

PENAL CODE

TITLE 5. OFFENSES AGAINST THE PERSON

CHAPTER 20. KIDNAPPING, UNLAWFUL RESTRAINT, AND  
SMUGGLING OF PERSONS

Sec. 20.01. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Restrain" means to restrict a person's movements without consent, so as to interfere substantially with the person's liberty, by moving the person from one place to another or by confining the person. Restraint is "without consent" if it is accomplished by:

(A) force, intimidation, or deception; or

(B) any means, including acquiescence of the victim, if:

(i) the victim is a child who is less than 14 years of age or an incompetent person and the parent, guardian, or person or institution acting in loco parentis has not acquiesced in the movement or confinement; or

(ii) the victim is a child who is 14 years of age or older and younger than 17 years of age, the victim is taken outside of the state and outside a 120-mile radius from the victim's residence, and the parent, guardian, or person or institution acting in loco parentis has not acquiesced in the movement.

(2) "Abduct" means to restrain a person with intent to prevent his liberation by:

(A) secreting or holding him in a place where he is not likely to be found; or

(B) using or threatening to use deadly force.

(3) "Relative" means a parent or stepparent, ancestor, sibling, or uncle or aunt, including an adoptive relative of the same degree through marriage or adoption.

(4) "Person" means an individual or a corporation, association, limited liability company, or other entity or organization governed by the Business Organizations Code.

(5) Notwithstanding Section 1.07, "individual" means a human being who has been born and is alive.

(6) "Agricultural land" has the meaning assigned by

Section 75.001, Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

(7) "Firearm" has the meaning assigned by Section 46.01.

(8) "Special investigator" includes an agent of the United States Department of Homeland Security.

Acts 1973, 63rd Leg., p. 883, ch. 399, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1974.

Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 900, Sec. 1.01, eff. Sept. 1,

1994; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 790, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999;

Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 822, Sec. 2.03, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 112 (S.B. 1258), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2019.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 572 (S.B. 576), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 20.02. UNLAWFUL RESTRAINT. (a) A person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly restrains another person.

(b) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under this section that:

(1) the person restrained was a child younger than 14 years of age;

(2) the actor was a relative of the child; and

(3) the actor's sole intent was to assume lawful control of the child.

(c) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor, except that the offense is:

(1) a state jail felony if the person restrained was a child younger than 17 years of age;

(2) a felony of the third degree if:

(A) the actor recklessly exposes the victim to a substantial risk of serious bodily injury;

(B) the actor restrains an individual the actor knows is a public servant while the public servant is lawfully discharging an official duty or in retaliation or on account of an exercise of official power or performance of an official duty as a public servant; or

(C) the actor, while in custody or committed to a

civil commitment facility, restrains any other person; or

(3) notwithstanding Subdivision (2)(B), a felony of the second degree if the actor restrains an individual the actor knows is a peace officer or judge while the officer or judge is lawfully discharging an official duty or in retaliation or on account of an exercise of official power or performance of an official duty as a peace officer or judge.

(d) It is no offense to detain or move another under this section when it is for the purpose of effecting a lawful arrest or detaining an individual lawfully arrested.

(e) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under this section that:

(1) the person restrained was a child who is 14 years of age or older and younger than 17 years of age;

(2) the actor does not restrain the child by force, intimidation, or deception; and

(3) the actor is not more than three years older than the child.

Acts 1973, 63rd Leg., p. 883, ch. 399, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1974. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 900, Sec. 1.01, eff. Sept. 1, 1994; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 707, Sec. 1(b), 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 790, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 524, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 440 (H.B. [2908](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 351 (S.B. [1179](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 20.03. KIDNAPPING. (a) A person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly abducts another person.

(b) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under this section that:

(1) the abduction was not coupled with intent to use or to threaten to use deadly force;

(2) the actor was a relative of the person abducted; and

(3) the actor's sole intent was to assume lawful control of the victim.

(c) An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree.

Acts 1973, 63rd Leg., p. 883, ch. 399, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1974.  
Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 900, Sec. 1.01, eff. Sept. 1, 1994.

Sec. 20.04. AGGRAVATED KIDNAPPING. (a) A person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly abducts another person with the intent to:

- (1) hold him for ransom or reward;
- (2) use him as a shield or hostage;
- (3) facilitate the commission of a felony or the flight after the attempt or commission of a felony;
- (4) inflict bodily injury on him or violate or abuse him sexually;
- (5) terrorize him or a third person; or
- (6) interfere with the performance of any governmental or political function.

(b) A person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly abducts another person and uses or exhibits a deadly weapon during the commission of the offense.

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), an offense under this section is a felony of the first degree.

(d) At the punishment stage of a trial, the defendant may raise the issue as to whether he voluntarily released the victim in a safe place. If the defendant proves the issue in the affirmative by a preponderance of the evidence, the offense is a felony of the second degree.

Acts 1973, 63rd Leg., p. 883, ch. 399, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1974.  
Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 900, Sec. 1.01, eff. Sept. 1, 1994; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 318, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 20.05. SMUGGLING OF PERSONS. (a) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly:

- (1) uses a motor vehicle, aircraft, watercraft, or

other means of conveyance to transport an individual with the intent to:

(A) conceal the individual from a peace officer or special investigator; or

(B) flee from a person the actor knows is a peace officer or special investigator attempting to lawfully arrest or detain the actor;

(2) encourages or induces a person to enter or remain in this country in violation of federal law by concealing, harboring, or shielding that person from detection; or

(3) assists, guides, or directs two or more individuals to enter or remain on agricultural land without the effective consent of the owner.

