

# Sex Offense Primer: Sexual Abuse and Failure to Register Offenses



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**SEX OFFENSE PRIMER: SEXUAL ABUSE AND FAILURE TO REGISTER OFFENSES**

The purpose of this Primer is to provide a general overview of the statutes, sentencing guideline issues, and case law relating to sexual abuse and failure to register offenses.

**I. Relevant Statutes**

**A. The Statutory Scheme**

**Offenses Against the Person: Assault with Intent to Commit Sexual Abuse**

18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(1) Assault with Intent to Commit a Violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2241 or 2242.

With enactment of the Violence Against Women Act of 2013, section 113(a)(1) was amended to prohibit assault with intent to commit murder or a violation of title 18, section 2241 (Aggravated Sexual Abuse) or 2242 (Sexual Abuse). *Subsection (a)(1) has no statutory minimum penalty and a maximum penalty of 20 years.*

18 U.S.C. § 113(a)(2) Assault with Intent to Commit a Violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2243 or 2244.

With enactment of the Violence Against Women Act of 2013, section 113(a)(2) was amended to prohibit assault with intent to commit any felony, except murder or a violation of title 18, section 2241 or 2242. Previously, section 113(a)(2) had excluded assault with intent to commit a violation of Chapter 109A, including sections 2241, 2242, 2243, and 2244. The effect of the statutory change is that an assault with intent to commit a violation of section 2243 (Sexual Abuse of a Minor or Ward) or 2244 (Abusive Sexual Contact) may now be prosecuted under section 113(a)(2). *Subsection (a)(2) has no statutory minimum penalty and a maximum penalty of ten years.*

**Offenses Against the Person: Sexual Abuse (Chapter 109A of title 18):**

18 U.S.C. § 2241 Aggravated Sexual Abuse.

Section 2241(a) prohibits knowingly causing another person to engage in a sexual act by using force against that person or by threatening or placing that person in fear that any person will be

subjected to death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping.  
*Subsection (a) includes attempt, and has no statutory minimum penalty and a maximum penalty of life;*

Section 2241(b) prohibits knowingly rendering another person unconscious and engaging in a sexual act with that person or administering to another person a drug or intoxicant by force or threat of force or without knowledge or permission of that person and substantially impairing the ability of that person to appraise or control conduct and engaging in a sexual act with that person.  
*Subsection (b) includes attempt, and has no statutory minimum penalty and a maximum penalty of life;*

Section 2241(c) prohibits crossing state lines with the intent to engage in a sexual act with a person under the age of 12 years; knowingly engaging in a sexual act with a person under the age of 12 years; or knowingly engaging in a sexual act under circumstances described in subsections (a) or (b) with a person who is at least 12 years old and is not yet 16, and who is at least four years younger than the person engaging in the act.<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to § 2241(d), the government does not have to prove that the defendant knew the other person engaging in the sexual act was under 12 years old. *Subsection (c) includes attempt, and has a statutory minimum penalty of 30 years in prison and a maximum penalty of life. If the defendant was previously convicted of an offense under subsection (c) or an analogous state crime, there is a statutory minimum penalty of life in prison.*

18 U.S.C. § 2242

Sexual Abuse.

Prohibits knowingly causing another person to engage in a sexual act by threatening or placing that person in fear (other than by threatening or placing that other person in fear that any person will be subjected to death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping); or engaging in a sexual act with another person if that person is not capable of appraising the nature of the conduct or is physically incapable of declining or communicating unwillingness to engage in that sexual act. *Section 2242 includes attempt, and has no statutory minimum and has a maximum penalty of life.*

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the offenses found in Chapter 109A must have been committed in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States or in Federal custody.

18 U.S.C. § 2243

Sexual Abuse of a Minor or Ward.

Section 2243(a) prohibits knowingly engaging in a sexual act with another person who has attained 12 years but not 16 years and is at least 4 years younger than the person so engaging. Pursuant to § 2243(c), it is a defense that the defendant reasonably believed that the other person had reached age 16. Pursuant to § 2243(d), however, the government does not have to prove that the defendant knew the age of the other person engaging in the act, or that the requisite age difference existed between the people involved in the act. *Section 2243(a) includes attempt, and has a statutory maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.*

Section 2243(b) prohibits knowingly engaging in a sexual act with another person in official detention and under the custodial, supervisory, or disciplinary authority of the person so engaging. *Section 2243(b) includes attempt, and has a statutory maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.*

Pursuant to § 2243(c), it is a defense that the persons engaging in the sexual act were at that time married to each other.

18 U.S.C. § 2244

Abusive Sexual Contact.

Section 2244(a) prohibits knowingly engaging in or causing sexual contact with or by another person if doing so would violate 18 U.S.C. §§ 2241, 2242, or 2243, had the sexual contact been a sexual act. *If the contact would have violated § 2241(a) or (b), there is a statutory maximum penalty of ten years in prison. If the contact would have violated § 2241(c), there is a statutory maximum penalty of life in prison. If the contact would have violated § 2242, there is a statutory maximum penalty of three years in prison. If the contact would have violated § 2243(a) or (b), there is a statutory maximum penalty of two years in prison.*

Section 2244(b) prohibits knowingly engaging in sexual contact with another person without that other person's permission. *This subsection has a statutory maximum of two years in prison.*

*Subsection 2244(c) doubles the statutory maximum in cases that otherwise violate this section (except § 2244(a)(5)) and involve an individual who is younger than 12 years old.*

18 U.S.C. § 2245      Offenses Resulting in Death.

Anyone who murders an individual while in the course of committing any of the offenses listed above should be sentenced to death or to any term of years or for life.

18 U.S.C. § 2246      Definitions.

The definitions relevant to this Primer appear below:

(2) the term “sexual act” means:

(A) contact between the penis and the vulva or the penis and the anus, and for purposes of this subparagraph contact involving the penis occurs upon penetration, however, slight;

(B) contact between the mouth and the penis, the mouth and the vulva, or the mouth and the anus;

(C) the penetration, however slight, of the anal or genital opening of another by a hand or finger or by any object, with an intent to abuse, humiliate, harass, degrade, or arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person; or

(D) the intentional touching, not through the clothing, of the genitalia of another person who has not attained the age of 16 years with an intent to abuse, humiliate, harass, degrade, or arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person;

(3) the term “sexual contact” means the intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks of any person with an intent to abuse, humiliate, harass, degrade, or arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person;

(4) the term “serious bodily injury” means bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, unconsciousness, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

18 U.S.C. § 2247      Repeat Offenders.

If the defendant has violated one of the above statutes after a prior sex offense conviction, the statutory maximum is twice the term otherwise provided (unless § 3559(e) (Mandatory life imprisonment for repeated sex offenses against children) applies).

The term “prior sex offense conviction” means a conviction for an offense: (1) under chapter 109A, 110, or 117 of title 18 or 18 U.S.C. § 1591; or (2) under State law for an offense consisting of conduct that would have been an offense under the chapters listed above if the conduct had occurred within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2426(b).

18 U.S.C. § 2248      Mandatory Restitution.

This section mandates an order of restitution for any offense listed above. The defendant shall pay the full amount of the victim’s losses, which includes: (1) medical services relating to physical, psychiatric, or psychological care; (2) physical and occupational therapy or rehabilitation; (3) necessary transportation, temporary housing, and child care expenses; (4) lost income; (5) attorney fees, plus any costs incurred in obtaining a civil protection order; and (6) any other losses suffered by the victim as a proximate result of the offense.

**Offenses Related to Registration as a Sex Offender (Chapters 109B and 110A of title 18):**

18 U.S.C. § 2250      Failure to Register.

Section 2250(a) prohibits knowingly failing to register or update a registration as required by the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act if the defendant is (1) required to register under the Act, or (2) is a sex offender as defined for purposes of the Act by reason of a conviction under Federal law, or travels in interstate or foreign commerce, or enters or leaves, or resides in, Indian country. Pursuant to § 2250(b), it is an affirmative defense that: (1) uncontrollable circumstances prevented the individual from complying; (2) he or she did not contribute to the creation of such circumstances in reckless disregard of the requirement to comply; (3) and he or she complied as soon as such circumstances ceased to

exist. *This subsection has a statutory maximum penalty of ten years in prison.*

Section 2250(c) provides for a statutory minimum of five years and a statutory maximum penalty of thirty years in prison for any individual described in subsection (a) who commits a crime of violence under Federal law. This penalty is in addition to, and runs consecutive to, the punishment provided in subsection (a).

