

Basic Crime Terms Glossary

Every crime has a number of elements to its definition. Each element of that crime must be fulfilled for the crime to have been committed. As I list a crime I will number the elements. I will try to use language in the definitions that will be non-legal in nature so it will be easier to understand.

Assault. An (1) intentional threat by word or act (2) to do violence to another person (3) coupled with an apparent ability to carry out that threat (4) with such threat causing a well founded fear in the other person. (i.e. Joe raised his fist and told Bill that he was going to punch him in the nose)

Battery. An (1) intentional touching or striking of another person (2) against their will (3) causing intentional bodily harm to such other person (i.e. Joe punched Bill and gave him a bloody nose).

Burglary. (1) Entering (2) a house or a vehicle (3) without permission or consent (4) with the intent to commit a crime therein (i.e. Bill breaks into Joe's house and steals (theft) a TV).

Criminal Mischief. This is more commonly called vandalism. (1) Willfully and (2) maliciously (3) damaging any property of another (i.e. Joe punctures Bill's car tire with a screwdriver).

Felony. A criminal offense that is punishable by death or imprisonment in a state penitentiary for a period of more than one year.

Juvenile. A person under sixteen years of age.

Minor. A person under eighteen years of age.

Misdemeanor. Any criminal offense that is punishable by a term of imprisonment in a county jail for a period of not in excess of one year.

Probable Cause. Facts and/or evidence that would lead a reasonable and prudent person to believe that an individual has committed or is about to commit a crime.

Prowler. A person would be considered a prowler if they were (1) in a place (2) at a time or (3) in a manner not usual to a law-abiding individual that (4) causes concern for the safety of persons or property in that area (i.e. Joe is standing in the bushes in a dark area of a house that does not belong to him at 2am). Note: A peeper is a prowler who is looking at people through the windows of their homes.

Robbery. (1) The taking of property (2) from a person (3) with the intent to deprive that person of the property and while taking the property (4) force is used or the victim is put in fear (i.e. Joe confronts Bill and says give me your money or I'll stab you with this knife).

Theft. (1) Knowingly (2) taking or using (3) the property of another with (4) the intent to deprive such person of its use (i.e. Bill takes Joe's bike without his knowledge or permission).

Trespass. (1) Entering or remaining on property (2) to which notice not to do so was given by actual communication or by posting or fencing (i.e. Joe climbs over Bill's fence and swims in Bill's pool).