

## CHAPTER FOUR - CRIMINAL HISTORY AND CRIMINAL LIVELIHOOD

### PART A - CRIMINAL HISTORY

#### Introductory Commentary

*The Comprehensive Crime Control Act sets forth four purposes of sentencing. (See 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a)(2).) A defendant's record of past criminal conduct is directly relevant to those purposes. A defendant with a record of prior criminal behavior is more culpable than a first offender and thus deserving of greater punishment. General deterrence of criminal conduct dictates that a clear message be sent to society that repeated criminal behavior will aggravate the need for punishment with each recurrence. To protect the public from further crimes of the particular defendant, the likelihood of recidivism and future criminal behavior must be considered. Repeated criminal behavior is an indicator of a limited likelihood of successful rehabilitation.*

*The specific factors included in §4A1.1 and §4A1.3 are consistent with the extant empirical research assessing correlates of recidivism and patterns of career criminal behavior. While empirical research has shown that other factors are correlated highly with the likelihood of recidivism, e.g., age and drug abuse, for policy reasons they were not included here at this time. The Commission has made no definitive judgment as to the reliability of the existing data. However, the Commission will review additional data insofar as they become available in the future.*

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

#### **§4A1.1. Criminal History Category**

The total points from items (a) through (e) determine the criminal history category in the Sentencing Table in Chapter Five, Part A.

- (a) Add 3 points for each prior sentence of imprisonment exceeding one year and one month.
- (b) Add 2 points for each prior sentence of imprisonment of at least sixty days not counted in (a).
- (c) Add 1 point for each prior sentence not included in (a) or (b), up to a total of 4 points for this item.
- (d) Add 2 points if the defendant committed the instant offense while under any criminal justice sentence, including probation, parole, supervised release, imprisonment, work release, or escape status.
- (e) Add 2 points if the defendant committed the instant offense less than two years after release from imprisonment on a sentence counted under (a) or (b) or while in imprisonment or escape status on such a sentence. If 2 points are added for item (d), add only 1 point for this item.

### Commentary

*The total criminal history points from §4A1.1 determine the criminal history category (I-VI) in the Sentencing Table in Chapter Five, Part A. The definitions and instructions in §4A1.2 govern the computation of the criminal history points. Therefore, §§4A1.1 and 4A1.2 must be read together. The following notes highlight the interaction of §§4A1.1 and 4A1.2.*

#### Application Notes:

1. §4A1.1(a). *Three points are added for each prior sentence of imprisonment exceeding one year and one month. There is no limit to the number of points that may be counted under this item. The term "prior sentence" is defined at §4A1.2(a). The term "sentence of imprisonment" is defined at §4A1.2(b). Where a prior sentence of imprisonment resulted from a revocation of probation, parole, or a similar form of release, see §4A1.2(k).*

*Certain prior sentences are not counted or are counted only under certain conditions:*

*A sentence imposed more than fifteen years prior to the defendant's commencement of the instant offense is not counted unless the defendant's incarceration extended into this fifteen year period. See §4A1.2(e).*

*A sentence imposed for an offense committed prior to the defendant's eighteenth birthday is counted under this item only if it resulted from an adult conviction. See §4A1.2(d).*

*A sentence for a foreign conviction, a conviction that has been expunged, or an invalid conviction, is not counted. See §4A1.2(h) and (j) and the Commentary to §4A1.2.*

2. §4A1.1(b). *Two points are added for each prior sentence of imprisonment of at least sixty days not counted in §4A1.1(a). There is no limit to the number of points that may be counted under this item. The term "prior sentence" is defined at §4A1.2(a). The term "sentence of imprisonment" is defined at §4A1.2(b). Where a prior sentence of imprisonment resulted from a revocation of probation, parole, or a similar form of release, see §4A1.2(k).*

*Certain prior sentences are not counted or are counted only under certain conditions:*

*A sentence imposed more than ten years prior to the defendant's commencement of the instant offense is not counted. See §4A1.2(e).*

