];

Second, the [money] [property] belonged to the United States; and

Third, the value of the [money] [property] was more than $1,000.

### Comment

This instruction deals with the first paragraph of 18 U.S.C. § 641. Instruction 23.2 (Receiving Stolen Government Money or Property) deals with the second paragraph of § 641.

Theft of money or property having a value of $1,000 or less is a misdemeanor. 18 U.S.C. § 641. If the crime charged is a misdemeanor, the third element of this instruction should be omitted.

Knowledge that stolen property belonged to the United States is not an element of the offense. *Baker v. United States,* 429 F.2d 1278, 1279 (9th Cir. 1970).

*See United States v. Campbell*, 42 F.3d 1199, 1204 (9th Cir. 1994) (government must prove defendant stole property with intention of depriving owner of use or benefit of property).

To qualify as property of the United States, "the United States 'must have "title to, possession of, or control over" the funds involved.'" *United States v. Kranovich*, 401 F.3d 1107, 113 (9th Cir. 2005) (quoting *United States v. Faust*, 850 F.2d 575, 579 (9th Cir. 1988)). Property belongs to the United States for the purposes of § 641 even if it is in the possession of a third party or commingled with a third party's funds so long as the government exercises "supervision and control of the funds and their ultimate use." *Id*. at 1113-14 (citation omitted) (quoting *United States v. Von Stephens*, 774 F.2d 1411, 1413 (9th Cir. 1985) (per curiam)).

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 23.2 Receiving Stolen Government Money or Property (18 U.S.C. § 641)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[receiving] [concealing] [retaining]] [[embezzled] [stolen] [converted]] government [money] [property] in violation of Section 641 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[received] [concealed] [retained]] [[money] [property of value]];

Second, the [money] [property] belonged to the United States;

Third, the defendant knew that the [money] [property] had been [embezzled] [stolen] [converted];

Fourth, the defendant intended to convert the [money] [property] to [his] [her] own use or gain; and

Fifth, the value of the [money] [property] was more than $1,000.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 23.1 (Theft of Government Money or Property).

*Revised July 2011*

## 23.3 Theft, Embezzlement, or Misapplication of Bank Funds (18 U.S.C. § 656)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [theft] [embezzlement] [misapplication] of bank funds in violation of Section 656 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was a [*specify position held*] of the [*specify financial institution*];

Second, the defendant knowingly and willfully [stole] [embezzled] [misapplied] funds or credits belonging to the bank or entrusted to its care in excess of $1,000;

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to injure or defraud the [*specify financial institution*];

Fourth, the [*specify financial institution*] was [*specify Section 656 status*]; and

Fifth, the amount of money taken was more than $1,000.

The fact that the defendant may have intended to repay the funds at the time they were taken is not a defense.

### Comment

Although not found in the statute, "intent to injure or defraud" has been held to be an essential element of the crime. *United States v. Stozek*, 783 F.2d 891, 893 (9th Cir. 1986). "Intent to defraud may be inferred from a defendant's reckless disregard of the bank's interests." *United States v. Castro*, 887 F.2d 988, 994 (9th Cir. 1989) (citing *Stozek*, 783 F.2d at 893).

If the crime charged is a misdemeanor, the fifth element of this instruction should be omitted.

If Instruction 4.8 (Knowingly) is modified and "limit[ed] only to 'acts' committed knowingly," such an instruction will not "undermine[] the specific mens rea requirements applicable to misapplication of bank funds" offenses. *United States v. Lonich*, 23 F.4th 881, 901 (9th Cir. 2022).

## 23.4 Embezzlement or Misapplication by Officer or Employee of Lending, Credit or Insurance Institution (18 U.S.C. § 657)

### Comment

The Committee recommends that when the defendant is charged with embezzlement or willful misapplication in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 657, Instruction 23.3 (Theft, Embezzlement, or Misapplication of Bank Funds) should be used with appropriate modifications. Section 656 and Section 657 contain the same elements. *United States v. Musacchio*, 968 F.2d 782, 787 n.6 (9th Cir. 1991).

*See United States v. Bennett*, 621 F.3d 1131, 1138 (9th Cir. 2010) (interpreting "financial institution" under 18 U.S.C. § 1344 to exclude wholly owned subsidiary of financial institution and *criticizing United States v. Cartwright*, 632 F.2d 1290 (5th Cir. 1980), which held that "a subsidiary's assets 'belonged to' a parent corporation for purposes of 18 U.S.C. § 657").

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 23.5 Theft from Interstate or Foreign Shipment (18 U.S.C. § 659)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with theft from [an interstate] [a foreign] shipment in violation of Section 659 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant stole the property described in the indictment from a shipment in [interstate] [foreign] commerce; [and]

Second, the defendant did so with the intent to convert the property to [his] [her] own use[.] [; and]

[Third, the property had a value of $1,000 or more.]

Property is moving as or is [a part of] a shipment in [interstate] [foreign] commerce if the point of origin is in one [state] [country] and the destination is another [state] [country]. Property is moving as [an interstate] [a foreign] shipment at all points between the point of origin and the final destination, regardless of any temporary stop while awaiting transshipment or otherwise.

### Comment

This instruction deals with theft from a shipment in interstate or foreign commerce subject to the first paragraph of 18 U.S.C. § 659. If the charge under the first paragraph of § 659 is based on conduct other than theft, modify the instruction accordingly.

Use the third element only if the charge alleges that the value of the property was $1,000 or more.

## 23.6 Interstate Transportation of Stolen Vehicle, Vessel, or Aircraft (18 U.S.C. § 2312)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with transportation of a stolen [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] in [interstate] [foreign] commerce in violation of Section 2312 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] was stolen;

Second, the defendant transported the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] between [one state and another] [a foreign nation and the United States];

Third, the defendant knew the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] had been stolen at the time the defendant transported it; and

Fourth, the defendant intended to permanently or temporarily deprive the owner of ownership of the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft].

[It is not necessary that the taking of the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] be unlawful at the time of the taking. Even if possession is lawfully acquired, the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] will be deemed "stolen" if the defendant thereafter forms the intent to deprive the owner of the rights and benefits of ownership and keeps the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] for the defendant's own use.]

### Comment

The elements stated in this instruction were identified by the Ninth Circuit in *United States v. Albuquerque*, 538 F.2d 277, 278 (9th Cir. 1976), and *Jones v. United States*, 378 F.2d 340, 341 (9th Cir. 1967).

The terms "motor vehicle," "vessel," and "aircraft" are defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2311.

Where a person lawfully obtains possession of a motor vehicle and later forms an intention to convert it to that person's own use, and in furtherance of that intention transports it across state boundaries, a violation of the statute has occurred. *United States v. Miles,* 472 F.2d 1145, 1146 (8th Cir. 1973) (per curiam).

*Revised Apr. 2019*

## 23.7 Sale or Receipt of Stolen Vehicle, Vessel, or Aircraft (18 U.S.C. § 2313)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [receiving] [possessing] [concealing] [storing] [bartering] [selling] [disposing of] a stolen [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] in violation of Section 2313 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] was stolen;

Second, after being stolen, the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] was transported in [interstate] [foreign] commerce, meaning between [one state and another] [a foreign nation and the United States];

Third, the defendant [received] [possessed] [concealed] [stored] [bartered] [sold] [disposed of] the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] while it was in [interstate] [foreign] commerce; and

Fourth, the defendant knew that the [motor vehicle] [vessel] [aircraft] was stolen at the time [he] [she] acted.

The government need not prove the defendant knew the property was in [interstate] [foreign] commerce; it need only prove the defendant knew it was stolen.

Something enters [interstate] [foreign] commerce when its transportation begins in one [state] [country] and is intended to continue into another. Property does not continue to be in [interstate] [foreign] commerce indefinitely. It ordinarily ceases to be in [interstate] [foreign] commerce when delivered to its final destination, unless it is being held there for some improper purpose, such as disguising its nature as stolen property or preparing it for re-sale as legitimate property.

### Comment

An instruction that roughly used the same elements of this instruction was approved in *United States v. Henderson*, 721 F.2d 662, 666 n.3 (9th Cir. 1983). The defendant's knowledge that the stolen property was "in interstate commerce" is not an element of the offense. *Id.* The four-element format is derived from *United States v. Albuquerque*, 538 F.2d 277, 278 (9th Cir. 1976) (stating elements of transporting a stolen motor vehicle in interstate commerce).

Whether property is in interstate commerce is a fact for the jury to determine under all of the circumstances. *Henderson*, 721 F.2d at 666 n.3. The time a stolen object remains in the destination state may indicate it has left interstate commerce, but other factors may negate this inference.

*Revised Jan. 2019*

## 23.8 Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property (18 U.S.C. § 2314)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with the transportation of stolen property in [interstate] [foreign] commerce in violation of Section 2314 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [transported] [transmitted] [transferred] stolen [*specify property*] between [one state and another] [a foreign nation and the United States];

Second, at the time that the [*specify property*] crossed the [state] [country] border, the defendant knew it was stolen;

Third, the defendant intended to deprive the owner of the ownership of the [*specify property*] temporarily or permanently; and

Fourth, the money or property was of the value of $5,000 or more.

The government need not prove who stole the [*specify property*].

### Comment

The government need not show by direct evidence that the property was stolen. *United States v. Drebin*, 557 F.2d 1316, 1328 (9th Cir. 1977).

In *United States v. Albuquerque*, 538 F.2d 277, 278 (9th Cir. 1976), it was held that one of the elements of the offense of interstate transportation of a stolen vehicle was that the defendant intended to permanently or temporarily deprive the owner of ownership.

Section 2314 creates several distinct crimes. This instruction only applies to interstate or foreign movement of stolen property.

## 23.9 Sale or Receipt of Stolen Goods, Securities, and Other Property (18 U.S.C. § 2315)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [receiving] [possessing] [concealing] [storing] [bartering] [selling] [disposing of] stolen [*specify stolen property*] in violation of Section 2315 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[received] [possessed] [concealed] [stored] [bartered] [sold] [disposed of]] [*specify stolen property*] that had crossed a [state] [United States] boundary after having been stolen;

Second, at the time the defendant did so [he] [she] knew that the [*specify stolen property*] had been stolen; and

Third, the [*specify stolen property*] was of a value of $5,000 or more.

The government need not prove the defendant knew the property was in interstate commerce; it need only prove the defendant knew it was stolen.

Something enters [interstate] [foreign] commerce when its transportation begins in one [state] [country] and is intended to continue into another. Property does not continue to be in [interstate] [foreign] commerce indefinitely. It ordinarily ceases to be in [interstate] [foreign] commerce when delivered to its final destination [, unless it is being held there for some improper purpose such as disguising its nature as stolen property or preparing it for re-sale as legitimate property].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 23.7 (Sale or Receipt of Stolen Vehicle, Vessel, or Aircraft).

