

726.6 Child endangerment.

1. A person who is the parent, guardian, or person having custody or control over a child or a minor under the age of eighteen with a mental or physical disability, or a person who is a member of the household in which a child or such a minor resides, commits child endangerment when the person does any of the following:

a. Knowingly acts in a manner that creates a substantial risk to a child or minor's physical, mental or emotional health or safety.

b. By an intentional act or series of intentional acts, uses unreasonable force, torture or cruelty that results in bodily injury, or that is intended to cause serious injury.

c. By an intentional act or series of intentional acts, evidences unreasonable force, torture or cruelty which causes substantial mental or emotional harm to a child or minor.

d. Willfully deprives a child or minor of necessary food, clothing, shelter, health care or supervision appropriate to the child or minor's age, when the person is reasonably able to make the necessary provisions and which deprivation substantially harms the child or minor's physical, mental or emotional health. For purposes of this paragraph, the failure to provide specific medical treatment shall not for that reason alone be considered willful deprivation of health care if the person can show that such treatment would conflict with the tenets and practice of a recognized religious denomination of which the person is an adherent or member. This exception does not in any manner restrict the right of an interested party to petition the court on behalf of the best interest of the child or minor.

e. Knowingly permits the continuing physical or sexual abuse of a child or minor. However, it is an affirmative defense to [this subsection](#) if the person had a reasonable apprehension that any action to stop the continuing abuse would result in substantial bodily harm to the person or the child or minor.

f. Abandons the child or minor to fend for the child or minor's self, knowing that the child or minor is unable to do so.

g. Knowingly permits a child or minor to be present at a location where amphetamine, its salts, isomers, or salts of isomers, or methamphetamine, its salts, isomers, or salts of isomers, is manufactured in violation of [section 124.401, subsection 1](#), or where a product is possessed in violation of [section 124.401, subsection 4](#).

h. Knowingly allows a person custody or control of, or unsupervised access to a child or a minor after knowing the person is required to register or is on the sex offender registry as a sex offender under [chapter 692A](#). However, this paragraph does not apply to a person who is a parent or guardian of a child or a minor, who is required to register as a sex offender, or to a person who is married to and living with a person required to register as a sex offender.

i. Knowingly provides direct supervision of a person under [section 724.22, subsection 5](#), while intoxicated as provided under the conditions set out in [section 321J.2, subsection 1](#), paragraph "a", "b", or "c".

2. A person who is required to register as a sex offender under [chapter 692A](#) for a sex offense against a minor who knowingly has control of a minor, or who knowingly has unsupervised access to a minor, commits child endangerment. However, [this subsection](#) does not apply to any of the following:

a. A person who is required to register as a sex offender under [chapter 692A](#) for a sex offense against a minor who knowingly has control of a minor, or who knowingly has unsupervised access to a minor, when the person is the legal parent or guardian of the minor and the control or unsupervised access is not otherwise illegal.

b. A person who is required to register as a sex offender under [chapter 692A](#) for a sex offense against a minor who knowingly has control of a minor, or who knowingly has unsupervised access to a minor, when the person is married to and living with the legal parent or guardian of the minor and the control or unsupervised access is not otherwise illegal.

3. A parent or person authorized by the parent shall not be prosecuted for a violation of [subsection 1](#), paragraph "f", relating to abandonment, if the parent or person authorized by the parent has voluntarily released custody of a newborn infant in accordance with [section 233.2](#).

4. For the purposes of [subsection 1](#), “person having control over a child or a minor” means any of the following:

a. A person who has accepted, undertaken, or assumed supervision of a child or such a minor from the parent or guardian of the child or minor.

b. A person who has undertaken or assumed temporary supervision of a child or such a minor without explicit consent from the parent or guardian of the child or minor.

c. A person who operates a motor vehicle with a child or such a minor present in the vehicle.

5. A person who commits child endangerment resulting in the death of a child or minor is guilty of a class “B” felony. Notwithstanding [section 902.9, subsection 1](#), paragraph “b”, a person convicted of a violation of [this subsection](#) shall be confined for no more than fifty years.

6. A person who commits child endangerment resulting in serious injury to a child or minor is guilty of a class “C” felony.

7. A person who commits child endangerment resulting in bodily injury to a child or minor or child endangerment in violation of [subsection 1](#), paragraph “g”, that does not result in a serious injury, or a person who commits child endangerment in violation of [subsection 2](#), is guilty of a class “D” felony.

8. A person who commits child endangerment that is not subject to penalty under [subsection 5, 6, or 7](#) is guilty of an aggravated misdemeanor.

[C50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §731A.1 – 731A.3; C79, 81, §726.6]

[85 Acts, ch 180, §3](#); [96 Acts, ch 1129, §109](#); [2001 Acts, ch 3, §2 – 5](#); [2001 Acts, ch 67, §12, 13](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1119, §104](#); [2004 Acts, ch 1004, §1](#); [2004 Acts, ch 1151, §3, 4](#); [2005 Acts, ch 158, §31](#); [2007 Acts, ch 126, §109](#); [2009 Acts, ch 119, §65](#); [2013 Acts, ch 30, §252](#); [2017 Acts, ch 69, §30](#); [2017 Acts, ch 170, §50, 51, 53, 54](#); [2021 Acts, ch 78, §1, 2](#)

Referred to in [§124.401C](#), [229A.2](#), [233.3](#), [252B.7](#), [702.11](#), [707.2](#), [724.22](#), [726.4](#), [726.6A](#), [802.2B](#), [902.12](#), [915.37](#)

Definition of forcible felony; [§702.11](#)