

NJ Kidnapping Statute

2C:13-1. Kidnapping.

2C:13-1. Kidnapping. a. Holding for ransom, reward or as a hostage. A person is guilty of kidnapping if he unlawfully removes another from the place where he is found or if he unlawfully confines another with the purpose of holding that person for ransom or reward or as a shield or hostage.

b. Holding for other purposes. A person is guilty of kidnapping if he unlawfully removes another from his place of residence or business, or a substantial distance from the vicinity where he is found, or if he unlawfully confines another for a substantial period, with any of the following purposes:

- (1) To facilitate commission of any crime or flight thereafter;
- (2) To inflict bodily injury on or to terrorize the victim or another;
- (3) To interfere with the performance of any governmental or political function; or
- (4) To permanently deprive a parent, guardian or other lawful custodian of custody of the victim.

c. Grading of kidnapping. (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, kidnapping is a crime of the first degree and upon conviction thereof, a person may, notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (1) of subsection a. of N.J.S.2C:43-6, be sentenced to an ordinary term of imprisonment between 15 and 30 years. If the actor releases the victim unharmed and in a safe place prior to apprehension, it is a crime of the second degree.

(2) Kidnapping is a crime of the first degree and upon conviction thereof, an actor shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment by the court, if the victim of the kidnapping is less than 16 years of age and if during the kidnapping:

- (a) A crime under N.J.S.2C:14-2 or subsection a. of N.J.S.2C:14-3 is committed against the victim;
- (b) A crime under subsection b. of N.J.S.2C:24-4 is committed against the victim; or

(c) The actor sells or delivers the victim to another person for pecuniary gain other than in circumstances which lead to the return of the victim to a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the general supervision of the victim.

Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (1) of subsection a. of N.J.S.2C:43-6, the term of imprisonment imposed under this paragraph shall be either a term of 25 years during which the actor shall not be eligible for parole, or a specific term between 25 years and life imprisonment, of which the actor shall serve 25 years before being eligible for parole; provided, however, that the crime of kidnapping under this paragraph and underlying aggravating crimes listed in subparagraph (a), (b) or (c) of this paragraph shall merge for purposes of sentencing. If the actor is convicted of the criminal homicide of a victim of a kidnapping under the provisions of chapter 11, any sentence imposed under provisions of this paragraph shall be served consecutively to any sentence imposed pursuant to the provisions of chapter 11.

d. "Unlawful" removal or confinement. A removal or confinement is unlawful within the meaning of this section and of sections 2C:13-2 and 2C:13-3, if it is accomplished by force, threat or deception, or, in the case of a person who is under the age of 14 or is incompetent, if it is accomplished without the consent of a parent, guardian or other person responsible for general supervision of his welfare.

e. It is an affirmative defense to a prosecution under paragraph (4) of subsection b. of this section, which must be proved by clear and convincing evidence, that:

(1) The actor reasonably believed that the action was necessary to preserve the victim from imminent danger to his welfare. However, no defense shall be available pursuant to this subsection if the actor does not, as soon as reasonably practicable but in no event more than 24 hours after taking a victim under his protection, give notice of the victim's location to the police department of the municipality where the victim resided, the office of the county prosecutor in the county where the victim resided, or the Division of Youth and Family Services in the Department of Children and Families;

(2) The actor reasonably believed that the taking or detaining of the victim was consented to by a parent, or by an authorized State agency; or

(3) The victim, being at the time of the taking or concealment not less than 14 years old, was taken away at his own volition by his parent and without purpose to commit a criminal offense with or against the victim.

f. It is an affirmative defense to a prosecution under paragraph (4) of subsection b. of this section that a parent having the right of custody reasonably believed he was fleeing from imminent physical danger from the other parent, provided that the parent having custody, as soon as reasonably practicable:

(1) Gives notice of the victim's location to the police department of the municipality where the victim resided, the office of the county prosecutor in the county where the victim resided, or the Division of Youth and Family Services in the Department of Children and Families; or

(2) Commences an action affecting custody in an appropriate court.

g. As used in subsections e. and f. of this section, "parent" means a parent, guardian or other lawful custodian of a victim.