

**321J.2 Operating while under the influence of alcohol or a drug or while having an alcohol concentration of .08 or more (OWI).**

1. A person commits the offense of operating while intoxicated if the person operates a motor vehicle in this state in any of the following conditions:

a. While under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or other drug or a combination of such substances.

b. While having an alcohol concentration of .08 or more.

c. While any amount of a controlled substance is present in the person, as measured in the person's blood or urine.

2. A person who violates [subsection 1](#) commits:

a. A serious misdemeanor for the first offense.

b. An aggravated misdemeanor for a second offense.

c. A class "D" felony for a third offense and each subsequent offense.

3. A first offense is punishable by all of the following:

a. A minimum period of imprisonment in the county jail of forty-eight hours, but not to exceed one year, to be served as ordered by the court, less credit for any time the person was confined in a jail or detention facility following arrest or for any time the person spent in a court-ordered operating-while-intoxicated program that provides law enforcement security. However, the court, in ordering service of the sentence and in its discretion, may accommodate the defendant's work schedule.

b. (1) With the consent of the defendant, the court may defer judgment pursuant to [section 907.3](#) and may place the defendant on probation upon conditions as it may require. Upon a showing that the defendant is not fulfilling the conditions of probation, the court may revoke probation and impose any sentence authorized by law. Before taking such action, the court shall give the defendant an opportunity to be heard on any matter relevant to the proposed action. Upon violation of the conditions of probation, the court may proceed as provided in [chapter 908](#). Upon fulfillment of the conditions of probation and the payment of fees imposed and not waived by the judicial district department of correctional services under [section 905.14](#), the defendant shall be discharged without entry of judgment.

(2) A person is not eligible for a deferred judgment under [section 907.3](#) if the person has been convicted of a violation of [this section](#) or the person's driver's license has been revoked under [this chapter](#), and any of the following apply:

(a) If the defendant's alcohol concentration established by the results of an analysis of a specimen of the defendant's blood, breath, or urine withdrawn in accordance with [this chapter](#) exceeds .15, regardless of whether or not the alcohol concentration indicated by the chemical test minus the established margin of error inherent in the device or method used to conduct the test equals an alcohol concentration of .15 or more.

(b) If the defendant has previously been convicted of a violation of [subsection 1](#) or a statute in another state substantially corresponding to [subsection 1](#).

(c) If the defendant has previously received a deferred judgment or sentence for a violation of [subsection 1](#) or for a violation of a statute in another state substantially corresponding to [subsection 1](#).

(d) If the defendant refused to consent to testing requested in accordance with [section 321J.6](#).

(e) If the offense under [this chapter](#) results in bodily injury to a person other than the defendant.

(f) If the offense was committed in violation of [section 321.279, subsection 3](#), paragraph "a", subparagraph (2).

c. Assessment of a fine of one thousand two hundred fifty dollars. However, in the discretion of the court, if no personal or property injury has resulted from the defendant's actions, the court may waive up to six hundred twenty-five dollars of the fine when the defendant presents to the court a temporary restricted license issued pursuant to [section 321J.20](#).

(1) Upon the entry of a deferred judgment, a civil penalty shall be assessed as provided in

[section 907.14](#) in an amount not less than the amount of the criminal fine authorized pursuant to this paragraph “c”.

(2) As an alternative to a portion or all of the fine, the court may order the person to perform unpaid community service. However, the court shall not order the person to perform unpaid community service in lieu of a civil penalty or victim restitution. Surcharges and fees shall also be assessed pursuant to [chapter 911](#).

d. Revocation of the person’s driver’s license for a minimum period of one hundred eighty days up to a maximum revocation period of one year, pursuant to [section 321J.4, subsection 1](#), [section 321J.9](#), or [section 321J.12](#). The department shall require the defendant to install an ignition interlock device of a type approved by the commissioner of public safety on all vehicles operated by the defendant if the defendant seeks a temporary restricted license.

e. Assignment to substance abuse evaluation and treatment, a course for drinking drivers, and, if available and appropriate, a reality education substance abuse prevention program pursuant to [section 321J.24](#).

4. A second offense is punishable by all of the following:

a. A minimum period of imprisonment in the county jail or community-based correctional facility of seven days but not to exceed two years.

b. Assessment of a minimum fine of one thousand eight hundred seventy-five dollars and a maximum fine of six thousand two hundred fifty dollars. Surcharges and fees shall be assessed pursuant to [chapter 911](#).

c. Revocation of the defendant’s driver’s license for a period of one year, if a revocation occurs pursuant to [section 321J.12, subsection 1](#). If a revocation occurs due to test refusal under [section 321J.9](#), or pursuant to [section 321J.4, subsection 2](#), the defendant’s license shall be revoked for a period of two years.

d. Assignment to substance abuse evaluation and treatment, a course for drinking drivers, and, if available and appropriate, a reality education substance abuse prevention program pursuant to [section 321J.24](#).