18 U.S.C. § 2260A Penalties for Registered Sex Offenders.

This section provides for a ten-year term of imprisonment for anyone who is required by Federal or other law to register as a sex offender and who commits a felony offense involving a minor violating, among others, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2241-2245. The ten-year sentence is in addition to, and runs consecutive to, any sentence imposed for the offense under the provisions listed in this section.

**B. Legal Issues Relating to the Statutes**

**“Force” under 18 U.S.C. § 2241(a).**

How courts define the term “force” in § 2241(a) is important because an offense involving conduct described in § 2241(a), prompts cross-references in the guidelines, and because such conduct subjects the defendant to an enhancement in §2A3.1.

The element of “force” in section 2241(a) “is satisfied by showing the use of such physical force as is sufficient to overcome, restrain, or injure a person; or the use of a threat of harm sufficient to coerce or compel submission by the victim.” *United States v. Bercier*, 506 F.3d 625, 628 (8th Cir. 2007) (quotation omitted) (holding that the evidence was sufficient to sustain a conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 2241(a) where the victim testified that the defendant “pushed her back on the bed and would not let her push him away when he put his head and hand up her shirt and began touching and kissing her breasts[,]” and then “forcibly held her legs apart while he performed oral sex”); *United States v. Sharpfish*, 408 F.3d 507, 510-11 (8th Cir. 2005) (finding an adequate showing of force where the evidence showed that the defendant “had a great size advantage over the victim: he was said to weigh 235 to 240 pounds, whereas [the victim] was three years old,” the defendant “had used his size advantage to brutalize the child over time by beating and kicking her,” and the victim testified that the defendant would “lay on her, despite her telling him ‘no,’ and that he hurt her ‘down there’”). A co-defendant’s use of force during an aggravated sexual assault sufficient to prevent

the victim from escaping constitutes force sufficient to enhance the defendant's sentence. *United States v. Bowman*, 632 F.3d 906, 911-12 (5th Cir. 2011).

**Attempt under 18 U.S.C. § 2241(a).**

Another key issue involves the difference between attempted aggravated sexual abuse and sexual contact. Where the defendant had the intent to cause another person to engage in a sexual act by use of force, and has taken a substantial step to do so, he can be convicted of attempted aggravated sexual abuse. *See United States v. Crowley*, 318 F.3d 401, 408-09 (2d Cir. 2003) (finding sufficient evidence to support a conviction for attempted aggravated sexual abuse where the victim testified that the defendant "placed his hand on her vagina and tried to insert his finger, but was prevented by her physical resistance," and that "all of the sexual contact that [the defendant] did accomplish . . . was committed, according to the victim's testimony, over her express verbal objection and against her physical resistance, by means of physical force").

**Mandatory Life Sentence under 18 U.S.C. § 2241(c).**

A key issue is whether a prior conviction qualifies for the mandatory life sentence under section 2241(c) for having committed the offense after having been convicted of another federal offense under section 2241(c) or a state offense that would have been a federal offense under the provision. A state offense cannot qualify as a predicate offense for the enhanced penalty provision if all the required elements in section 2241(c) are not met. *See United States v. Jones*, 748 F.3d 64, 73-74 (1st Cir. 2014) (finding a state offense for aggravated sexual assault with a victim under the age of 13 did not qualify for the mandatory life sentence because the state offense did not also require proof that the defendant acted with an intent to degrade, humiliate, arouse, etc, as required by the definition of a "sexual act" under section 2246).

**Knowledge of Incapacitation under 18 U.S.C. § 2242.**

A key issue involves whether the statute requires that the defendant knew the victim was incapacitated in order to support the conviction. *See United States v. Bruguier*, 735 F.3d 754, 759-760 (8th Cir. 2014) (en banc) (finding "knowingly" in the statute requires not only that the defendant knowingly engaged in a sexual act, but that he also knew the victim was incapable of appraising the nature of the conduct or was physically incapable of declining participation in or communicating unwillingness to engage in the sexual act).

### **Retroactivity of 18 U.S.C. § 2250(a).**

One key issue for the courts is when the legal obligations to register as a sex offender pursuant to the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) attach. Although the Attorney General has promulgated rules and regulations that SORNA is to be retroactively applied to sex offenders convicted of a sex offense prior to the enactment of SORNA, the Supreme Court has held that the Act's registration requirements do not apply to pre-Act offenders until the Attorney General has so specified. *See United States v. Reynolds*, 132 S. Ct. 975 (2011) (reversing and remanding conviction under SORNA for interstate travel in September 2007, when defendant's substantive sex offense conviction was before the effective date of the Act, and leaving unanswered the question whether the Attorney General's Interim Rule specifying that SORNA applies to such sex offenders, which was promulgated on February 28, 2007, is valid). *See also United States v. Madera*, 528 F.3d 852, 857 (11th Cir. 2008). The Supreme Court has held that SORNA applies to a defendant who failed to register after moving within a state even without traveling in interstate commerce, because he was already subject to the Jacob Wetterling Act requiring him to register. *United States v. Kebodeaux*, 133 S. Ct. 2496, 2500 (2013). The Supreme Court has also held that SORNA only applies to sex offenders whose interstate travel occurs after the effective date of SORNA. *United States v. Carr*, 130 S. Ct. 2229 (2010).

Another key issue involves whether defendants in states that have not yet implemented SORNA can be convicted for failing to register as required by the Act.<sup>2</sup> *See United States v. Dixon*, 551 F.3d 578, 582 (7th Cir. 2008) (finding although the state had not established SORNA requirements, defendant was required to register after the Attorney General issued regulations), *cert. granted, rev'd and remanded by Carr v. United States*, 130 S. Ct. 2229 (2010).

### **Offender Tiers Under 18 U.S.C. § 2250.**

Whether the district court correctly concludes that a defendant is required to register under SORNA is another key issue. *See United States v. Stock*, 685 F.3d 621 (6th Cir. 2012) (finding that the requirement that the defendant register as a Tier III sex offender, meaning a sex offender whose offense is "comparable to or more severe than . . . aggravated sexual abuse or sexual abuse" as described in section 2241 and 2242 and therefore requiring a "sexual act," was not met because the relevant state sexual battery offense that requires the touching of another person, whether of the genitalia or not, did not meet the definition of a "sexual

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<sup>2</sup> Although states were required to implement the provisions of the Act by July 27, 2010, only 17 states, 68 tribes and three territories have complied to date, according to the Department of Justice's SMART (Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking) Office.

act” as described in those sections).

**“Victim” Under 18 U.S.C. § 2260A.**

Whether an actual minor victim is required for a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2260A is a key issue. *See United States v. Slaughter*, 708 F.3d 1208, 1214-16 (11th Cir. 2013) (finding defendant’s attempted enticement offense was a proper predicate offense even though the “minor” was actually a law enforcement officer); *United States v. Jones*, 748 F.3d 64, 72 (1st Cir. 2014) (affirming the defendant’s conviction where the “minor” with whom the defendant had communicated online was actually a postal inspector).

**II. Chapter Two: Offense Guideline Sections**

**A. Applicable Offense Guideline is Driven by the Offense of Conviction**

The applicable Chapter Two (Offense Conduct) offense guideline section is determined by looking up the **offense of conviction** in the Statutory Index (Appendix A). *See* §1B1.2 (Applicable Guidelines).

For purposes of determining which offense guideline section is applicable where the Statutory Index specifies the use of more than one section for the offense of conviction, use the offense guideline section for the most specific definition of the offense of conviction.

**B. Applicable Base Offense Level, Specific Offense Characteristics, and Cross References Can be Driven by Relevant Conduct**

Many of the subsections of the sex offense guidelines include the phrase “**if the offense involved.**” Section 1B1.1 defines “offense” to include “the offense of conviction and all relevant conduct under §1B1.3 (Relevant Conduct) unless a different meaning is specified or is otherwise clear from the context.” §1B1.1, comment. (n.1(H)). Section 1B1.3 states that the base offense level, any specific offense characteristics, and cross-references in Chapter Two, and adjustments in Chapter Three, are to be determined on the basis of relevant conduct. Therefore, while the applicable Chapter Two offense guideline section is determined by looking up the offense of conviction in Appendix A, relevant conduct is important to the application of many subsections.

**C. §2A3.1 (Criminal Sexual Abuse; Attempt to Commit Criminal Sexual Abuse)**

Appendix A specifies offense guideline §2A3.1 for use when the offense of conviction is 18 U.S.C. §§ 113(a)(1), 2241, 2242, 37 (Violence at international airports).<sup>3</sup> In §2A3.1, the term

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<sup>3</sup> *See* Amendment 2 of the amendments submitted by the Commission to Congress on April 30, 2014, 79 FR 25996 (May 6, 2014).

