

#### **Overview**

- Jurisdiction
- Changes to felony sentencing under JRA
- Highlight common errors





#### **Jurisdiction**

- District court may accept guilty or no contest pleas for Class H and Class I felonies with consent of:
  - Presiding district court judge
  - Prosecutor
  - Defendant
- Appeals are to Appellate Division



#### **Jurisdiction**

 Of 30,000 felony sentences entered in FY 2009-2010, 5,000 were in district court





#### **Jurisdiction**

- By default, probation violations for felony pleas accepted in district court are in superior court
- May be heard in district court with consent of:
  - Prosecutor
  - Defendant
- Appeals of revocation are to superior court
  - State v. Hooper, 358 N.C. 122 (2004)



#### **Jurisdiction**

- Felony drug treatment court cases may be supervised in district court with consent of:
  - Chief district court judge
  - Senior resident superior court judge
- If district court revokes, appeal is to Court of Appeals





#### **Basic Steps**

- 1. Determine the applicable law
- 2. Determine the offense class
- 3. Determine the prior record level
- 4. Consider aggravating and mitigating factors
- 5. Select a minimum sentence
- 6. Determine the maximum sentence
- 7. Choose a sentence disposition

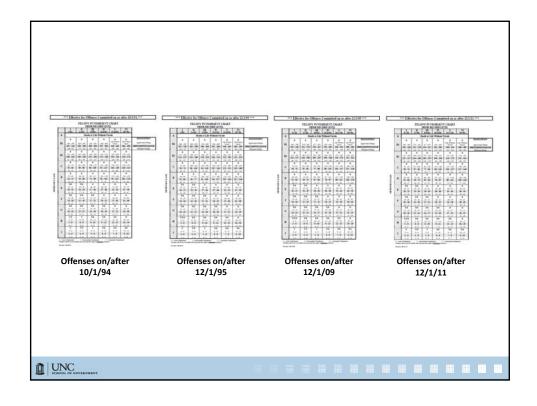


#### Applicable law

- Structured Sentencing
  - Effective October 1, 1994
  - Amended December 1, 1995
  - Amended December 1, 2009
  - Amended December 1, 2011
- Offense date determines applicable law







# All felons get post-release supervision

Offenses committed on or after December 1, 2011





## Post-release supervision (PRS) for all felonies

- Class F-I: 9 months PRS (was 0 months)
- Corresponding increase in maximum sentences

UNC

## Post-release supervision (PRS) for all felonies

MAXIMUM SENTENCES UNDER PRIOR LAW

Class F-I: 120% of minimum

MAXIMUM SENTENCES UNDER NEW LAW

• Class F-I: 120% of minimum, plus 9





	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		*** Effe	ctive for	· Offense	es Comir	itted on	or after	12/1/11	***
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#### A Prior Record Level II defendant is convicted of a Class H felony.

I/A

8 - 10

6 - 8

4 - 6

**PRIOR LAW** 

• 8-10 months

**NEW LAW** 

• 8-19 months





# What Does the Sentence Mean? Pre-12/1/11: No Post-Release Supervision Earned Time: Credit for work/programs Reduces the inmate's maximum sentence No reduction below minimum

10 months

# What Does the Sentence Mean? On or after 12/1/11: Post-Release Supervision Maximum is 120% of minimum, plus 9 months Release 9 months before maximum (less earned time) 9-month period of post-release supervision



#### What Does the Sentence Mean?

• **Earned Time**: 3, 6, or 9 days/month, depending on job/program completion

#### **Average percentage of minimum served:**

Class B1-C: 102%

Class D: 105%

Class E-F: 106%

Class G: 107%

Class H: 111%

Class I: 114%



#### **Post-Release Supervision**

- Class F-I Sex offenders:
  - Supervised release period is 60 months instead of 9
  - Max. sentence is 120% of min., plus 9
- Drug trafficking
  - Maximums in G.S. 90-95 weren't fixed by JRA





# Multiple Convictions



#### **Multiple Convictions**

- You may <u>consolidate</u> multiple offenses
  - Most serious offense controls
- You may run sentences <u>concurrently</u> or <u>consecutively</u>
  - Silence in the judgment = concurrent
- You may <u>not</u> stack probation periods
- You may run a probation period consecutive to a period of imprisonment ("contingent")





2 counts felony larceny (Class H)

