

Ohio

The separate sections of the [Ohio Revised Code](#) cannot be individually linked. To find the text of the Ohio obscenity law, go to the [Ohio Revised Code](#) Web site, scroll down on the left hand side and choose the folder marked **Title 29** (Crimes—Procedure); then choose the folder marked **Chapter 2907** (Sex Offenses). See these relevant subchapters:

- **Definitions (2907.01)**
- **Pandering obscenity (2907.32)**
- **Pandering obscenity involving a minor (2907.321)**
- **Dissemination of matter harmful to juveniles (2907.31)**
- **Displaying matter harmful to juveniles (2907.311)**

TITLE XXIX CRIMES - PROCEDURE

§ 2907.01. Definitions.

As used in [sections 2907.01](#) to [2907.37](#) of the Revised Code:

(A) "Sexual conduct" means vaginal intercourse between a male and female; anal intercourse, fellatio, and cunnilingus between persons regardless of sex; and, without privilege to do so, the insertion, however slight, of any part of the body or any instrument, apparatus, or other object into the vaginal or anal cavity of another. Penetration, however slight, is sufficient to complete vaginal or anal intercourse.

(B) "Sexual contact" means any touching of an erogenous zone of another, including without limitation the thigh, genitals, buttock, pubic region, or, if the person is a female, a breast, for the purpose of sexually arousing or gratifying either person.

(C) "Sexual activity" means sexual conduct or sexual contact, or both.

(D) "Prostitute" means a male or female who promiscuously engages in sexual activity for hire, regardless of whether the hire is paid to the prostitute or to another.

(E) "Harmful to juveniles" means that quality of any material or performance describing or representing nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sado-masochistic abuse in any form to which all of the following apply:

(1) The material or performance, when considered as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest in sex of juveniles.

(2) The material or performance is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable for juveniles.

(3) The material or performance, when considered as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, and scientific value for juveniles.

(F) When considered as a whole, and judged with reference to ordinary adults or, if it is designed for sexual deviates or other specially susceptible group, judged with reference to that group, any material or performance is "obscene" if any of the following apply:

(1) Its dominant appeal is to prurient interest;

(2) Its dominant tendency is to arouse lust by displaying or depicting sexual activity, masturbation, sexual excitement, or nudity in a way that tends to represent human beings as mere objects of sexual appetite;

(3) Its dominant tendency is to arouse lust by displaying or depicting bestiality or extreme or bizarre violence, cruelty, or brutality;

(4) Its dominant tendency is to appeal to scatological interest by displaying or depicting human bodily functions of elimination in a way that inspires disgust or revulsion in persons with ordinary sensibilities, without serving any genuine scientific, educational, sociological, moral, or artistic purpose;

(5) It contains a series of displays or descriptions of sexual activity, masturbation, sexual excitement, nudity, bestiality, extreme or bizarre violence, cruelty, or brutality, or human bodily functions of elimination, the cumulative effect of which is a dominant tendency to appeal to prurient or scatological interest, when the appeal to such an interest is primarily for its own sake or for commercial exploitation, rather than primarily for a genuine scientific, educational, sociological, moral, or artistic purpose.

(G) "Sexual excitement" means the condition of human male or female genitals when in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal.

(H) "Nudity" means the showing, representation, or depiction of human male or female genitals, pubic area, or buttocks with less than a full, opaque covering, or of a female breast with less than a full, opaque covering of any portion thereof below the top of the nipple, or of covered male genitals in a discernibly turgid state.

(I) "Juvenile" means an unmarried person under the age of eighteen.

(J) "Material" means any book, magazine, newspaper, pamphlet, poster, print, picture, figure, image, description, motion picture film, phonographic record, or tape, or other tangible thing capable of arousing interest through sight, sound, or touch and includes an image or text appearing on a computer monitor, television screen, liquid crystal display, or similar display device or an image or text recorded on a computer hard disk, computer floppy disk, compact disk, magnetic tape, or similar data storage device.

(K) "Performance" means any motion picture, preview, trailer, play, show, skit, dance, or other exhibition performed before an audience.

(L) "Spouse" means a person married to an offender at the time of an alleged offense, except that such person shall not be considered the spouse when any of the following apply:

(1) When the parties have entered into a written separation agreement authorized by [section 3103.06](#) of the Revised Code;

(2) During the pendency of an action between the parties for annulment, divorce, dissolution of marriage, or legal separation;

(3) In the case of an action for legal separation, after the effective date of the judgment for legal separation.

(M) "Minor" means a person under the age of eighteen.

(N) "Mental health client or patient" has the same meaning as in [section 2305.51](#) of the Revised Code.

(O) "Mental health professional" has the same meaning as in [section 2305.115](#) of the Revised Code.