“minor” means an individual (including fictitious individuals and law enforcement officers) who had not attained the age of 18 years (or who was represented to have not attained the age of 18 years). See §2A3.1, comment. (n.1).

1. **Determining the Base Offense Level.** If the defendant was convicted under 18 U.S.C. § 2241(c), the base offense level is **38**. Otherwise, the base offense level is **30**.
2. **Specific Offense Characteristics.**
  - a. Conduct described in 18 U.S.C. § 2241 (a) or (b). Section 2A3.1(b)(1) states that, if the offense involved conduct described in 18 U.S.C. § 2241(a) or (b), the offense level is to be increased by **4** levels. See *United States v. Bowman*, 632 F.3d 906, 912 (5th Cir. 2011) (finding that restraint sufficient to prevent the victim from escaping the sexual conduct constitutes “force” within 18 U.S.C. § 2241); *United States v. Carey*, 589 F.3d 187, 194-95 (5th Cir. 2009) (force that occurs during the act of assault itself falls within conduct described in § 2241(a) for application of §2A3.1(b)(1)); *United States v. Two Elk*, 536 F.3d 890, 910 (8th Cir. 2008) (affirming application of §2A3.1(b)(1) upon the district court’s finding of force where “there was a substantial discrepancy between the body mass of [the defendant]” and the minor, the defendant lifted the minor off the floor and placed her on the bed, and muffled the minor’s cries with his hand); *United States v. Cerno*, 529 F.3d 926, 938-39 (10th Cir. 2008) (finding procedural error in the district court’s failure to consider the nature and circumstances of the offense pursuant to § 3553(a) when it failed to consider the relative amount of force used to commit the sexual abuse). But see *United States v. Blue*, 255 F.3d 609, 613 (8th Cir. 2001) (holding application of §2A3.1(b)(1) improper because “size difference alone cannot establish use of force”). *United States v. Volpe*, 224 F.3d 72, 77 (2d Cir. 2000) (“[Section] 2A3.1(b)(1) appears to be aimed at uses of force to compel the victim’s submission to a sexual assault, not at more forceful assaults . . .”).

This enhancement applies even if the conduct that forms the basis of the enhancement is the same conduct that justified application of §2A1.1 via a cross reference from another guideline. *United States v. Flanders*, – F.3d –, 2014 WL 2186554, \*15 (11th Cir. May 27, 2014) (finding no double counting in application of the cross

reference at §2G1.1(c)(1) because offense involved conduct constituting sexual abuse and application of §2A3.1(b)(1)). Specifically, in *Flanders*, the court found the Sentencing Commission intended for the entirety of §2A3.1, including the enhancement, to apply following application of the cross reference pursuant to §1B1.5(a) and the cross reference applied because offense involved sexual abuse under section 2241(b) and enhancement applied because the offense involved conduct constituting a more severe subset of aggravated sexual abuse under subsection 2241(b)(2)).

This enhancement does not apply, if the conduct that forms the basis for a conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 2241(c) is that the defendant engaged in conduct described in 18 U.S.C. § 2241(a) or (b). See §2A3.1(b)(1), comment. (n.2(B)). This express prohibition avoids unwarranted double-counting. *C.f. United States v. Beith*, 407 F.3d 881, 888 (7th Cir. 2005) (“Double counting is permissible unless the guidelines expressly provide otherwise or a compelling basis exists for implying such a prohibition.” (internal quotation omitted)), *abrogated by United States v. Vizcarra*, 668 F.3d 516 (7th Cir. 2012).

Thus, since the November 1, 2007 amendment to this guideline, it is impermissible double-counting to apply the enhancement in §2A3.1(b)(1) in a case where the defendant was convicted under § 2241(c) for knowingly engaging in a sexual act with a person who is at least 12, but younger than 16 by: (1) using force against the victim; (2) threatening or placing the victim in fear that any person will be subjected to death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping; (3) rendering the victim unconscious; or (4) administering by force or threat of force or without knowledge or permission of the victim, a drug, intoxicant, or other similar substance and substantially impairing the ability of the victim to appraise or control conduct.

- b. Age of the victim. Section 2A3.1(b)(2) provides for a four-level enhancement if the victim was under 12 years old and a two-level enhancement if the victim was at least 12, but was under 16 years old. This enhancement only applies, however, if the base offense level is 30. The base offense level of 38 under §2A3.1(a)(1) already takes the age of the victim into account. Again, this avoids unwarranted double-counting.

For purposes of this guideline, the term “victim” includes an undercover law enforcement officer. *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.1);

- c. Custody, care, or supervisory control. Section 2A3.1(b)(3) provides for a two-level enhancement if the victim was in the custody, care, or supervisory control of the defendant or if the victim was held in the custody of a correctional facility. This subsection is to be construed broadly and includes offenses involving a victim less than 18 years old entrusted to the defendant whether temporarily or permanently. *See* §2A3.1(b)(3), comment. (n.3(A)); *United States v. Swank*, 676 F.3d 919 (9th Cir. 2012) (stating “[i]n determining whether to apply the enhancement, the court should look to the actual relationship that existed between the defendant and the minor and not simply to the legal status of the defendant-minor relationship,” and finding the enhancement applicable when the minor had been staying in the defendant’s home for two days, the defendant was the victim’s uncle, and he shared in the child rearing of the children in the house, including the minor victim, and in preparing food for all the children); *United States v. Kenyon*, 481 F.3d 1054, 1072 (8th Cir. 2007) (stating that “[s]o long as the defendant has some responsibility for the child, he has been entrusted with the child, even if another shares that responsibility,” but that mere “proximity [to the child] is not enough”). The subsection also applies to adult victims. *See United States v. Simmons*, 470 F.3d 1115, 1129-30 (5th Cir. 2006) (finding that the district court erred in failing to apply the enhancement for a police officer who raped an arrestee in his cruiser because the enhancement was applicable to adult victims in police custody).

If section 2A3.1(b)(3) applies, §3B1.3 (Abuse of Position of Trust or Use of Special Skill) does not apply. *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.3(B)).

- d. Bodily injury. Section 2A3.1(b)(4) provides for (1) a four-level enhancement if the victim sustained permanent or life-threatening bodily injury; (2) a two-level enhancement if the victim sustained serious bodily injury; and (3) a three-level enhancement if the degree of injury is between that specified in (1) and (2).

**Permanent or life-threatening injury.** Section 1B1.1, comment. (n.1(J)) defines “permanent or life-threatening bodily injury” as “injury involving a substantial risk of death; loss or substantial impairment of the function of a

bodily member, organ, or mental faculty that is likely to be permanent; or an obvious disfigurement that is likely to be permanent.” *See also United States v. James*, 957 F.2d 679, 681 (9th Cir. 1992) (holding that a four-level enhancement for infecting a nine-year-old child with Herpes Type-II virus was appropriate because the enhancement encompasses the impairment of organs as well as bodily members and that the defendant inflicted an incurable serious disease).

**Serious bodily injury.** According to §1B1.1, comment. (n.1(L)), “serious bodily injury” is “injury involving extreme physical pain or the protracted impairment of a function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty; or requiring medical intervention such as surgery, hospitalization, or physical rehabilitation.” *See also United States v. Robinson*, 436 F. App’x 82 (3d Cir) (holding application of serious bodily injury enhancement appropriate where defendant severely beat the victims he prostituted and his co-conspirators subjected the victims to fractures, deep lacerations, and concussions), *cert. denied*, 132 S. Ct. 791 (2011); *United States v. Long Turkey*, 342 F.3d 856, 858-59 (8th Cir. 2003) (upholding the district court’s application of the enhancement for a victim who suffered rectal laceration which needed to be repaired and who compared having the defendant’s fist in her vagina to childbirth); *United States v. Guy*, 340 F.3d 655, 658-59 (8th Cir. 2003) (holding that an enhancement for serious bodily injury was appropriate where the crime was rape and the 14-year-old victim was impregnated and suffered extreme physical pain during her labor and delivery). For purposes of this guideline, “serious bodily injury” means conduct other than the criminal sexual abuse, which has already been taken into account in the base offense level. *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.1).

