

**CRIMINAL POSSESSION OF A FORGED INSTRUMENT
FIRST DEGREE
(C Felony)
(Knowingly Uttering or Possessing a Specified Forged
Instrument
with Intent to Defraud, Etc.)
PENAL LAW 170.30
(Committed on or After September 1, 1967)**

The _____ count is Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the First Degree.

Under our law, a person is guilty of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the First Degree when, with knowledge that it is forged and with intent to defraud, deceive or injure another, he or she utters or possesses a forged instrument which is or purports to be or which is calculated to become or to represent if completed (specify appropriate instrument as set forth in Penal Law §170.15¹).²

Some of the terms used in this definition have their own special meaning in our law. I will now give you the meaning of the

¹The instruments specified in the respective subdivisions of Penal Law §170.15 are:

1. Part of an issue of money, stamps, securities, or other valuable instruments issued by a government or governmental instrumentality; or
2. Part of an issue of stock, bonds, or other instruments representing interests in or claims against a corporate or other organization or its property.

²The statutory definition of this crime refers to the uttering or possession of any forged instrument "of a _____ kind specified in section 170.15." The charge substitutes for the quoted language, the applicable text from Penal Law section 170.15.

following terms³: "intent," "possess," and, "forged instrument".

INTENT means conscious objective or purpose.⁴ Thus, a person acts with intent to defraud, deceive or injure another when that person's conscious objective or purpose is to do so.

POSSESS means to have physical possession or otherwise to exercise dominion and control over tangible property.⁵

A FORGED INSTRUMENT means a written instrument which has been falsely made, completed or altered.⁶ The words "written instrument," "falsely made," "falsely completed," and "falsely altered" used in the definition of "forged instrument" also have their own special meanings.

A written instrument means any instrument or article [including computer data or a computer program] containing written or printed matter or the equivalent thereof, used for the purpose of reciting, embodying, conveying or recording information, or constituting a symbol or evidence of value, right, privilege or identification, which is capable of being used to the advantage or

³The term "utter" is not defined by statute or in case law. Black's Law Dictionary (7th ed 1999) defines the term as follows:

"1. To say, express, or publish.... 2. To put or send (a document) into circulation; esp., to circulate (a forged note) as if genuine...." (Examples omitted).

⁴See Penal Law §15.05(1).

⁵See Penal Law §10.00(8). Where constructive possession is alleged, insert the appropriate instruction from the "Additional Charges" section at the end of this article.

⁶ See Penal Law §170.00(7). Depending on the evidence, it may not be necessary to define all three of the methods by which a written instrument may be forged.

disadvantage of some person.⁷

A written instrument can be either complete or incomplete.

A complete written instrument means one which purports to be a genuine written instrument fully drawn with respect to every essential feature thereof.⁸

[NOTE: Add where appropriate:

An endorsement, attestation, acknowledgment or other similar signature or statement is deemed both a complete written instrument in itself and a part of the main instrument in which it is contained or to which it attaches.⁹]

An incomplete written instrument means one which contains some matter by way of content or authentication but which requires additional matter in order to render it a complete written instrument.¹⁰

A written instrument is falsely made when a person makes or draws a complete written instrument in its entirety, or an incomplete written instrument, which purports to be an authentic creation of its ostensible maker or drawer, but which is not such either because the ostensible maker or drawer is fictitious or because, if real, he or she did not authorize the making or drawing thereof.¹¹

A written instrument is falsely completed when, by adding, inserting or changing matter, a person transforms an incomplete

⁷See Penal Law §170.00(1).

⁸See Penal Law §170.00(2).

⁹Id.

¹⁰See Penal Law §170.00(3).

¹¹See Penal Law §170.00(4).

written instrument into a complete one, without the authority of anyone entitled to grant it, so that such complete instrument appears or purports to be in all respects an authentic creation of or fully authorized by its ostensible maker or drawer.¹²

A written instrument is falsely altered when, without the authority of anyone entitled to grant it, a person changes a written instrument, whether it be in a complete or incomplete form, by means of erasure, obliteration, deletion, insertion or matter, transposition or matter, or in any other manner, so that such instrument in its thus altered form appears or purports to be in all respects an authentic creation of or fully authorized by its ostensible maker or drawer.¹³

In order for you to find the defendant guilty of this crime, the people are required to prove, from all of the evidence in the case, beyond a reasonable doubt, each of the following two elements:

1. That on or about _____ (*date*) _____, in the county of _____ (*county*) _____, the defendant, _____ (*defendant's name*) _____, uttered or possessed a forged instrument which is or purports to be or which is calculated to become or to represent if completed (*specify appropriate instrument as set forth in Penal Law §170.15*); and
2. That the defendant did so with knowledge that it was forged and with the intent to defraud, deceive or injure another.

Therefore, if you find that the People have proven beyond a reasonable doubt both of those elements, you must find the defendant guilty of the crime of Criminal Possession of a Forged

¹²See Penal Law §170.00(5).

¹³See Penal Law §170.00(6).

Instrument in the First Degree as charged in the _____ count.

On the other hand, if you find that the People have not proven beyond a reasonable doubt either one or both of those elements, you must find the defendant not guilty of the crime of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the First Degree as charged in the _____ count.