*An adult or juvenile sentence imposed for an offense committed prior to the defendant's eighteenth birthday is counted only if confinement resulting from such sentence extended into the five year period preceding the defendant's commencement of the instant offense. See §4A1.2(d).*

*Sentences for certain specified non-felony offenses are never counted. See §4A1.2(c)(2).*

*A sentence for a foreign conviction or a tribal court conviction, an expunged conviction, or an invalid conviction, is not counted. See §4A1.2(h), (i), (j), and the Commentary to §4A1.2.*

*A military sentence is counted only if imposed by a general or special court martial. See §4A1.2(g).*

3. *§4A1.1(c). One point is added for each prior sentence not counted under §4A1.1(a) or (b). A maximum of four points may be counted under this item. The term "prior sentence" is defined at §4A1.2(a).*

*Certain prior sentences are not counted or are counted only under certain conditions:*

*A sentence imposed more than ten years prior to the defendant's commencement of the instant offense is not counted. See §4A1.2(e).*

*An adult or juvenile sentence imposed for an offense committed prior to the defendant's eighteenth birthday is counted only if imposed within five years of the defendant's commencement of the current offense. See §4A1.2(d).*

*Sentences for certain specified non-felony offenses are counted only if they meet certain requirements. See §4A1.2(c)(1).*

*Sentences for certain specified non-felony offenses are never counted. See §4A1.2(c)(2).*

*A diversionary disposition is counted only where there is a finding or admission of guilt in a judicial proceeding. See §4A1.2(f).*

*A sentence for a foreign conviction, a tribal court conviction, an expunged conviction, or an invalid conviction, is not counted. See §4A1.2(h), (i), (j), and the Commentary to §4A1.2.*

*A military sentence is counted only if imposed by a general or special court martial. See §4A1.2(g).*

4. *§4A1.1(d). Two points are added if the defendant committed any part of the instant offense (i.e., any relevant conduct) while under any criminal justice sentence, including probation, parole, supervised release, imprisonment, work release, or escape status. For the purposes of this item, a "criminal justice sentence" means a sentence countable under §4A1.2 (Definitions and Instructions for Computing Criminal History).*
5. *§4A1.1(e). Two points are added if the defendant committed any part of the instant offense (i.e., any relevant conduct) less than two years following release from confinement on a sentence counted under §4A1.1(a) or (b). This also applies if the defendant committed the instant offense while in imprisonment or escape status on such a sentence. However, if two points are added under §4A1.1(d), only one point is added under §4A1.1(e).*

*Background:* Prior convictions may represent convictions in the federal system, fifty state systems, the District of Columbia, territories, and foreign, tribal, and military courts. There are jurisdictional variations in offense definitions, sentencing structures, and manner of sentence pronouncement. To minimize problems with imperfect measures of past crime seriousness, criminal history categories are based on the maximum term imposed in previous sentences rather than on other measures, such as whether the conviction was designated a felony or misdemeanor. In recognition of the imperfection

of this measure however, §4A1.3 permits information about the significance or similarity of past conduct underlying prior convictions to be used as a basis for imposing a sentence outside the applicable guideline range.

Subdivisions (a), (b), and (c) of §4A1.1 distinguish confinement sentences longer than one year and one month, shorter confinement sentences of at least sixty days, and all other sentences, such as confinement sentences of less than sixty days, probation, fines, and residency in a halfway house.

Section 4A1.1(d) implements one measure of recency by adding two points if the defendant was under a criminal justice sentence during any part of the instant offense.

Section 4A1.1(e) implements another measure of recency by adding two points if the defendant committed any part of the instant offense less than two years immediately following his release from confinement on a sentence counted under §4A1.1(a) or (b). Because of the potential overlap of (d) and (e), their combined impact is limited to three points. However, a defendant who falls within both (d) and (e) is more likely to commit additional crimes; thus, (d) and (e) are not completely combined.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1989 (see Appendix C, amendments 259-261).

