

New Jersey

- [2C:34-2 Obscenity](#)

2C:34-2. Obscenity for persons 18 years of age or older

2C:34-2. Obscenity for Persons 18 Years of Age or Older.

a. Definitions for purpose of this section:

(1) "Obscene material" means any description, narrative account, display, or depiction of sexual activity or anatomical area contained in, or consisting of, a picture or other representation, publication, sound recording, live performance, or film, which by means of posing, composition, format or animated sensual details:

(a) Depicts or describes in a patently offensive way, ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, masturbation, excretory functions, or lewd exhibition of the genitals,

(b) Lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value, when taken as a whole, and

(c) Is a part of a work, which to the average person applying contemporary community standards, has a dominant theme taken as a whole, which appeals to the prurient interest.

(2) "Exhibit" means the sale of admission to view obscene material.

b. A person who sells, distributes, rents or exhibits obscene material to a person 18 years of age or older commits a crime of the fourth degree. Sale of obscene material shall be deemed to include any form of transaction which results in the admission to a display or depiction of obscene material or temporary or permanent access to any obscene material.

Nothing contained herein or in section 3 of P.L.1995, c.230 (C.2C:34-7) shall be construed to prohibit a municipality from adopting as a part of its zoning ordinances an ordinance permitting the sale, distribution, rental or exhibition of obscene material in which event such sale, distribution, rental or exhibition shall be deemed legal.

Amended 1982,c.211; 1989,c.54,s.1; 1995,c.230,s.1.

2C:34-3. Obscenity for persons under 18

2C:34-3. Obscenity For Persons Under 18. a. Definitions for purposes of this section:

(1) "Obscene material" means any description, narrative account, display, depiction

of a specified anatomical area or specified sexual activity contained in, or consisting of, a picture or other representation, publication, sound recording, live performance or film, which by means of posing, composition, format or animated sensual details, emits sensuality with sufficient impact to concentrate prurient interest on the area or activity.

(2) "Obscene film" means any motion picture film or preview or trailer to a film, not including newsreels portraying actual current events or pictorial news of the day, in which a scene, taken by itself:

(a) Depicts a specified anatomical area or specified sexual activity, or the simulation of a specified sexual activity, or verbalization concerning a specified sexual activity; and

(b) Emits sensuality sufficient, in terms of the duration and impact of the depiction, to appeal to prurient interest.

(3) "Specified anatomical area" means:

(a) Less than completely and opaquely covered human genitals, pubic region, buttock or female breasts below a point immediately above the top of the areola; or

(b) Human male genitals in a discernibly turgid state, even if covered.

(4) "Specified sexual activity" means:

(a) Human genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal; or

(b) Any act of human masturbation, sexual intercourse or deviate sexual intercourse;
or

(c) Fondling or other erotic touching of covered or uncovered human genitals, pubic region, buttock or female breast.

(5) "Knowingly" means:

(a) Having knowledge of the character and content of the material or film described herein; or

(b) Having failed to exercise reasonable inspection which would disclose its character and content.

(6) "Exhibit" means the sale of admission to view obscene material.

(7) "Show" means cause or allow to be seen.

b. Promoting obscene material.

(1) A person who knowingly sells, distributes, rents or exhibits to a person under 18 years of age obscene material is guilty of a crime of the third degree.

(2) A person who knowingly shows obscene material to a person under 18 years of age with the knowledge or purpose to arouse, gratify or stimulate himself or another is guilty of a crime of the third degree if the person showing the obscene material is at least four years older than the person under 18 years of age viewing the material.

c. Admitting to exhibition of obscene film.

(1) Any person who knowingly admits a person under 18 years of age to a theatre then exhibiting an obscene film is guilty of a crime of the third degree.

(2) A person who knowingly shows an obscene film to a person under 18 years of age with the knowledge or purpose to arouse, gratify or stimulate himself or another is guilty of a crime of the third degree if the person showing the obscene film is at least four years older than the person under 18 years of age viewing the film.

d. Presumption of knowledge and age.

The requisite knowledge with regard to the character and content of the film or material and of the age of the person is presumed in the case of an actor who sells, distributes, rents, exhibits or shows obscene material to a person under 18 years of age or admits to a film obscene for a person under 18 years of age a person who is under 18 years of age.

e. Defenses.

(1) It is an affirmative defense to a prosecution under subsections b. and c. which the defendant must prove by a preponderance of evidence that:

(a) The person under age 18 falsely represented in or by writing that he was age 18 or over;

(b) The person's appearance was such that an individual of ordinary prudence would believe him to be age 18 or over; and

(c) The sale, distribution, rental, showing or exhibition to or admission of the person was made in good faith relying upon such written representation and appearance and in the reasonable belief that he was actually age 18 or over.

(2) It is an affirmative defense to a prosecution under subsection c. that the defendant is an employee in a motion picture theatre who has no financial interest in that motion picture theatre other than his wages and has no decision-making authority or responsibility with respect to the selection of the motion picture show which is exhibited.

Amended 1989, c.54, s.2; 1999, c.227.

2C:34-3.1. Retailer defined

"Retailer," as used in this act, means any person who operates a store, newsstand, booth, concession or similar business with unimpeded access for persons under 18 years old, who is in the business of making sales of periodicals or other publications at retail containing pictures, drawings or photographs.

P.L. 1988, c. 17, s. 1.

2C:34-3.2. Display of obscene material

A municipality may enact an ordinance making it a petty disorderly persons offense for a retailer to display or permit to be displayed at his business premises any obscene material as defined in N.J.S. 2C:34-3, at a height of less than 5 feet or without a blinder or other covering placed or printed on the front of the material displayed. Any such ordinance shall contain a provision stating that public display of the obscene material shall constitute presumptive evidence that the retailer knowingly made or permitted the display.

P.L. 1988, c. 17, s. 2.

2C:34-4. Public communication of obscenity

a. "Publicly communicate" means to display, post, exhibit, give away or vocalize material in such a way that its character and content may be readily and distinctly perceived by the public by normal unaided vision or hearing when viewing or hearing it in, on or from a public street, road, thoroughfare, recreation or shopping center or area, public transportation facility or vehicle used for public transportation.

b. A person who knowingly publicly communicates obscene material, as defined in section 2C:34-3 or causes or permits it to be publicly communicated on property he owns or leases or operates is guilty of a crime of the fourth degree.

c. Public communication of obscene material shall constitute presumptive evidence that the defendant made the communication or caused or permitted it to be made knowingly.

L.1978, c. 95, s. 2C:34-4, eff. Sept. 1, 1979.