

## **Florida Statutes Pertaining to Consent, Sexual Assault, and Gender-Based Violence**

**Consent** is defined in Florida within the criminal statute related to sexual battery.

794.011 Sexual battery.—(a) **“Consent” means intelligent, knowing, and voluntary consent and does not include coerced submission. “Consent” shall not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the alleged victim to offer physical resistance to the offender.**

Rape and sexual assault are called “Sexual Battery” under Florida criminal law. See criminal code in Florida section 794.011

### **Sexual battery**

(1) As used in this chapter:

(a) “Consent” means intelligent, knowing, and voluntary consent and does not include coerced submission. “Consent” shall not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the alleged victim to offer physical resistance to the offender.

(b) “Mentally defective” means a mental disease or defect which renders a person temporarily or permanently incapable of appraising the nature of his or her conduct.

(c) “Mentally incapacitated” means temporarily incapable of appraising or controlling a person’s own conduct due to the influence of a narcotic, anesthetic, or intoxicating substance administered without his or her consent or due to any other act committed upon that person without his or her consent.

(d) “Offender” means a person accused of a sexual offense in violation of a provision of this chapter.

(e) “Physically helpless” means unconscious, asleep, or for any other reason physically unable to communicate unwillingness to an act.

(f) “Retaliation” includes, but is not limited to, threats of future physical punishment, kidnapping, false imprisonment or forcible confinement, or extortion.

(g) “Serious personal injury” means great bodily harm or pain, permanent disability, or permanent disfigurement.

(h) “Sexual battery” means oral, anal, or vaginal penetration by, or union with, the sexual organ of another or the anal or vaginal penetration of another by any other object; however, sexual battery does not include an act done for a bona fide medical purpose.

(i) “Victim” means a person who has been the object of a sexual offense.

(j) “Physically incapacitated” means bodily impaired or handicapped and substantially limited in ability to resist or flee.

(2)(a) A person 18 years of age or older who commits sexual battery upon, or in an attempt to commit sexual battery injures the sexual organs of, a person less than 12 years of age commits a capital felony, punishable as provided in ss. 775.082 and 921.141.

(b) A person less than 18 years of age who commits sexual battery upon, or in an attempt to commit sexual battery injures the sexual organs of, a person less than 12 years of age commits a life felony, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, s. 775.084, or s. 794.0115.

(3) A person who commits sexual battery upon a person 12 years of age or older, without that person's consent, and in the process thereof uses or threatens to use a deadly weapon or uses actual physical force likely to cause serious personal injury commits a life felony, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, s. 775.084, or s. 794.0115.

(4) A person who commits sexual battery upon a person 12 years of age or older without that person's consent, under any of the following circumstances, commits a felony of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, s. 775.084, or s. 794.0115:

(a) When the victim is physically helpless to resist.

(b) When the offender coerces the victim to submit by threatening to use force or violence likely to cause serious personal injury on the victim, and the victim reasonably believes that the offender has the present ability to execute the threat.

(c) When the offender coerces the victim to submit by threatening to retaliate against the victim, or any other person, and the victim reasonably believes that the offender has the ability to execute the threat in the future.

(d) When the offender, without the prior knowledge or consent of the victim, administers or has knowledge of someone else administering to the victim any narcotic, anesthetic, or other intoxicating substance which mentally or physically incapacitates the victim.

(e) When the victim is mentally defective and the offender has reason to believe this or has actual knowledge of this fact.

(f) When the victim is physically incapacitated.

(g) When the offender is a law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or correctional probation officer as defined by s. 943.10(1), (2), (3), (6), (7), (8), or (9), who is certified under the provisions of s. 943.1395 or is an elected official exempt from such certification by virtue of s. 943.253, or any other person in a position of control or authority in a probation, community control, controlled release, detention, custodial, or similar setting, and such officer, official, or person is acting in such a manner as to lead the victim to reasonably believe that the offender is in a position of control or authority as an agent or employee of government.

(5) A person who commits sexual battery upon a person 12 years of age or older, without that person's consent, and in the process thereof does not use physical force and violence likely to cause serious personal injury commits a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, s. 775.084, or s. 794.0115.

(6) The offense described in subsection (5) is included in any sexual battery offense charged under subsection (3) or subsection (4).