#### **§4A1.2. Definitions and Instructions for Computing Criminal History**

##### **(a) Prior Sentence Defined**

- (1) The term "prior sentence" means any sentence previously imposed upon adjudication of guilt, whether by guilty plea, trial, or plea of nolo contendere, for conduct not part of the instant offense.
- (2) Prior sentences imposed in unrelated cases are to be counted separately. Prior sentences imposed in related cases are to be treated as one sentence for purposes of the criminal history. Use the longest sentence of imprisonment if concurrent sentences were imposed and the aggregate sentence of imprisonment imposed in the case of consecutive sentences.
- (3) A conviction for which the imposition or execution of sentence was totally suspended or stayed shall be counted as a prior sentence under §4A1.1(c).

##### **(b) Sentence of Imprisonment Defined**

- (1) The term "sentence of imprisonment" means a sentence of incarceration and refers to the maximum sentence imposed.
- (2) If part of a sentence of imprisonment was suspended, "sentence of imprisonment" refers only to the portion that was not suspended.

(c) **Sentences Counted and Excluded**

Sentences for all felony offenses are counted. Sentences for misdemeanor and petty offenses are counted, except as follows:

- (1) Sentences for the following prior offenses and offenses similar to them, by whatever name they are known, are counted only if (A) the sentence was a term of probation of at least one year or a term of imprisonment of at least thirty days, or (B) the prior offense was similar to an instant offense:

Careless or reckless driving  
Contempt of court  
Disorderly conduct or disturbing the peace  
Driving without a license or with a revoked or suspended license  
False information to a police officer  
Fish and game violations  
Gambling  
Hindering or failure to obey a police officer  
Insufficient funds check  
Leaving the scene of an accident  
Local ordinance violations (excluding local ordinance violations that are also criminal offenses under state law)  
Non-support  
Prostitution  
Resisting arrest  
Trespassing.

- (2) Sentences for the following prior offenses and offenses similar to them, by whatever name they are known, are never counted:

Hitchhiking  
Juvenile status offenses and truancy  
Loitering  
Minor traffic infractions (e.g., speeding)  
Public intoxication  
Vagrancy.

(d) **Offenses Committed Prior to Age Eighteen**

- (1) If the defendant was convicted as an adult and received a sentence of imprisonment exceeding one year and one month, add 3 points under §4A1.1(a) for each such sentence.
- (2) In any other case,
- (A) add 2 points under §4A1.1(b) for each adult or juvenile sentence to confinement of at least sixty days if the defendant was released from such confinement within five years of his commencement of the instant offense;

- (B) add 1 point under §4A1.1(c) for each adult or juvenile sentence imposed within five years of the defendant's commencement of the instant offense not covered in (A).

(e) **Applicable Time Period**

- (1) Any prior sentence of imprisonment exceeding one year and one month that was imposed within fifteen years of the defendant's commencement of the instant offense is counted. Also count any prior sentence of imprisonment exceeding one year and one month, whenever imposed, that resulted in the defendant being incarcerated during any part of such fifteen-year period.
- (2) Any other prior sentence that was imposed within ten years of the defendant's commencement of the instant offense is counted.
- (3) Any prior sentence not within the time periods specified above is not counted.
- (4) The applicable time period for certain sentences resulting from offenses committed prior to age eighteen is governed by §4A1.2(d)(2).

(f) **Diversionsary Dispositions**

Diversion from the judicial process without a finding of guilt (e.g., deferred prosecution) is not counted. A diversionsary disposition resulting from a finding or admission of guilt, or a plea of nolo contendere, in a judicial proceeding is counted as a sentence under §4A1.1(c) even if a conviction is not formally entered, except that diversion from juvenile court is not counted.

(g) **Military Sentences**

Sentences resulting from military offenses are counted if imposed by a general or special court martial. Sentences imposed by a summary court martial or Article 15 proceeding are not counted.

(h) **Foreign Sentences**

Sentences resulting from foreign convictions are not counted, but may be considered under §4A1.3 (Adequacy of Criminal History Category).

