

Types of Crime

A crime is any act or behavior that society has decided should be punished by imprisonment, fine or both. Criminal law refers to the rules that prohibit behavior the government deems harmful to society. If one engages in such behavior, they may be guilty of a crime and prosecuted in criminal court.

There are many different types of crimes but crimes can be divided into the following main categories:

1. Personal Crimes: These are crimes that result in physical or mental harm to another person. Personal crimes include: assault and battery, imprisonment, kidnapping, homicide (first and second degree murder, and involuntary manslaughter), and rape.

2. Property Crimes – “Offenses against property”: These are crimes that do not necessarily involve harm to another person. Instead, they involve an interference with another person’s right to use or enjoy their property. Property crimes include: larceny (theft), robbery (theft by force), burglary, arson, embezzlement, forgery, false pretenses, and receipt of stolen goods.

3. Inchoate Crimes: These are crimes that were begun, but not completed. This requires that a person take a certain step to complete the crime. Inchoate crimes include any crime that is attempted like attempted robbery or murder, and conspiracy.

Crimes are also often classified according to the level of seriousness, such as the distinction between felony and misdemeanor crimes. Generally, felonies are more serious crimes such as murder, kidnapping and robbery. Their punishment is a year or more in prison or a more severe punishment. Misdemeanors, on the other hand are less serious crimes such as shoplifting. Their punishment is usually a fine and jail sentence of less than a year, if at all.