Section 2315 of Title 18 creates a variety of crimes in addition to those addressed in this instruction. Among them is the crime of pledging or accepting stolen property as security for a loan. When that is the crime charged, the value of the stolen property need be only $500. If one of the other crimes is charged, this instruction should be modified.

## 23.10 Mail Theft (18 U.S.C. § 1708)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with mail theft in violation of Section 1708 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, there was [[a letter] [a postal card] [a package] [a bag] [mail]] [[in the mail] [in a private mail box] [at a post office] [in a letter box] [in a mail receptacle] [in a mail route] [in an authorized depository for mail matter] [in possession of a letter or mail carrier]];

Second, the defendant took the [letter] [postal card] [package] [bag] [mail] from the [mail] [post office] [letter box] [private mail box] [mail receptacle] [mail route] [authorized depository for mail matter] [letter or mail carrier]; and

Third, at the time the defendant took the [letter] [postal card] [package] [bag] [mail], the defendant intended to deprive the owner, temporarily or permanently, of its use and benefit.

### Comment

A jury may infer that the defendant stole an item of mail if a properly addressed and recently mailed item was never received by the addressee and was found in the defendant's possession. *See United States v. Ellison*, 469 F.2d 413, 415 (9th Cir. 1972).

*Revised June 2021*

## 23.11 Attempted Mail Theft (18 U.S.C. § 1708)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted mail theft in violation of Section 1708 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to steal mail from a [post office] [letter box] [private mailbox] [mail receptacle] [mail route] [authorized depository for mail matter] [mail carrier]; and

Second, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward stealing the mail.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

### Comment

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 23.12 Possession of Stolen Mail (18 U.S.C. § 1708)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with possession of stolen mail in violation of Section 1708 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [a letter] [a postal card] [a package] [a bag] [mail] was stolen from the [mail] [post office] [letter box] [private mailbox] [mail receptacle] [mail route] [authorized depository for mail matter] [letter or mail carrier].

Second, the defendant possessed the [letter] [postal card] [package] [bag] [mail] [*or specify an article or thing contained therein*]; and

Third, the defendant knew that the [letter] [postal card] [package] [bag] [mail] was stolen.

### Comment

*See* Instruction 23.10 (Mail Theft).

It is not necessary that the defendant knew the matter was stolen from the mail so long as the defendant knew that it was stolen. *Barnes v. United States,* 412 U.S. 837, 847 (1973).

*Revised June 2021*

## 23.13 Embezzlement of Mail by Postal Employee (18 U.S.C. § 1709)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with embezzling mail in violation of Section 1709 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, while working as a Postal Service employee, the defendant [was entrusted with] [came into possession of] the [letter] [postal card] [package] [bag] [mail];

Second, the [letter] [postal card] [package] [bag] [mail] was intended to be conveyed by mail; and

Third, the defendant embezzled the [letter] [postal card] [package] [bag] [mail] [*or specify an article or thing contained therein*].

### Comment

The government need not prove in a prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 1709 that the defendant had the specific intent permanently to deprive the owner of the property. *United States v. Monday,* 614 F.3d 983, 985-86 (9th Cir. 2010).

*Revised June 2021*

## 23.14 Economic Espionage (18 U.S.C. § 1831)

The defendant is charged in [Count_____ of] the indictment with economic espionage in violation of Section 1831 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [intended] [knew] that his actions would benefit any [foreign government] [foreign instrumentality] [foreign agent];

Second, the defendant knowingly:

> [[stole] [without authorization [appropriated] [took] [carried away] [concealed]] [obtained by fraud] [obtained by artifice] [obtained by deception] a trade secret];
>
> *or*
>
> [without authorization [copied] [duplicated] [sketched] [drew] [photographed] [downloaded] [uploaded] [altered] [destroyed] [photocopied] [replicated] [transmitted] [delivered] [sent] [mailed] [communicated] [conveyed] a trade secret];
>
> *or*
>
> [[received] [bought] [possessed] a trade secret, knowing the same to have been [stolen] [appropriated without authorization] [obtained without authorization] [converted without authorization]].

### Comment

Use this instruction "when there is evidence of foreign government sponsored or coordinated intelligence activity" involving "any manner of benefit." *United States v. Liew*, 856 F.3d 585, 597 (9th Cir. 2017) (quoting *United States v. Hsu*, 155 F.3d 189, 195-96 (3d Cir. 1998)).

The term "foreign instrumentality," as used in these instructions, means any agency, bureau, ministry, component, institution, association, or any legal, commercial, or business organization, corporation, firm, or entity that is substantially owned, controlled, sponsored, commanded, managed, or dominated by a foreign government. 18 U.S.C. § 1839(1). A "foreign agent" is any officer, employee, proxy, servant, delegate, or representative of a foreign government. 18 U.S.C. § 1839(2).

If the indictment charges conspiracy to commit economic espionage (18 U.S.C. § 1831(a)(5)), the jury should be instructed that it is not necessary for the government to prove that the information the alleged conspirators intended to misappropriate was, in fact, a trade secret. What is required is proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant and at least one other member of the conspiracy knowingly agreed to misappropriate information that they reasonably believed was a trade secret and did so for the benefit of a foreign government or foreign instrumentality. This is because the defendant's guilt or innocence on this charge depends on what

he believed the circumstances to be, not what they actually were. *See Liew*, 856 F.3d at 594, 600; *United States v. Nosal*, 844 F.3d 1024, 1044-45 (9th Cir. 2016).

Similarly, if the indictment charges attempt to commit economic espionage (18 U.S.C. § 1831(a)(4)), the jury should be instructed that the government is not required to prove that the information the defendant is alleged to have attempted to misappropriate was, in fact, a trade secret. However, the government is required to prove the defendant reasonably believed that the information the defendant intended to misappropriate was a trade secret. *Id*.

*Revised June 2021*

## 23.15 Theft of Trade Secrets (18 U.S.C. § 1832)

The defendant is charged in [Count_____ of] the indictment with theft of trade secrets in violation of Section 1832 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant intended to convert a trade secret to the economic benefit of someone other than the owner of that trade secret;

Second, the trade secret is related to a [[product] [service]] [[used in] [intended for use in]] [[interstate] [foreign]] commerce;

Third, the defendant [intended] [knew] that the offense would injure any owner of that trade secret;

Fourth, the defendant knowingly:

> [[stole] [without authorization [appropriated] [took] [carried away] [concealed]] [obtained by fraud] [obtained by artifice] [obtained by deception] such information];
>
> *or*
>
> [without authorization [copied] [duplicated] [sketched] [drew] [photographed] [downloaded] [uploaded] [altered] [destroyed] [photocopied] [replicated] [transmitted] [delivered] [sent] [mailed] [communicated] [conveyed] such information];
>
> *or*
>
> [[received] [bought] [possessed] such information, knowing the same to have been [stolen] [appropriated without authorization] [obtained without authorization] [converted without authorization]].

### Comment

Use this instruction in "general criminal trade secrets" cases in which the benefit is "economic," and not for the benefit of a foreign government or instrumentality. *United States v. Liew*, 856 F.3d 585, 597 (9th Cir. 2017) (quoting *United States v. Hsu*, 155 F.3d 189, 195-96 (3d Cir. 1998)).

If the indictment charges conspiracy to commit theft of trade secrets (18 U.S.C. § 1832(a)(5)), the jury should be instructed that it is not necessary for the government to prove that the information the alleged conspirators intended to convert was, in fact, a trade secret. What is required is proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant and at least one other member of the conspiracy knowingly agreed to convert information that they reasonably believed was a trade

secret and did so for the economic benefit of anyone other than the owner. This is because the defendant's guilt or innocence on this charge depends on what he believed the circumstances to be, not what they actually were. *See Liew*, 856 F.3d at 594, 600; *United States v. Nosal*, 844 F.3d 1024, 1044-45 (9th Cir. 2016).

Similarly, if the indictment charges attempt to commit theft of trade secrets (18 U.S.C. § 1832(a)(4)), the jury should be instructed that the government is not required to prove that the information the defendant is alleged to have attempted to convert was, in fact, a trade secret. However, the government is required to prove the defendant reasonably believed that the information the defendant intended to convert was a trade secret. *Id*.

*Revised June 2021*

## 23.16 Trade Secret—Defined (18 U.S.C. § 1839(3))

The term "trade secret" means all forms and types of financial, business, scientific, technical, economic, or engineering information, including patterns, plans, compilations, program devices, formulas, designs, prototypes, methods, techniques, processes, procedures, programs, or codes, whether tangible or intangible, and whether or how stored, compiled, or memorialized physically, electronically, graphically, photographically, or in writing, if:

First, the information is actually secret because it is not generally known to or readily ascertainable through proper means by another person who can obtain economic value from the disclosure or use of the information;

Second, the owner thereof has taken reasonable measures to keep such information secret; and

Third, the information derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from being secret.

In addition, facts and information acquired by an employee, whether by memorization or some other means, in the course of his or her employment may potentially be trade secrets, but only if they meet the definition of a trade secret set forth above. However, the personal skills, talents, or abilities that an employee develops at his place of employment are not trade secrets.

The term "trade secret" can include compilations of public information when combined or compiled in a novel way, even if a portion or every individual portion of that compilation is generally known. Combinations or compilations of public information from a variety of different sources, when combined or compiled in a novel way, can be a trade secret. In such a case, if a portion of the trade secret is generally known or even if every individual portion of the trade secret is generally known, the compilation or combination of information may still qualify as a trade secret if it meets the definition of a trade secret set forth above.

### Comment

The three elements of the definition of "trade secret" were set forth in *United States v. Chung*, 659 F.3d 815, 824-25 (9th Cir. 2011). After *Chun*g, 18 U.S.C. § 1839(3) was amended to change the language from "the public" to the current "another person who can obtain economic value from the disclosure or use of the information." *United States v. Liew*, 856 F.3d 585, 597 (9th Cir. 2017).

To establish the second element, the government must prove that the trade secret owner took "reasonable measures to guard" the secret. The government is not required to "prove a negative" that the trade secret was never disclosed. *Id*. at 601.

"[A]n employee's personal skills, talents or abilities . . . are not trade secrets . . . [F]acts and information acquired during employment can only be trade secrets if they meet the given definition." *Id*. at 594 (cleaned up). "[I]ndividuals can independently develop technology through

proper means and [an employee] is free to leave an employer and use non-trade secret information and skills gained through that employment." *Id*. at 599.

The term "owner," with respect to a trade secret, means the person or entity in whom or in which rightful legal or equitable title to, or license in, the trade secret is reposed. 18 U.S.C. § 1839(4).

