

# What is Criminal Mischief in the State of Florida?

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What is criminal mischief? Criminal mischief is a fairly vague charge. If you have been arrested and accused of criminal mischief, you may need a [criminal defense lawyer](#) to explain exactly what the outcome of this charge might be. Your sentence will depend on the amount of damage caused by the criminal mischief you are accused of.

According to Florida Statutes, criminal mischief is defined as a crime committed when the defendant knowingly, willfully, and maliciously causes damage to any property belonging to someone else. A defendant can even be charged with criminal mischief on terms of negligence, as in the defendant failed to realize he or she was causing damage. Graffiti and vandalism are common criminal mischief crimes.

## Criminal Mischief in the State of Florida

According to Florida Statutes, the charge and punishment for a crime classified as criminal mischief often depends on the damage committed. If the damage is valued at less than \$200, it is considered a second-degree misdemeanor punishable by 60 days in jail and a \$500 fine. If the damage is between \$200 and \$1,000, it is charged as a first-degree misdemeanor, which is a little more serious. This can land you in jail for a full year with up to a \$1,000 fine.

Criminal mischief can actually be charged as a third-degree felony in the state of Florida if the defendant caused damage valued at greater than \$1,000. The sentence for a felony [criminal mischief charge](#) is usually 5 years in prison and up to \$5,000 in fines.

Regardless of the amount of damage, if you have a previous criminal mischief charge, your second one could automatically be charged as a third-degree felony.

Graffiti is a little less serious but it does carry mandatory minimum fines. For a first offense it is a mandatory fine of \$250. For a second conviction it's \$500 and for a third you will be forced to pay \$1,000 in fines. Graffiti convictions are usually followed by hours of community service and can include working to remove the graffiti.

## Criminal Mischief Defense

If you have been charged with criminal mischief, a [criminal defense lawyer](#) may be able to help. A criminal defense lawyer can explain the nature of the charges and can also conduct an investigation into your case that may have the court lower your sentence. It is important to at least consult a criminal defense lawyer so that you have as much information as possible. By calling a lawyer, you may eventually have your charges lowered from a felony to a misdemeanor, or dropped all together.

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