

TITLE 10 - ARMED FORCES

Subtitle A - General Military Law

PART II - PERSONNEL

CHAPTER 47 - UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE

SUBCHAPTER X - PUNITIVE ARTICLES

§ 920. Art. 120. Rape, sexual assault, and other sexual misconduct

(a) **Rape.**— Any person subject to this chapter who causes another person of any age to engage in a sexual act by—

- (1) using force against that other person;
- (2) causing grievous bodily harm to any person;
- (3) threatening or placing that other person in fear that any person will be subjected to death, grievous bodily harm, or kidnaping;
- (4) rendering another person unconscious; or
- (5) administering to another person by force or threat of force, or without the knowledge or permission of that person, a drug, intoxicant, or other similar substance and thereby substantially impairs the ability of that other person to appraise or control conduct;

is guilty of rape and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(b) **Rape of a Child.**— Any person subject to this chapter who—

- (1) engages in a sexual act with a child who has not attained the age of 12 years; or
- (2) engages in a sexual act under the circumstances described in subsection (a) with a child who has attained the age of 12 years;

is guilty of rape of a child and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(c) **Aggravated Sexual Assault.**— Any person subject to this chapter who—

- (1) causes another person of any age to engage in a sexual act by—
 - (A) threatening or placing that other person in fear (other than by threatening or placing that other person in fear that any person will be subjected to death, grievous bodily harm, or kidnaping); or
 - (B) causing bodily harm; or
- (2) engages in a sexual act with another person of any age if that other person is substantially incapacitated or substantially incapable of—
 - (A) appraising the nature of the sexual act;
 - (B) declining participation in the sexual act; or
 - (C) communicating unwillingness to engage in the sexual act;

is guilty of aggravated sexual assault and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(d) **Aggravated Sexual Assault of a Child.**— Any person subject to this chapter who engages in a sexual act with a child who has attained the age of 12 years is guilty of aggravated sexual assault of a child and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(e) **Aggravated Sexual Contact.**— Any person subject to this chapter who engages in or causes sexual contact with or by another person, if to do so would violate subsection (a) (rape) had the sexual contact been a sexual act, is guilty of aggravated sexual contact and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(f) **Aggravated Sexual Abuse of a Child.**— Any person subject to this chapter who engages in a lewd act with a child is guilty of aggravated sexual abuse of a child and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(g) **Aggravated Sexual Contact With a Child.**— Any person subject to this chapter who engages in or causes sexual contact with or by another person, if to do so would violate subsection (b) (rape of

a child) had the sexual contact been a sexual act, is guilty of aggravated sexual contact with a child and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(h) Abusive Sexual Contact.— Any person subject to this chapter who engages in or causes sexual contact with or by another person, if to do so would violate subsection (c) (aggravated sexual assault) had the sexual contact been a sexual act, is guilty of abusive sexual contact and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(i) Abusive Sexual Contact With a Child.— Any person subject to this chapter who engages in or causes sexual contact with or by another person, if to do so would violate subsection (d) (aggravated sexual assault of a child) had the sexual contact been a sexual act, is guilty of abusive sexual contact with a child and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(j) Indecent Liberty With a Child.— Any person subject to this chapter who engages in indecent liberty in the physical presence of a child—

(1) with the intent to arouse, appeal to, or gratify the sexual desire of any person; or

(2) with the intent to abuse, humiliate, or degrade any person;

is guilty of indecent liberty with a child and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(k) Indecent Act.— Any person subject to this chapter who engages in indecent conduct is guilty of an indecent act and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(l) Forcible Pandering.— Any person subject to this chapter who compels another person to engage in an act of prostitution with another person to be directed to said person is guilty of forcible pandering and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(m) Wrongful Sexual Contact.— Any person subject to this chapter who, without legal justification or lawful authorization, engages in sexual contact with another person without that other person's permission is guilty of wrongful sexual contact and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(n) Indecent Exposure.— Any person subject to this chapter who intentionally exposes, in an indecent manner, in any place where the conduct involved may reasonably be expected to be viewed by people other than members of the actor's family or household, the genitalia, anus, buttocks, or female areola or nipple is guilty of indecent exposure and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

(o) Age of Child.—

(1) Twelve years.— In a prosecution under subsection (b) (rape of a child), subsection (g) (aggravated sexual contact with a child), or subsection (j) (indecent liberty with a child), it need not be proven that the accused knew that the other person engaging in the sexual act, contact, or liberty had not attained the age of 12 years. It is not an affirmative defense that the accused reasonably believed that the child had attained the age of 12 years.