Prior Record Level I

Offense date: January 10, 2012

#### What sentences are permissible?

- Consolidate (active or suspended)
   [6-17]
- Concurrent (active or suspended)[6-17][6-17]
- Consecutive (active or suspended) [6-17] [6-17]
- Contingent (active, followed by probation)
   [6-17, active] [6-17, suspended for 36 months]

C/I/A

6 - 8

5 - 6

4 - 5



#### **Consecutive Felonies**

- DOC will apply a "one-sentence theory" or "single sentence rule" (15A-1354(b))
  - Sum all minimums
  - Sum all maximums, minus 9 months for second/subsequent PRS terms





#### **Consecutive Felonies**

Class H 8 – 19 months

Class H + 8 – 19 (-9)

16 – 38 (sum of all mins and maxes)

- 9 (to remove duplicate "PRS time")

16 – 29 months

- Release from DAC 9 months before reaching maximum
- Serve a single 9-month term of post-release supervision



#### **Consecutive Felonies**

Class H 8 – 19 months

Class H + 8 - 19 (-9)

Class H + 8 - 19 (-9)

Class I + 6 - 17 (-9)

Class I + 6 - 17 (-9)

36 – 91 (sum of all mins and maxes)

- 36 (to remove duplicate "PRS time")

40 - 55 months

- Release from DAC 9 months before reaching maximum
- Serve a single 9-month term of post-release supervision





#### **Prior Record Level**



#### **COUNT**

- All felonies
- Class 1 and Class A1 non-traffic misdemeanors
- DWI, commercial DWI, and death by vehicle
- Prayer for Judgment (PJC)
- Crimes from other jurisdictions

#### **DON'T COUNT**

- Class 2 & 3 misdemeanors
- Traffic misdemeanors (other than DWI, commercial DWI, and death by vehicle)
- Infractions
- Contempt adjudications
- Probation revocations
- Juvenile adjudications

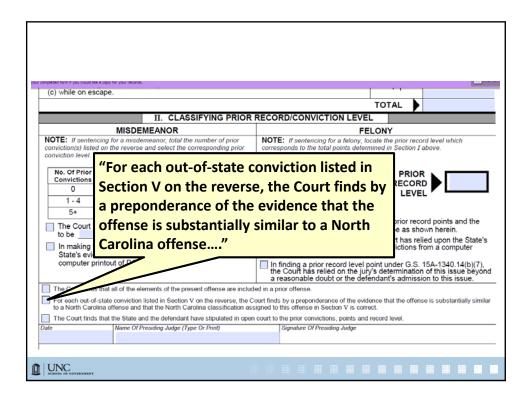




#### **Crimes from other Jurisdictions**

- By default, count as follows:
  - Prior out-of-state felonies: Class I (2 points)
  - Prior out-of-state misd.: Class 3 mids. (0 points)
- State or defendant can show "substantial similarity" to a NC offense
  - If "substantial similarity" proved, count the out-ofstate offense like its NC counterpart
  - This is a question of law to which the parties cannot validly stipulate (<u>common error</u>)



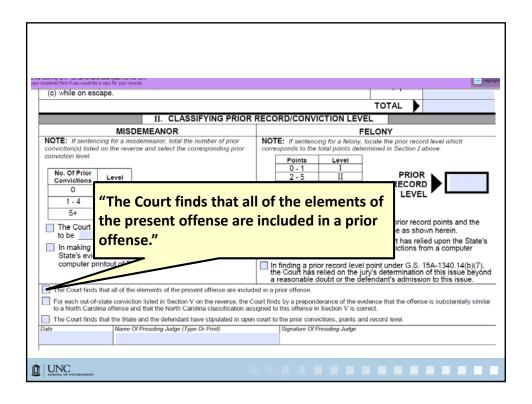




#### **Prior Record "Bonus Points"**

- +1 Offense committed while on probation, parole, post-release supervision, in prison, or on escape
- +1 All elements of present offense included in any prior offense (a question of law—no stipulations)







A defendant has the following prior record:

11/1/98 First-degree rape (Pennsylvania)

8/4/01 DWLR (Class 1 misdemeanor)

/ 1/12/03 DWI

4/25/082d deg burglary (Class G)4/25/08Poss. stolen goods (Class H)

2/14/10 Simple assault (Class 2 misdemeanor)

**+1** Current crime committed while on probation

What is his prior record level?

– 8 points → Level III

What if State shows "substantial similarity" of rape?

