

PART B — CAREER OFFENDERS AND CRIMINAL LIVELIHOOD

§4B1.1. Career Offender

- (a) A defendant is a career offender if (1) the defendant was at least eighteen years old at the time the defendant committed the instant offense of conviction; (2) the instant offense of conviction is a felony that is either a crime of violence or a controlled substance offense; and (3) the defendant has at least two prior felony convictions of either a crime of violence or a controlled substance offense.
- (b) Except as provided in subsection (c), if the offense level for a career offender from the table in this subsection is greater than the offense level otherwise applicable, the offense level from the table in this subsection shall apply. A career offender's criminal history category in every case under this subsection shall be Category VI.

OFFENSE STATUTORY MAXIMUM	OFFENSE LEVEL*
(1) Life	37
(2) 25 years or more	34
(3) 20 years or more, but less than 25 years	32
(4) 15 years or more, but less than 20 years	29
(5) 10 years or more, but less than 15 years	24
(6) 5 years or more, but less than 10 years	17
(7) More than 1 year, but less than 5 years	12.

*If an adjustment from §3E1.1 (Acceptance of Responsibility) applies, decrease the offense level by the number of levels corresponding to that adjustment.

- (c) If the defendant is convicted of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or § 929(a), and the defendant is determined to be a career offender under subsection (a), the applicable guideline range shall be determined as follows:
- (1) If the only count of conviction is 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or § 929(a), the applicable guideline range shall be determined using the table in subsection (c)(3).
 - (2) In the case of multiple counts of conviction in which at least one of the counts is a conviction other than a conviction for 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or § 929(a), the guideline range shall be the greater of—
 - (A) the guideline range that results by adding the mandatory minimum consecutive penalty required by the 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or

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§ 929(a) count(s) to the minimum and the maximum of the otherwise applicable guideline range determined for the count(s) of conviction other than the 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or § 929(a) count(s); and

(B) the guideline range determined using the table in subsection (c)(3).

(3) CAREER OFFENDER TABLE FOR 18 U.S.C. § 924(C) OR § 929(A) OFFENDERS

§3E1.1 REDUCTION	GUIDELINE RANGE FOR THE 18 U.S.C. § 924(C) OR § 929(A) COUNT(S)
No reduction	360–life
2-level reduction	292–365
3-level reduction	262–327.

Commentary

Application Notes:

- Definitions.**—“*Crime of violence*,” “*controlled substance offense*,” and “*two prior felony convictions*” are defined in §4B1.2.
- “Offense Statutory Maximum.”**—“*Offense Statutory Maximum*,” for the purposes of this guideline, refers to the maximum term of imprisonment authorized for the offense of conviction that is a crime of violence or controlled substance offense, including any increase in that maximum term under a sentencing enhancement provision that applies because of the defendant’s prior criminal record (such sentencing enhancement provisions are contained, for example, in 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(A), (B), (C), and (D)). For example, in a case in which the statutory maximum term of imprisonment under 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(C) is increased from twenty years to thirty years because the defendant has one or more qualifying prior drug convictions, the “Offense Statutory Maximum” for that defendant for the purposes of this guideline is thirty years and not twenty years. If more than one count of conviction is of a crime of violence or controlled substance offense, use the maximum authorized term of imprisonment for the count that has the greatest offense statutory maximum.
- Application of Subsection (c).**—
 - In General.**—Subsection (c) applies in any case in which the defendant (i) was convicted of violating 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or § 929(a); and (ii) as a result of that conviction (alone or in addition to another offense of conviction), is determined to be a career offender under §4B1.1(a).
 - Subsection (c)(2).**—To determine the greater guideline range under subsection (c)(2), the court shall use the guideline range with the highest minimum term of imprisonment.
 - “Otherwise Applicable Guideline Range.”**—For purposes of subsection (c)(2)(A), “otherwise applicable guideline range” for the count(s) of conviction other than the 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or 18 U.S.C. § 929(a) count(s) is determined as follows:

- (i) If the count(s) of conviction other than the 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or 18 U.S.C. § 929(a) count(s) does not qualify the defendant as a career offender, the otherwise applicable guideline range for that count(s) is the guideline range determined using: (I) the Chapter Two and Three offense level for that count(s); and (II) the appropriate criminal history category determined under §§4A1.1 (Criminal History Category) and 4A1.2 (Definitions and Instructions for Computing Criminal History).
 - (ii) If the count(s) of conviction other than the 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or 18 U.S.C. § 929(a) count(s) qualifies the defendant as a career offender, the otherwise applicable guideline range for that count(s) is the guideline range determined for that count(s) under §4B1.1(a) and (b).
- (D) **Imposition of Consecutive Term of Imprisonment.**—In a case involving multiple counts, the sentence shall be imposed according to the rules in subsection (e) of §5G1.2 (Sentencing on Multiple Counts of Conviction).
- (E) **Example.**—The following example illustrates the application of subsection (c)(2) in a multiple count situation:

The defendant is convicted of one count of violating 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) for possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense (5 year mandatory minimum), and one count of violating 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(B) (5 year mandatory minimum, 40 year statutory maximum). Applying subsection (c)(2)(A), the court determines that the drug count (without regard to the 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) count) qualifies the defendant as a career offender under §4B1.1(a). Under §4B1.1(a), the otherwise applicable guideline range for the drug count is 188–235 months (using offense level 34 (because the statutory maximum for the drug count is 40 years), minus 3 levels for acceptance of responsibility, and criminal history category VI). The court adds 60 months (the minimum required by 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)) to the minimum and the maximum of that range, resulting in a guideline range of 248–295 months. Applying subsection (c)(2)(B), the court then determines the career offender guideline range from the table in subsection (c)(3) is 262–327 months. The range with the greatest minimum, 262–327 months, is used to impose the sentence in accordance with §5G1.2(e).

Background: Section 994(h) of title 28, United States Code, mandates that the Commission assure that certain “career” offenders receive a sentence of imprisonment “at or near the maximum term authorized.” Section 4B1.1 implements this directive, with the definition of a career offender tracking in large part the criteria set forth in 28 U.S.C. § 994(h). However, in accord with its general guideline promulgation authority under 28 U.S.C. § 994(a)–(f), and its amendment authority under 28 U.S.C. § 994(o) and (p), the Commission has modified this definition in several respects to focus more precisely on the class of recidivist offenders for whom a lengthy term of imprisonment is appropriate and to avoid “unwarranted sentencing disparities among defendants with similar records who have been found guilty of similar criminal conduct . . .” 28 U.S.C. § 991(b)(1)(B). The Commission’s refinement of this definition over time is consistent with Congress’s choice of a directive to the Commission rather than a mandatory minimum sentencing statute (“The [Senate Judiciary] Committee believes that such a directive to the Commission will be more effective; the guidelines development process can assure consistent and rational implementation for the Committee’s view that substantial prison terms should be imposed on repeat violent offenders and repeat drug traffickers.” S. Rep. No. 225, 98th Cong., 1st Sess. 175 (1983)).

Subsection (c) provides rules for determining the sentence for career offenders who have been convicted of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or § 929(a). The Career Offender Table in subsection (c)(3) provides a sentence at or near the statutory maximum for these offenders by using guideline ranges that corre-

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spond to criminal history category VI and offense level 37 (assuming §3E.1.1 (Acceptance of Responsibility) does not apply), offense level 35 (assuming a 2-level reduction under §3E.1.1 applies), and offense level 34 (assuming a 3-level reduction under §3E.1.1 applies).

<i>Historical Note</i>	Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective January 15, 1988 (amendments 47 and 48); November 1, 1989 (amendments 266 and 267); November 1, 1992 (amendment 459); November 1, 1994 (amendment 506); November 1, 1995 (amendment 528); November 1, 1997 (amendments 546 and 567); November 1, 2002 (amendment 642); November 1, 2011 (amendment 758); August 1, 2016 (amendment 798); November 1, 2023 (amendment 824); November 1, 2025 (amendment 836).
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§4B1.2. Definitions of Terms Used in Section 4B1.1

- (a) **CRIME OF VIOLENCE.**—The term “crime of violence” means any offense under federal or state law, punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, that—
 - (1) has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person of another; or
 - (2) is murder, voluntary manslaughter, kidnapping, aggravated assault, a forcible sex offense, robbery, arson, extortion, or the use or unlawful possession of a firearm described in 26 U.S.C. § 5845(a) or explosive material as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 841(c).
- (b) **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENSE.**—The term “controlled substance offense” means an offense under federal or state law, punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, that—
 - (1) prohibits the manufacture, import, export, distribution, or dispensing of a controlled substance (or a counterfeit substance) or the possession of a controlled substance (or a counterfeit substance) with intent to manufacture, import, export, distribute, or dispense; or
 - (2) is an offense described in 46 U.S.C. § 70503(a) or § 70506(b).
- (c) **TWO PRIOR FELONY CONVICTIONS.**—The term “two prior felony convictions” means (1) the defendant committed the instant offense of conviction subsequent to sustaining at least two felony convictions of either a crime of violence or a controlled substance offense (*i.e.*, two felony convictions of a crime of violence, two felony convictions of a controlled substance offense, or one felony conviction of a crime of violence and one felony conviction of a controlled substance offense), and (2) the sentences for at least two of the aforementioned felony convictions are counted separately under the provisions of §4A1.1(a), (b), or (c). The date that a defendant sustained a conviction shall be the date that the guilt of the defendant has been established, whether by guilty plea, trial, or plea of *nolo contendere*.