(2) Sixteen years.— In a prosecution under subsection (d) (aggravated sexual assault of a child), subsection (f) (aggravated sexual abuse of a child), subsection (i) (abusive sexual contact with a child), or subsection (j) (indecent liberty with a child), it need not be proven that the accused knew that the other person engaging in the sexual act, contact, or liberty had not attained the age of 16 years. Unlike in paragraph (1), however, it is an affirmative defense that the accused reasonably believed that the child had attained the age of 16 years.

(p) Proof of Threat.— In a prosecution under this section, in proving that the accused made a threat, it need not be proven that the accused actually intended to carry out the threat.

(q) Marriage.—

(1) In general.— In a prosecution under paragraph (2) of subsection (c) (aggravated sexual assault), or under subsection (d) (aggravated sexual assault of a child), subsection (f) (aggravated sexual abuse of a child), subsection (i) (abusive sexual contact with a child), subsection (j) (indecent liberty with a child), subsection (m) (wrongful sexual contact), or subsection (n) (indecent exposure), it is an affirmative defense that the accused and the other person when they engaged in the sexual act, sexual contact, or sexual conduct are married to each other.

- (2) **Definition.**— For purposes of this subsection, a marriage is a relationship, recognized by the laws of a competent State or foreign jurisdiction, between the accused and the other person as spouses. A marriage exists until it is dissolved in accordance with the laws of a competent State or foreign jurisdiction.
- (3) **Exception.**— Paragraph (1) shall not apply if the accused’s intent at the time of the sexual conduct is to abuse, humiliate, or degrade any person.
- (r) **Consent and Mistake of Fact as to Consent.**— Lack of permission is an element of the offense in subsection (m) (wrongful sexual contact). Consent and mistake of fact as to consent are not an issue, or an affirmative defense, in a prosecution under any other subsection, except they are an affirmative defense for the sexual conduct in issue in a prosecution under subsection (a) (rape), subsection (c) (aggravated sexual assault), subsection (e) (aggravated sexual contact), and subsection (h) (abusive sexual contact).
- (s) **Other Affirmative Defenses not Precluded.**— The enumeration in this section of some affirmative defenses shall not be construed as excluding the existence of others.
- (t) **Definitions.**— In this section:
- (1) **Sexual act.**— The term “sexual act” means—
- (A) contact between the penis and the vulva, and for purposes of this subparagraph contact involving the penis occurs upon penetration, however slight; or
 - (B) the penetration, however slight, of the genital opening of another by a hand or finger or by any object, with an intent to abuse, humiliate, harass, or degrade any person or to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person.
- (2) **Sexual contact.**— The term “sexual contact” means the intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks of another person, or intentionally causing another person to touch, either directly or through the clothing, the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks of any person, with an intent to abuse, humiliate, or degrade any person or to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person.
- (3) **Grievous bodily harm.**— The term “grievous bodily harm” means serious bodily injury. It includes fractured or dislocated bones, deep cuts, torn members of the body, serious damage to internal organs, and other severe bodily injuries. It does not include minor injuries such as a black eye or a bloody nose. It is the same level of injury as in section 928 (article 128) of this chapter, and a lesser degree of injury than in section 2246 (4) of title 18.
- (4) **Dangerous weapon or object.**— The term “dangerous weapon or object” means—
- (A) any firearm, loaded or not, and whether operable or not;
 - (B) any other weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate, that in the manner it is used, or is intended to be used, is known to be capable of producing death or grievous bodily harm; or
 - (C) any object fashioned or utilized in such a manner as to lead the victim under the circumstances to reasonably believe it to be capable of producing death or grievous bodily harm.
- (5) **Force.**— The term “force” means action to compel submission of another or to overcome or prevent another’s resistance by—
- (A) the use or display of a dangerous weapon or object;
 - (B) the suggestion of possession of a dangerous weapon or object that is used in a manner to cause another to believe it is a dangerous weapon or object; or
 - (C) physical violence, strength, power, or restraint applied to another person, sufficient that the other person could not avoid or escape the sexual conduct.
- (6) **Threatening or placing that other person in fear.**— The term “threatening or placing that other person in fear” under paragraph (3) of subsection (a) (rape), or under subsection (e) (aggravated sexual contact), means a communication or action that is of sufficient consequence

to cause a reasonable fear that non-compliance will result in the victim or another person being subjected to death, grievous bodily harm, or kidnapping.