(i) **Tribal Court Sentences**

Sentences resulting from tribal court convictions are not counted, but may be considered under §4A1.3 (Adequacy of Criminal History Category).

(j) **Expunged Convictions**

Sentences for expunged convictions are not counted, but may be considered under §4A1.3 (Adequacy of Criminal History Category).

(k) **Revocations of Probation, Parole, Mandatory Release, or Supervised Release**

- (1) In the case of a prior revocation of probation, parole, supervised release, special parole, or mandatory release, add the original term of imprisonment to any term of imprisonment imposed upon revocation. The resulting total is used to compute the criminal history points for §4A1.1(a), (b), or (c), as applicable.
- (2) Revocation of probation, parole, supervised release, special parole, or mandatory release may affect the points for §4A1.1(e) in respect to the recency of last release from confinement. It may also affect the time period under which certain sentences are counted as provided in §4A1.2(e)(1).

Commentary

Application Notes:

1. Prior Sentences. "Prior sentence" means a sentence imposed prior to sentencing on the instant offense, other than a sentence for conduct that is part of the instant offense. See §4A1.2(a). A sentence imposed after the defendant's commencement of the instant offense, but prior to sentencing on the instant offense, is a prior sentence if it was for conduct other than conduct that was part of the instant offense.
2. Sentences of Imprisonment. To qualify as a sentence of imprisonment, the defendant must have actually served a period of imprisonment on such sentence (or, if the defendant escaped, would have served time). See §§4A1.2(a)(3) and (b)(2). For the purposes of applying §4A1.1(a), (b), or (c), the length of a sentence of imprisonment is the stated maximum. That is, criminal history points are based on the sentence pronounced, not the length of time actually served. See §4A1.2(b)(1) and (2). A sentence of probation is to be treated as a sentence under §4A1.1(c) unless a condition of probation requiring imprisonment of at least sixty days was imposed.
3. Related Cases. Cases are considered related if they (1) occurred on a single occasion, (2) were part of a single common scheme or plan, or (3) were consolidated for trial or sentencing. The court should be aware that there may be instances in which this definition is overly broad and will result in a criminal history score that underrepresents the seriousness of the defendant's criminal history and the danger that he presents to the public. For example, if the defendant commits a number of offenses on independent occasions separated by arrests, and the resulting criminal cases are consolidated and result in a combined sentence of eight years, counting merely three points for this factor will not adequately reflect either the seriousness of the defendant's criminal history or the frequency with which he commits crimes. In such circumstances, the court should consider whether departure is warranted. See §4A1.3.
4. Sentences Imposed in the Alternative. A sentence which specifies a fine or other non-incarcerative disposition as an alternative to a term of imprisonment (e.g., \$1,000 fine or ninety days' imprisonment) is treated as a non-imprisonment sentence.
5. Sentences for Driving While Intoxicated or Under the Influence. Convictions for driving while intoxicated or under the influence (and similar offenses by whatever name they are known) are counted. Such offenses are not minor traffic infractions within the meaning of §4A1.2(c).

