

## CHAPTER 78

AN ACT concerning general definitions under the criminal code and assault against certain school employees and amending N.J.S.2C:1-14 and N.J.S.2C:12-1.

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. N.J.S.2C:1-14 is amended to read as follows:

Definitions.

2C:1-14. In this code, unless a different meaning plainly is required:

- a. "Statute" includes the Constitution and a local law or ordinance of a political subdivision of the State;
- b. "Act" or "action" means a bodily movement whether voluntary or involuntary;
- c. "Omission" means a failure to act;
- d. "Conduct" means an action or omission and its accompanying state of mind, or, where relevant, a series of acts and omissions;
- e. "Actor" includes, where relevant, a person guilty of an omission;
- f. "Acted" includes, where relevant, "omitted to act";
- g. "Person," "he," and "actor" include any natural person and, where relevant, a corporation or an unincorporated association;
- h. "Element of an offense" means (1) such conduct or (2) such attendant circumstances or (3) such a result of conduct as
  - (a) Is included in the description of the forbidden conduct in the definition of the offense;
  - (b) Establishes the required kind of culpability;
  - (c) Negatives an excuse or justification for such conduct;
  - (d) Negatives a defense under the statute of limitations; or
  - (e) Establishes jurisdiction or venue;
- i. "Material element of an offense" means an element that does not relate exclusively to the statute of limitations, jurisdiction, venue or to any other matter similarly unconnected with (1) the harm or evil, incident to conduct, sought to be prevented by the law defining the offense, or (2) the existence of a justification or excuse for such conduct;
- j. "Reasonably believes" or "reasonable belief" designates a belief the holding of which does not make the actor reckless or criminally negligent;
- k. "Offense" means a crime, a disorderly persons offense or a petty disorderly persons offense unless a particular section in this code is intended to apply to less than all three;
  - l. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1991, c.91).
- m. "Amount involved," "benefit," and other terms of value. Where it is necessary in this act to determine value, for purposes of fixing the degree of an offense, that value shall be the fair market value at the time and place of the operative act.
- n. "Motor vehicle" shall have the meaning provided in R.S.39:1-1.
- o. "Unlawful taking of a motor vehicle" means conduct prohibited under N.J.S.2C:20-10 when the means of conveyance taken, operated or controlled is a motor vehicle.
- p. "Research facility" means any building, laboratory, institution, organization, school, or person engaged in research, testing, educational or experimental activities, or any commercial or academic enterprise that uses warm-blooded or cold-blooded animals for food or fiber production, agriculture, research, testing, experimentation or education. A research facility includes, but is not limited to, any enclosure, separately secured yard, pad, pond, vehicle, building structure or premises or separately secured portion thereof.

q. "Communication" means any form of communication made by any means, including, but not limited to, any verbal or written communication, communications conveyed by any electronic communication device, which includes but is not limited to, a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectric or photo-optical system, telephone, including a cordless, cellular or digital telephone, computer, video recorder, fax machine, pager, or any other means of transmitting voice or data and communications made by sign or gesture.

r. "School" means a public or nonpublic elementary or secondary school within this State offering education in grades K through 12, or any combination thereof, at which a child may legally fulfill compulsory school attendance requirements.

2. N.J.S.2C:12-1 is amended to read as follows:

Assault.

2C:12-1. Assault. a. Simple assault. A person is guilty of assault if he:

(1) Attempts to cause or purposely, knowingly or recklessly causes bodily injury to another; or

(2) Negligently causes bodily injury to another with a deadly weapon; or

(3) Attempts by physical menace to put another in fear of imminent serious bodily injury.

Simple assault is a disorderly persons offense unless committed in a fight or scuffle entered into by mutual consent, in which case it is a petty disorderly persons offense.

b. Aggravated assault. A person is guilty of aggravated assault if he:

(1) Attempts to cause serious bodily injury to another, or causes such injury purposely or knowingly or under circumstances manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life recklessly causes such injury; or

(2) Attempts to cause or purposely or knowingly causes bodily injury to another with a deadly weapon; or

(3) Recklessly causes bodily injury to another with a deadly weapon; or

(4) Knowingly under circumstances manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life points a firearm, as defined in section 2C:39-1f., at or in the direction of another, whether or not the actor believes it to be loaded; or