(7) Threatening or placing that other person in fear.—

(A) In general.— The term “threatening or placing that other person in fear” under paragraph (1)(A) of subsection (c) (aggravated sexual assault), or under subsection (h) (abusive sexual contact), means a communication or action that is of sufficient consequence to cause a reasonable fear that non-compliance will result in the victim or another being subjected to a lesser degree of harm than death, grievous bodily harm, or kidnapping.

(B) Inclusions.— Such lesser degree of harm includes—

(i) physical injury to another person or to another person’s property; or

(ii) a threat—

(I) to accuse any person of a crime;

(II) to expose a secret or publicize an asserted fact, whether true or false, tending to subject some person to hatred, contempt or ridicule; or

(III) through the use or abuse of military position, rank, or authority, to affect or threaten to affect, either positively or negatively, the military career of some person.

(8) Bodily harm.— The term “bodily harm” means any offensive touching of another, however slight.

(9) Child.— The term “child” means any person who has not attained the age of 16 years.

(10) Lewd act.— The term “lewd act” means—

(A) the intentional touching, not through the clothing, of the genitalia of another person, with an intent to abuse, humiliate, or degrade any person, or to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person; or

(B) intentionally causing another person to touch, not through the clothing, the genitalia of any person with an intent to abuse, humiliate or degrade any person, or to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person.

(11) Indecent liberty.— The term “indecent liberty” means indecent conduct, but physical contact is not required. It includes one who with the requisite intent exposes one’s genitalia, anus, buttocks, or female areola or nipple to a child. An indecent liberty may consist of communication of indecent language as long as the communication is made in the physical presence of the child. If words designed to excite sexual desire are spoken to a child, or a child is exposed to or involved in sexual conduct, it is an indecent liberty; the child’s consent is not relevant.

(12) Indecent conduct.— The term “indecent conduct” means that form of immorality relating to sexual impurity which is grossly vulgar, obscene, and repugnant to common propriety, and tends to excite sexual desire or deprave morals with respect to sexual relations. Indecent conduct includes observing, or making a videotape, photograph, motion picture, print, negative, slide, or other mechanically, electronically, or chemically reproduced visual material, without another person’s consent, and contrary to that other person’s reasonable expectation of privacy, of—

(A) that other person’s genitalia, anus, or buttocks, or (if that other person is female) that person’s areola or nipple; or

(B) that other person while that other person is engaged in a sexual act, sodomy (under section 925 (article 125)), or sexual contact.

(13) Act of prostitution.— The term “act of prostitution” means a sexual act, sexual contact, or lewd act for the purpose of receiving money or other compensation.

(14) Consent.— The term “consent” means words or overt acts indicating a freely given agreement to the sexual conduct at issue by a competent person. An expression of lack of consent through words or conduct means there is no consent. Lack of verbal or physical resistance or submission resulting from the accused’s use of force, threat of force, or placing another person in

fear does not constitute consent. A current or previous dating relationship by itself or the manner of dress of the person involved with the accused in the sexual conduct at issue shall not constitute consent. A person cannot consent to sexual activity if—

- (A) under 16 years of age; or
- (B) substantially incapable of—
 - (i) appraising the nature of the sexual conduct at issue due to—
 - (I) mental impairment or unconsciousness resulting from consumption of alcohol, drugs, a similar substance, or otherwise; or
 - (II) mental disease or defect which renders the person unable to understand the nature of the sexual conduct at issue;
 - (ii) physically declining participation in the sexual conduct at issue; or
 - (iii) physically communicating unwillingness to engage in the sexual conduct at issue.