(b) Subject to Subsections (b-1) and (b-2), an offense under this section is a felony of the third degree with a term of imprisonment of 10 years, except that the offense is:

(1) a felony of the second degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of 10 years if:

(A) the actor commits the offense in a manner that creates a substantial likelihood that the smuggled individual will suffer serious bodily injury or death;

(B) the smuggled individual is a child younger than 18 years of age at the time of the offense;

(C) the offense was committed with the intent to obtain a pecuniary benefit;

(D) during the commission of the offense the actor, another party to the offense, or an individual assisted, guided, or directed by the actor knowingly possessed a firearm; or

(E) the actor commits the offense under Subsection (a)(1)(B); or

(2) a felony of the first degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of 10 years if:

(A) it is shown on the trial of the offense that, as a direct result of the commission of the offense, the smuggled individual became a victim of sexual assault, as defined by Section [22.011](#), or aggravated sexual assault, as defined by Section [22.021](#); or

(B) the smuggled individual suffered serious bodily injury or death.

(b-1) If at the punishment stage of the trial or at the time of entering a plea agreement for an offense under this section punishable as a felony of the third degree, the attorney representing the state in the prosecution of the offense certifies to the court in writing that the actor has provided significant cooperation to the state or law enforcement, and describes the manner of cooperation, the minimum term of imprisonment is five years. The certification is confidential and shall be sealed by the court, except that the certification may be accessed by the office of the attorney representing the state, the attorney representing the defendant, and the court. For purposes of this subsection, "significant cooperation" includes:

(1) testifying in a trial on behalf of the state against other parties to the offense;

(2) providing relevant information regarding the case and other parties to the offense;

(3) providing information that furthers the investigation of the charged offense and any other parties involved; or

(4) providing information that aids law enforcement.

(b-2) At the punishment stage of a trial of an offense under this section, other than an offense punishable under Subsection (b)(1)(A), (C), (D), or (E) or (b)(2), the actor may raise the issue as to whether the actor is related to the smuggled individual in the third degree of consanguinity or, at the time of the offense, in the third degree of affinity. If the actor proves the issue in the affirmative by a preponderance of the evidence, the offense is a felony of the third degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of five years.

(c) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution of an offense under this section, other than an offense punishable under Subsection (b)(1)(A) or (b)(2), that the actor is related to the smuggled individual within the second degree of consanguinity or, at the time of the offense, within the second degree of affinity.

(d) If conduct constituting an offense under this section

also constitutes an offense under another section of this code, the actor may be prosecuted under either section or under both sections.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1014, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 223 (H.B. 260), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 333 (H.B. 11), Sec. 14, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 572 (S.B. 576), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2021.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., 3rd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 4), Sec. 3, eff. February 6, 2024.

Sec. 20.06. CONTINUOUS SMUGGLING OF PERSONS. (a) A person commits an offense if, during a period that is 10 or more days in duration, the person engages two or more times in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 20.05.

(b) If a jury is the trier of fact, members of the jury are not required to agree unanimously on which specific conduct engaged in by the defendant constituted an offense under Section 20.05 or on which exact date the defendant engaged in that conduct. The jury must agree unanimously that the defendant, during a period that is 10 or more days in duration, engaged two or more times in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 20.05.

(c) If the victim of an offense under Subsection (a) is the same victim as a victim of an offense under Section 20.05, a defendant may not be convicted of the offense under Section 20.05 in the same criminal action as the offense under Subsection (a), unless the offense under Section 20.05:

- (1) is charged in the alternative;
- (2) occurred outside the period in which the offense alleged under Subsection (a) was committed; or
- (3) is considered by the trier of fact to be a lesser included offense of the offense alleged under Subsection (a).

(d) A defendant may not be charged with more than one count under Subsection (a) if all of the conduct that constitutes an

offense under Section 20.05 is alleged to have been committed against the same victim.

(e) Except as provided by Subsections (f) and (g), an offense under this section is a felony of the second degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of 10 years.

(f) An offense under this section is a felony of the first degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of 10 years if:

(1) the conduct constituting an offense under Section 20.05 is conducted in a manner that creates a substantial likelihood that the smuggled individual will suffer serious bodily injury or death; or

(2) the smuggled individual is a child younger than 18 years of age at the time of the offense.

(g) An offense under this section is a felony of the first degree, punishable by imprisonment in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for life or for any term of not more than 99 years or less than 25 years, if:

(1) it is shown on the trial of the offense that, as a direct result of the commission of the offense, the smuggled individual became a victim of sexual assault, as defined by Section 22.011, or aggravated sexual assault, as defined by Section 22.021; or

(2) the smuggled individual suffered serious bodily injury or death.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 333 (H.B. 11), Sec. 15, eff. September 1, 2015.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., 3rd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 4), Sec. 4, eff. February 6, 2024.

Sec. 20.07. OPERATION OF STASH HOUSE. (a) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly:

(1) uses or permits another to use any real estate, building, room, tent, vehicle, boat, or other property owned by the person or under the person's control to commit an offense or to facilitate the commission of an offense under Section 20.05, 20.06, 20A.02, 20A.03, 43.04, or 43.05; or

(2) rents or leases any property to another, intending that the property be used as described by Subdivision (1).

(b) An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of five years, except that the offense is a felony of the second degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of five years if:

(1) the offense is committed under Subsection (a)(1) and the property that is the subject of the offense is used to commit or facilitate the commission of an offense under Section 20.06, 20A.03, or 43.05; or

(2) it is shown on the trial of the offense that as a direct result of the commission of the offense:

(A) an individual became a victim of sexual assault, as defined by Section 22.011, or aggravated sexual assault, as defined by Section 22.021; or

(B) an individual suffered serious bodily injury or death.

(c) If conduct that constitutes an offense under this section also constitutes an offense under another law, the actor may be prosecuted under this section, the other law, or both.

Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 412 (H.B. 2613), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., 3rd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 4), Sec. 5, eff. February 6, 2024.