*Revised June 2021*

## 24. OTHER OFFENSES

**Instruction**


24.1 Misprision of Felony (18 U.S.C. § 4)
24.2 Arson or Attempted Arson (18 U.S.C. § 81)
24.3 Conspiracy to Commit Arson (18 U.S.C. § 81)
24.4 Escape from Custody (18 U.S.C. § 751(a))
24.5 Attempted Escape (18 U.S.C. § 751(a))
24.6 Assisting Escape (18 U.S.C. § 752(a))
24.7 Extortionate Credit Transactions (18 U.S.C. § 892)
24.8 False Impersonation of Citizen of United States (18 U.S.C. § 911)
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24.15 Perjury—Testimony (18 U.S.C. § 1621)
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24.17 False Declaration Before Grand Jury or Court (18 U.S.C. § 1623)
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24.22 Lacey Act—Import or Export of Illegally Taken Fish, Wildlife, or Plants (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372, 3373(d)(1)(A))
24.23 Lacey Act—Commercial Activity in Illegally Taken Fish, Wildlife, or Plants (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372, 3373(d)(1)(B))
24.24 Lacey Act—Defendant Should Have Known That Fish, Wildlife, or Plants Were Illegally Taken (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372, 3373(d)(2))
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24.26 Soliciting or Receiving Kickbacks in Connection with Medicare or Federal Health Care Program Payments (42 U.S.C. § 1320a-7b(b)(1)(A))
24.27 False Entry in Bank Records (18 U.S.C § 1005)
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24.29 Receiving the Proceeds of Extortion (18 U.S.C. § 880)
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24.32 Paying A Bribe—Elements (18 U.S.C. § 666(a)(2))
24.33 Definition of "Agent" (18 U.S.C. § 666)

## 24.1 Misprision of Felony (18 U.S.C. § 4)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with misprision of felony in violation of Section 4 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that crime, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, a federal felony was committed, as charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment;

Second, the defendant had knowledge of the commission of that felony;

Third, the defendant had knowledge that the conduct was a federal felony;

Fourth, the defendant failed to notify a federal authority as soon as possible; and

Fifth, the defendant did an affirmative act, as alleged, to conceal the crime.

A felony is a crime punishable by a term of imprisonment of more than one year.

Mere failure to report a federal felony is not a crime. The defendant must also commit some affirmative act designed to conceal the fact that a federal felony has been committed.

### Comment

*See United States v. Sullivan*, 159 F.4th 579, 588-90 (9th Cir. 2025) *amending on denial of reh'g en banc*, 131 F.4th 776 (9th Cir. 2025); *United States v. Olson*, 856 F.3d 1216 (9th Cir. 2017).

With respect to the third element, "'[t]he defendant need not know the precise term of imprisonment authorized by law, but at least [he] must know the potential punishment exceeds one year in prison.'" *Sullivan*, 159 F.4th at 590 (quoting *Olson*, 856 F.3d at 1224).

*Revised March 2026*

## 24.2 Arson or Attempted Arson (18 U.S.C. § 81)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [attempted] arson in violation of Section 81 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[intentionally set fire to or burned] [intended to set fire to or burn]] [*specify building*];

Second, [*specify building*] was located on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*]; [and]

Third, the defendant acted wrongfully and without justification[.] [; and]

[Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward committing the crime.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, the defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of the crime.]

[If you decide that the defendant is guilty, you must then decide whether the government has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that [the building was regularly used by people as a place in which to live and sleep] [a person's life was placed in jeopardy].]

### Comment

If the charge is conspiracy to commit the crime, use Instruction 24.3 (Conspiracy to Commit Arson).

As to the second element of the instruction regarding federal jurisdiction, "special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 7. While federal jurisdiction over the place may be determined as a matter of law, the locus of the offense within that place is an issue for the jury. *United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982).

The bracketed language stating an additional element applies only when the charge is an attempt. In attempt cases, "[t]o constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of

culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 24.3 Conspiracy to Commit Arson (18 U.S.C. § 81)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with conspiracy to commit arson in violation of Section 81 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, beginning on or about [*date*], and ending on or about [*date*], there was an agreement between two or more persons to commit arson; and

Second, the defendant became a member of the conspiracy knowing of its object and intending to help accomplish it.

As used in this instruction "arson" is the intentional setting of a fire to or burning [*specify building*] located on [*specify place of federal jurisdiction*], which is wrongful and without justification.

A conspiracy is a kind of criminal partnership—an agreement of two or more persons to commit one or more crimes. The crime of conspiracy is the agreement to do something unlawful; it does not matter whether the crime agreed upon was committed.

For a conspiracy to have existed, it is not necessary that the conspirators made a formal agreement or that they agreed on every detail of the conspiracy. It is not enough, however, that they simply met, discussed matters of common interest, acted in similar ways, or perhaps helped one another. You must find that there was a plan to commit arson.

One becomes a member of a conspiracy by willfully participating in the unlawful plan with the intent to advance or further some object or purpose of the conspiracy, even though the person does not have full knowledge of all the details of the conspiracy. Furthermore, one who willfully joins an existing conspiracy is as responsible for it as the originators. On the other hand, one who has no knowledge of a conspiracy, but happens to act in a way that furthers some object or purpose of the conspiracy, does not thereby become a conspirator. Similarly, a person does not become a conspirator merely by associating with one or more persons who are conspirators, nor merely by knowing that a conspiracy exists.

[If you decide that the defendant is guilty, you must then decide whether the government has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that [the building was regularly used by people as a place in which to live and sleep] [a person's life was placed in jeopardy].]

### Comment

"Special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 7. While federal jurisdiction over the place may be determined as a matter of law, the locus of the offense within that place is an issue for the jury. *United States v. Gipe,* 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982).

*See* Comment to Instruction 11.1 (Conspiracy—Elements). Because 18 U.S.C. § 81 does

not expressly require proof of an overt act, the third element of Instruction 11.1 (overt act) is not included in this instruction. *United States v. Shabani*, 513 U.S. 10, 15-17 (1994) (holding that under "the plain language of the statute and settled interpretive principles," proof of an overt act is not necessary for violation of drug conspiracy statute, 21 U.S.C. § 846); *see also United States v. Montgomery*, 150 F.3d 983, 997-98 (9th Cir. 1998) (recognizing that reasoning in *Shabani* obviates need for proof of an overt act in furtherance of conspiracy under 21 U.S.C. § 963).

## 24.4 Escape from Custody (18 U.S.C. § 751(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with escape from custody in violation of Section 751(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was in the custody of [*specify custodian*];

Second, the defendant was in custody by virtue of [*specify reason for or type of custody*]; and

Third, the defendant knowingly and voluntarily left custody without permission.

### Comment

An intent to avoid confinement is not an element of escape. *United States v. Bailey*, 444 U.S. 394, 408 (1980).

Section 751(a) provides a maximum punishment of one year in prison for certain types of custody, such as custody imposed by virtue of an arrest for a misdemeanor, and a maximum punishment of five years in prison for other types of custody, such as custody imposed by virtue of a felony arrest. It is therefore necessary to include the type of custody in the instruction. *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466, 490 (2000) (holding that other than fact of prior conviction, any fact that increases statutory maximum must be submitted to jury).

For cases considering what constitutes federal custody under 18 U.S.C. § 751(a), *see United States v. Brown*, 875 F.3d 1235, 1239 (9th Cir. 2017) (holding that federal inmate in state custody under writ of habeas corpus ad prosequendum was in federal custody); *United States v. Burke*, 694 F.3d 1062, 1064-65 (9th Cir. 2012) (holding that defendant who resided at residential reentry center under supervised release was not in federal custody).

*Revised Sept. 2018*

## 24.5 Attempted Escape (18 U.S.C. § 751(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with attempted escape from custody in violation of Section 751(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was in the custody of [*specify custodian*];

Second, the defendant was in custody by virtue of [*specify reason for or type of custody*];

Third, the defendant intended to escape from custody; and

Fourth, the defendant did something that was a substantial step toward escaping from custody.

A "substantial step" is conduct that strongly corroborated the defendant's intent to commit the crime. To constitute a substantial step, the defendant's act or actions must unequivocally demonstrate that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances. Mere preparation is not a substantial step toward committing the crime.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 24.4 (Escape from Custody).

"To constitute a substantial step, a defendant's actions must cross the line between preparation and attempt by unequivocally demonstrating that the crime will take place unless interrupted by independent circumstances." *United States v. Goetzke*, 494 F.3d 1231, 1237 (9th Cir. 2007) (per curiam) (quoting *United States v. Nelson*, 66 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 1995)).

The "strongly corroborated" language in this instruction comes from *United States v. Snell*, 627 F.2d 186, 187 (9th Cir. 1980) (per curiam) ("A conviction for attempt requires proof of culpable intent and conduct constituting a substantial step toward commission of the crime that strongly corroborates that intent."), and *United States v. Darby*, 857 F.2d 623, 625 (9th Cir. 1988) (same).

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously as to which particular act or actions constituted a substantial step toward the commission of a crime. *United States v. Hofus*, 598 F.3d 1171, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010).

"[A] person may be convicted of an attempt to commit a crime even though that person may have actually completed the crime." *United States v. Rivera-Relle*, 333 F.3d 914, 921 (9th Cir. 2003).

*Revised May 2023*

## 24.6 Assisting Escape (18 U.S.C. § 752(a))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with assisting escape in violation of Section 752(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*name of escapee*] was in the custody of [*specify custodian*] by virtue of [*specify reason for or type of custody*];

Second, [*name of escapee*] [[left] [attempted to leave]] [[his] [her]] custody, without permission;

Third, the defendant knew that [*name of escapee*] did not have permission to leave; and

Fourth, the defendant assisted [*name of escapee*] in [leaving] [attempting to leave].

### Comment

Section 752(a) provides a maximum punishment of one year in prison for certain types of custody, such as custody imposed by virtue of an arrest for a misdemeanor, and a maximum punishment of five years in prison for other types of custody, such as custody imposed by virtue of a felony arrest. It is therefore necessary to include the type of custody in the instruction. *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466, 490 (2000) (other than prior conviction, any fact that increases statutory maximum must be submitted to jury).

## 24.7 Extortionate Credit Transactions (18 U.S.C. § 892)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with making an extortionate extension of credit in violation of Section 892 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly extended credit to [*name of debtor*]; and

Second, at the time the credit was extended, the defendant as a creditor and [*name of debtor*] as a debtor both understood that delay or failure in making repayment could result in the use of violence or other criminal means to harm the person, reputation, or property of some person.

## 24.8 False Impersonation of Citizen of United States (18 U.S.C. § 911)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with misrepresenting [himself] [herself] to be a citizen of the United States. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant directly and falsely represented [himself] [herself] to be a citizen of the United States;

Second, the defendant was not a citizen of the United States at that time;

Third, the defendant made such false representation willfully, that is, the misrepresentation was voluntarily and deliberately made; and

Fourth, the false representation was made to someone who had good reason to make inquiry into defendant's citizenship status.