(15) Mistake of fact as to consent.— The term “mistake of fact as to consent” means the accused held, as a result of ignorance or mistake, an incorrect belief that the other person engaging in the sexual conduct consented. The ignorance or mistake must have existed in the mind of the accused and must have been reasonable under all the circumstances. To be reasonable the ignorance or mistake must have been based on information, or lack of it, which would indicate to a reasonable person that the other person consented. Additionally, the ignorance or mistake cannot be based on the negligent failure to discover the true facts. Negligence is the absence of due care. Due care is what a reasonably careful person would do under the same or similar circumstances. The accused’s state of intoxication, if any, at the time of the offense is not relevant to mistake of fact. A mistaken belief that the other person consented must be that which a reasonably careful, ordinary, prudent, sober adult would have had under the circumstances at the time of the offense.

(16) Affirmative defense.— The term “affirmative defense” means any special defense which, although not denying that the accused committed the objective acts constituting the offense charged, denies, wholly, or partially, criminal responsibility for those acts. The accused has the burden of proving the affirmative defense by a preponderance of evidence. After the defense meets this burden, the prosecution shall have the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that the affirmative defense did not exist.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 73; Pub. L. 102–484, div. A, title X, § 1066(c), Oct. 23, 1992, 106 Stat. 2506; Pub. L. 104–106, div. A, title XI, § 1113, Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 462; Pub. L. 109–163, div. A, title V, § 552(a)(1), Jan. 6, 2006, 119 Stat. 3256.)

Historical and Revision Notes

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
920(a)		
920(b)		
920(c)	50:714(a).	
50:714(b).		
50:714(c).	May 5, 1950, ch. 169, § 1 (Art. 120), 64 Stat. 140.	

In subsection (c), the words “either of” are inserted for clarity.

Amendments

2006—Pub. L. 109–163 amended section generally, substituting subsecs. (a) to (t) relating to rape, sexual assault, and other sexual misconduct for subsecs. (a) to (d) relating to rape and carnal knowledge.

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 5, 2009 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscp.html>).

1996—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104–106, § 1113(a), amended subsec. (b) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (b) read as follows: “Any person subject to this chapter who, under circumstances not amounting to rape, commits an act of sexual intercourse with a female not his wife who has not attained the age of sixteen years, is guilty of carnal knowledge and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.”

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 104–106, § 1113(b), added subsec. (d).

1992—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 102–484 struck out “with a female not his wife” after “intercourse” and “her” after “without”.

Effective Date of 2006 Amendment

Pub. L. 109–163, div. A, title V, § 552(c), Jan. 6, 2006, 119 Stat. 3263, provided that: “Section 920 of title 10, United States Code (article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice), as amended by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to offenses committed on or after the effective date specified in subsection (f) [see note below].”

Amendment by Pub. L. 109–163 effective on Oct. 1, 2007, see section 552(f) of Pub. L. 109–163, set out as a note under section 843 of this title.

Effective Date of 1992 Amendment

Amendment by Pub. L. 102–484 effective Oct. 23, 1992, and applicable with respect to offenses committed on or after that date, see section 1067 of Pub. L. 102–484, set out as a note under section 803 of this title.

Interim Maximum Punishments

Pub. L. 109–163, div. A, title V, § 552(b), Jan. 6, 2006, 119 Stat. 3263, provided that: “Until the President otherwise provides pursuant to section 856 of title 10, United States Code (article 56 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice), the punishment which a court-martial may direct for an offense under section 920 of such title (article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice), as amended by subsection (a), may not exceed the following limits:

“(1) Subsections (a) and (b).—For an offense under subsection (a) (rape) or subsection (b) (rape of a child), death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct.

“(2) Subsection (c).—For an offense under subsection (c) (aggravated sexual assault), dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for 30 years.

“(3) Subsections (d) and (e).—For an offense under subsection (d) (aggravated sexual assault of a child) or subsection (e) (aggravated sexual contact), dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for 20 years.

“(4) Subsections (f) and (g).—For an offense under subsection (f) (aggravated sexual abuse of a child) or subsection (g) (aggravated sexual contact with a child), dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for 15 years.

“(5) Subsections (h) through (j).—For an offense under subsection (h) (abusive sexual contact), subsection (i) (abusive sexual contact with a child), or subsection (j) (indecent liberty with a child), dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for 7 years.

“(6) Subsections (k) and (l).—For an offense under subsection (k) (indecent act) or subsection (l) (forcible pandering), dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for 5 years.

“(7) Subsections (m) and (n).—For an offense under subsection (m) (wrongful sexual contact) or subsection (n) (indecent exposure), dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for one year.”