5. A third or subsequent offense is punishable by all of the following:

a. Commitment to the custody of the director of the department of corrections for an indeterminate term not to exceed five years, with a mandatory minimum term of thirty days.

(1) If the court does not suspend a person’s sentence of commitment to the custody of the director of the department of corrections under this paragraph “a”, the person shall be assigned to a facility pursuant to [section 904.513](#).

(2) If the court suspends a person’s sentence of commitment to the custody of the director of the department of corrections under this paragraph “a”, the court shall order the person to serve not less than thirty days nor more than one year in the county jail, and the person may be committed to treatment in the community under [section 907.6](#).

b. Assessment of a minimum fine of three thousand one hundred twenty-five dollars and a maximum fine of nine thousand three hundred seventy-five dollars. Surcharges and fees shall be assessed pursuant to [chapter 911](#).

c. Revocation of the person’s driver’s license for a period of six years pursuant to [section 321J.4, subsection 4](#).

d. Assignment to substance abuse evaluation and treatment, a course for drinking drivers, and, if available and appropriate, a reality education substance abuse prevention program pursuant to [section 321J.24](#).

e. Notwithstanding the maximum sentence set forth in paragraph “a”, a person convicted of a third or subsequent offense may be sentenced as an habitual offender pursuant to [sections 902.8 and 902.9](#) if the person qualifies as an habitual offender as described in [section 902.8](#).

6. To the extent that [section 907.3](#) allows, the court may impose additional sentencing terms and conditions.

7. a. All persons convicted of an offense under [subsection 2](#) shall be ordered, at the person’s expense, to undergo, prior to sentencing, a substance abuse evaluation. The court shall order the person to follow the recommendations proposed in the substance abuse evaluation as provided in [section 321J.3](#).

b. Where the program is available and is appropriate for the convicted person, a person

convicted of an offense under [subsection 2](#) shall be ordered to participate in a reality education substance abuse prevention program as provided in [section 321J.24](#).

c. A minimum term of imprisonment in a county jail or community-based correctional facility imposed on a person convicted of a second or subsequent offense under [subsection 2](#), paragraph “b” or “c” shall be served on consecutive days. However, if the sentencing court finds that service of the full minimum term on consecutive days would work an undue hardship on the person, or finds that sufficient jail space is not available and is not reasonably expected to become available within four months after sentencing to incarcerate the person serving the minimum sentence on consecutive days, the court may order the person to serve the minimum term in segments of at least forty-eight hours and to perform a specified number of hours of unpaid community service as deemed appropriate by the sentencing court.

8. In determining if a violation charged is a second or subsequent offense for purposes of criminal sentencing or license revocation under [this chapter](#):

a. Any conviction or revocation deleted from motor vehicle operating records pursuant to [section 321.12](#) shall not be considered as a previous offense.

b. Deferred judgments entered pursuant to [section 907.3](#) for violations of [this section](#) shall be counted as previous offenses.

c. Convictions or the equivalent of deferred judgments for violations in any other states under statutes substantially corresponding to [this section](#) shall be counted as previous offenses. The courts shall judicially notice the statutes of other states which define offenses substantially equivalent to the one defined in [this section](#) and can therefore be considered corresponding statutes. Each previous violation on which conviction or deferral of judgment was entered prior to the date of the violation charged shall be considered and counted as a separate previous offense.

9. A person shall not be convicted and sentenced for more than one violation of [this section](#) for actions arising out of the same event or occurrence, even if the event or occurrence involves more than one of the conditions specified in [subsection 1](#).

10. The clerk of the district court shall immediately certify to the department a true copy of each order entered with respect to deferral of judgment, deferral of sentence, or pronouncement of judgment and sentence for a defendant under [this section](#).

11. a. [This section](#) does not apply to a person operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of a drug if the substance was prescribed for the person and was taken under the prescription and in accordance with the directions of a medical practitioner as defined in [chapter 155A](#) or if the substance was dispensed by a pharmacist without a prescription pursuant to the rules of the board of pharmacy, if there is no evidence of the consumption of alcohol and the medical practitioner or pharmacist had not directed the person to refrain from operating a motor vehicle.

b. When charged with a violation of [subsection 1](#), paragraph “c”, a person may assert, as an affirmative defense, that the controlled substance present in the person’s blood or urine was prescribed or dispensed for the person and was taken in accordance with the directions of a practitioner and the labeling directions of the pharmacy, as that person and place of business are defined in [section 155A.3](#).