(5) Commits a simple assault as defined in subsection a. (1), (2) or (3) of this section upon:

(a) Any law enforcement officer acting in the performance of his duties while in uniform or exhibiting evidence of his authority or because of his status as a law enforcement officer; or

(b) Any paid or volunteer fireman acting in the performance of his duties while in uniform or otherwise clearly identifiable as being engaged in the performance of the duties of a fireman; or

(c) Any person engaged in emergency first-aid or medical services acting in the performance of his duties while in uniform or otherwise clearly identifiable as being engaged in the performance of emergency first-aid or medical services; or

(d) Any school board member, school administrator, teacher, school bus driver or other employee of a public or nonpublic school or school board while clearly identifiable as being engaged in the performance of his duties or because of his status as a member or employee of a public or nonpublic school or school board or any school bus driver employed by an operator under contract to a public or nonpublic school or school board while clearly

identifiable as being engaged in the performance of his duties or because of his status as a school bus driver; or

(e) Any employee of the Division of Youth and Family Services while clearly identifiable as being engaged in the performance of his duties or because of his status as an employee of the division; or

(f) Any justice of the Supreme Court, judge of the Superior Court, judge of the Tax Court or municipal judge while clearly identifiable as being engaged in the performance of judicial duties or because of his status as a member of the judiciary; or

(g) Any operator of a motorbus or the operator's supervisor or any employee of a rail passenger service while clearly identifiable as being engaged in the performance of his duties or because of his status as an operator of a motorbus or as the operator's supervisor or as an employee of a rail passenger service; or

(h) Any Department of Corrections employee, county corrections officer, juvenile corrections officer, State juvenile facility employee, juvenile detention staff member, juvenile detention officer, probation officer or any sheriff, undersheriff, or sheriff's officer acting in the performance of his duties while in uniform or exhibiting evidence of his authority; or

(i) Any employee, including any person employed under contract, of a utility company as defined in section 2 of P.L.1971, c.224 (C.2A:42-86) or a cable television company subject to the provisions of the "Cable Television Act," P.L.1972, c.186 (C.48:5A-1 et seq.) while clearly identifiable as being engaged in the performance of his duties in regard to connecting, disconnecting or repairing or attempting to connect, disconnect or repair any gas, electric or water utility, or cable television or telecommunication service; or

(6) Causes bodily injury to another person while fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer in violation of subsection b. of N.J.S.2C:29-2 or while operating a motor vehicle in violation of subsection c. of N.J.S.2C:20-10. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a person shall be strictly liable for a violation of this subsection upon proof of a violation of subsection b. of N.J.S.2C:29-2 or while operating a motor vehicle in violation of subsection c. of N.J.S.2C:20-10 which resulted in bodily injury to another person; or

(7) Attempts to cause significant bodily injury to another or causes significant bodily injury purposely or knowingly or, under circumstances manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life recklessly causes such significant bodily injury; or

(8) Causes bodily injury by knowingly or purposely starting a fire or causing an explosion in violation of N.J.S.2C:17-1 which results in bodily injury to any emergency services personnel involved in fire suppression activities, rendering emergency medical services resulting from the fire or explosion or rescue operations, or rendering any necessary assistance at the scene of the fire or explosion, including any bodily injury sustained while responding to the scene of a reported fire or explosion. For purposes of this subsection, "emergency services personnel" shall include, but not be limited to, any paid or volunteer fireman, any person engaged in emergency first-aid or medical services and any law enforcement officer. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a person shall be strictly liable for a violation of this paragraph upon proof of a violation of N.J.S.2C:17-1 which resulted in bodily injury to any emergency services personnel; or

(9) Knowingly, under circumstances manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life, points or displays a firearm, as defined in subsection f. of N.J.S.2C:39-1, at or in the direction of a law enforcement officer; or

(10) Knowingly points, displays or uses an imitation firearm, as defined in subsection f. of N.J.S.2C:39-1, at or in the direction of a law enforcement officer with the purpose to intimidate, threaten or attempt to put the officer in fear of bodily injury or for any unlawful purpose; or

(11) Uses or activates a laser sighting system or device, or a system or device which, in the manner used, would cause a reasonable person to believe that it is a laser sighting system or device, against a law enforcement officer acting in the performance of his duties while in uniform or exhibiting evidence of his authority. As used in this paragraph, "laser sighting system or device" means any system or device that is integrated with or affixed to a firearm and emits a laser light beam that is used to assist in the sight alignment or aiming of the firearm.