### Comment

In *United States v. Anguiano-Morfin*, 713 F.3d 1208 (9th Cir. 2013), the Ninth Circuit explained that, when a defendant charged with falsely impersonating a United States citizen relies on the defense that he genuinely believed that he was a United States citizen, the "best course" is to instruct the jury that the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant knew that his claim to United States citizenship was false, and that a "reasonable doubt as to whether [the defendant] knew his claim to United States citizenship was false" must result in an acquittal. *Id*. at 1210. The Ninth Circuit explained that in such cases the jury instructions should make clear that the defendant's subjective belief is the dispositive issue. *Id*.

In *United States v. Karaouni*, 379 F.3d 1139, 1144 (9th Cir. 2004), the Ninth Circuit held that the representation must be "direct" and that a statement from which United States citizenship could be inferred is insufficient. "Willfully" requires proof that the misrepresentation was "voluntary and deliberate." *Id.* at 1142. The fourth element is required by Ninth Circuit case law limiting the reach of the statute to avoid First Amendment overbreadth issues. *Id.* at 1142 n.7.

*Revised July 2013*

## 24.9 False Impersonation of Federal Officer or Employee (18 U.S.C. § 912)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with fraud while impersonating a federal officer or employee in violation of Section 912 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant falsely pretended to be an [officer] [employee] acting under the authority of [the United States] [*specify federal department, agency, or officer*]; and

Second, the defendant [acted as such] [in such pretended character demanded or obtained [*specify thing of value*]].

### Comment

Two options are afforded for the second element because 18 U.S.C. § 912 states two offenses. It has been held to be duplicitous to charge both falsely acting as a federal officer and demanding or obtaining money while falsely acting as a federal officer in a single count. *United States v. Aguilar*, 756 F.2d 1418, 1422 (9th Cir. 1985).

To review the intent element of 18 U.S.C. § 912, *see United States v. Tomsha-Miguel*, 766 F.3d 1041, 1046-47 (9th Cir. 2014).

To review the First Amendment limits on criminal laws that penalize false speech, *see United States v. Swisher*, 811 F.3d 299, 315-16 (9th Cir. 2016).

*Revised Mar. 2017*

## 24.10 False Statement to Government Agency (18 U.S.C. § 1001)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with knowingly and willfully [making a false statement] [using a document containing a false statement] in a matter within the jurisdiction of a governmental agency or department in violation of Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [made a false statement] [used a writing that contained a false statement];

Second, the [statement][writing] was made in a matter within the jurisdiction of the [*specify government agency or department*];

Third, the defendant acted willfully; that is, the defendant acted deliberately and with knowledge both that the statement was untrue and that his or her conduct was unlawful; and

Fourth, the [statement] [writing] was material to the decisions or activities of the [*specify government agency or department*]; that is, it had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the agency's decisions or activities.

### Comment

The Ninth Circuit has held the common law test for materiality, as reflected in the last sentence of this instruction, is the standard to use when false statement statutes such as 18 U.S.C. §1001 are charged. *United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008) (citing *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995)); *see also United States v. Kirst*, 54 F.4th 610, 624 (9th Cir. 2022) (affirming jury instruction regarding materiality element on grounds that it accorded with Model Criminal Jury Instruction 24.10 and *Peterson*). "The false statement need not have actually influenced the agency . . . and the agency need not rely on the information in fact for it to be material." *United States v. Serv. Deli Inc*., 151 F.3d 938, 941 (9th Cir. 1998) (citations omitted); *see also United States v. King*, 735 F.3d 1098, 1108 (9th Cir. 2013).

No mental state is required with respect to the fact that a matter is within the jurisdiction of a federal agency, and the false statement need not be made directly to the government agency. *United States v. Green*, 745 F.2d 1205, 1208-10 (9th Cir. 1984). There is no requirement that the defendant acted with the intention of influencing the government agency. *United States v. Yermian*, 468 U.S. 63, 73 & n.13 (1984). The initial determination whether the matter is one within the jurisdiction of a department or agency of the United States—apart from the issue of materiality—should be made by the court as a matter of law. *United States v. F.J. Vollmer & Co.,* 1 F.3d 1511, 1518 (7th Cir. 1993).

To make a false statement "willfully" under Section 1001, the defendant must have both the specific intent to make a false statement and the knowledge that his or her conduct was unlawful. Specific intent does not require evil intent but only that the defendant act deliberately and knowingly. *See United States v. Heuer*, 4 F.3d 723, 732 (9th Cir. 1993). The requirement that the defendant knew that his or her conduct was unlawful is based on *Bryan v. United States*,

wherein the Supreme Court stated that "in order to establish a willful violation of a statute, the Government must prove that the defendant acted with knowledge that his conduct was unlawful." 524 U.S. 184, 191-92 (1998) (quoting *Ratzlaf v. United States*, 510 U.S. 135, 139 (1994)). Later, the Solicitor General conceded that a district court erred by giving an instruction on "willfulness" that does not comply with *Bryan. Ajoku v. United States,* 134 S. Ct. 1872 (mem.) (U.S. Apr. 21, 2014).

In determining whether the government has carried its burden to prove a defendant's knowledge of unlawfulness, the jurors may rely on their common sense and life experiences in the absence of direct evidence. *See United States v. Charley*, 1 F.4th 637, 644 (9th Cir. 2021) (quoting *United States v. Ramirez*, 714 F.3d 1134, 1138 (9th Cir. 2013)).

Materiality must be demonstrated by the government, *United States v. Oren,* 893 F.2d 1057, 1063 (9th Cir. 1990); *United States v. Talkington,* 589 F.2d 415, 416 (9th Cir. 1978), and must be submitted to the jury. *Gaudin*, 515 U.S. at 506. Actual reliance is not required. *Talkington*, 589 F.2d at 417 (citation omitted). The materiality test applies to each allegedly false statement submitted to the jury. *Id.*

Depending on the facts in evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g.*, "with all of you agreeing as to which statement was false and material"). *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

For purposes of determining proper venue, the location where the statement is uttered is the location of the crime. *United States v. Fortenberry*, 89 F.4th 702, 712 (9th Cir. 2023) ("Section 1001 offense is complete at the time the false statement is uttered, and because no actual effect on federal authorities is necessary to sustain a conviction, the location of the crime must be understood to be the place where the defendant makes the statement.").

*Revised March 2024*

## 24.11 Harboring or Concealing Person from Arrest (18 U.S.C. § 1071)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [harboring] [concealing] a person from arrest in violation of Section 1071 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, a federal warrant had been issued for the arrest of [*name of person*];

Second, the defendant knowingly [[harbored] [concealed]] [*name of person*];

Third, at the time the defendant [[harbored] [concealed]] [*name of person*], the defendant knew that a warrant had been issued for the arrest of [*name of person*].

Fourth, the defendant intended to prevent the discovery or arrest of [*name of person*].

### Comment

A violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1071 requires proof of four elements. *United States v. Hill*, 279 F.3d 731, 737-38 (9th Cir. 2002) (setting forth four elements listed in instruction). "[A]ny physical act of providing assistance, including food, shelter, and other assistance to aid the [fugitive] in avoiding detection and apprehension will make out a violation of section 1071." *Id.* at 738 ((alterations in original) (quoting *United States v. Yarbrough*, 852 F.2d 1522, 1543 (9th Cir. 1988)) (holding that giving money to fugitive to shelter, feed, or hide himself is not harboring, while directly providing shelter, food, or aid is harboring).

A wife may be convicted of harboring her fugitive husband even if the harboring occurs outside the United States (*i.e.*, Mexico). *Hill*, 279 F.3d at 733.

Failure to disclose a fugitive's location to law enforcement and making false statements to law enforcement are not crimes under the statute. *Yarbrough*, 852 F.2d at 1543.

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.12 Harboring or Concealing Escaped Prisoner (18 U.S.C. § 1072)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [harboring] [concealing] an escaped prisoner in violation of Section 1072 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, [*name of prisoner*] escaped from [the custody of [*e.g.*, a Deputy U.S. Marshal]] [a federal penal or correctional institution]; and

Second, the defendant thereafter knowingly [[harbored] [concealed]] [*name of prisoner*].

### Comment

As to the first element, a defendant is in "federal custody" for the purposes of this statute if he or she is confined under the authority of the Attorney General. It does not matter that the prisoner is not physically confined in a federal institution, nor that actual federal officials supervise custody. *United States v. Eaglin*, 571 F.2d 1069, 1072-73 (9th Cir. 1977); *see also United States v. Hobson*, 519 F.2d 765, 771 (9th Cir. 1975) (holding that "escape from an institution designated by the Attorney General, pursuant to a commitment to his custody, under a federal sentence, is an escape from 'the custody of the Attorney General' in the legal sense, even though the institution is run by the State").

As to the issue of whether walking away from a half-way house is an escape, *see United States v. Jones*, 569 F.2d 499, 500 (9th Cir. 1978) ("A federal prisoner participating in a pre-release or half-way house program by designation of the Attorney General commits an escape when he willfully violates the terms of his extended confinement."). As to the issue of whether not returning from temporary leave is an escape, *see Eaglin*, 571 at 1073 ("The custody of the Attorney General continues despite the unsupervised nature of the temporary release from confinement granted under a social pass . . . .").

Any "physical act of providing assistance, including food, shelter, and other assistance to aid the fugitive in avoiding detection and apprehension will make out a violation of section 1071." *United States v. Hill*, 279 F.3d 731, 738 (9th Cir. 2002) (alterations in original) (quoting *United States v. Yarbrough*, 852 F.2d 1522, 1543 (9th Cir. 1988)) (holding that giving money to fugitive to shelter, feed, or hide himself is not harboring, while directly providing shelter, food, or aid is harboring).

Regarding the second element, the government must prove that the defendant knew the person aided was an escapee but does not need to prove that the defendant knew the escape was from federal custody. *Eaglin*, 571 F.2d at 1074 n.4; *see also United States v. Kutas*, 542 F.2d 527, 528-29 (9th Cir. 1976) (holding no error in instructing jury that "[t]he words 'harbor' and 'conceal' refer to any physical act of providing assistance, including food, shelter, and other assistance to aid the prisoner in avoiding detection and apprehension").

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## 24.13 Determination of Indian Status for Offenses Committed Within Indian Country (18 U.S.C. § 1153)

For the defendant to be found to be an Indian, the government must prove the following, beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant has some quantum of Indian blood, whether or not that blood is traceable to a member of a federally recognized tribe; and

Second, the defendant was a member of, or affiliated with, a federally recognized tribe at the time of the offense.

[I instruct you that [*specify tribe*] is a federally recognized tribe.]