(P) "Sado-masochistic abuse" means flagellation or torture by or upon a person or the condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained.

HISTORY: 134 v H 511 (Eff 1-1-74); 136 v S 144 (Eff 8-27-75); 142 v H 51 (Eff 3-17-89); 143 v H 514 (Eff 1-1-91); 146 v H 445 (Eff 9-3-96); 147 v H 32 (Eff 3-10-98); 149 v S 9 (Eff 5-14-2002); 149 v H 8. Eff 8-5-2002; 149 v H 490, § 1, eff. 1-1-04.

§ 2907.32. Pandering obscenity.

(A) No person, with knowledge of the character of the material or performance involved, shall do any of the following:

(1) Create, reproduce, or publish any obscene material, when the offender knows that the material is to be used for commercial exploitation or will be publicly disseminated or displayed, or when the offender is reckless in that regard;

(2) Promote or advertise for sale, delivery, or dissemination; sell, deliver, publicly disseminate, publicly display, exhibit, present, rent, or provide; or offer or agree to sell, deliver, publicly disseminate, publicly display, exhibit, present, rent, or provide, any obscene material;

(3) Create, direct, or produce an obscene performance, when the offender knows that it is to be used for commercial exploitation or will be publicly presented, or when the offender is reckless in that regard;

(4) Advertise or promote an obscene performance for presentation, or present or participate in presenting an obscene performance, when the performance is presented publicly, or when admission is charged;

(5) Buy, procure, possess, or control any obscene material with purpose to violate division (A)(2) or (4) of this section.

(B) It is an affirmative defense to a charge under this section, that the material or performance involved was disseminated or presented for a bona fide medical, scientific, educational, religious, governmental, judicial, or other proper purpose, by or to a physician, psychologist, sociologist, scientist, teacher, person pursuing bona fide studies or research, librarian, clergyman, prosecutor, judge, or other person having a proper interest in the material or performance.

(C) Whoever violates this section is guilty of pandering obscenity, a felony of the fifth degree. If the offender previously has been convicted of a violation of this section or of [section 2907.31](#) of the Revised Code, then pandering obscenity is a felony of the fourth degree.

HISTORY: 134 v H 511 (Eff 1-1-74); 142 v H 51 (Eff 3-17-89); 146 v S 2. Eff 7-1-96.

[§ 2907.32.1] § 2907.321. Pandering obscenity involving a minor.

(A) No person, with knowledge of the character of the material or performance involved, shall do any of the following:

(1) Create, reproduce, or publish any obscene material that has a minor as one of its participants or portrayed observers;

(2) Promote or advertise for sale or dissemination; sell, deliver, disseminate, display, exhibit, present, rent, or provide; or offer or agree to sell, deliver, disseminate, display, exhibit, present, rent, or provide, any obscene material that has a minor as one of its participants or portrayed observers;

(3) Create, direct, or produce an obscene performance that has a minor as one of its participants;

(4) Advertise or promote for presentation, present, or participate in presenting an obscene performance that has a minor as one of its participants;

(5) Buy, procure, possess, or control any obscene material, that has a minor as one of its participants;

(6) Bring or cause to be brought into this state any obscene material that has a minor as one of its participants or portrayed observers.

(B) (1) This section does not apply to any material or performance that is sold, disseminated, displayed, possessed, controlled, brought or caused to be brought into this state, or presented for a bona fide medical, scientific, educational, religious, governmental, judicial, or other proper purpose, by or to a physician, psychologist, sociologist, scientist, teacher, person pursuing bona fide studies or research, librarian, clergyman, prosecutor, judge, or other person having a proper interest in the material or performance.

(2) Mistake of age is not a defense to a charge under this section.

(3) In a prosecution under this section, the trier of fact may infer that a person in the material or performance involved is a minor if the material or performance, through its title, text, visual representation, or otherwise, represents or depicts the person as a minor.

(C) Whoever violates this section is guilty of pandering obscenity involving a minor. Violation of division (A)(1), (2), (3), (4), or (6) of this section is a felony of the second degree. Violation of division (A)(5) of this section is a felony of the fourth degree. If the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of this section or [section 2907.322](#) [2907.32.2] or 2907.323 [2907.32.3] of the Revised Code, pandering obscenity involving a minor in violation of division (A)(5) of this section is a felony of the third degree.

HISTORY: 137 v S 243 (Eff 11-17-77); 140 v H 44 (Eff 9-27-84); 142 v H 51. Eff 3-17-89.

§ 2907.31. Disseminating matter harmful to juveniles.