(7) A person who is convicted of committing a sexual battery on or after October 1, 1992, is not eligible for basic gain-time under s. 944.275. This subsection may be cited as the "Junny Rios-Martinez, Jr. Act of 1992."

(8) Without regard to the willingness or consent of the victim, which is not a defense to prosecution under this subsection, a person who is in a position of familial or custodial authority to a person less than 18 years of age and who:

(a) Solicits that person to engage in any act which would constitute sexual battery under paragraph (1)(h) commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

(b) Engages in any act with that person while the person is 12 years of age or older but less than 18 years of age which constitutes sexual battery under paragraph (1)(h) commits a felony of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

(c) Engages in any act with that person while the person is less than 12 years of age which constitutes sexual battery under paragraph (1)(h), or in an attempt to commit sexual battery injures the sexual organs of such person commits a capital or life felony, punishable pursuant to subsection (2).

(9) For prosecution under paragraph (4)(g), acquiescence to a person reasonably believed by the victim to be in a position of authority or control does not constitute consent, and it is not a defense that the perpetrator was not actually in a position of control or authority if the circumstances were such as to lead the victim to reasonably believe that the person was in such a position.

(10) Any person who falsely accuses any person listed in paragraph (4)(g) or other person in a position of control or authority as an agent or employee of government of violating paragraph (4)(g) is guilty of a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

**794.0115 Dangerous sexual felony offender; mandatory sentencing.—**

(1) This section may be cited as the “Dangerous Sexual Felony Offender Act.”

(2) Any person who is convicted of a violation of s. 787.025(2)(c); s. 794.011(2), (3), (4), (5), or (8); s. 800.04(4) or (5); s. 825.1025(2) or (3); s. 827.071(2), (3), or (4); or s. 847.0145; or of any similar offense under a former designation, which offense the person committed when he or she was 18 years of age or older, and the person:

(a) Caused serious personal injury to the victim as a result of the commission of the offense;

(b) Used or threatened to use a deadly weapon during the commission of the offense;

(c) Victimized more than one person during the course of the criminal episode applicable to the offense;

(d) Committed the offense while under the jurisdiction of a court for a felony offense under the laws of this state, for an offense that is a felony in another jurisdiction, or for an offense that would be a felony if that offense were committed in this state; or

(e) Has previously been convicted of a violation of s. 787.025(2)(c); s. 794.011(2), (3), (4), (5), or (8); s. 800.04(4) or (5); s. 825.1025(2) or (3); s. 827.071(2), (3), or (4); s. 847.0145; of any offense under a former statutory designation which is similar in elements to an offense described in this paragraph; or of any offense that is a felony in another jurisdiction, or would be a felony if that offense were committed in this state, and which is similar in elements to an offense described in this paragraph, is a dangerous sexual felony offender, who must be sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of 25 years imprisonment up to, and including, life imprisonment.

(3) “Serious personal injury” means great bodily harm or pain, permanent disability, or permanent disfigurement.

(4) The offense described in subsection (2) which is being charged must have been committed after the date of commission of the last prior conviction for an offense that is a prior conviction described in paragraph (2)(e).

(5) It is irrelevant that a factor listed in subsection (2) is an element of an offense described in that subsection. It is also irrelevant that such an offense was reclassified to a higher felony degree under s. 794.023 or any other law.

(6) Notwithstanding s. 775.082(3), chapter 958, any other law, or any interpretation or construction thereof, a person subject to sentencing under this section must be sentenced to the mandatory term of imprisonment provided under this section. If the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment imposed under this section exceeds the maximum sentence authorized under s. 775.082, s. 775.084, or chapter 921, the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment under this section must be imposed. If the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment under this section is less than the sentence that could be imposed under s. 775.082, s. 775.084, or chapter 921, the sentence imposed must include the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment under this section.

(7) A defendant sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment under this section is not eligible for statutory gain-time under s. 944.275 or any form of discretionary early release, other than pardon or executive clemency, or conditional medical release under s. 947.149, before serving the minimum sentence.

**794.02 Common-law presumption relating to age abolished.**—The common-law rule “that a boy under 14 years of age is conclusively presumed to be incapable of committing the crime of rape” shall not be in force in this state.