- (d) INCHOATE OFFENSES INCLUDED.—The terms “crime of violence” and “controlled substance offense” include the offenses of aiding and abetting, attempting to commit, or conspiring to commit any such offense.
- (e) ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS.—
 - (1) FORCIBLE SEX OFFENSE.—“**Forcible sex offense**” includes where consent to the conduct is not given or is not legally valid, such as where consent to the conduct is involuntary, incompetent, or coerced. The offenses of sexual abuse of a minor and statutory rape are included only if the sexual abuse of a minor or statutory rape was (A) an offense described in 18 U.S.C. § 2241(c) or (B) an offense under state law that would have been an offense under section 2241(c) if the offense had occurred within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.
 - (2) EXTORTION.—“**Extortion**” is obtaining something of value from another by the wrongful use of (A) force, (B) fear of physical injury, or (C) threat of physical injury.
 - (3) ROBBERY.—“**Robbery**” is the unlawful taking or obtaining of personal property from the person or in the presence of another, against his will, by means of actual or threatened force, or violence, or fear of injury, immediate or future, to his person or property, or property in his custody or possession, or the person or property of a relative or member of his family or of anyone in his company at the time of the taking or obtaining. The phrase “actual or threatened force” refers to force that is sufficient to overcome a victim’s resistance.
 - (4) PRIOR FELONY CONVICTION.—“**Prior felony conviction**” means a prior adult federal or state conviction for an offense punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, regardless of whether such offense is specifically designated as a felony and regardless of the actual sentence imposed. A conviction for an offense committed at age eighteen or older is an adult conviction. A conviction for an offense committed prior to age eighteen is an adult conviction if it is classified as an adult conviction under the laws of the jurisdiction in which the defendant was convicted (e.g., a federal conviction for an offense committed prior to the defendant’s eighteenth birthday is an adult conviction if the defendant was expressly proceeded against as an adult).

Commentary

Application Notes:

1. **Further Considerations Regarding “Crime of Violence” and “Controlled Substance Offense”.**—For purposes of this guideline—

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Unlawfully possessing a listed chemical with intent to manufacture a controlled substance (21 U.S.C. § 841(c)(1)) is a “controlled substance offense.”

Unlawfully possessing a prohibited flask or equipment with intent to manufacture a controlled substance (21 U.S.C. § 843(a)(6)) is a “controlled substance offense.”

Maintaining any place for the purpose of facilitating a drug offense (21 U.S.C. § 856) is a “controlled substance offense” if the offense of conviction established that the underlying offense (the offense facilitated) was a “controlled substance offense.”

Using a communications facility in committing, causing, or facilitating a drug offense (21 U.S.C. § 843(b)) is a “controlled substance offense” if the offense of conviction established that the underlying offense (the offense committed, caused, or facilitated) was a “controlled substance offense.”

A violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or § 929(a) is a “crime of violence” or a “controlled substance offense” if the offense of conviction established that the underlying offense was a “crime of violence” or a “controlled substance offense”. (Note that in the case of a prior 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) or § 929(a) conviction, if the defendant also was convicted of the underlying offense, the sentences for the two prior convictions will be treated as a single sentence under §4A1.2 (Definitions and Instructions for Computing Criminal History).)

2. **Offense of Conviction as Focus of Inquiry.**—Section 4B1.1 (Career Offender) expressly provides that the instant and prior offenses must be crimes of violence or controlled substance offenses of which the defendant was convicted. Therefore, in determining whether an offense is a crime of violence or controlled substance for the purposes of §4B1.1 (Career Offender), the offense of conviction (*i.e.*, the conduct of which the defendant was convicted) is the focus of inquiry.
3. **Applicability of §4A1.2.**—The provisions of §4A1.2 (Definitions and Instructions for Computing Criminal History) are applicable to the counting of convictions under §4B1.1.

<i>Historical Note</i>	Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective January 15, 1988 (amendment 49); November 1, 1989 (amendment 268); November 1, 1991 (amendment 433); November 1, 1992 (amendment 461); November 1, 1995 (amendment 528); November 1, 1997 (amendments 546 and 568); November 1, 2000 (amendment 600); November 1, 2002 (amendments 642 and 646); November 1, 2004 (amendment 674); November 1, 2007 (amendment 709); November 1, 2009 (amendment 736); November 1, 2015 (amendment 795); August 1, 2016 (amendment 798); November 1, 2023 (amendment 822); November 1, 2025 (amendment 836).
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§4B1.3. Criminal Livelihood

If the defendant committed an offense as part of a pattern of criminal conduct engaged in as a livelihood, his offense level shall be not less than **13**, unless §3E1.1 (Acceptance of Responsibility) applies, in which event his offense level shall be not less than **11**.

Commentary

Application Notes:

1. **“Pattern of criminal conduct”** means planned criminal acts occurring over a substantial period of time. Such acts may involve a single course of conduct or independent offenses.