Whether the defendant was a member of, or affiliated with, a federally recognized tribe is determined by considering four factors, in declining order of importance, as follows:

(1) Enrollment in a federally recognized tribe;
(2) Government recognition formally and informally through receipt of assistance reserved only to individuals who are members, or are eligible to become members, of federally recognized tribes;
(3) Enjoyment of the benefits of affiliation with a federally recognized tribe; and
(4) Social recognition as someone affiliated with a federally recognized tribe through residence on a reservation and participation in the social life of a federally recognized tribe.

### Comment

Indian status is a jurisdictional element under 18 U.S.C. § 1153. *See United States v. Bruce*, 394 F.3d 1215, 1223-24 (9th Cir. 2005). "[T]he government must prove that the defendant was an Indian at the time of the offense with which the defendant is charged." *United States v. Zepeda*, 792 F.3d 1103, 1113 (9th Cir. 2015) (en banc). This rule applies with the same force when the Indian status of the victim is in question under 18 U.S.C. § 1152. *United States v. Reza-Ramos*, 816 F.3d 1110, 1120-21 (9th Cir. 2016). As to the first element, the defendant must have a blood connection to an Indian tribe, but the tribe need not be federally recognized. *Zepeda*, 792 F.3d at 1113. With regard to the second element, the defendant must have a current affiliation with a federally recognized tribe. *Id*. "The federally recognized tribe with which a defendant is currently affiliated need not be, and sometimes is not, the same as the tribe or tribes from which his bloodline derives." *Id*. at 1110. It is plain error for the court to fail to instruct on each of the two prongs of the Indian status test. *Reza-Ramos*, 816 F.3d at 1123.

Offenses committed within Indian country are identified in 18 U.S.C. § 1153(a) as follows: murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, maiming, a felony under chapter 109A (sexual abuse felonies), incest, a felony assault under § 113, assault against an individual who has not attained the age of 16 years, felony child abuse or neglect, arson, burglary, robbery, and a felony under § 661 (embezzlement and theft) committed by any Indian against the person or property of another Indian or other person within Indian country.

For the enumerated offenses prosecuted under 18 U.S.C. § 1153, the court should give Instruction 24.13, and the jury instruction used for the substantive offense should include two additional elements, as follows:

> [Number of element], the [*specify offense*] occurred at a place within the [name of the Indian Country where the offense allegedly occurred], which I instruct you is in Indian Country.
>
> [Number of element], the defendant is an Indian.

Whether the offense occurred at a particular location is a question of fact to be decided by the jury, with the court determining the jurisdictional question of whether the location is within Indian Country as a question of law. *See United States v. Gipe*, 672 F.2d 777, 779 (9th Cir. 1982).

The court also must instruct the jury of the "declining order of importance" of the four factors used to determine whether the defendant was a member of, or affiliated with, a federally recognized tribe at the time of the offense. *Zepeda*, 729 F.3d at 1114.

Whether a tribe is federally recognized is a question of law to be determined by the court. *Id*. "[T]he list of federally recognized tribes [at the time of the offense] prepared by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is the best evidence of a tribe's federal recognition." *Reza-Ramos*, 816 F.3d at 1122. "If the court has found that the tribe of which the government claims the defendant is a member, or with which the defendant is affiliated, is federally recognized, it should inform the jury that the tribe is federally recognized as a matter of law." *Zepeda*, 792 F.3d at 1114-15.

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## 24.14 Perjury—Testimony (18 U.S.C. § 1621)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with perjury in violation of Section 1621 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant testified under oath orally or in writing that [*specify false testimony*];

Second, the testimony was false[, with all of you agreeing as to which statement was false];

Third, the false testimony was material to the matters before [*specify proceeding*]; that is, the testimony had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the actions of [*specify, for example,* the grand jury]; and

Fourth, the defendant acted willfully, that is deliberately and with knowledge that the testimony was false.

The testimony of one witness is not enough to support a finding that the testimony of [*name of defendant*] was false. There must be additional evidence—either the testimony of another person or other evidence—that tends to support the testimony of falsity. The other evidence, standing alone, need not convince you beyond a reasonable doubt that the testimony was false. But after considering all the evidence on the subject, you must be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the testimony was false.

### Comment

The bracketed language in the second element of this instruction should be given when the indictment charges that the defendant made more than one false statement. *See Vitello v. United States*, 425 F.2d 416, 423 (9th Cir. 1970); *see also* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

The Committee believes that what is "a competent tribunal, officer, or person, in any case in which a law of the United States authorizes an oath to be administered" for purposes of § 1621 is a question of law and need not be submitted to the jury.

The Supreme Court has held that materiality is a question of fact for the jury. *See Johnson v. United States*, 520 U.S. 461, 465-66 (1997) (discussing in context of perjury prosecution). Accordingly, it is necessary to include materiality as an element of the offense in this instruction. *See, e.g.*, Instruction 24.10 (False Statement to Government Agency). The common law test for materiality in the false statement statutes, as reflected in the third element of this instruction, is the preferred formulation. *United States v. Peterson,* 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008).

Because the jury must determine whether a statement is material under *Johnson*, the definition of materiality has been included in this instruction. *United States v. McKenna*, 327 F.3d 830, 839 (9th Cir. 2003) (discussing materiality of false statements in context of perjury).

Whether a statement that may be literally true can support a conviction requires careful consideration. *See United States v. Thomas*, 612 F.3d 1107, 1121-23 (9th Cir. 2010). If the

defendant's theory of defense is that his or her statement was literally true, some modification of the instruction may be appropriate. *Id.*

When the defendant is accused of multiple falsehoods, the jury must be unanimous on at least one of the charges in the indictment. *Vitello*, 425 F.2d at 423.

The last paragraph of the instruction concerning corroboration is worded to cover the case where the perjury is in the giving of testimony. When the perjury consists of one or more false statements in a writing, such as an affidavit, it should be substituted for "testimony." This paragraph applies to a charge of perjury in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1621 and to a charge of subornation of perjury in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1622. *See* Instruction 24.15 (Subornation of Perjury). In the case of a § 1622 charge, the name of the person alleged to have been suborned should be inserted.

A paragraph in the instruction concerning corroboration is not required when a defendant is accused of violating 18 U.S.C. § 1623. *See* Instruction 24.16 (False Declaration Before Grand Jury or Court).

When the alleged false testimony is proved by circumstantial evidence, corroboration is not required. *See Gebhard v. United States,* 422 F.2d 281, 288 (9th Cir. 1970).

Corroborative evidence may be circumstantial and need not be independently sufficient to establish the falsity of the testimony. *See United States v. Howard*, 445 F.2d 821, 822 (9th Cir. 1971); *Arena v. United States*, 226 F.2d 227, 233 (9th Cir. 1955).

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## 24.15 Subornation of Perjury (18 U.S.C. § 1622)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with subornation of perjury in violation of Section 1622 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant voluntarily and intentionally persuaded [*name of witness*] to commit perjury;

Second, the defendant acted with the intent that [*name of witness*] would deceive the [court] [jury]; and

Third, [*name of witness*] committed perjury in that:

(a) [he] [she] testified under oath or affirmation at [*describe proceeding*] that [*specify alleged false testimony*];

(b) the testimony given was false[, with all of you agreeing at to which statement was false];

(c) at the time [*name of witness*] testified, [he] [she] knew the testimony was false; and

(d) the false testimony was material to the matter before the [court] [grand jury]; that is, the testimony had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the actions of [*specify, for example:* the grand jury].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 24.14 (Perjury—Testimony).

The bracketed language in subpart (b) of the third element of this instruction should be given when the indictment charges that the defendant made more than one false statement. *See Vitello v. United States*, 425 F.2d 416, 423 (9th Cir. 1970). *See also* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

Language in the instruction concerning corroboration is not required when a defendant is accused of a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1623 but is required under 18 U.S.C. § 1621. *See* Instruction 24.14 (Perjury—Testimony).

The Supreme Court has held that materiality is a question of fact for the jury. *See Johnson v. United States*, 520 U.S. 461, 465-66 (1997) (discussing materiality of false statements in context of perjury). Accordingly, it is necessary to include materiality as an element of the offense in this instruction. The common law test for materiality in the false statement statutes, as reflected in the third element of this instruction, is the preferred formulation. *See United States v. Peterson,* 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008).

Because the jury must determine whether a statement is material under *Johnson*, the definition of materiality has been included in this instruction. *See United States v. McKenna*, 327 F.3d 830, 839 (9th Cir. 2003) (discussing materiality of false statements in context of perjury).

A perjury is an essential element of this offense. *See Catrino v. United States,* 176 F.2d 884, 886-87 (9th Cir. 1949). The use of "any perjury" in § 1622 evidences a Congressional intent that subornation of perjury is committed not only by one who procures another to commit perjury in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1621, but also by one who procures another to make a false statement in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1623. *See United States v. Gross,* 511 F.2d 910, 915-16 (3d Cir. 1975).

If the suborned testimony is in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1621, the "two-witness" or "corroboration" rule applies. *See* Instruction 24.14 (Perjury—Testimony). Corroboration, however, is not required if the suborned testimony is in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1623. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1623(e); *Gross*, 511 F.2d at 915-16.

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## 24.16 False Declaration Before Grand Jury or Court (18 U.S.C. § 1623)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with having made a false declaration in violation of Section 1623 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant testified under oath in or ancillary to any [court] [grand jury] proceedings;

Second, the testimony was false [, with all of you agreeing as to which statement was false];

Third, the defendant knew that the testimony was false; and

Fourth, the false testimony was material to the matters before the [court] [grand jury]; that is, it had a natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the [court] [grand jury's investigations].

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instructions 24.14 (Perjury—Testimony) and 24.15 (Subornation of Perjury).

The testimony under oath may be in conjunction with a proceeding that is ancillary to the main proceeding involving the defendant. *See United States v. Brugnara*, 856 F.3d 1198, 1209 (9th Cir. 2017) (involving false declaration made during supervised release revocation hearing).

The bracketed language in the second element of this instruction should be given when the indictment charges that the defendant made more than one false statement. *See Vitello v. United States*, 425 F.2d 416, 423 (9th Cir. 1970); s*ee* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

Materiality of the false declaration is an element of the offense and therefore an issue for the jury. *See Johnson v. United States*, 520 U.S. 461, 465-66 (1997). The common law test for materiality in the false statement statutes, as reflected in the fourth element of this instruction, is the preferred formulation. *See United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008). The government must present evidence from an earlier trial to prove that the statements were material; "simply offering the defendant's statement itself is not enough." *United States v. Leon-Reyes*, 177 F.3d 816, 819 (9th Cir. 1999).

Because the jury must determine whether a statement is material under *Johnson*, the definition of materiality has been included in this instruction. *United States v. McKenna*, 327 F.3d 830, 839 (9th Cir. 2003) (discussing materiality of false statements in context of perjury).