**794.021 Ignorance or belief as to victim’s age no defense.**—When, in this chapter, the criminality of conduct depends upon the victim’s being below a certain specified age, ignorance of the age is no defense. Neither shall misrepresentation of age by such person nor a bona fide belief that such person is over the specified age be a defense.

**794.023 Sexual battery by multiple perpetrators; reclassification of offenses.**—

(1) The Legislature finds that an act of sexual battery, when committed by more than one person, presents a great danger to the public and is extremely offensive to civilized society. It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to reclassify offenses for acts of sexual battery committed by more than one person.

(2) A violation of s. 794.011 shall be reclassified as provided in this subsection if it is charged and proven by the prosecution that, during the same criminal transaction or episode, more than one person committed an act of sexual battery on the same victim.

(a) A felony of the second degree is reclassified to a felony of the first degree.

(b) A felony of the first degree is reclassified to a life felony.

This subsection does not apply to life felonies or capital felonies. For purposes of sentencing under chapter 921 and determining incentive gain-time eligibility under chapter 944, a felony offense that is reclassified under this subsection is ranked one level above the ranking under s. 921.0022 or s. 921.0023 of the offense committed.

**794.05 Unlawful sexual activity with certain minors.**—

(1) A person 24 years of age or older who engages in sexual activity with a person 16 or 17 years of age commits a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084. As used in this section, “sexual activity” means oral,

anal, or vaginal penetration by, or union with, the sexual organ of another; however, sexual activity does not include an act done for a bona fide medical purpose.

(2) The provisions of this section do not apply to a person 16 or 17 years of age who has had the disabilities of nonage removed under chapter 743.

(3) The victim's prior sexual conduct is not a relevant issue in a prosecution under this section.

(4) If an offense under this section directly results in the victim giving birth to a child, paternity of that child shall be established as described in chapter 742. If it is determined that the offender is the father of the child, the offender must pay child support pursuant to the child support guidelines described in chapter 61.

### **Domestic Violence**

Florida criminal law defines "domestic violence" as:

741.28 Domestic violence; definitions.—As used in ss. 741.28-741.31:

(1) "Department" means the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

(2) "Domestic violence" means any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member.

(3) "Family or household member" means spouses, former spouses, persons related by blood or marriage, persons who are presently residing together as if a family or who have resided together in the past as if a family, and persons who are parents of a child in common regardless of whether they have been married. With the exception of persons who have a child in common, the family or household members must be currently residing or have in the past resided together in the same single dwelling unit.

(4) "Law enforcement officer" means any person who is elected, appointed, or employed by any municipality or the state or any political subdivision thereof who meets the minimum qualifications established in s. 943.13 and is certified as a law enforcement officer under s. 943.1395.

### **Dating Violence**

The State of Florida defines "dating violence" in criminal law as:

784.046 (1) (d) "Dating violence" means violence between individuals who have or have had a continuing and significant relationship of a romantic or intimate nature. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the consideration of the following factors:

1. A dating relationship must have existed within the past 6 months;
2. The nature of the relationship must have been characterized by the expectation of affection or sexual involvement between the parties; and

3. The frequency and type of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship must have included that the persons have been involved over time and on a continuous basis during the course of the relationship.

The term does not include violence in a casual acquaintanceship or violence between individuals who only have engaged in ordinary fraternization in a business or social context.

### **Stalking**

The State of Florida defines “stalking” in criminal law as:

784.048 Stalking; definitions; penalties.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Harass” means to engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person which causes substantial emotional distress to that person and serves no legitimate purpose.

(b) “Course of conduct” means a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a period of time, however short, which evidences a continuity of purpose. The term does not include constitutionally protected activity such as picketing or other organized protests.

(c) “Credible threat” means a verbal or nonverbal threat, or a combination of the two, including threats delivered by electronic communication or implied by a pattern of conduct, which places the person who is the target of the threat in reasonable fear for his or her safety or the safety of his or her family members or individuals closely associated with the person, and which is made with the apparent ability to carry out the threat to cause such harm. It is not necessary to prove that the person making the threat had the intent to actually carry out the threat. The present incarceration of the person making the threat is not a bar to prosecution under this section.

(d) “Cyberstalk” means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.