6. Reversed, Vacated, or Invalidated Convictions. Sentences resulting from convictions that have been reversed or vacated because of errors of law, or because of subsequently-discovered evidence exonerating the defendant, are not to be counted. Also, sentences resulting from convictions that a defendant shows to have been previously ruled constitutionally invalid are not to be counted. Nonetheless, the criminal conduct underlying any conviction that is not counted in the criminal history score may be considered pursuant to §4A1.3 (Adequacy of Criminal History Category).
7. Offenses Committed Prior to Age Eighteen. Section 4A1.2(d) covers offenses committed prior to age eighteen. Attempting to count every juvenile adjudication would have the potential for creating large disparities due to the differential availability of records. Therefore, for offenses committed prior to age eighteen, only those that resulted in adult sentences of imprisonment exceeding one year and one month, or resulted in imposition of an adult or juvenile sentence or release from confinement on that sentence within five years of the defendant's commencement of the instant offense are counted. To avoid disparities from jurisdiction to jurisdiction in the age at which a defendant is considered a "juvenile," this provision applies to all offenses committed prior to age eighteen.
8. Applicable Time Period. Section 4A1.2(d)(2) and (e) establishes the time period within which prior sentences are counted. As used in §4A1.2(d)(2) and (e), the term "commencement of the instant offense" includes any relevant conduct. See §1B1.3 (Relevant Conduct). If the government is able to show that a sentence imposed outside this time period is evidence of similar misconduct or the defendant's receipt of a substantial portion of income from criminal livelihood, the court may consider this information in determining whether to depart and sentence above the applicable guideline range.
9. Diversionsary Dispositions. Section 4A1.2(f) requires counting prior adult diversionsary dispositions if they involved a judicial determination of guilt or an admission of guilt in open court. This reflects a policy that defendants who receive the benefit of a rehabilitative sentence and continue to commit crimes should not be treated with further leniency.
10. Convictions Set Aside or Defendant Pardoned. A number of jurisdictions have various procedures pursuant to which previous convictions may be set aside or the defendant may be pardoned for reasons unrelated to innocence or errors of law, e.g., in order to restore civil rights or to remove the stigma associated with a criminal conviction. Sentences resulting from such convictions are to be counted. However, expunged convictions are not counted. §4A1.2(j).
11. Revocations to be Considered. Section 4A1.2(k) covers revocations of probation and other conditional sentences where the original term of imprisonment imposed, if any, did not exceed one year and one month. Rather than count the original sentence and the resentence after revocation as separate sentences, the sentence given upon revocation should be added to the original sentence of imprisonment, if any, and the total should be counted as if it were one sentence. By this approach, no more than three points will be assessed for a single conviction, even if probation or conditional release was subsequently revoked. If the sentence originally imposed, the sentence imposed upon revocation, or the total of both sentences exceeded one year and one month, the maximum three points would be assigned. If, however, at the time of revocation another sentence was imposed for a new criminal conviction, that conviction would be computed separately from the sentence imposed for the revocation.
12. Local ordinance violations. A number of local jurisdictions have enacted ordinances covering certain offenses (e.g., larceny and assault misdemeanors) that are also violations of state criminal law. This enables a local court (e.g., a municipal court) to exercise jurisdiction over such offenses. Such offenses are excluded from the definition of local ordinance violations in

*§4A1.2(c)(1) and, therefore, sentences for such offenses are to be treated as if the defendant had been convicted under state law.*

13. **Insufficient funds check.** *"Insufficient funds check," as used in §4A1.2(c)(1), does not include any conviction establishing that the defendant used a false name or non-existent account.*

**Background:** *Prior sentences, not otherwise excluded, are to be counted in the criminal history score, including uncounseled misdemeanor sentences where imprisonment was not imposed.*

*The Commission leaves for court determination the issue of whether a defendant may collaterally attack at sentencing a prior conviction.*

**Historical Note:** Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1989 (see Appendix C, amendments 262-265); November 1, 1990 (see Appendix C, amendments 352 and 353).

**§4A1.3. Adequacy of Criminal History Category (Policy Statement)**

If reliable information indicates that the criminal history category does not adequately reflect the seriousness of the defendant's past criminal conduct or the likelihood that the defendant will commit other crimes, the court may consider imposing a sentence departing from the otherwise applicable guideline range. Such information may include, but is not limited to, information concerning:

- (a) prior sentence(s) not used in computing the criminal history category (*e.g.*, sentences for foreign and tribal offenses);
- (b) prior sentence(s) of substantially more than one year imposed as a result of independent crimes committed on different occasions;
- (c) prior similar misconduct established by a civil adjudication or by a failure to comply with an administrative order;
- (d) whether the defendant was pending trial, sentencing, or appeal on another charge at the time of the instant offense;
- (e) prior similar adult criminal conduct not resulting in a criminal conviction.