Whether a statement that may be literally true can support a conviction requires careful consideration. *See United States v. Thomas*, 612 F.3d 1107, 1121-23 (9th Cir. 2010). If the

defendant's theory of defense is that his or her statement was literally true, some modification of the instruction may be appropriate. *Id.*

Note that § 1623 applies only to "any proceeding before or ancillary to any court or grand jury of the United States." An "ancillary proceeding" is "an action conducted by a judicial representative or an action conducted pursuant to explicit statutory or judicial procedures." *United States v. Tibbs,* 600 F.2d 19, 21 (6th Cir. 1979); s*ee also United States v. Krogh*, 366 F. Supp. 1255, 1256 (D.D.C.1973) (discussing sworn deposition in ancillary proceeding).

Section 1623(c) authorizes a person to be accused of having "made two or more declarations, which are inconsistent to the degree that one of them is necessarily false," and the government is not required to specify which declaration is false.

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## 24.17 Failure to Appear (18 U.S.C. § 3146(a)(1))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with failure to appear in violation of Section 3146(a)(1) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was released from custody under the Bail Reform Act;

Second, the defendant was required to appear in court or before a judicial officer on [*date*];

Third, the defendant knew of this required appearance; and

Fourth, the defendant intentionally failed to appear as required.

### Comment

If the defendant becomes a fugitive before the hearing, the defendant's release is no longer pursuant to the Bail Reform Act, and the defendant thus may not be convicted under § 3146(a). *See United States v. Castaldo*, 636 F.2d 1169, 1172 (9th Cir. 1980). Vacating a hearing before its occurrence precludes satisfaction of the second element because the defendant is no longer "under . . . order to appear on any date certain"; this rule applies even when the hearing is vacated because the defendant has failed to appear at prior hearings. *See United States v. Fisher*, 137 F.3d 1158, 1163 (9th Cir. 1998).

"When a defendant engages in a course of conduct designed to avoid notice of his trial date, the government is not required to prove the defendant's actual knowledge of that date." *Weaver v. United States*, 37 F.3d 1411, 1413 (9th Cir. 1994).

"A deliberate decision to disobey the law . . . cannot be found beyond a reasonable doubt merely from nonappearance and notice of obligation to appear." *United States v. Wilson,* 631 F.2d 118, 119 (9th Cir. 1980).

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## 24.18 Failure to Surrender (18 U.S.C. § 3146(a)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with failure to surrender in violation of Section 3146(a)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was sentenced to a term of imprisonment;

Second, the defendant was released from custody under the Bail Reform Act;

Third, the defendant was ordered to surrender for service of the sentence on [*date*];

Fourth, the defendant knew of the order to surrender; and

Fifth, the defendant intentionally failed to surrender as ordered.

### Comment

*See* Comment to Instruction 24.17 (Failure to Appear (18 U.S.C. § 3146(a)(1))).\

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### 24.19 Failure to Appear or Surrender—Affirmative Defense (18 U.S.C. § 3146(c))

It is a defense to a charge of failure to [appear] [surrender] if uncontrollable circumstances prevented the person from [appearing] [surrendering]. To establish this defense, the defendant must prove that the following elements are more probably true than not true:

First, uncontrollable circumstances prevented the defendant from [appearing] [surrendering];

Second, the defendant did not contribute to the creation of the circumstances in reckless disregard of the requirement to [appear] [surrender]; and

Third, the defendant [appeared] [surrendered] as soon as the uncontrollable circumstances ceased to exist.

If you find that each of these elements is more probably true than not true, you must find the defendant not guilty of the charge of failure to [appear] [surrender].

**Comment**

*See United States v. Springer*, 51 F.3d 861, 866-68 (9th Cir. 1995) (discussing "uncontrollable circumstances" prong).

*Revied September 2025*

## 24.20 Excavating or Trafficking in Archaeological Resources (16 U.S.C. § 470ee(a), (b)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [excavating] [trafficking in] archaeological resources in violation of Section [470ee(a)] [470ee(b)(2)] of Title 16 the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

[First, the defendant knowingly [[excavated] [removed] [damaged] [altered] [defaced]] [*specify archaeological resource*] while knowing that it was of archaeological interest and at least 100 years of age;]

*or*

[First, the defendant knowingly [[sold] [purchased] [exchanged] [transported] [received] [offered to sell] [offered to purchase] [offered to exchange]] [*specify archaeological resource*] while knowing that it was of archaeological interest and at least 100 years of age;]

Second, the [*specify archaeological resource*] was [[located on] [removed from]] [*specify public or Indian lands*]; and

Third, the defendant acted without a permit to do so from [*specify federal land manager*].

The government is not required to prove that the defendant knew that the [*specify archaeological resource*] was [[located on] [removed from]] [[public] [Indian]] land.

### Comment

A felony prosecution under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act requires proof that the defendant knew, or at least had reason to know, that the object taken is an "archaeological resource"; otherwise, the offense is a misdemeanor and knowledge that the object is of archaeological interest is not an element. *See United States v. Lynch*, 233 F.3d 1139, 1145-46 (9th Cir. 2000) (discussing prosecution under 16 U.S.C. § 470ee(a)).

Knowledge that the archaeological resource was on government land is not an element of the offense, only a jurisdictional prerequisite for prosecution. *Cf. United States v. Howey,* 427 F.2d 1017 (9th Cir. 1970) (holding that defendant's knowledge of government ownership of property is not element of the offense of theft of government property under 18 U.S.C. § 641).

Statutory maximum sentences are increased for offenses if the commercial or archaeological value of the archaeological resources at issue and the cost of restoration and repair of such resources exceeds the sum of $500. If the value of the resource is disputed, the jury should be instructed to make a finding of whether the value was more than $500. Archaeological value is what it would have cost the United States to engage in a full-blown archaeological dig to recover the archaeological information protected by the Act. *United States v. Ligon*, 440 F.3d 1182, 1185 (9th Cir. 2006).

For a definition of "archaeological resource," *see* 16 U.S.C. § 470bb (1). As to obtaining a permit from a federal land manager, *see* 16 U.S.C. § 470cc.

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## 24.21 Lacey Act—Import or Export of Illegally Taken Fish, Wildlife, or Plants (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372, 3373(d)(1)(A))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with violating Sections 3372 and 3373 of Title 16 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[imported] [exported]] [[fish] [wildlife] [plants]]; and

Second, the defendant knew that the [[imported] [exported]] [[fish] [wildlife] [plants]] had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under [United States law] [United States regulations] [United States treaties] [tribal law].

A defendant acts knowingly if [he] [she] is aware of the conduct and does not act through ignorance, mistake or accident. You may consider evidence of the defendant's words, acts, or omissions, along with all the other evidence, in deciding whether the defendant acted knowingly.

### Comment

This instruction is for use in any case involving a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3373(d)(1)(A) for the illegal importing or exporting of fish, wildlife, or plants. Under that section of the Lacey Act, criminal liability is premised on a finding of a violation of one of the subsections of 16 U.S.C. § 3372. For violations of § 3373(d)(1)(B), *see* Instruction 24.22. For violations of § 3373(d)(2), *see* Instruction 24.23. For violations of § 3373(d)(3), *see* Instruction 24.24.

When a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(1) (U.S. Laws, Treaties) is alleged, use this instruction without change. For offenses under subsections (a)(2) and (a)(3) of § 3372, the instruction should be modified as shown below.

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(2)(A) (fish or wildlife taken in violation of state or foreign law), substitute the following element:

> Second, the defendant knew that the [fish] [wildlife] had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation].

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(2)(B) (plants taken in violation of state or foreign law), substitute the following element:

> Second, the defendant knew that the plants had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] that [protects plants] [[regulates [the theft of plants] [the taking of plants from a park, forest reserve, or other officially protected area] [the taking of plants without, or contrary to, required authorization]] [without the payment of appropriate royalties, taxes, or stumpage fees required for the plant by any law or regulation of any state or any foreign law or regulation] [in violation of any limitation under any law or regulation of any state, or under any foreign law or regulation, governing the export or transshipment of plants].

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(3)(A) (fish or wildlife in special U.S. jurisdiction), substitute the following element:

> Second, the defendant possessed [fish] [wildlife] within the Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of the United States;

and add a new third element:

> Third, the defendant knew the [fish] [wildlife] had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] [tribal law].

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(3)(B) (plants in special U.S. jurisdiction), substitute the following element:

> Second, the defendant possessed plants within the Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of the United States;

and add a third element:

> Third, the defendant knew the plants had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] that [protects plants] [[regulates [the theft of plants] [the taking of plants from a park, forest reserve, or other officially protected area] [the taking of plants without, or contrary to, required authorization]] [without the payment of appropriate royalties, taxes, or stumpage fees required for the plant by any law or regulation of any state or any foreign law or regulation] [in violation of any limitation under any law or regulation of any state, or under any foreign law or regulation, governing the export or transshipment of plants].

When a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(2) is involved, consult 18 U.S.C. § 10 for a definition of interstate commerce or foreign commerce.

When a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(3) is involved, consult 18 U.S.C. § 7 for a definition of special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

The requirement that the defendant knew that the wildlife was possessed in violation of "a particular law" is not an element of the offense. *See, e.g., United States v. Santillan*, 243 F.3d 1125, 1129 (9th Cir. 2001) (concluding that Lacey Act does not require knowledge of specific law violated by the possession or other predicate act, so long as defendant knows that possession was unlawful).

"[A]ny foreign law" in the Lacey Act includes foreign regulations, even those based upon foreign laws invalidated by the foreign government after the time of the offense. *See United States v. Lee*, 937 F.2d 1388, 1391-93 (9th Cir. 1991).

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## 24.22 Lacey Act—Commercial Activity in Illegally Taken Fish, Wildlife, or Plants (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372, 3373(d)(1)(B))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with violating Sections 3372 and 3373 of Title 16 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knew that the [fish] [wildlife] [plants] had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of, or in a manner unlawful under [United States law] [United States regulations] [United States treaties] [tribal law];

Second, the market value of the [fish] [wildlife] [plants] actually [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] exceeded $350; and

Third, the defendant [[imported] [exported] [transported] [sold] [received] [acquired] [purchased]] [[fish] [wildlife] [plants]] by knowingly engaging in conduct that involved [its sale] [its purchase] [the offer to sell it] [the offer to purchase it] [the intent to sell it] [the intent to purchase it].

A defendant acts knowingly if [he] [she] is aware of the conduct and does not act through ignorance, mistake, or accident. You may consider evidence of the defendant's words, acts, or omissions, along with all the other evidence, in deciding whether the defendant acted knowingly.