- e. **Abduction.** Section 2A3.1(b)(5) provides for a four-level enhancement if the victim was abducted. The word “abducted” “means that a victim was forced to accompany an offender to a different location.” *See* §1B1.1, comment. (n.1(A)); *see also United States v. Hefferon*, 314 F.3d 211, 225 (5th Cir. 2002) (holding that the victim was “moved to another location” when the defendant moved the victim from one location on the property, where he first sexually assaulted the victim, to another location on

the property, where he sexually assaulted the victim again); *United States v. Hawkins*, 87 F.3d 722, 727-28 (5th Cir. 1996) (holding “the term ‘a different location’ . . . to be flexible and thus susceptible of multiple interpretations, which are to be applied case by case to the particular facts under scrutiny, not mechanically based on the presence or absence of doorways, lot lines, thresholds, and the like”).

Actual or threatened force is not necessary for the application of this enhancement; the abduction can also be committed by “the use of a force substitute such as inveigling,” *United States v. Romero*, 189 F.3d 576, 590 (7th Cir. 1999), that is, imposing one’s will through “trickery” or “gentle urging” or flattery, *United States v. Beith*, 407 F.3d 881, 893 (7th Cir. 2005), *abrogated on other grounds by United States v. Vizcarra*, 668 F.3d 516 (7th Cir. 2012). *See also United States v. Martinez-Hernandez*, 593 F.3d 761, 762 (8th Cir. 2010) (stating the only force necessary is that needed to overcome the particular victim’s will, and need not be physical; force may be accomplished through a veiled coercion or an inveigling).

- f. Knowing misrepresentation of identity and use of a computer. Section 2A3.1(b)(6) provides for a two-level enhancement if, to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct, or if, to facilitate transportation or travel by a minor or a participant, to engage in prohibited sexual conduct, the offense involved:

(A) the knowing misrepresentation of a participant’s identity; or  
(B) the use of a computer or interactive computer service.  
Subsections (b)(6)(A) and (b)(6)(B) are intended to apply only to misrepresentations made directly to a minor or to a person who exercises custody, care, or supervisory control of the minor or use of the computer or an interactive computer service to communicate directly with the minor or with a person who exercises custody, care, or supervisory control of the minor. *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.4(A), (B)).

**Misrepresentation of participant’s identity.** Such misrepresentation includes misrepresentation of a person’s name, age, occupation, gender, or status *with the intent to* persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct, or, if to facilitate transportation or travel by a minor or a participant, to engage in prohibited

sexual conduct. The use of a computer screen name, without such intent, does not prompt the application of this enhancement. *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.4(A)).

3. **Cross References.** Section 2A3.1 has two cross references. Section 2A3.1(c)(1) provides a cross reference to §2A1.1 (First Degree Murder), but only if a victim was killed under circumstances that would constitute murder under 18 U.S.C. § 1111, and only if the resulting offense level is greater than that determined under §2A3.1.

Section 2A3.1(c)(2) provides a cross reference to §2G2.1 (Sexually Exploiting a Minor by Production of Sexually Explicit Visual or Printed Material; Custodian Permitting Minor to Engage in Sexually Explicit Conduct; Advertisement for Minors to Engage in Production) if the criminal sexual abuse offense involved causing, transporting, permitting, or offering or seeking by notice or advertisement, a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct. Section 2G2.1 only applies if the offense level is greater than when determined under §2A3.1. This cross reference should be construed broadly. *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.5(A)). The term “sexually explicit conduct” has the meaning provided in 18 U.S.C. § 2256(2). *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.5(B)).

4. **Special Instruction.** Section 3A1.2(c)(2) (Official Victim) applies in cases in which the offense occurred in the custody or control of a prison or other correctional facility and the victim was a prison official. *See* §2A3.1(d)(1).
5. **Upward Departure Provision.** An upward departure may be warranted if the victim was sexually abused by more than one participant. *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.6). For purposes of this guideline, a participant is a person who is criminally responsible for the commission of the offense, but need not have been convicted. *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.1); §3B1.1, comment. (n.1).

**D. §2A3.2 (Criminal Sexual Abuse of a Minor Under the Age of Sixteen Years (Statutory Rape) or Attempt to Commit Such Acts)**

Appendix A specifies offense guideline §2A3.2 for use when the offense of conviction is

18 U.S.C. §§ 113(a)(2) or 2243(a).<sup>4</sup> Although in other sex offense guidelines, the definition of “minor” is a person who has not attained the age of 18, for purposes of §2A3.2, the definition of “minor” only includes an individual (including fictitious individuals and law enforcement officers) who had not attained the age of 16 years (or who was represented to have not attained the age of 16 years). See §2A3.2, comment. (n.1). The Seventh Circuit has also stated in dicta that “the logic of the guideline definition [of “minor”] embraces an impersonator who is not an officer.” *United States v. Morris*, 549 F.3d 548, 550 (7th Cir. 2008). Section 2A3.2 only applies in a case in which the defendant is convicted of a statutory violation of sexual abuse of a minor over the age of 12 years but under the age of 16 years when the minor is at least 4 years younger than the defendant, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 2243(a).

1. **Base Offense Level.** This guideline has a base offense level of **18**.
2. **Specific Offense Characteristics.**
  - a. **Custody, care, or supervisory control.** Section 2A3.2(b)(1) provides for a four-level enhancement if the minor was in the care, custody, or supervisory control of the defendant. This subsection is to be construed broadly and applies whenever the minor is entrusted to the defendant, whether temporarily or permanently. See §2A3.2, comment. (n.2(A)). If section (b)(1) applies, §3B1.3 (Abuse of Position of Trust or Use of Special Skill) does not apply. See §2A3.2, comment. (n.2(B)).
  - b. **Knowing misrepresentation of identity or undue influence.** Section 2A3.2(b)(2) provides that if the minor was not in the care, custody, or supervisory control of the defendant, and the offense involved either knowingly misrepresenting a participant’s identity to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce the minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct; or otherwise unduly influencing the minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct, a four-level enhancement applies.

**Misrepresentation of identity.** Such misrepresentation applies only to misrepresentations made directly to the minor or to a person who exercises custody, care, or

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<sup>4</sup> See Amendment 2 of the amendments submitted by the Commission to Congress on April 30, 2014, 79 FR 25996 (May 6, 2014).

supervisory control of the minor. *See* §2A3.2, comment. (n.3(A)).

**Undue influence.** Courts should look at the facts of each case closely to determine whether a participant’s influence over the minor compromised the voluntariness of the minor’s behavior. *See* §2A3.2, comment. (n.3(B)). The Sixth Circuit has found that a district court may vary upward when it finds that §2A3.2(b)(2)(B)(ii) does not adequately consider the undue influence the defendant had over a minor. *United States v. Studabaker*, 578 F.3d 423, 432 (6th Cir. 2009).

Because of an amendment to §2A3.2 in November 2007, the undue influence portion of §2A3.2(b)(2) no longer applies in a case in which the only “minor” involved in the offense is an undercover law enforcement officer. *See* §2A3.2, comment. (n.3(B)).

If the participant is at least ten years older than the minor, there is a rebuttable presumption that this subsection applies because some degree of undue influence can be presumed based on the substantial age difference. *See* §2A3.2, comment. (n.3(B)).

c. **Use of a computer.** Section 2A3.2(b)(3) provides for a two-level enhancement if a computer or an interactive computer service was used to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce the minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct. This subsection applies only to communication directly with the minor or with a person who exercises custody, care, or supervisory control of the minor. *See* §2A3.2, comment. (n.4).

3. **Cross Reference.** Section 2A3.2(c) provides a cross reference to §2A3.1 if the offense involves criminal sexual abuse (or attempt to commit criminal sexual abuse) as defined in 18 U.S.C. §§ 2241 or 2242. Additionally, if the victim was younger than 12 years old, §2A3.1 applies, regardless of the “consent” of the minor.

**Criminal sexual abuse.** *See United States v. Tyndall*, 521 F.3d 877, 883-84 (8th Cir. 2008) (affirming the district court’s cross-reference to §2A3.1 for a defendant convicted under 18 U.S.C. §

2243(a), even though the defendant was acquitted of the charges under 18 U.S.C. § 2242, because the minor’s “inebriated state made her incapable of appraising the nature of the sexual act and physically incapable of refusing or communicating her refusal to participate in the sexual act”); *United States v. Searby*, 439 F.3d 961, 964 (8th Cir. 2006) (affirming the district court’s decision to apply the cross-reference to §2A3.1 where the minor testified that the defendant “restrained her by holding her hands above her head” and that “she tried to fight him away and that she protested several times”); *United States v. Archdale*, 229 F.3d 861, 868-69 (9th Cir. 2000) (holding that the district court did not engage in impermissible double-counting when the court added four levels for use of force based on §2A3.1(b)(1) after properly applying the cross-reference from §2A3.2).