A departure under this provision is warranted when the criminal history category significantly under-represents the seriousness of the defendant's criminal history or the likelihood that the defendant will commit further crimes. Examples might include the case of a defendant who (1) had several previous foreign sentences for serious offenses, (2) had received a prior consolidated sentence of ten years for a series of serious assaults, (3) had a similar instance of large scale fraudulent misconduct established by an adjudication in a Securities and Exchange Commission enforcement proceeding, (4) committed the instant offense while on bail or pretrial release for another serious offense or (5) for appropriate reasons, such as cooperation in the prosecution of other defendants, had previously received an extremely lenient sentence for a serious offense. The court may, after a review of all the relevant information, conclude that the defendant's criminal history was significantly more serious than that of most defendants in the same criminal history category, and therefore consider an upward departure from the guidelines. However, a prior arrest record itself shall not be considered under §4A1.3.

There may be cases where the court concludes that a defendant's criminal history category significantly over-represents the seriousness of a defendant's criminal history or the likelihood that the defendant will commit further crimes. An example might include the case of a defendant with two minor misdemeanor convictions close to ten years prior to the instant offense and no other evidence of prior criminal behavior in the intervening period. The court may conclude that the defendant's criminal history was significantly less serious than that of most defendants in the same criminal history category (Category II), and therefore consider a downward departure from the guidelines.

In considering a departure under this provision, the Commission intends that the court use, as a reference, the guideline range for a defendant with a higher or lower criminal history category, as applicable. For example, if the court concludes that the defendant's criminal history category of III significantly under-represents the seriousness of the defendant's criminal history, and that the seriousness of the defendant's criminal history most closely resembles that of most defendants with a Category IV criminal history, the court should look to the guideline range specified for a defendant with a Category IV criminal history to guide its departure. The Commission contemplates that there may, on occasion, be a case of an egregious, serious criminal record in which even the guideline range for a Category VI criminal history is not adequate to reflect the seriousness of the defendant's criminal history. In such a case, a decision above the guideline range for a defendant with a Category VI criminal history may be warranted. However, this provision is not symmetrical. The lower limit of the range for a Category I criminal history is set for a first offender with the lowest risk of recidivism. Therefore, a departure below the lower limit of the guideline range for a Category I criminal history on the basis of the adequacy of criminal history cannot be appropriate.

#### Commentary

***Background:** This policy statement recognizes that the criminal history score is unlikely to take into account all the variations in the seriousness of criminal history that may occur. For example, a defendant with an extensive record of serious, assaultive conduct who had received what might now be considered extremely lenient treatment in the past might have the same criminal history category as a defendant who had a record of less serious conduct. Yet, the first defendant's criminal history clearly may be more serious. This may be particularly true in the case of younger defendants (e.g., defendants in their early twenties or younger) who are more likely to have received repeated lenient treatment, yet who may actually pose a greater risk of serious recidivism than older defendants. This policy statement authorizes the consideration of a departure from the guidelines in the limited circumstances where reliable information indicates that the criminal history category does not adequately reflect the seriousness of the defendant's criminal history or likelihood of recidivism, and provides guidance for the consideration of such departures.*

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

## PART B - CAREER OFFENDERS AND CRIMINAL LIVELIHOOD

### §4B1.1. Career Offender

A defendant is a career offender if (1) the defendant was at least eighteen years old at the time of the instant offense, (2) the instant offense of conviction is a felony that is either a crime of violence or a controlled substance offense, and (3) the defendant has at least two prior felony convictions of either a crime of violence or a controlled substance offense. If the offense level for a career criminal from the table below is greater than the offense level otherwise applicable, the offense level from the table below shall apply. A career offender's criminal history category in every case shall be Category VI.

<u>Offense Statutory Maximum</u>	<u>Offense Level*</u>
(A) Life	37
(B) 25 years or more	34
(C) 20 years or more, but less than 25 years	32
(D) 15 years or more, but less than 20 years	29
(E) 10 years or more, but less than 15 years	24
(F) 5 years or more, but less than 10 years	17
(G) More than 1 year, but less than 5 years	12

\*If an adjustment from §3E1.1 (Acceptance of Responsibility) applies, decrease the offense level by 2 levels.