### Comment

This instruction is for use in any case involving a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3373(d)(1)(B) involving the sale or purchase of, the offer of sale or purchase of, or the intent to sell or purchase, fish or wildlife or plants with a market value in excess of $350. Under that section of the Lacey Act, criminal liability is premised on a finding of a violation of one of the subsections of 16 U.S.C. § 3372. For violations of § 3373(d)(1)(A), *see* Instruction 24.21. For violations of § 3372(d)(2), *see* Instruction 24.23. For violations of § 3373(d)(3), *see* Instruction 24.24.

When a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(1) (U.S. Laws, Treaties) is alleged, use this instruction without change. For offenses under subsections (a)(2) and (a)(3) of § 3372, the elements of the instruction should be modified as shown below.

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(2)(A) (fish or wildlife taken in violation of state or foreign law), substitute the following elements for the first and third elements, keeping the second element unchanged:

> First, the defendant knew that the [fish] [wildlife] had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation];
>
> Third, the defendant [imported] [exported] [transported] [sold] [received] [acquired] [purchased] in interstate or foreign commerce the [fish] [wildlife] by knowingly engaging

in conduct that involved [[their sale] [their purchase] [the offer to sell them] [the offer to purchase them] [the intent to sell them] [the intent to purchase them]].

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(2)(B) (plants taken in violation of state or foreign law), substitute the following elements for the first and third elements, keeping the second element unchanged:

First, the defendant knew that the plants had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] that [protects plants] [[regulates [the theft of plants] [the taking of plants from a park, forest reserve, or other officially protected area] [the taking of plants without, or contrary to, required authorization]] [without the payment of appropriate royalties, taxes, or stumpage fees required for the plant by any law or regulation of any state or any foreign law or regulation] [in violation of any limitation under any law or regulation of any state, or under any foreign law or regulation, governing the export or transshipment of plants];

Third, the defendant [imported] [exported] [transported] [sold] [received] [acquired] [purchased] the plants in interstate or foreign commerce by knowingly engaging in conduct that involved the [sale] [purchase] [offer of sale] [offer to purchase] [intent to sell] [intent to purchase] the plants.

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(3)(A) (fish or wildlife in special U.S. jurisdiction), substitute the following elements:

First, the defendant knew that the [fish] [wildlife] had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] [tribal law];

Second, the market value of the [fish] [wildlife] actually [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] exceeded $350;

Third, the defendant, while within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, possessed [fish] [wildlife], knowing that it had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] [tribal law]; and

Fourth, while possessing the [fish] [wildlife] within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, the defendant knowingly engaged in conduct that involved [its sale or purchase] [the offer to sell or purchase it] [the intent to sell or purchase it].

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(3)(B) (plants in special maritime jurisdiction), substitute the following elements:

First, the defendant knew that the plants had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] that [protects plants] [[regulates [the theft of plants] [the taking of

plants from a park, forest reserve, or other officially protected area] [the taking of plants without, or contrary to, required authorization]] [without the payment of appropriate royalties, taxes, or stumpage fees required for the plant by any law or regulation of any state or any foreign law or regulation] [in violation of any limitation under any law or regulation of any state, or under any foreign law or regulation, governing the export or transshipment of plants];

Second, the market value of the plants actually [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] exceeded $350;

Third, the defendant, while within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, possessed plants, knowing that they had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] that [protects plants] [[regulates [the theft of plants] [the taking of plants from a park, forest reserve, or other officially protected area] [the taking of plants without, or contrary to, required authorization]] [without the payment of appropriate royalties, taxes, or stumpage fees required for the plant by any law or regulation of any state or any foreign law or regulation] [in violation of any limitation under any law or regulation of any state, or under any foreign law or regulation, governing the export or transshipment of plants]; and

Fourth, while possessing the plants within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, the defendant knowingly engaged in conduct that involved [their sale or purchase] [the offer to sell or purchase them] [the intent to sell or purchase them].

Normally, a specific definition of market value will not be necessary. If, however, special circumstances arise in which a definition would be appropriate under the facts of the case, the judge might consult *United States v. Stenberg*, 803 F.2d 422, 432-33 (9th Cir. 1986). When the case involves purchases made by government agents it is advisable to instruct the jury that the price paid by the government agent is not conclusive evidence of the market value; market value is the price a piece of property would bring if sold on the open market between a willing buyer and seller. *Id.*; *see also United States v. Atkinson*, 966 F.2d 1270, 1273 (9th Cir. 1992) (noting that proper method for valuing game under 16 U.S.C. § 3372(c) on guided hunt is value of offer to provide services).

*See United States v. Senchenko*, 133 F.3d 1153, 1156 (9th Cir. 1998) (permissible to infer commercial intent on facts presented).

"'[S]ale' for purposes of 16 U.S.C. § 3373(d)(1)(B) includes both the agreement to receive consideration for guiding or outfitting services and the actual provision of such guiding or outfitting services." *United States v. Fejes*, 232 F.3d 696, 701 (9th Cir. 2000).

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.23 Lacey Act—Defendant Should Have Known That Fish, Wildlife, or Plants Were Illegally Taken (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372, 3373(d)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with violating Sections 3372 and 3373 of Title 16 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [[imported] [exported] [transported] [sold] [received] [acquired] [purchased]] [[fish] [wildlife] [plants]]; and

Second, the defendant in the exercise of due care should have known that the [fish] [wildlife] [plants] had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under [United States Law] [United States regulations] [United States treaties] [tribal law].

A defendant acts knowingly if [he] [she] is aware of the act and does not act through ignorance, mistake, or accident. You may consider evidence of the defendant's words, acts, or omissions, along with all the other evidence, in deciding whether the defendant acted knowingly.

Due care means that degree of care that a reasonably prudent person would exercise under the same or similar circumstances.

### Comment

This instruction is for use in any case involving a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3373(d)(2), a misdemeanor. *See United States v. Hansen–Sturm*, 44 F.3d 793, 794 (9th Cir. 1995) (describing violation as a lesser included offense of felony provisions of Lacey Act). Liability is premised on a finding of a violation of one of the subsections of 16 U.S.C. § 3372. For violations of § 3373(d)(1)(A), *see* Instruction 24.21. For violations of §3373(d)(1)(B), *see* Instruction 24.22. For violations of § 3373(d)(3), *see* Instruction 24.24.

When a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(1) (U.S. Laws, Treaties) is alleged, use this instruction without change. For offenses under subsections (a)(2) and (a)(3) of § 3372, the elements of the instruction should be modified as shown below.

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(2)(A) (fish or wildlife taken in violation of state or foreign law), substitute the following elements:

> First, the defendant knowingly [[imported] [exported] [transported] [sold] [received] [acquired] [purchased]] [[fish] [wildlife]] in interstate or foreign commerce; and
>
> Second, the defendant in the exercise of due care should have known that the [fish] [wildlife] had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation].

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(2)(B) (plants taken in violation of state or foreign law), substitute the following elements:

First, the defendant knowingly [imported] [exported] [transported] [sold] [received] [acquired] [purchased] plants in interstate or foreign commerce; and

Second, the defendant in the exercise of due care should have known that the plants had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] that [protects plants] [[regulates [the theft of plants] [the taking of plants from a park, forest reserve, or other officially protected area] [the taking of plants without, or contrary to, required authorization]] [without the payment of appropriate royalties, taxes, or stumpage fees required for the plant by any law or regulation of any state or any foreign law or regulation] [in violation of any limitation under any law or regulation of any state, or under any foreign law or regulation, governing the export or transshipment of plants].

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(3)(A) (fish or wildlife in special U.S. jurisdiction), substitute the following elements:

First, while within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, the defendant knowingly possessed [fish] [wildlife] which had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] [tribal law]; and

Second, with the exercise of due care the defendant should have known that the [fish] [wildlife] had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] [tribal law].

For an alleged violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(3)(B) (plants in special U.S. jurisdiction), substitute the following elements:

First, while within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, the defendant knowingly possessed plants which had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] that [protects plants] [[regulates [the theft of plants] [the taking of plants from a park, forest reserve, or other officially protected area] [the taking of plants without, or contrary to, required authorization]] [without the payment of appropriate royalties, taxes, or stumpage fees required for the plant by any law or regulation of any state or any foreign law or regulation] [in violation of any limitation under any law or regulation of any state, or under any foreign law or regulation, governing the export or transshipment of plants; and

Second, with the exercise of due care the defendant should have known that the plants had been [taken] [possessed] [transported] [sold] in violation of or in a manner unlawful under any [state law] [state regulation] [foreign law] [foreign regulation] that [protects plants] [[regulates [the theft of plants] [the taking of plants from a park, forest reserve, or other officially protected area] [the taking of plants without, or contrary to, required authorization]] [without the payment of appropriate royalties, taxes, or stumpage fees required for the plant by any law or regulation of any state or any foreign law or regulation]

[in violation of any limitation under any law or regulation of any state, or under any foreign law or regulation, governing the export or transshipment of plants].

For a discussion of due care, *see United States v. Thomas*, 887 F.2d 1341, 1346 (9th Cir. 1989).

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.24 Lacey Act—False Labeling of Fish, Wildlife, or Plants (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(d), 3373(d)(3))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with violating Sections 3372 and 3373 of Title 16 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly [made] [submitted] a false [[record concerning] [account concerning] [label for] [identification of]] [[fish] [wildlife] [plants]]; [and]

Second, the [[fish] [wildlife] [plants]] [[had been] [were intended to be]] [[imported] [exported] [transported] [sold] [purchased] [received] from a foreign country] [transported in interstate or foreign commerce] [; and]

[Third, the defendant's [making of] [submission of] a false [[record concerning] [account concerning] [label for] [identification of]] [[fish] [wildlife] [plants]] involved the [sale or purchase of] [offer of sale or purchase of] [commission of an act with intent to sell or purchase] the [fish] [wildlife] [plants] with a market value greater than $350].

A defendant acts knowingly if [he] [she] is aware of the act and does not act through ignorance, mistake, or accident. You may consider evidence of the defendant's words, acts, or omissions, along with all the other evidence, in deciding whether the defendant acted knowingly.

### Comment

This instruction is for use in any case involving a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3373(d)(3). Under that section of the Lacey Act, criminal liability is premised on a finding of a violation of 16 U.S.C. § 3372(d) (false labeling).

The third element should be added only if the defendant is accused of violating 16 U.S.C. § 3373(d)(3)(A)(ii). If the jury finds the government proved only the first and second elements, the defendant may be found guilty of 16 U.S.C. § 3373(d)(3)(A)(I) (felony importation of fish, wildlife or plants) or of 16 U.S.C. § 3373(d)(3)(B) (misdemeanor false labeling).

The scienter required for conviction under 16 U.S.C. § 3373(d)(3) requires the defendant "knowingly" violate 16 U.S.C. § 3372(d) prohibiting making or submitting a false label.

*See* Comment to Instruction 24.22 (Lacey Act—Commercial Activity in Illegally Taken Fish, Wildlife, or Plants) concerning the need for an instruction concerning a definition of "market value."