**Victim under 12 years old.** See *United States v. Beith*, 407 F.3d 881, 887 (7th Cir. 2005) (finding the application of the cross reference to §2A3.1 appropriate because the court was free to consider relevant conduct to which the defendant had admitted, and the victim was less than 12 years old), *abrogated on other grounds by United States v. Vizcarra*, 668 F.3d 516 (7th Cir. 2012).

4. **Upward Departure Consideration.** In cases in which the offense level determined under this guideline substantially understates the seriousness of the offense, an upward departure may be warranted. See §2A3.2, comment. (n.6) (listing as examples instances in which the defendant committed the act in furtherance of a commercial scheme such as pandering, transporting persons for the purpose of prostitution, or the production of pornography).

#### **E. §2A3.3 (Criminal Sexual Abuse of a Ward or Attempt to Commit Such Acts)**

Appendix A specifies offense guideline §2A3.3 for offenses committed in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 113(a)(2) or 2243(b).<sup>5</sup> In §2A3.3, the term “minor” means an individual (including fictitious individuals and law enforcement officers) who had not attained the age of 18 years (or who was represented to have not attained the age of 18 years). See §2A3.3, comment. (n.1). The term “ward” means someone in official detention under the custodial, supervisory, or disciplinary authority of the defendant. See §2A3.3, comment. (n.1).

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<sup>5</sup> See Amendment 2 of the amendments submitted by the Commission to Congress on April 30, 2014, 79 FR 25996 (May 6, 2014).

1. **Base Offense Level.** This guideline has a base offense level of **14**.
2. **Specific Offense Characteristics.**
  - a. **Knowing misrepresentation of identity.** Section 2A3.3(b)(1) provides for a two-level enhancement if the offense involved the knowing misrepresentation of a participant’s identity to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct.

Such misrepresentation applies only to misrepresentations made directly to a minor or to a person who exercises custody, care, or supervisory control of the minor. Further, the use of a misleading computer screen name, without the intent to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct does not prompt the application of this enhancement. *See* §2A3.3, comment. (n.2).
  - b. **Use of a computer.** Section 2A3.3(b)(2) provides for a two-level enhancement if the participant used a computer or interactive computer service to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct. This subsection applies only to communication directly with the minor or with a person who exercises custody, care, or supervisory control of the minor. *See* §2A3.3, comment. (n.3)

**Note:** Section 3B1.3 (Abuse of Position of Trust or Use of Special Skill) should not apply if the defendant is sentenced under §2A3.3, because an abuse of position of trust is assumed in all cases and is built into the base offense level. §2A3.3, comment. (n.4).

**F. §2A3.4 (Abusive Sexual Contact or Attempt to Commit Abusive Sexual Contact)**

Appendix A specifies offense guideline §2A3.4 for offenses involving abusive sexual contact in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 113(a)(2), 2244,<sup>6</sup> or 37. This section applies to abusive sexual contact that does not amount to criminal sexual abuse. In §2A3.4, the term “minor”

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<sup>6</sup> *See* Amendment 2 of the amendments submitted by the Commission to Congress on April 30, 2014, 79 FR 25996 (May 6, 2014).

means an individual (including a fictitious individual or law enforcement officer) who had not attained the age of 18 years (or who was represented to have not attained the age of 18 years). See §2A3.4, comment. (n.1).

Several courts have struggled with the distinction between attempted sexual abuse and sexual contact. Compare *United States v. Hayward*, 359 F.3d 631, 641 (3d Cir. 2004) (finding that pushing the victim's head toward the defendant's penis while his pants were still on amounted to sexual contact (properly sentenced under §2A3.4), not an attempted sexual act) with *United States v. Miranda*, 348 F.3d 1322, 1331 (11th Cir. 2003) (holding that arranging in a chat room to meet with the victim (an undercover officer posing as a 13-year-old girl) at a school to engage in sex, and then showing up at the school at the time arranged, constituted an attempted sexual act that falls under §2A3.2).

1. **Determining the Base Offense Level.** The different base offense levels in this guideline take into account the different means that could be used to commit the offense.

If the offense involved conduct described in 18 U.S.C. § 2241(a) or (b), the base offense level is **20**. For purposes of this subsection, such conduct is engaging in, *or causing sexual contact with*, or by another person by: (1) using force against the victim; (2) threatening or placing the victim in fear that any person will be subjected to death, bodily injury, or kidnapping; (3) rendering the victim unconscious; or (4) administering by force or threat of force, or without knowledge or permission of the victim, a drug, intoxicant, or other similar substance and substantially impairing the ability of the victim to appraise or control conduct. See §2A3.4, comment. (n.2).

If the offense involved conduct described in 18 U.S.C. § 2242, the base offense level is **16**. For purposes of this subsection, such conduct is: (1) engaging in, *or causing sexual contact with*, or by another person by threatening or placing the victim in fear (other than fear of death, kidnapping, or serious bodily injury); or (2) engaging in, or causing sexual contact with, or by another person who is incapable of appraising the nature of the conduct or physically incapable of declining participation in, or communicating unwillingness to engage in, the sexual act. See §2A3.4, comment. (n.3).

Otherwise, the base offense level is **12**.

2. **Specific Offense Characteristics.**

- a. **Victim under 12 years.** Section 2A3.4(b)(1) provides for a four-level enhancement if the victim had not attained the age of 12

years. The section also provides that if the resulting offense level is less than **22**, the offense level must be increased to level **22**.

- b. Victim between 12 and 15. Section 2A3.4(b)(2) provides for a two-level enhancement if the base offense level is either **20** or **16**, and the victim had attained the age of 12 years but not the age of 16 years.
- c. Custody, care, or supervisory control. Section 2A3.4(b)(3) provides for a two-level enhancement if the victim was in the custody, care, or supervisory control of the defendant. This subsection is to be construed broadly and applies whenever the minor is entrusted to the defendant, whether temporarily or permanently. *See* §2A3.4, comment. (n.4(A)). If section (b)(3) applies, §3B1.3 (Abuse of Position of Trust or Use of Special Skill) does not apply. *See* §2A3.4, comment. (n.4(B)).
- d. Knowing misrepresentation of identity. Section 2A3.4(b)(4) provides for a two-level enhancement if the offense involved the knowing misrepresentation of a participant's identity to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct.

Such misrepresentation applies only to misrepresentations made directly to a minor or to a person who exercises custody, care, or supervisory control of the minor. Further, the use of a misleading computer screen name, without the intent to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct does not prompt the application of this enhancement. *See* §2A3.4, comment. (n.5).

- e. Use of a computer. Section 2A3.4(b)(5) provides for a two-level enhancement if a computer or interactive computer service was used to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in prohibited sexual conduct. This subsection applies only to communication directly with the minor or with a person who exercises custody, care, or supervisory control of the minor. *See* §2A3.4, comment. (n.6)
3. **Cross References.** Section 2A3.4 has two cross references. Section 2A3.4(c)(1) provides that §2A3.1 applies if the offense involved criminal sexual abuse or attempt to commit criminal sexual abuse, as defined in 18 U.S.C. §§ 2241 or 2242. *See United States v. No Neck*, 472 F.3d 1048, 1055 (8th Cir. 2007) (affirming the district court's cross reference to

§2A3.1, even when the defendant was acquitted of criminal sexual abuse charges).

Section 2A3.4(c)(2) provides that §2A3.2 applies if the offense involved criminal sexual abuse of a minor or attempt to commit criminal sexual abuse of a minor, as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2243(a), if the resulting offense level is greater than that determined under §2A3.4.

#### **G. §2A3.5 (Failure to Register as a Sex Offender)**

Appendix A specifies offense guideline §2A3.5 for failing to register as a sex offender under 18 U.S.C. § 2250(a).<sup>7</sup>

In §2A3.5, the term “minor” means an individual (including a fictitious individual or law enforcement officer) who had not attained the age of 18 years (or who was represented to have not attained the age of 18 years). *See* §2A3.5, comment. (n.1).

1. **Determining the Base Offense Level.** The alternative base offense levels for §2A3.5 depend on the sexual offense of conviction for which the defendant was required to register, whether a state or federal offense. The statute determines how serious the offense is based on the prior sexual offense committed and categorizes each offender into one of three tiers. Tier III offenders are the most egregious. The term “sex offense” is defined in 42 U.S.C. § 16911(5). *See* §2A3.5, comment (n.1).

A) If the offender is a Tier III offender, the base offense level is **16**;

(B) if the offender is a Tier II offender, the base offense level is **14**; and

(C) if the offender is a Tier I offender, the base offense level is **12**.