### Commentary

#### Application Notes:

1. "Crime of violence," "controlled substance offense," and "two prior felony convictions" are defined in §4B1.2.
2. "Offense Statutory Maximum" refers to the maximum term of imprisonment authorized for the offense of conviction that is a crime of violence or controlled substance offense. If more than one count of conviction is of a crime of violence or controlled substance offense, use the maximum authorized term of imprisonment for the count that authorizes the greatest maximum term of imprisonment.

Background: 28 U.S.C. § 994(h) mandates that the Commission assure that certain "career" offenders, as defined in the statute, receive a sentence of imprisonment "at or near the maximum term authorized." Section 4B1.1 implements this mandate. The legislative history of this provision suggests that the phrase "maximum term authorized" should be construed as the maximum term authorized by statute. See S. Rep. 98-225, 98th Cong., 1st Sess. 175 (1983), 128 Cong. Rec. 26, 511-12 (1982) (text of "Career Criminals" amendment by Senator Kennedy), 26, 515 (brief summary of amendment), 26, 517-18 (statement of Senator Kennedy).

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective January 15, 1988 (see Appendix C, amendments 47 and 48); November 1, 1989 (see Appendix C, amendments 266 and 267).

**§4B1.2. Definitions of Terms Used in Section 4B1.1**

- (1) The term "crime of violence" means any offense under federal or state law punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year that --
  - (i) has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person of another, or
  - (ii) is burglary of a dwelling, arson, or extortion, involves use of explosives, or otherwise involves conduct that presents a serious potential risk of physical injury to another.
- (2) The term "controlled substance offense" means an offense under a federal or state law prohibiting the manufacture, import, export, or distribution of a controlled substance (or a counterfeit substance) or the possession of a controlled substance (or a counterfeit substance) with intent to manufacture, import, export, or distribute.
- (3) The term "two prior felony convictions" means (A) the defendant committed the instant offense subsequent to sustaining at least two felony convictions of either a crime of violence or a controlled substance offense (*i.e.*, two felony convictions of a crime of violence, two felony convictions of a controlled substance offense, or one felony conviction of a crime of violence and one felony conviction of a controlled substance offense), and (B) the sentences for at least two of the aforementioned felony convictions are counted separately under the provisions of Part A of this Chapter. The date that a defendant sustained a conviction shall be the date the judgment of conviction was entered.

Commentary

Application Notes:

1. *The terms "crime of violence" and "controlled substance offense" include the offenses of aiding and abetting, conspiring, and attempting to commit such offenses.*
2. *"Crime of violence" includes murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, aggravated assault, forcible sex offenses, robbery, arson, extortion, extortionate extension of credit, and burglary of a dwelling. Other offenses are included where (A) that offense has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person of another, or (B) the conduct set forth in the count of which the defendant was convicted involved use of explosives or, by its nature, presented a serious potential risk of physical injury to another.*
3. *"Prior felony conviction" means a prior adult federal or state conviction for an offense punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, regardless of whether such offense is specifically designated as a felony and regardless of the actual sentence imposed.*
4. *The provisions of §4A1.2 (Definitions and Instructions for Computing Criminal History) are applicable to the counting of convictions under §4B1.1.*

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective January 15, 1988 (see Appendix C, amendment 49); November 1, 1989 (see Appendix C, amendment 268).

**§4B1.3. Criminal Livelihood**

If the defendant committed an offense as part of a pattern of criminal conduct engaged in as a livelihood, his offense level shall be not less than 13, unless §3E1.1 (Acceptance of Responsibility) applies, in which event his offense level shall be not less than 11.

