

**AGGRAVATED ASSAULT - UPON LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**  
**(ATTEMPTING TO CAUSE OR PURPOSELY, KNOWINGLY OR**  
**RECKLESSLY CAUSING BODILY INJURY)**  
**(N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1b(5)(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g))<sup>1</sup>**

Count \_\_\_\_\_ of this indictment charges the defendant with aggravated assault.

**(Read appropriate count of indictment)**

The defendant is accused of violating a law that provides in pertinent part:

A person is guilty of aggravated assault if he . . . (a)ttempts to cause or purposely, knowingly or recklessly causes bodily injury to . . . (a)ny law enforcement officer acting in the performance of his duties while in uniform or exhibiting evidence of his authority or because of his status as a law enforcement officer.

For you to find the defendant guilty of this offense, the State must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

1. that the defendant purposely attempted to cause or purposely, knowingly or recklessly caused bodily injury (**insert name of victim**);
2. that (**insert name of victim**) was a law-enforcement officer; and
- 3a. that the defendant knew that (**insert name of victim**) was a law-enforcement officer<sup>2</sup> acting in the performance of (his/her) duties or while in uniform or exhibiting evidence of (his/her) authority;<sup>3</sup> **or**
- 3b. that the defendant knew that (**insert name of victim**) was a law-enforcement officer<sup>4</sup> and purposely committed the act against (him/her)

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<sup>1</sup> This charge is drafted for the most common situation, where a defendant is charged with aggravated assault upon a law enforcement officer under N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1b(5)(a). Other sections of the statute apply, with differing language, to aggravated assault upon paid and volunteer firemen; emergency first-aid and medical personnel; school board members, school administrators, teachers and other employees of a school board; employees of the Division of Youth and Family Services; the judiciary; and bus drivers and railroad employees. N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1b(5)(b) to (g). As always, the Model Charge must be adapted to fit the facts of each case.

<sup>2</sup> State v. Green, 318 N.J. Super. 361, 376 (App. Div. 1999), aff'd o.b., 163 N.J. 140 (2000) (the defendant must know that the victim is a law-enforcement officer).

<sup>3</sup> If transferred intent is an issue, the charge should be modified accordingly. State in the Interest of S.B., 333 N.J. Super. 236, 243 (App. Div. 2000).

<sup>4</sup> State v. Green, supra.

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because of (his/her) status as a law-enforcement officer.

The first element that the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt is that the defendant purposely attempted to cause or purposely, knowingly or recklessly caused bodily injury to **(insert name of victim)**.

**(If appropriate, use the model charge on Attempt).**

Bodily injury means physical pain, illness or any impairment of physical condition.<sup>5</sup>

A person acts purposely with respect to the nature of his/her conduct or a result thereof if it is a person's conscious object to engage in conduct of that nature or to cause such a result. A person acts purposely with respect to attendant circumstances if a person is aware of the existence of such circumstances or a person believes or hopes that they exist. One can be deemed to be acting purposely if one acts with design, with a purpose, with a particular object, if one really means to do what he/she does.<sup>6</sup>

A person acts knowingly with respect to the nature of his/her conduct or the attendant circumstances if a person is aware that his/her conduct is of that nature, or that such circumstances exist or a person is aware of a high probability of their existence. A person acts knowingly with respect to a result of his/her conduct if a person is aware that it is practically certain that his/her conduct will cause such a result. One is said to act knowingly if one acts with knowledge, if one acts consciously, if he/she comprehends his/her acts.<sup>7</sup>

A person acts recklessly with respect to a material element of an offense, such as the infliction of serious bodily injury, if he/she consciously disregards a substantial and unjustifiable risk that the material element exists or will result from his/her conduct. The risk must be of such a nature and degree that, considering the nature and purpose of the actor's conduct and the circumstances known to the actor, its disregard involves a gross deviation from the standard of

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<sup>5</sup> N.J.S.A. 2C:11-1a.

<sup>6</sup> N.J.S.A. 2C:2-2b(1).

<sup>7</sup> N.J.S.A. 2C:2-2b(2)

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conduct that a reasonable person would observe in the actor's situation. One is said to act recklessly if one acts with recklessness, with scorn for the consequences, heedlessly or in a foolhardy manner.<sup>8</sup>

Purpose, knowledge and recklessness are conditions of the mind that cannot be seen and that can often be determined only from inferences from conduct, words or acts. It is not necessary for the State to produce a witness to testify that the defendant stated that he/she acted with a particular state of mind. It is within your power to find that proof of purpose, knowledge or recklessness has been furnished beyond a reasonable doubt by inferences that may arise from the nature of the acts and circumstances surrounding the conduct in question.

For you to find that the defendant caused bodily injury to **(insert name of victim)**, the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that (he/she) would not have been injured but for the defendant's conduct.<sup>9</sup>

The second element that the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt is that **(insert name of victim)** was a law-enforcement officer.

A law-enforcement officer is any person who is employed as a permanent full-time member of any State, county or municipal law-enforcement agency, department or division of those governments and who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection, investigation, arrest, conviction, detention or rehabilitation of persons violating the criminal laws of this state.<sup>10</sup>

The third element that the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt is:

a. that the defendant knew that **(insert name of victim)** was a law-enforcement officer acting in the performance of (his/her) duties or while in uniform or exhibiting evidence of (his/her) authority; **or**

b. that the defendant knew that **(insert name of victim)** was a law-enforcement officer and purposely committed the act against (him/her) because of (his/her) status as a law-enforcement officer.

Earlier, I defined for you the relevant states of mind and those definitions apply with

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<sup>8</sup> N.J.S.A. 2C:2-2b(3).

<sup>9</sup> N.J.S.A. 2C:2-3a(1). If causation is contested, a fuller explanation of causation may be needed. N.J.S.A. 2C:2-3.

<sup>10</sup> N.J.S.A. 40A:14-152.2.

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equal force to this element.

If you find that the State has proven every element beyond a reasonable doubt, then you must find the defendant guilty. If, however, the State has failed to prove any element beyond a reasonable doubt, then you must find him/her not guilty.

**(Where appropriate charge simple assault as a lesser offense.)<sup>11</sup>**

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<sup>11</sup> N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1a.