The definition of each tier is found in 42 U.S.C. § 16911(2)-(4). Courts may use the modified categorical approach to determine the defendant’s tier classification. *See United States v. Taylor*, 644 F.3d 573 (7th Cir. 2011) (holding the district court appropriately examined the charging instrument under a modified categorical approach to determine which tier

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<sup>7</sup> The Fifth Circuit held in regard to §2A3.5 that, “where, at the time of sentencing there is no guideline in effect for the particular offense of conviction, and the Sentencing Commission has promulgated a proposed guideline applicable to the offense of conviction, the district court’s failure to consider the proposed guideline when sentencing the defendant may result in reversible plain error.” *United States v. Sanchez*, 527 F.3d 463, 466 (5th Cir. 2008). The Eleventh Circuit held that retroactive application of §2A3.5 was permissible under an advisory guideline system when the district court explicitly stated it would have imposed the same sentence regardless of the guidelines. *United States v. Shira*, 286 F. App’x 650, 653 (11th Cir. 2008) (unpublished).

the defendant should have been classified in, because the statute he had been convicted of violating prohibited all sodomy, including consensual sodomy with an adult), *cert. denied*, 132 S. Ct. 1049 (2012).

2. **Specific Offense Characteristics.**

- a. Sex offense while in failure to register status. Section 2A3.5(b)(1) provides alternative enhancements. The greatest applicable enhancement applies. A “sex offense” includes any crime with an element of a sexual act or sexual contact with another. *See United States v. Romeo*, 385 Fed. App’x 45, 48-49 (2d Cir. 2010) (unpub) (finding violation of a state law defining “sexual contact” more broadly than the federal definition qualified for purposes of the enhancement). If, while the defendant was in failure-to-register status, he committed either a sex offense against someone other than a minor or committed a felony offense other than a sex offense against a minor, a six-level enhancement applies. *See United States v. Johnson*, 743 F.3d 196, 204 (7th Cir. 2014) (finding although a conviction is not required to apply the enhancement for committing a sexual offense against someone other than a minor, because defendant’s sexual conduct with his adult girlfriend, while not consensual, did not meet the elements of a state sexual offense, the enhancement should not have been applied). If, while in failure-to-register status, the defendant committed a sex offense against a minor, an eight-level enhancement applies. *See United States v. Bevins*, 430 Fed. App’x 550 (8th Cir. 2011) (unpub) (finding the enhancement was properly applied because the minor’s testimony that defendant sexually abused him while in a failure to register status was credibly coherent, plausible, and not contradicted by objective evidence, even though minor had been noncredible on other facts); *United States v. Lott*, 750 F.3d 214, 220 (2d Cir. 2014) (finding although defendant was convicted of “prohibited acts” and not “lewd and lascivious conduct” under Vermont law for the attempted sexual contact with a 13 year old female while in failure to register status, enhancement is applicable to mere commission of a sex offense even absent a conviction for that offense).
- b. Excuse for failing to register. Section 2A3.5(b)(2) provides for a three-level *decrease* if the defendant voluntarily corrected the failure to register or tried to register but was prevented from registering by uncontrollable circumstances to which the defendant did not contribute. For the decrease to apply, the defendant’s attempt to register or to correct the failure to register must have

occurred before he knew or should have known that a jurisdiction had detected his failure to register. *See* §2A3.5, comment. (n.2(A)).

It is not a voluntary correction to a failure to register if it is not a genuine attempt to correct one's registration status. *See United States v. Forster*, 549 Fed. Appx. 757, 770-71 (10th Cir. 2013) (unpub) (finding defendant's attempt to register after moving from one residence to another, after having been out of the country for eight months, was not a voluntary correction of his failure to register but was instead a desire to perpetuate a false claim that he had been at the first residence during that eight month period instead).

**Note:** The specific offense characteristic at §2A3.5(b)(2) does not apply if the specific offense characteristic at §2A3.5(b)(1) also applies. §2A3.5, comment. (n.2(B)).

#### **H. §2A3.6 (Aggravated Offenses Relating to Registration as a Sex Offender)**

Appendix A specifies offense guideline §2A3.6 for offenses violating 18 U.S.C. §§ 2250(c) or 2260A for aggravated offenses relating to failing to register as a sex offender.

If the defendant was convicted under 18 U.S.C. § 2250(c), the guideline sentence under §2A3.6 is the minimum term required by statute. Section 2250 provides a mandatory minimum term of five years and a statutory maximum term of 30 years of imprisonment.

A sentence above five years of imprisonment is considered an upward departure, and may be warranted, for example, in a case involving a sex offense committed against a minor or if the offense resulted in serious bodily injury to a minor *See* §2A3.6, comment. (n.4). The statute requires any sentence under this statute to be applied consecutively to any sentence imposed under 18 U.S.C. § 2250(a) (Failure to Register). *See* §2A3.5, comment. (n.1).

If the defendant was convicted under 18 U.S.C. § 2260A, the guideline sentence is the term of imprisonment required by statute, which is ten years of imprisonment. This term must also be imposed consecutively to any sentence imposed for an offense listed under § 2260A.

**Note:** Chapters Three (Adjustments) and Four (Criminal History and Criminal Livelihood) do not apply to sentences under this guideline. The guideline sentence for these offenses is determined only by the relevant statute. *See* §2A3.6, comment. (n.2).

**Note:** If a defendant is sentenced under this guideline in conjunction with a sentence for an underlying offense, any specific offense characteristics that are based on the same conduct as the conduct comprising the conviction under 18 U.S.C. §§ 2250(c) or 2260A does not apply.

See §2A3.6, comment. (n.3).

### **III. Chapter Three: Adjustments**

#### **A. §3A1.1(b) (Vulnerable Victim)**

Section 3A1.1(b)(1) provides for a two-level adjustment if the defendant knew or should have known that a victim of the offense was a vulnerable victim. Further, §3A1.1(b)(2) provides that if (b)(1) applies and the offense involved a large number of vulnerable victims, the offense level should be adjusted another 2 levels.

For purposes of this subsection, “vulnerable victim” means a person who is a victim of the offense of conviction and any conduct for which the defendant is accountable under §1B1.3 (Relevant Conduct) and who is unusually vulnerable due to age, physical or mental condition or who is otherwise particularly susceptible to the criminal conduct. §3A1.1, comment. (n.2); *see United States v. Hayes*, 434 Fed. App’x 94 (3d Cir.) (unpub) (holding application of §3A1.1 proper where defendant recruited and prostituted a minor victim with bi-polar disorder), *cert. denied*, 132 S. Ct. 565 (2011); *United States v. Irving*, 554 F.3d 64, 75 (2d Cir. 2009) (upholding application of the vulnerable victim enhancement because the minor victims living in Mexico and Honduras were homeless and without parental or other supervision and guidance); *United States v. Chee*, 514 F.3d 1106, 1117 (10th Cir. 2008) (upholding the district court’s vulnerable victim enhancement where the victim “suffer[ed] from mental and physical handicaps, including a diminished mental capacity, seizures, and partial paralysis”); *United States v. Julian*, 427 F.3d 471, 489-90 (7th Cir. 2005) (finding no double-counting where the district court increased the defendant’s sentence based on the victim’s age under §2A3.1(b)(2) and based on the “economic vulnerability of the victims” under §3A1.1 because the defendant took “advantage of the poor and homeless children by offering shelter, housing and food”).

The adjustment under §3A1.1(b) does not apply, however, if the factor that makes the person vulnerable is already incorporated into the offense guideline. Therefore, in sexual abuse offenses against minors, if the guideline provides an enhancement for the age of the minor, §3A1.1 does not apply unless the victim was unusually vulnerable for reasons unrelated to the age of the victim. §3A1.1, comment. (n.2); *see United States v. Beith*, 407 F.3d 881, 892 (7th Cir. 2005) (holding that “allegations of molestation standing alone are insufficient to establish vulnerability” when the victim’s “age had already been the subject of an enhancement” under 2A3.1(b)(2)), *abrogated on other grounds by United States v. Vizcarra*, 668 F.3d 516 (7th Cir. 2012).