Commentary

Application Notes:

1. "Pattern of criminal conduct" means planned criminal acts occurring over a substantial period of time. Such acts may involve a single course of conduct or independent offenses.
2. "Engaged in as a livelihood" means that (1) the defendant derived income from the pattern of criminal conduct that in any twelve-month period exceeded 2,000 times the then existing hourly minimum wage under federal law; and (2) the totality of circumstances shows that such criminal conduct was the defendant's primary occupation in that twelve-month period (e.g., the defendant engaged in criminal conduct rather than regular, legitimate employment; or the defendant's legitimate employment was merely a front for his criminal conduct).

Background: Section 4B1.3 implements 28 U.S.C. § 994(i)(2), which directs the Commission to ensure that the guidelines specify a "substantial term of imprisonment" for a defendant who committed an offense as part of a pattern of criminal conduct from which he derived a substantial portion of his income.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective June 15, 1988 (see Appendix C, amendment 50); November 1, 1989 (see Appendix C, amendment 269); November 1, 1990 (see Appendix C, amendment 354).

**§4B1.4. Armed Career Criminal**

- (a) A defendant who is subject to an enhanced sentence under the provisions of 18 U.S.C. § 924(e) is an armed career criminal.
- (b) The offense level for an armed career criminal is the greatest of:
  - (1) the offense level applicable from Chapters Two and Three; or
  - (2) the offense level from §4B1.1 (Career Offender) if applicable; or
  - (3) (A) 34, if the defendant used or possessed the firearm or ammunition in connection with a crime of violence or controlled substance offense, as defined in §4B1.2(1), or if the firearm possessed by the defendant was of a type described in 26 U.S.C. § 5845(a)\*; or
  - (B) 33, otherwise.\*

\*If §3E1.1 (Acceptance of Responsibility) applies, reduce by 2 levels.

- (c) The criminal history category for an armed career criminal is the greatest of:
- (1) the criminal history category from Chapter Four, Part A (Criminal History), or §4B1.1 (Career Offender) if applicable; or
  - (2) Category VI, if the defendant used or possessed the firearm or ammunition in connection with a crime of violence or controlled substance offense, as defined in §4B1.2(1), or if the firearm possessed by the defendant was of a type described in 26 U.S.C. § 5845(a); or
  - (3) Category IV.

Commentary

Application Note:

1. *This guideline applies in the case of a defendant subject to an enhanced sentence under 18 U.S.C. § 924(e). Under 18 U.S.C. § 924(e)(1), a defendant is subject to an enhanced sentence if the instant offense of conviction is a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g) and the defendant has at least three prior convictions for a "violent felony" or "serious drug offense," or both, committed on occasions different from one another. The terms "violent felony" and "serious drug offense" are defined in 18 U.S.C. § 924(e)(2). It is to be noted that the definitions of "violent felony" and "serious drug offense" in 18 U.S.C. § 924(e)(2) are not identical to the definitions of "crime of violence" and "controlled substance offense" used in §4B1.1 (Career Offender), nor are the time periods for the counting of prior sentences under §4A1.2 (Definitions and Instructions for Computing Criminal History) applicable to the determination of whether a defendant is subject to an enhanced sentence under 18 U.S.C. § 924(e).*

*It is also to be noted that the procedural steps relative to the imposition of an enhanced sentence under 18 U.S.C. § 924(e) are not set forth by statute and may vary to some extent from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.*

**Background:** *This section implements 18 U.S.C. § 924(e), which requires a minimum sentence of imprisonment of fifteen years for a defendant who violates 18 U.S.C. § 922(g) and has three previous convictions for a violent felony or a serious drug offense. If the offense level determined under this section is greater than the offense level otherwise applicable, the offense level determined under this section shall be applied. A minimum criminal history category (Category IV) is provided, reflecting that each defendant to whom this section applies will have at least three prior convictions for serious offenses. In some cases, the criminal history category may not adequately reflect the defendant's criminal history; see §4A1.3 (Adequacy of Criminal History Category).*

**Historical Note:** Effective November 1, 1990 (see Appendix C, amendment 355).