(A) No person, with knowledge of its character or content, shall recklessly do any of the following:

(1) Directly sell, deliver, furnish, disseminate, provide, exhibit, rent, or present to a juvenile, a group of juveniles, a law enforcement officer posing as a juvenile, or a group of law enforcement officers posing as juveniles any material or performance that is obscene or harmful to juveniles;

(2) Directly offer or agree to sell, deliver, furnish, disseminate, provide, exhibit, rent, or present to a juvenile, a group of juveniles, a law enforcement officer posing as a juvenile, or a group of law enforcement officers posing as juveniles any material or performance that is obscene or harmful to juveniles;

(3) While in the physical proximity of the juvenile or law enforcement officer posing as a juvenile, allow any juvenile or law enforcement officer posing as a juvenile to review or peruse any material or view any live performance that is harmful to juveniles.

(B) The following are affirmative defenses to a charge under this section that involves material or a performance that is harmful to juveniles but not obscene:

(1) The defendant is the parent, guardian, or spouse of the juvenile involved.

(2) The juvenile involved, at the time of the conduct in question, was accompanied by the juvenile's parent or guardian who, with knowledge of its character, consented to the material or performance being furnished or presented to the juvenile.

(3) The juvenile exhibited to the defendant or to the defendant's agent or employee a draft card, driver's license, birth record, marriage license, or other official or apparently official document purporting to show that the juvenile was eighteen years of age or over or married, and the person to whom that document was exhibited did not otherwise have reasonable cause to believe that the juvenile was under the age of eighteen and unmarried.

(C) (1) It is an affirmative defense to a charge under this section, involving material or a performance that is obscene or harmful to juveniles, that the material or performance was furnished or presented for a bona fide medical, scientific, educational, governmental, judicial, or other proper purpose, by a physician, psychologist, sociologist, scientist, teacher, librarian, clergyman, prosecutor, judge, or other proper person.

(2) Except as provided in division (B)(3) of this section, mistake of age is not a defense to a charge under this section.

(D) (1) A person directly sells, delivers, furnishes, disseminates, provides, exhibits, rents, or presents or directly offers or agrees to sell, deliver, furnish, disseminate, provide, exhibit, rent, or present material or a performance to a juvenile, a group of juveniles, a law enforcement officer posing as a juvenile, or a group of law enforcement officers posing as juveniles in violation of this section by means of an electronic method of remotely transmitting information if the person knows or has reason to believe that the person receiving the information is a juvenile or the group of persons receiving the information are juveniles.

(2) A person remotely transmitting information by means of a method of mass distribution does not directly sell, deliver, furnish, disseminate, provide, exhibit, rent, or present or directly offer or agree to sell, deliver, furnish, disseminate, provide, exhibit, rent, or present the material or performance in question to a juvenile, a group of juveniles, a law enforcement officer posing as a juvenile, or a group of law enforcement officers posing as juveniles in violation of this section if either of the following applies:

(a) The person has inadequate information to know or have reason to believe that a particular recipient of the information or offer is a juvenile.

(b) The method of mass distribution does not provide the person the ability to prevent a particular recipient from receiving the information.

(E) If any provision of this section, or the application of any provision of this section to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this section or related sections that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application. To this end, the provisions are severable.

(F) Whoever violates this section is guilty of disseminating matter harmful to juveniles. If the material or performance involved is harmful to juveniles, except as otherwise provided in this division, a violation of this section is a misdemeanor of the first degree. If the material or performance involved is obscene, except as otherwise provided in this division, a violation of this section is a felony of the fifth degree. If the material or performance involved is obscene and the juvenile to whom it is sold, delivered, furnished, disseminated, provided, exhibited, rented, or presented, the juvenile to whom the offer is made or who is the subject of the agreement, or the juvenile who is allowed to review, peruse, or view it is under thirteen years of age, violation of this section is a felony of the fourth degree.

HISTORY: 134 v H 511 (Eff 1-1-74); 142 v H 51 (Eff 3-17-89); 142 v H 790 (Eff 3-16-89); 146 v S 2. Eff 7-1-96; 149 v H 490, § 1, eff. 1-1-04.

[§ 2907.31.1] § 2907.311. Displaying matter harmful to juveniles.

(A) No person who has custody, control, or supervision of a commercial establishment, with knowledge of the character or content of the material involved, shall display at the establishment any material that is harmful to juveniles and that is open to view by juveniles as part of the invited general public.

(B) It is not a violation of division (A) of this section if the material in question is displayed by placing it behind "blinder racks" or similar devices that cover at least the lower two-thirds of the material, if the material in question is wrapped or placed behind the counter, or if the material in question otherwise is covered or located so that the portion that is harmful to juveniles is not open to the view of juveniles.

(C) Whoever violates this section is guilty of displaying matter harmful to juveniles, a misdemeanor of the first degree. Each day during which the offender is in violation of this section constitutes a separate offense.

HISTORY: 142 v H 51. Eff 3-17-89.