#### **B. §3A1.3 (Restraint of Victim)**

Section 3A1.3 provides for a two-level adjustment if a victim was physically restrained in the course of the offense. “Physically restrained” means the forcible restraint of the victim such as by being tied, bound, or locked up. §1B1.1, comment. (n.1(K)). This adjustment does not apply where the offense guideline specifically incorporates this factor, or where the unlawful

restraint of a victim is an element of the offense itself. §3A1.3, comment. (n.2). *See United States v. Joe*, 696 F.3d 1066 (10th Cir. 2012) (holding that because precedential circuit decisions including *United States v. Miera*, 539 F.3d 1232 (10th Cir. 2008), found that preventing a victim from even thinking about escape is to “physically restrain” that victim, the conduct giving rise to the restraint-of-the-victim enhancement in §3A1.3 is incorporated into the offense of aggravated sexual abuse in § 2241(a)); *United States v. Star*, 451 Fed. Appx. 708 (9th Cir. 2011) (unpub) (affirming application of §3A1.3 because “restraint of the victim is not an element of the offense of aggravated sexual abuse nor was it incorporated in the aggravated sexual assault offense Guideline applied”); *but see United States v. Johnson*, 492 F.3d 254, 257 (4th Cir. 2007) (holding that the defendant’s “act of gripping the victim’s arms and holding her down while [another man] raped her is sufficiently akin to the [guideline] definition’s examples (being tied, bound, or locked up) to constitute forcible restraint,” and stating that a conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 2241(a)(1) “does not hinge on whether the victim was restrained or confined”). If the restraint was sufficiently egregious, an upward departure may be warranted. §3A1.3, comment. (n.3).

### **C. §3B1.3 (Abuse of Position of Trust or Use of Special Skill)**

Section 3B1.3 provides for a two-level adjustment if the defendant abused a position of public or private trust, or used a special skill, in a manner that significantly facilitated the commission or concealment of the offenses. *See United States v. Chee*, 514 F.3d 1106, 1118 (10th Cir. 2008) (finding whether an individual occupies a position of trust is evaluated from the perspective of the victim). However, this adjustment does not apply in the sexual abuse guidelines if the specific offense characteristics for a victim being in the care, custody, or supervisory control of the defendant or for the victim being held in the custody of a correctional facility apply. *See* §2A3.1, comment. (n.3(B)); §2A3.2, comment. (n.2(B)); §2A3.3, comment. (n.4); §2A3.4, comment. (n.4(B)).

## **IV. Chapter Four: Repeat and Dangerous Sex Offender<sup>8</sup>**

### **A. §4B1.5 (Repeat and Dangerous Sex Offender Against Minors)**

Section 4B1.5 applies to offenders whose offense of conviction is one of the “covered sex crime[s]” committed against a minor and who presents a continuing danger to the public, either because he committed the offense of conviction after at least one sex offense conviction (*see* §4B1.5(a)), or because he has engaged in a pattern of activity involving prohibited sexual conduct (*see* §4B1.5(b)). *See also* §4B1.5 comment. (n.2), (background). The “covered sex crime[s]” relevant to this Primer are offenses (including attempt and conspiracy to commit the offense), perpetrated against a minor, under Chapter 109A (18 U.S.C. §§ 2241-2248). For purposes of this guideline, the term “minor” means an individual (including a fictitious

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed description of the issues and case law associated with §4B1.5, *see* Sex Offense Primer: Offenses Involving Commercial Sex Acts and Sexual Exploitation of Minors.

individual or law enforcement officer) who had not attained the age of 18 years (or who was represented to have not attained the age of 18 years). *See* §4B1.5, comment. (n.1). *See United States v. Cerno*, 529 F.3d 926, 938 (10th Cir. 2008) (finding a conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 2241(a) a “covered sex crime” when the victim was over the age of 16 even though certain offenses within Chapter 109A pertain to minors under either the age of 12 or the age of 16).

Section 4B1.5(a) specifically states that the offense level is the greater of the offense level under Chapters Two and Three or the offense level determined based on a corresponding table. *See* §4B1.5(a)(1). Section 4B1.5(b)(1) specifically states that the enhancement is to be added to the offense levels determined under Chapters Two and Three. Thus, the guidelines intend the cumulative application of most enhancements in conjunction with §4B1.5, foreclosing many double-counting arguments. *See United States v. Bruguier*, 703 F.3d 393 (8th Cir. 2012) (finding proper application of §4B1.5 to defendant’s combined offense level in sentencing defendant convicted of multiple counts of sexual abuse against separate victims because the guidelines direct that multiple counts are grouped and the combined offense level is determined prior to application of Chapter Four adjustments).

## **V. Chapter Five: Probation, Supervised Release, and Departures**

### **A. §5B1.3 (Conditions of Probation)**

Section §5B1.3 sets out mandatory, standard, and special conditions of probation.

1. §5B1.3(a) (Mandatory Conditions). Section 5B1.3(a)(9)(A) provides that, in a state in which the requirements of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act do not apply, a defendant convicted of a sexual offense must report the address where he will reside and any subsequent change of address, and must register as a sex offender in any State where the defendant resides, is employed, carries on a vocation, or is a student. This subsection applies if the state continues to register sex offenders pursuant to the sex offender registry in place before the enactment of the Adam Walsh Act. *See* §5B1.3, comment. (n.1).

Section 5B1.3(a)(9)(B) provides that, in a state in which the requirements of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act apply, a sex offender must register and keep the registration current in both the jurisdiction where he lives, works, or is a student and where he was convicted.

2. §5B1.3(b). The guidelines allow courts to impose other conditions of probation if the conditions are “reasonably related to”: (1) the nature and circumstances of the offense and the history and characteristics of the defendant; (2) the need for the sentence imposed to reflect the seriousness of the offense, to promote respect for the law, and to provide just

punishment for the offense; (3) the need for the sentence imposed to afford adequate deterrence; (4) the need to protect the public from further crimes by the defendant; and (5) the need to provide the defendant with educational or vocational training, medical care, or other correctional treatment in the most effective manner.

Such conditions can only involve deprivations of liberty or property as are reasonably necessary for the purposes of sentencing indicated in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a). *See* §5B1.3(b)(2).

3. §5B1.3(d) (Policy Statement). Section 5B1.3(d)(7) sets forth “special” conditions of probation that might be appropriate in sex offense convictions. Subsection (A) allows for a condition requiring the defendant to participate in a program approved by the United States Probation Office for the treatment and monitoring of sex offenders. Subsection (B) allows for a condition limiting the use of a computer or an interactive computer service in cases in which the defendant used such items. Finally, subsection (C) allows for a condition requiring the defendant to submit to a search, at any time, with or without a warrant, and by any law enforcement or probation officer, of the defendant’s person and any property, papers, or things upon reasonable suspicion concerning a violation of the supervised release or unlawful conduct.

#### **B. §5D1.1 (Imposition of a Term of Supervised Release)**

Pursuant to this section, the court must order a term of supervised release to follow imprisonment when a sentence of more than one year is imposed, or when required by statute.

#### **C. §5D1.2 (Term of Supervised Release)**

This section provides that the length of the term of supervised release cannot be less than the minimum term of years specified for the offense, and may be up to life if the offense is a sex offense. The statutory maximum term of supervised release is recommended if the offense is a sex offense. *See* §5D1.2(b)(2); *United States v. Williams*, 636 F.3d 1229 (9th Cir.) (finding sentence of lifetime term of supervised release did not violate the Eighth Amendment because no “gross disproportionality” was inferred, *citing Graham v. Florida*, 130 S. Ct. 2011, 2021 (2010), and the sentence was not substantively unreasonable because of high risk of recidivism of sex offenders), *cert. denied*, 132 S. Ct. 188 (2011). The failure to register as a sex offender under 18 U.S.C. § 2250 is not a “sex offense” within the meaning of §5D1.2(b)(2). *See United States v. Goodwin*, 717 F.3d 511 (7th Cir. 2013).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *See* Amendment 2 of the amendments submitted by the Commission to Congress on April 30, 2014, 79 FR 25996 (May 6, 2014), specifically clarifying in Application Note 1 of

In the Adam Walsh Act of 2006, 18 U.S.C. § 3583 was amended to increase the authorized term of supervised release for, among other offenses, any sexual abuse offense perpetrated against a minor under chapter 109A of title 18 to a mandatory minimum of five years with a statutory maximum term of life.

**D. §5D1.3 (Conditions of Supervised Release)**

Section §5D1.3 sets out mandatory, standard, and special conditions of supervised release.

1. §5D1.3(a) (Mandatory Conditions). Section 5D1.3(a)(7)(A) provides that, in a state in which the requirements of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act do not apply, a defendant convicted of a sexual offense must report the address where he will reside and any subsequent change of address, and must register as a sex offender in any State where the defendant resides, is employed, carries on a vocation, or is a student. This subsection applies if the state continues to register sex offenders pursuant to the sex offender registry in place before the enactment of the Adam Walsh Act. *See* §5D1.3, comment. (n. 1).

