

1220A BATTERY: SELF-DEFENSE IN ISSUE — § 940.19(1); § 939.48**Statutory Definition of the Crime**

Battery, as defined in § 940.19(1) of the Criminal Code of Wisconsin, is committed by one who causes bodily harm to another by an act done with the intent to cause bodily harm to that person or another without the consent of the person so harmed.

State's Burden of Proof

Before you may find the defendant guilty of this offense, the State must prove by evidence which satisfies you beyond a reasonable doubt that the following four elements were present.

Elements of the Crime That the State Must Prove

1. The defendant caused bodily harm to (name of victim).

"Cause" means that the defendant's act was a substantial factor in producing the bodily harm.¹

"Bodily harm" means physical pain or injury, illness, or any impairment of physical condition.²

2. The defendant intended to cause bodily harm to [(name of victim)] [another person].³

"Intent to cause bodily harm" means that the defendant had the mental purpose to cause bodily harm to another human being or was aware that (his) (her) conduct was practically certain to cause bodily harm to another human being.⁴

3. The defendant caused bodily harm without the consent⁵ of (name of victim).
4. The defendant knew that (name of victim) did not consent.

Deciding About Intent and Knowledge

You cannot look into a person's mind to find intent and knowledge. Intent and knowledge must be found, if found at all, from the defendant's acts, words, and statements, if any, and from all the facts and circumstances in this case bearing upon intent and knowledge.⁶

Self-Defense

Self-defense is an issue in this case. The law of self-defense allows the defendant to threaten or intentionally use force against another only if:⁷

- the defendant believed that there was an actual or imminent unlawful interference with the defendant's person; and
- the defendant believed that the amount of force the defendant used or threatened to use was necessary to prevent or terminate the interference; and
- the defendant's beliefs were reasonable.

Determining Whether Beliefs Were Reasonable

A belief may be reasonable even though mistaken.⁸ In determining whether the defendant's beliefs were reasonable, the standard is what a person of ordinary intelligence and prudence would have believed in the defendant's position under the circumstances that existed at the time of the alleged offense.⁹ The reasonableness of the defendant's beliefs must

be determined from the standpoint of the defendant at the time of the defendant's acts and not from the viewpoint of the jury now.

[IF RETREAT IS AN ISSUE, ADD APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTION HERE – SEE WIS JI-CRIMINAL 810.]

[IF THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE DEFENDANT PROVOKED THE ATTACK, ADD APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTION HERE – SEE WIS JI-CRIMINAL 815.]

State's Burden of Proof

The State must prove by evidence which satisfies you beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant did not act lawfully in self-defense.

Jury's Decision

If you are satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that all four elements of battery have been proved and that the defendant did not act lawfully in self-defense, you should find the defendant guilty.

If you are not so satisfied, you must find the defendant not guilty.

COMMENT

Wis JI-Criminal 1220A was originally published in 1985 and revised in 1994 and 2001. This revision was approved by the Committee in June 2014 and involved a nonsubstantive correction in the text.

This instruction combines the uniform instruction for simple battery (Wis JI-Criminal 1220) with the instruction on the privilege of self-defense (Wis JI-Criminal 800). The Committee concluded that integrating the elements and the privilege provides a clearer statement of all the facts necessary to constitute guilt in a case where self-defense is an issue. This kind of approach was suggested in State v. Staples, 99 Wis.2d 364, 299 N.W.2d 270 (Ct. App. 1980).

1. If a more extensive definition of "cause" is necessary, see Wis JI-Criminal 901.
2. This is the definition of "bodily harm" provided in § 939.22(4).

3. In most cases, the defendant will be charged with intending to harm the actual victim and the name of the victim should be used in instructing the jury. However, the defendant is also guilty of battery if he intends to harm one person but actually harms another. This is the common law doctrine of transferred intent which has been described as follows in connection with first degree murder:

It is immaterial that the human being killed is not the one the actor intended to kill. If X shoots at and kills a person who he thinks is Y but who is actually Z, X is as guilty as if he had not been mistaken about the identity of the person killed. The same is true where X shoots at Y intending to kill him, but he misses Y and kills Z. In both of these cases, X has caused "the death of another human being by an act done with intent to kill that person or another." In other words, the section incorporates the common law doctrine of "transferred intent."

1953 Judiciary Committee Report on the Criminal Code, Wisconsin Legislative Council, page 58.

4. See § 939.23(4) and Wis JI-Criminal 923A and 923B.

5. If definition of "without consent" is believed to be necessary, see Wis JI-Criminal 948 which provides an instruction based on the definition provided in § 939.22(48). That definition provides that "without consent" means "no consent in fact" or that consent was given because of fear, a claim of legal authority by the defendant, or misunderstanding.

6. This is the shorter version used to describe the process of finding intent. The Committee concluded that it is suitable for use in most cases. For the longer description of the intent-finding process, see Wis JI-Criminal 923A.

7. The instruction on self-defense is adapted from Wis JI-Criminal 800.

8. This treatment of "reasonably believes" is intended to be consistent with the definition provided in § 939.22(32).

9. The phrase "in the defendant's position under the circumstances that existed at the time of the alleged offense" is intended to allow consideration of a broad range of circumstances that relate to the defendant's situation. For example, with children (assuming they are old enough to be criminally charged), the standard relates to a reasonable person of like age, intelligence, and experience. Maichle v. Jonovic, 69 Wis.2d 622, 627-28, 230 N.W.2d 789 (1975).