Aggravated assault under subsections b. (1) and b. (6) is a crime of the second degree; under subsections b. (2), b. (7), b. (9) and b. (10) is a crime of the third degree; under subsections b. (3) and b. (4) is a crime of the fourth degree; and under subsection b. (5) is a crime of the third degree if the victim suffers bodily injury, otherwise it is a crime of the fourth degree. Aggravated assault under subsection b.(8) is a crime of the third degree if the victim suffers bodily injury; if the victim suffers significant bodily injury or serious bodily injury it is a crime of the second degree. Aggravated assault under subsection b.(11) is a crime of the third degree.

c. (1) A person is guilty of assault by auto or vessel when the person drives a vehicle or vessel recklessly and causes either serious bodily injury or bodily injury to another. Assault by auto or vessel is a crime of the fourth degree if serious bodily injury results and is a disorderly persons offense if bodily injury results.

(2) Assault by auto or vessel is a crime of the third degree if the person drives the vehicle while in violation of R.S.39:4-50 or section 2 of P.L.1981, c.512 (C.39:4-50.4a) and serious bodily injury results and is a crime of the fourth degree if the person drives the vehicle while in violation of R.S.39:4-50 or section 2 of P.L.1981, c.512 (C.39:4-50.4a) and bodily injury results.

(3) Assault by auto or vessel is a crime of the second degree if serious bodily injury results from the defendant operating the auto or vessel while in violation of R.S.39:4-50 or section 2 of P.L.1981, c.512 (C.39:4-50.4a) while:

(a) on any school property used for school purposes which is owned by or leased to any elementary or secondary school or school board, or within 1,000 feet of such school property;

(b) driving through a school crossing as defined in R.S.39:1-1 if the municipality, by ordinance or resolution, has designated the school crossing as such; or

(c) driving through a school crossing as defined in R.S.39:1-1 knowing that juveniles are present if the municipality has not designated the school crossing as such by ordinance or resolution.

Assault by auto or vessel is a crime of the third degree if bodily injury results from the defendant operating the auto or vessel in violation of this paragraph.

A map or true copy of a map depicting the location and boundaries of the area on or within 1,000 feet of any property used for school purposes which is owned by or leased to any elementary or secondary school or school board produced pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1987, c.101 (C.2C:35-7) may be used in a prosecution under subparagraph (a) of paragraph (3) of this section.

It shall be no defense to a prosecution for a violation of subparagraph (a) or (b) of paragraph (3) of this subsection that the defendant was unaware that the prohibited conduct took place while on or within 1,000 feet of any school property or while driving through a school crossing. Nor shall it be a defense to a prosecution under subparagraph (a) or (b) of paragraph (3) of this subsection that no juveniles were present on the school property or crossing zone at the time of the offense or that the school was not in session.

As used in this section, "vessel" means a means of conveyance for travel on water and propelled otherwise than by muscular power.

d. A person who is employed by a facility as defined in section 2 of P.L.1977, c.239 (C.52:27G-2) who commits a simple assault as defined in paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection a. of this section upon an institutionalized elderly person as defined in section 2 of P.L.1977, c.239 (C.52:27G-2) is guilty of a crime of the fourth degree.

e. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.2001, c.443).

f. A person who commits a simple assault as defined in paragraph (1), (2) or (3) of subsection a. of this section in the presence of a child under 16 years of age at a school or community sponsored youth sports event is guilty of a crime of the fourth degree. The defendant shall be strictly liable upon proof that the offense occurred, in fact, in the presence of a child under 16 years of age. It shall not be a defense that the defendant did not know that the child was present or reasonably believed that the child was 16 years of age or older. The provisions of this subsection shall not be construed to create any liability on the part of a participant in a youth sports event or to abrogate any immunity or defense available to a participant in a youth sports event. As used in this act, "school or community sponsored youth sports event" means a competition, practice or instructional event involving one or more interscholastic sports teams or youth sports teams organized pursuant to a nonprofit or similar charter or which are member teams in a youth league organized by or affiliated with a county or municipal recreation department and shall not include collegiate, semi-professional or professional sporting events.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 2, 2006.