Section 5D1.3(a)(7)(B) provides that, in a state in which the requirements of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act apply, a sex offender must register and keep the registration current in both the jurisdiction where he lives, works, or is a student and where he was convicted.

Section 3583 of title 18 states that, if a defendant required to register under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act commits a criminal offense under, among others, chapter 109A of title 18, the court is to 1) revoke a term of supervised release, and 2) require a defendant to serve a term of imprisonment for not less than 5 years.

2. §5D1.3(b) (Special Conditions). The guidelines allow courts to impose other conditions of supervised release if the conditions are “reasonably related to” any or all of the factors listed below. Following the statutory language of 18 U.S.C. § 3583(d)(1), there are four factors tied to the goals of supervised release. The first is the defendant’s history and characteristics and the nature and circumstances of his offense. The second is the need for adequate deterrence of future criminal conduct. The third is the need to protect the public from further crimes by the defendant, and the fourth is an effective provision of educational or vocational

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§5D1.2 that offenses under section 2250 are not “sex offenses.”

treatment, medical care, or other needed correctional treatment to the defendant. *See United States v. Perazza-Mercado*, 553 F.3d 65, 72 (1st Cir. 2009) (holding a special condition of supervised release requiring a total ban on Internet access at home inconsistent with the vocational and educational goals of supervised release where the defendant had no history of impermissible Internet use and the Internet was not an instrumentality of the offense). *See United States v. Bango*, 386 Fed. App'x 50 (3d Cir. 2010) (unpub) (holding special condition of supervised release requiring defendant, a landlord, to disclose to female tenants his convictions for sexual battery and failure to register as a sex offender reasonably related to the need to protect the public pursuant to 18 § U.S.C. 3553(a)(2)(C)).

Such conditions must also entail “no greater deprivation of liberty than is reasonably necessary” to achieve the goals of supervised release; must be consistent with any pertinent policy statements issued by the Commission; and must have adequate evidentiary support in the record. *See* §5D1.3(b)(2); *see also United States v. Fraga*, 704 F.3d 432 (5th Cir. 2013) (finding plain error in the automatic imposition of a lifetime term of supervised release “without regard for the specific facts and circumstances of the case or the range provided for in the statute”); *but see United States v. Wallette*, 686 F.3d 475 (8th Cir. 2012) (finding although court erred by failing to make an individualized determination before imposing special condition of supervised release that defendant abstain from possessing “materials depicting or describing sexually explicit conduct,” error was not plain because based on his history of sexual abuse and his need for treatment, “there is little likelihood that the district court, upon further consideration, would remove the condition”). *See also United States v. Levering*, 441 F.3d 566, 569-70 (8th Cir. 2006) (holding that the district court did not abuse its discretion by imposing a condition of supervised release requiring a total prohibition on contact with juvenile females—without prior approval of his probation officer—where the defendant had pleaded guilty to the forcible rape of a female juvenile); *United States v. Morgan*, 44 Fed. App'x. 881, 888 (10th Cir. 2002) (unpub) (holding that a special condition of supervised release requiring the defendant “to participate in a sex offender treatment and ‘submit to a risk assessment including physiological testing,’ violates neither [the defendant’s] constitutional rights nor the statutory and Guideline requirements for the imposition of special conditions of supervised release”).

3. §5D1.3(d)(7) (Policy Statement) (Sex Offenses). Section 5D1.3(d)(7) lists “special” conditions of supervised release. Subsection (A) allows for a condition requiring the defendant to participate in a program approved by the United States Probation Office for the treatment and monitoring of sex

offenders. Subsection (B) allows for a condition limiting the use of a computer or an interactive computer service in cases in which the defendant used such items. Finally, subsection (C) allows for a condition requiring the defendant to submit to a search, at any time, with or without a warrant, and by any law enforcement or probation officer, of the defendant's person and any property, papers, or things upon reasonable suspicion concerning a violation of the supervised release or unlawful conduct.

**E. §5F1.5 (Occupational Restrictions)**

Section §5F1.5(a) authorizes a court to impose occupational restrictions in limited circumstances. These occupational restrictions can do two things. First, they can prevent a defendant from taking a certain type of employment. For example, a sex offender may not be allowed to work around children. Second, a lesser restriction can limit the “terms” of a defendant's employment. For example, a defendant convicted of fraud may be restricted from working in a position handling money at a bank or may be required to discuss with the employer bank the details of his criminal history. *See United States v. Du*, 476 F.3d 1168, 1170 (10th Cir. 2007) (stating that specific findings are required before a court imposes any employment conditions that are considered “occupational restrictions”).

Such restrictions can only be imposed, however, if the court determines (1) that there is a reasonably direct relationship between the defendant's occupation and the offense conduct; and (2) that imposition of the restriction is reasonably necessary to protect the public. *See* §5F1.5(a). Pursuant to §5F1.5(b), an occupational restriction may only be in place for “the minimum time and to the minimum extent necessary to protect the public.”

**F. §5K2.0 (Grounds for Departure (Policy Statement))**

Pursuant to §5K2.0(b), the only grounds for a departure for “sexual offenses” below the range established by the applicable guidelines are those enumerated in Part K. *See* §5K2.0, comment. (n.4(B)). Courts may depart upward for “child crimes and sexual offenses” if it finds, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3553(b)(2)(A)(i) that there is an aggravating circumstance not adequately taken into consideration by the Commission. *See United States v. King*, 604 F.3d 125, 143-44 (3d Cir. 2010) (finding a five level upward departure reasonable for a defendant convicted of traveling to engage in sex with a minor for his pattern of sexually abusing minors, similar to the child pornography guideline's enhancement). The definition of “sexual offenses” includes offenses under chapter 109A of title 18. *See* §5K2.0, comment. (n. 4(A)).

**G. §5K2.8 (Extreme Conduct (Policy Statement))**

Pursuant to §5K2.8, if the conduct was unusually heinous, cruel, brutal, or degrading to the victim, a court may increase the sentence above the guideline range to reflect the nature of the

conduct. See *United States v. Flanders*, – F.3d –, 2014 WL 2186554, \*16 (11th Cir. May 27, 2014) (finding an upward departure reasonable for defendants who drugged women without their knowledge, videotaped sexual activity with the women who “woke up covered in bodily fluids and uncertain of what had happened to them,” and distributed the images over the Internet).

#### **H. §5K2.22 (Specific Offender Characteristics as Grounds for Downward Departure in Child Crimes and Sexual Offenses (Policy Statement))**

For offenses committed under chapter 109A (among others), of title 18, (1) age is only a reason to depart downward if and to the extent permitted by §5H1.1, (2) an extraordinary physical impairment is only a reason to depart downward if and to the extent permitted by §5H1.4, and (3) drug, alcohol, or gambling dependence or abuse is not a reason to depart downward.

#### **VI. Post-Booker Reasonableness Determinations**

*United States v. Flanders*, – F.3d –, 2014 WL 2186554, \*16 (11th Cir. May 27, 2014) (finding defendants’ life sentences substantively reasonable because they had used false pretenses to convince women to travel purportedly for purpose of making an audition for a liquor commercial, fed the victims alcohol laced with other drugs without the victims’ knowledge, had sex with the victims while they were unconscious, filmed the sexual activity and subsequently distributed the DVDs containing the images over the Internet).

*United States v. Kane*, 639 F.3d 1121 (8th Cir. 2011) (reversing and remanding a 120 month sentence for aggravated sexual abuse as procedurally unreasonable because the district court had found the defendant posed a low risk of recidivism even though she had held her daughter down during more than 200 sexual assaults, and had imposed a 90 month downward variance on the grounds that the codefendant who raped the child was more culpable), *cert. denied*, 132 S. Ct. 1590 (2012).

*United States v. Ausburn*, 362 Fed. App’x 259, 262 (3d Cir. 2010) (unpub) (affirming the district court’s sentence of 144-months’ imprisonment—double the high-end of the guidelines range—as substantively reasonable when the defendant used his position as a police chief to insulate himself with the victim and her family.).

*United States v. Simmons*, 568 F.3d 564, 570 (5th Cir. 2009) (finding the district court committed procedural error inconsistent with *Kimbrough v. United States*, 552 U.S. 85 (2007), by stating even though it disagreed with the guideline policy statement it lacked discretion to consider the defendant’s age in deciding whether to depart downward).

*United States v. Poynter*, 495 F.3d 349, 353 (6th Cir. 2007) (applying a “proportionality principle,” and holding that the district court’s “60-year sentence, a 206% upward variance from the top of the guidelines range, cannot be sustained” because nothing distinguished the defendant from other repeat sex offenders).

