

**AGGRAVATED ASSAULT UPON A POLICE OR PEACE OFFICER**  
**PENAL LAW 120.11**  
**(Committed on or after Nov. 1, 1993)<sup>1</sup>**  
**Revised April, 2018 <sup>1</sup>**

The (specify) count is Aggravated Assault Upon a Police Officer [or a Peace Officer].

Under our law, a person is guilty of Aggravated Assault Upon a Police Officer [or a Peace Officer] when, with intent to cause serious physical injury to a person whom he or she knows or reasonably should know to be a police officer [or a peace officer] engaged in the course of performing his or her official duties, that person causes such injury by means of a deadly weapon [or dangerous instrument].

The following terms used in that definition have a special meaning:<sup>2</sup>

**SERIOUS PHYSICAL INJURY** means impairment of a person's physical condition which creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes death, or serious and protracted disfigurement, or protracted impairment of health or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ.<sup>3</sup>

**INTENT** means conscious objective or purpose. Thus, a person acts with intent to cause serious physical injury to a person whom he or she knows or reasonably should know to be a police officer [or a peace officer] engaged in the course of performing his or her official

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<sup>1</sup> This charge applies when the crime was committed on or after November 1, 1993, except as to the following weapons which were added to the definition of "deadly weapon" [Penal Law § 10.00(12)] after that date:

November 1, 1995, was the effective date of an amendment to the definition of "deadly weapon" to add a "metal knuckle knife." L. 1995, ch. 219.

November 1, 2008, was the effective date of an amendment also to that definition to add "plastic knuckles." L. 2008, ch. 257.

The 2018 revision was to include the statutory additions to the definition of "deadly weapon" and the decisional law definitions of weapons as set forth in footnote five.

<sup>2</sup>See CPL § 1.20(34) for the definition of police officer; and CPL § 2.10 for the definition of peace officer.

<sup>3</sup>See Penal Law § 10.00(10).

duties when that person's conscious objective or purpose is to do so.<sup>4</sup>

DEADLY WEAPON means:

Select appropriate alternative:

any loaded weapon from which a shot, readily capable of producing death or other serious physical injury, may be discharged.

a switchblade knife defined as any knife having a blade which opens automatically by hand pressure applied to a button, spring or other device in the handle of the knife.

a pilum ballistic knife defined as any knife having a blade which can be projected from the handle by hand pressure applied to a button, lever, spring or other device in the handle of the knife.

a metal knuckle knife, defined as a weapon that, when closed, cannot function as a set of plastic knuckles or metal knuckles, nor as a knife and when open, can function as both a set of plastic knuckles or metal knuckles as well as a knife.

metal knuckles, defined as a metal object with multiple holes, through which individual places his or her fingers so that a metal bar rests atop the individual's knuckles.

a billy, defined as a cylindrical or rounded, rigid, club or baton with a handle grip which, from its appearance and inherent characteristics, is designed to be used as a striking weapon and not for other lawful purposes.

a dagger

a blackjack

plastic knuckles.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>See Penal Law § 15.05(1).

<sup>5</sup> Penal Law § 10.00(12) defines "deadly weapon." See Penal Law § 265.00 for the definitions of "switchblade knife," "gravity knife," "pilum ballistic knife" and "metal knuckle knife"; *People v. Aragon*, 28 N.Y.3d 125 (2016) (for the definition of "metal knuckles"); *People v. Ocasio*, 28 N.Y.3d 178 (2016) (for the definition of "billy").

There is no controlling statutory or decisional law definition of "plastic knuckles" albeit the legislative memorandum in support of adding that term

[DANGEROUS INSTRUMENT means any instrument, article or substance (including a vehicle) which, under the circumstances in which it is used, attempted to be used, or threatened to be used, is readily capable of causing death or other serious physical injury.]<sup>6</sup>

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

1. That on or about (date), in the county of (county), the defendant, (defendant's name), caused serious physical injury to (name of officer) by means of a deadly weapon [*or* dangerous instrument];
2. That the defendant did so with the intent to cause serious physical injury to (name of officer); and
3. That (name of officer) was a police officer [*or* a peace officer] engaged in the course of performing his/her official duties and the defendant knew or reasonably should have known that (name of officer) was a police officer [*or* a peace officer] engaged in the course of performing his/her official duties.

If you find the People have proven beyond a reasonable doubt each of those elements, you must find the defendant guilty of this crime.

If you find the People have not proven beyond a reasonable doubt any one or more of those elements, you must find the defendant not guilty of this crime.

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equated it with "brass [metal] knuckles"; thus, for the definition of "plastic knuckles," a court may wish to consider using the definition of "metal knuckles," substituting "plastic object" for "metal object" and "plastic bar" for "metal bar."

<sup>6</sup>See Penal Law § 10.00(13).