12. In any prosecution under [this section](#), evidence of the results of analysis of a specimen of the defendant’s blood, breath, or urine is admissible upon proof of a proper foundation.

a. The alcohol concentration established by the results of an analysis of a specimen of the defendant’s blood, breath, or urine withdrawn within two hours after the defendant was driving or in physical control of a motor vehicle is presumed to be the alcohol concentration at the time of driving or being in physical control of the motor vehicle.

b. The presence of a controlled substance or other drug established by the results of analysis of a specimen of the defendant’s blood or urine withdrawn within two hours after the defendant was driving or in physical control of a motor vehicle is presumed to show the presence of such controlled substance or other drug in the defendant at the time of driving or being in physical control of the motor vehicle.

c. The department of public safety shall adopt nationally accepted standards for determining detectable levels of controlled substances in the division of criminal investigation’s initial laboratory screening test for controlled substances.

13. *a.* In addition to any fine or penalty imposed under [this chapter](#), the court shall order a defendant convicted of or receiving a deferred judgment for a violation of [this section](#) to make restitution for damages resulting directly from the violation, to the victim, pursuant to [chapter 910](#). An amount paid pursuant to this restitution order shall be credited toward any adverse judgment in a subsequent civil proceeding arising from the same occurrence. However, other than establishing a credit, a restitution proceeding pursuant to [this section](#) shall not be given evidentiary or preclusive effect in a subsequent civil proceeding arising from the same occurrence.

*b.* The court may order restitution paid to any public agency for the costs of the emergency response resulting from the actions constituting a violation of [this section](#), not exceeding five hundred dollars per public agency for each such response. For the purposes of this paragraph, “*emergency response*” means any incident requiring response by fire fighting, law enforcement, ambulance, medical, or other emergency services. A public agency seeking such restitution shall consult with the county attorney regarding the expenses incurred by the public agency, and the county attorney may include the expenses in the statement of pecuniary damages pursuant to [section 910.3](#).

14. In any prosecution under [this section](#), the results of a chemical test shall not be used to prove a violation of [subsection 1](#), paragraph “*b*” or “*c*”, if the alcohol, controlled substance, or other drug concentration indicated by the chemical test minus the established margin of error inherent in the device or method used to conduct the chemical test does not equal or exceed the level prohibited by [subsection 1](#), paragraph “*b*” or “*c*”.

86 Acts, ch 1220, §2; 87 Acts, ch 118, §4; 87 Acts, ch 215, §46; 90 Acts, ch 1233, §20; 90 Acts, ch 1251, §33; 97 Acts, ch 177, §4, 5; 98 Acts, ch 1073, §9; 98 Acts, ch 1100, §50; 98 Acts, ch 1138, §2, 3, 11 – 13, 37; 99 Acts, ch 96, §36; 2000 Acts, ch 1118, §1; 2000 Acts, ch 1135, §1; 2002 Acts, ch 1042, §1; 2003 Acts, ch 60, §1, 2; 2003 Acts, ch 179, §120; 2003 Acts, 1st Ex, ch 2, §48, 209; 2006 Acts, ch 1010, §90; 2006 Acts, ch 1166, §1 – 3; 2007 Acts, ch 10, §174; 2010 Acts, ch 1124, §1, 9; 2010 Acts, ch 1193, §50, 81; 2011 Acts, ch 25, §31; 2011 Acts, ch 131, §93, 158; 2018 Acts, ch 1110, §2, 3, 9; 2019 Acts, ch 5, §1, 2; 2020 Acts, ch 1028, §2; 2021 Acts, ch 98, §2

Referred to in §81.1, 135B.34, 135C.33, 232.22, 232.150, 321.12, 321.208, 321.213, 321.241, 321.279, 321.555, 321J.2A, 321J.2B, 321J.3, 321J.4, 321J.4B, 321J.5, 321J.6, 321J.8, 321J.9, 321J.10, 321J.10A, 321J.12, 321J.13, 321J.15, 321J.16, 321J.20, 321J.22, 321J.24, 321J.25, 321N.3, 602.8102(51), 707.6A, 724.4C, 724.15, 724.16, 724.22, 726.6, 804.31, 901C.3, 901D.2, 902.3, 907.3, 910.1, 910.3, 915.80

For provisions relating to third offense OWI driver’s license revocations and restoration of driving privileges, see 99 Acts, ch 153, §25  
2018 amendments apply to all persons who apply for or are issued a temporary restricted license under [chapter 321J](#) on or after July 1, 2018; 2018 Acts, ch 1110, §9

Subsection 3, paragraph d amended