For a definition of interstate commerce or foreign commerce, *see* 18 U.S.C. § 10.

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.25 Soliciting or Receiving Kickbacks in Connection with Medicare or Federal Health Care Program Payments (42 U.S.C. § 1320a-7b(b)(1)(A))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [soliciting] [receiving] kickbacks in connection with [Medicare] [federal health care program] payments in violation of Section 1320a-7b(b)(1)(A) of Title 42 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant knowingly and willfully [[solicited] [received]] [*specify remuneration alleged*];

Second, the [*specify remuneration alleged*] was [solicited] [paid] and at least one purpose of the payment was to [induce] [and] [or] [in exchange for] the referral of a patient insured by [Medicare] [*specify federal health care program*] for [furnishing] [arranging for the furnishing] of an item or service; [and]

Third, the patient's items or services [furnished] [arranged to be furnished] were covered, in whole or in part, by [Medicare] [*specify federal health care program*]; [and]

[Fourth, [Medicare] [*specify federal health care program*] is a federal health care program.]

### Comment

This instruction is largely based on the Eighth Circuit's Model Criminal Instruction 6.42.1320, as modified per the Ninth Circuit's decision in *United States v. Hong*, 938 F.3d 1040, 1048-49 (9th Cir. 2019).

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.26 False Entry in Bank Records (18 U.S.C. § 1005)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with making a False Bank Entry, in violation of Section 1005 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

> First, on or about the date charged in the indictment, the defendant [made a material false entry in the books or records of a bank] [caused a material false entry to be made in the books or records of a bank];
>
> Second, the bank was [a Federal Reserve bank] [insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)] [*specific other covered bank*];
>
> Third, the defendant knew the entry was false when it was made; and
>
> Fourth, the defendant intended that the false entry injure or defraud the bank, or any individual person, or deceive any officer of a bank, or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), or any agent or examiner appointed to examine the affairs of a bank.

An entry in the books or records of a bank is false if it represents what is not true or does not exist. For purposes of this crime, an entry can be false if it omits, or leaves out, material information necessary to make what is stated or included in that entry not misleading or deceptive.

### Comment

The common law test for materiality is the standard to use when false statement statutes, such as 18 U.S.C. § 1005, are charged. *See United States v. Peterson*, 538 F.3d 1064, 1072 (9th Cir. 2008) (citing *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995)). That test is whether the statement has a "natural tendency to influence, or was capable of influencing, the decision of the decisionmaking body to which it was addressed." *Kungys v. United States*, 485 U.S. 759, 770 (1988) (quoting *Weinstock v. United States*, 231 F.2d 699, 701-02 (D.C. Cir. 1956)). "The false statement need not have actually influenced the agency, and the agency need not rely on the information in fact for it to be material." *United States v. Serv. Deli Inc*., 151 F.3d 938, 941 (9th Cir. 1998); *see also United States v. King*, 735 F.3d 1098, 1108 (9th Cir. 2013).

Materiality must be demonstrated by the government, *United States v. Oren*, 893 F.2d 1057, 1063 (9th Cir. 1990); *United States v. Talkington*, 589 F.2d 415, 416 (9th Cir. 1978), and must be submitted to the jury. *Gaudin*, 515 U.S. at 506. The materiality test applies to each allegedly false statement submitted to the jury. *Id*.

Material omissions are false statements for the purposes of § 1005. *United States v. Tat*, 15 F.4th 1248, 1251 (9th Cir. 2021). "[T]hat an accurately recorded bank transaction has a nexus to unlawful activity does not, standing alone, make all entries related to that transaction 'false' within the meaning of § 1005." *Id*. at 1252. "Accurate records reflecting a customer's purchase of a cashier's check from her bank account are not false entries under § 1005 solely because that check

has a nexus to money laundering." *Id*. at 1253. However, an entry is false if it lists a fictitious payee. *Id.*

Depending on the evidence, it may be appropriate to amend this instruction with language requiring specific jury unanimity (*e.g*., "with all of you agreeing as to which statement was false and material"). *See* Instruction 6.27 (Specific Issue Unanimity).

In *United States v. Yates*, 16 F.4th 256 (9th Cir. 2021), the Ninth Circuit explained that an entry is false if it represents what is not true or does not exist. Conversely, the offense of false entry is not committed when the transaction entered actually took place and is entered exactly as it occurred. That is so even though it is a part of a fraudulent or otherwise illegal scheme. *Id*. at 272. The Ninth Circuit added that an entry is false, for purposes of § 1005, if it omits material information or vital facts requested by a bank or regulator, even if the entry, on its face, is literally true. *Id*. Further, an entry is false if it records a transaction that is itself false and fictitious, concocted for the very purpose of distorting a financial statement—as opposed to a transaction that is merely a part of some broader fraudulent or illegal scheme. *Id*.

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.27 Forced Labor (18 U.S.C. § 1589(a)))

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with forced labor in violation of Section 1589(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [provided] [obtained] the labor or services of another person; and

Second, that the defendant did so through at least one of the following prohibited means:

a. force, threats of force, physical restraint, or threats of physical restraint to that person or another person;

b. serious harm or threats of serious harm to that person;

c. the abuse or threatened abuse of law or legal process; or

d. a scheme, plan or pattern intended to cause the person to believe that if that person did not perform such labor or services that person or another person would suffer serious harm or physical restraint; and

Third, that the defendant acted knowingly.

Jurors do not need to agree unanimously on which of the prohibited means the defendant did.

### Comment

*See United States v. Barai*, 55 F.4th 1245, 1249–53 (9th Cir. 2022) (affirming district court's use of substantially similar jury instruction).

The listed alternatives in 18 U.S.C. § 1589(a) are factual means, rather than distinct legal elements. *Barai*, 55 F.4th at 1250. Therefore, a jury need not be unanimous as to which of the four prohibited means in § 1589(a) the defendant used to compel forced labor. *See id.* at 1250, 1253; *see also United States v. Mickey*, 897 F.3d 1173, 1181 (9th Cir. 2018) ("'[E]lements [are] those circumstances on which the jury must unanimously agree, while . . . means [are] those circumstances on which the jury may disagree yet still convict.'" (quoting *Rendon v. Holder*, 764 F.3d 1077, 1086 (9th Cir. 2014)).

To demonstrate scienter under § 1589(a), the government must show that the defendant "'knowingly . . . obtain[ed] the labor or services" of the employee 'by means of' one of the four statutorily enumerated methods." *Martinez-Rodriguez v. Giles*, 31 F.4th 1139, 1156 (9th Cir. 2022) (quoting 18 U.S.C. § 1589(a)); *see also Barai*, 55 F.4th at 1252 ("[T]he forced labor statute expressly defines the mens rea element: 'knowingly.'"). "The scienter element requires proof that the defendant knew (1) that the enumerated 'circumstance existed' and (2) that the defendant was obtaining the labor in question as a result." *Martinez-Rodriguez*, 31 F.4th at 1156.

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.28 Receiving the Proceeds of Extortion (18 U.S.C. § 880)

The defendant is charged in [Count _____ of] the indictment with [[receiving] [possessing] [concealing] [disposing of]] the proceeds of extortion in violation of Section 880 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant [[received] [possessed] [concealed] [disposed of]] [[money] [property]];

Second, the [[money] [property]] was obtained from [*specify threat or extortion-related criminal activity violating 18 U.S.C. Chapter 41*]; and

Third, the defendant knew the [[money] [property]] had been unlawfully obtained.

### Comment

*See United States v. Lemus*, 93 F.4th 1255, 1258-61 (9th Cir. 2024) (affirming district court's use of substantially similar jury instruction).

"To violate § 880, the money at issue must have been obtained from threats or extortion-related offenses. The term [in § 880] 'any offense under this chapter' refers to violations of Chapter 41 of Title 18 . . . ." *Lemus*, 93 F.4th at 1257.

To establish knowledge under the third element, the government need only prove that the defendant possessed knowledge that the money or property at issue was "unlawfully obtained." *Lemus*, 93 F.4th at 1258-59. "Specific knowledge of the money's origin as proceeds of extortion or threats is unnecessary." *Id.* at 1259.

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.29 Theft Concerning Federally Funded Program—Elements (18 U.S.C. § 666)

The defendant is charged in [Count ___ of] the indictment with [embezzlement] [theft] [fraud] [conversion] [misapplication] in violation of Section 666 of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was an agent of [an organization] [[[a state] [local] [tribal]] [government or agency of that government]]; and

Second, the defendant [embezzled] [stole] [obtained by fraud] [knowingly and without authority converted to the use of someone other than the rightful owner] [intentionally misapplied] property; and

Third, the property had a value of $5,000 or more and was [owned by] [under the care, custody, or control] of the [organization] [government] [government agency]; and

Fourth, the [organization] [government] [government agency] received more than $10,000 in federal funding annually.

### Comment

*See United States v. Cabrera*, 328 F.3d 506, 509 (9th Cir. 2003) (citing *United States v. Simas*, 937 F.2d 459, 463 (9th Cir. 1991)).

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.30 Accepting A Bribe—Elements (18 U.S.C. § 666(a)(1)(B))

The defendant is charged in [Count ___ of] the indictment accepting a bribe in violation of Section 666(a)(1)(b) of Title 18 of the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant was an agent of [a [[state] [local] [tribal]] [government or agency]]; and

Second, the defendant for the benefit of any person corruptly [solicited] [demanded] [accepted] [agreed to accept] anything of value from another person; and

Third, the defendant acted with the intent to be influenced or rewarded in connection with some business, transaction, or series of transactions of the [organization] [government] [government agency]; and

Fourth, the business, transaction, or series of transactions involved something valued at $5,000 or more; and

Fifth, the [organization] [government] [government agency] received more than $10,000 in federal funding annually.

*Revised September 2025*

## 24.31 Paying A Bribe—Elements (18 U.S.C. § 666(a)(2))

The defendant is charged in [Count ___ of] the indictment with paying a bribe in a violation of Section 666 (a)(2) of Title 18 the United States Code. For the defendant to be found guilty of that charge, the government must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant gave, offered, or agreed to give a thing of value to another person; and

Second, the defendant did so corruptly with the intent to influence or reward an agent of [an organization or any agency thereof] [[a state] [local] [tribal]] [[government or agency of that government]] in connection with some business, transaction, or series of transactions of the [organization] [government] [government agency]; and

Third, this business, transaction, or series of transactions involved a thing with a value of $5,000 or more; and

Fourth, the [organization] [government] [government agency] received more than $10,000 in federal funding annually.

*Revised March 2026*

## 24.32 Definition of "Agent" (18 U.S.C. § 666)

An "agent" is a person who is authorized to act on behalf of an [organization] [government] [government agency] including an employee, officer, or representative.

### Comment

"Agent" is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 666 (d)(1).

*Revised September 2025*