**Legal categories of crime**

There are thousands of acts prohibited by law as felonies, misdemeanors, and violations. But following are some crimes that appear most often in local criminal courts and receive the most attention from state-level criminal justice agencies.

1. **Murder.** Under common law, murder is defined as “the felonious killing of another human being with malice aforethought”. The last phrase implies a definite malicious to kill. In most jurisdictions, murder includes the notions of malice aforethought, deliberation and premeditation. Malice aforethought is the intent to cause death or serious harm, or to commit any felony whatsoever. Deliberation refers to the full and conscious knowledge of the purpose to kill. Premeditation refers to a design or plan to do something before it is actually done. When death occurs during commission of felony, or attempt to commit felony as arson, burglary, larceny, rape, or robbery is called the Felony-Murder doctrine. In Felony-Murder doctrine, the person committing primary offense can also be charged with murder.
2. **Assault.** Assault does not refer to the infliction of any injury on another person. In legal terms, it is simply an intentional attempt or threat to physically injure another person. Assault and battery is an assault that inflicts some violence on the victim. Assault is of two types, simple and aggravated. Simple assault is one in which the intended harm fails or no serious harm was never intended. Aggravated assault refers to an assault made with the intent to commit murder, rape, or robbery or to inflict serious bodily harm. Perhaps the most peculiar category of assault is jostling. Jostling refers to the pushing or crowding of an individual. It is generally believed that pick pockets jostle their victims while stealing their money.
3. **Robbery.** Robbery is the felonious taking of the money or goods of another person in his presence against his will, through the use of threat, force or violence. Five elements are discussed in this definition. If one in the above is missing in an action, the crime would not be called robbery, it may be another crime or no crime. It involves aspects of both theft and assault and the use of force or violence is also present. It is generally classified as crime against person.
4. **Arson.** Arson is defined as the willful or malicious burning, or attempt to burn, the dwelling, building, vehicle or personal property of a person. Arson is a felony in all jurisdictions. Most often arson is divided into two and sometime three degrees. In general, if the premises that are burned are occupied, the charge will be first degree arson. If not occupied, the case will be second-degree arson. A person is guilty of arson in the third degree if the premises burned are his own, unoccupied, and if the purpose is to defraud the insurer.
5. **Burglary.** Burglary is defined as the breaking and entering of a dwelling, at night, with the intent to commit a felony therein. Burglary involves criminal intent.
6. **Property offenses.** The offenses against the property of another person to deprive him permanently are called property offenses. There are number of property offenses which are as fallows.

* **Larceny.** The taking and carrying away of the personal property of another person with the intent to deprive permanently.
* **Shoplifting.** The theft of goods from a store.
* **Pickpocketing.** The theft of money directly from the garments of a victim.
* **Embezzlement.** The fraudulent conversion of money or property by an employee, trustee, or other agent to whom the possession of such money or property was entrusted.
* **Forgery.** The making of any document with the intent to defraud.
* **Blackmail.** The taking of money or property through threats of exposure.
* **Plagiarism.** The copy of the literary, musical or artistic work of another and producing and publishing as one’s own original work.
* **Removal of landmarks.** The relocation of markings that designates property lines or boundaries.
* **Usury.** The taking of or contracting to take interest on a loan at a rate that exceeds the level established by law.
* **Ransom.** The demanding of money for the release of captured persons or property.
* **Buying receiving or possessing stolen goods.** The purchase or possession of any property or goods known to be stolen.
* **Extortion.** The demanding of money through the use of threats.

**vi. Sex offenses.**

The scope of illegal sexual activity is quite broad in American society. The list of sex offenses is still long and includes the following.

* **Forcible rape.** The sexual intercourse with a person against his or her will and through the use of force or threat to use force.
* **Statutory rape.** The sexual intercourse with a person under a stated age, with or without his or her consent.
* **Seduction.** The act of luring a woman of chaste character to engage in sexual intercourse by fraudulently promising to marry her or by some other false promises.
* **Fornication.** Sexual intercourse between unmarried persons.
* **Adultery.** Sexual intercourse between a man and women, at least one of whom is married to someone.
* **Incest.** Sexual intercourse between parent and child, any pair of siblings, or close blood relatives.
* **Pornography.** Literature, art film, pictures, or other articles of a sexual nature that are considered obscene by a community’s moral standards.
* **Bigamy.** The act of marrying while a former marriage is still legally in force.

**Some** other sexual offenses include exhibitionism, obscenity, prostitution, and peeping.

**vii. Drug Law Violation.** The act to violate the laws that are devised to control manufacture, transfer, distribution, sale and possession of drugs comes under the umbrella of drug law violation. Every state has devised laws to control the use and manufacture of drugs. Individuals, who violate these laws are subject to penalties ranges from simple to sever penalties.

**viii. Crimes Against Public Order and Safety.** The final category of crime is crime against public order and safety. It is also known as public order crimes. These crimes range from misdemeanor to felonies which are as follows.

* **Disorderly conduct.** Any act that tends to disturb the public peace, or shock the public sense of morality.
* **Disturbing of peace.** Any interruptions of the peace or good order of a neighborhood or community.
* **Stalking.** The willful and repeating harassing of another person.
* **Vagrancy.** The condition of being idle and having no visible means of support.
* **Desecration.** The damaging of a public structure, monument, or place of worship or burial.
* **Gambling.** The playing of any game of chance that involves money or property of any value that is prohibited by the criminal code.

**Some** other crimes against public order and safety includes drunken driving, violation of privacy, and loitering.

**ix. Domestic violence.** Domestic violence is a form of violent personal crime and can be defined as “activities of a physically aggressive nature occurring among members of a family, current or formers spouses or lovers, and others in close relationships, as a result of conflicts in personal relations”. Domestic violence typically occurs in the home, but it can also take place at the house of another family member or a neighbor. In domestic violence, the victim and offender are most often of the opposite genders, although they may be of the same gender.

Domestic violence has occurred throughout human history. In many cultures, men were legally and socially permitted to punish their wives and children for disobedience or disloyalty. Moreover, much of what is now referred to as domestic violence was once considered a legitimate mean by which men could maintain control over the family.

**Hate crimes.** Hate crimes can be defined as “an offence motivated by hatred against a victim because of his or her race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, handicap or national origin”.