



**FROM THE COMMITTEE
ON MODEL CRIMINAL
JURY INSTRUCTIONS**

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The Committee solicits comment on the following proposal by July 1, 2016. Comments may be sent in writing to Samuel R. Smith, Reporter, Committee on Model Criminal Jury Instructions, Michigan Hall of Justice, P.O. Box 30052, Lansing, MI 48909-7604, or electronically to MCrimJI@courts.mi.gov.
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PROPOSED

The Committee proposes instructions for “driving while license suspended causing death or serious injury” violations under MCL 257.904(4) and (5). The instructions, M Crim JI 15.21 and 15.22, are entirely new.

[NEW] M Crim JI 15.21 Driving While License Suspended / Revoked Causing Death

(1) The defendant is charged with driving while [his / her] operator’s license is suspended or revoked causing death. To prove this charge, the prosecutor must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

(2) First, that the defendant was operating a motor vehicle. “Operating” means driving or having actual physical control of the vehicle.¹

(3) Second, that the defendant was operating that vehicle on a highway or other place open to the general public [or generally accessible to motor vehicles, including any area designated for the parking of motor vehicles].

(4) Third, that, at the time, the defendant’s operator’s license was suspended or revoked.

(5) Fourth, that the Secretary of State gave notice of the suspension or revocation by first-class, United States Postal Service mail addressed to the defendant at the address shown by the record of the Secretary of State at least five days before the date of the alleged offense.

(6) Fifth, that the defendant’s operation of the vehicle caused the victim’s death. To “cause” the victim’s death, the defendant’s operation of the vehicle must have been a factual cause of the death, that is, but for the defendant’s operation of the vehicle, the death would not have occurred. In addition, operation of the vehicle must have been a proximate cause of death, that is, death must have been a direct and natural result of operating the vehicle.²

Use Note

¹ The term “operating” has been defined by the Michigan Supreme Court in *People v Wood*, 450 Mich 399, 538 NW2d 351 (1995). The court held that “[o]nce a person using a motor vehicle as a motor vehicle has put the vehicle in motion, or in a position posing a significant risk of causing a collision, such a person continues to operate it until the vehicle is returned to a position posing no such risk.” *Id.* at 404-405. The holding in *Wood* was applied in *People v Lechleitner*, 291 Mich App 56, 804 NW2d 345 (2010), which held that the defendant was properly convicted under the operating-while-intoxicated-causing-death statute where he was intoxicated, operated his vehicle, and crashed it, with the result that it sat in the middle of the freeway at night creating a risk of injury or death to others, and a following car swerved to miss his stopped truck and killed another motorist on the side of the road.

² If it is claimed that the defendant’s operation of the vehicle was not a proximate cause of death because of an intervening, superseding cause, review *People v Schaefer*, 473 Mich 418, 438-439, 703 NW2d 774 (2005). *Schaefer* was modified in part on other grounds by *People v Derror*, 475 Mich 316, 715 NW2d 822 (2006), which was overruled in part on other grounds by *People v Feezel*, 486 Mich 184, 783 NW2d 67 (2010).

[NEW] M Crim JI 15.22 Driving While License Suspended / Revoked Causing Serious Impairment of Body Function

(1) The defendant is charged with driving while [his / her] operator’s license is suspended or revoked causing serious impairment of body function. To prove this charge, the prosecutor must prove each of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

(2) First, that the defendant was operating a motor vehicle. “Operating” means driving or having actual physical control of the vehicle.¹

(3) Second, that the defendant was operating that vehicle on a highway or other place open to the general public [or generally accessible to motor vehicles, including any area designated for the parking of motor vehicles].

(4) Third, that, at the time, the defendant’s operator’s license was suspended or revoked.

(5) Fourth, that the Secretary of State gave notice of the suspension or revocation by first-class, United States Postal Service mail addressed to the defendant at the address shown by the record of the Secretary of State at least five days before the date of the alleged offense.

(6) Fifth, that the defendant’s operation of the vehicle caused a serious impairment of a body function to [name victim].² To “cause” such injury, the defendant’s operation of the vehicle must have been a factual cause of the injury, that is, but for the defendant’s operation of the vehicle the injury would not have occurred. In addition, operation of the vehicle must have been a proximate cause of the injury, that is, the injury must have been a direct and natural result of operating the vehicle.³

Use Note

¹ The term “operating” has been defined by the Michigan Supreme Court in *People v Wood*, 450 Mich 399, 538 NW2d 351 (1995). The court held that “[o]nce a person using a motor vehicle as a motor vehicle has put the vehicle in motion, or in a position posing a significant risk of causing a collision, such a person continues to operate it until the vehicle is returned to a position posing no such risk.” *Id.* at 404-405. The holding in *Wood* was applied in *People v Lechleitner*, 291 Mich App 56, 804 NW2d 345 (2010), which held that the defendant was properly convicted under the operating-while-intoxicated-causing-death statute where he was intoxicated, operated his vehicle, and crashed it, with the result that it sat in the middle of the freeway at night creating a risk of injury or death to others, and a following car swerved to miss his stopped truck and killed another motorist on the side of the road.

² The statute, MCL 257.58c, provides that serious impairment of a body function includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- (a) Loss of a limb or loss of use of a limb.
- (b) Loss of a foot, hand, finger, or thumb or loss of use of a foot, hand, finger, or thumb.
- (c) Loss of an eye or ear or loss of use of an eye or ear.
- (d) Loss or substantial impairment of a bodily function.
- (e) Serious visible disfigurement.
- (f) A comatose state that lasts for more than 3 days.
- (g) Measurable brain or mental impairment.
- (h) A skull fracture or other serious bone fracture.
- (i) Subdural hemorrhage or subdural hematoma.
- (j) Loss of an organ.

³ If it is claimed that the defendant’s operation of the vehicle was not a proximate cause of death because of an intervening, superseding cause, review *People v Schaefer*, 473 Mich 418, 438-439, 703 NW2d 774 (2005). *Schaefer* was modified in part on other grounds by *People v Derror*, 475 Mich 316, 715 NW2d 822 (2006), which was overruled in part on other grounds by *People v Feezel*, 486 Mich 184, 783 NW2d 67 (2010).