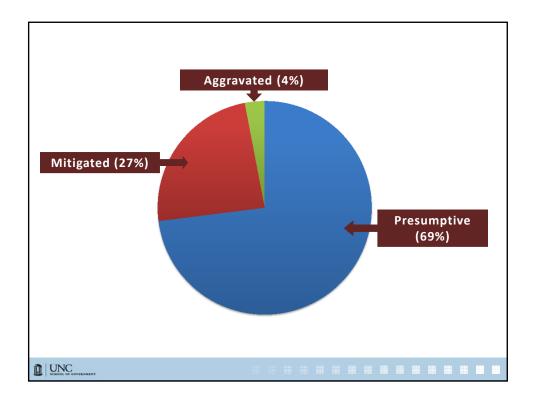
15 points → Level V



#### **Aggravating Factors**







#### **Aggravating Factors**

- Must be proved to jury or admitted to by defendant
- Burden of proof on State (beyond reasonable doubt)
- Statutory agg. factors need not be pled
- Nonstatutory (ad hoc) agg. factors must be pled
- State must provide notice of intent to prove aggravators 30 days before trial (unless waived)

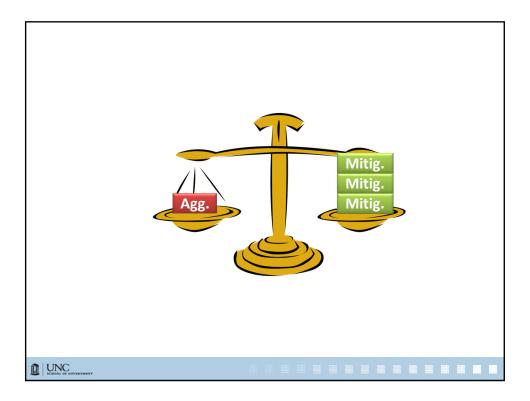




#### **Mitigating Factors**

- Found by the court (no jury finding required)
- Burden of proof on the defendant (preponderance of the evidence)



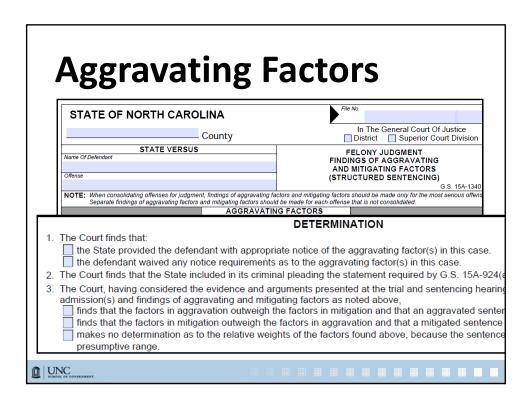




#### **Aggravating and Mitigating Factors**

- Balance aggravators vs. mitigators is in the court's discretion
  - Not a mathematical balance
- Decision to depart from presumptive range is in the discretion of the court
- If you depart from the presumptive, you MUST make written findings of agg./mitig. factors





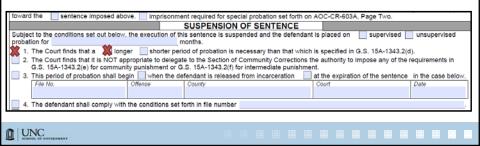


# Probationary Judgments



#### **Period of Probation**

- Default periods for felonies
  - Community: Not less than 12 nor more than 30
  - Intermediate: Not less than 18 nor more than 36
- May be longer/shorter if court makes findings
- Maximum length (with findings) is 60 months





#### **Intermediate Punishment**

#### Offense before 12/1/11 Offense on/after 12/1/11

- Supervised probation that MUST include:
  - Special probation
  - Intensive supervision
  - Residential program
  - Electronic house arrest
  - Day reporting center
  - Drug treatment court

- Supervised probation that MAY include:
  - Special probation
  - Drug treatment court
  - "Community and Intermediate conditions"



# Advanced Supervised Release (ASR)

- Early release program for certain inmates
- Eligible inmates released on "ASR date" if they complete "risk reduction incentives" in DOC
- Sentencing court and prosecutor are gatekeepers
  - No ASR unless court-ordered at sentencing
  - No ASR if prosecutor objects





#### **ASR Eligibility**

- Active sentences
  - Class D, I-III
  - Class E, I-IV
  - Class F, I-V
  - Class G, I-VI
  - Class H, I-VI

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# Advanced Supervised Release (ASR)

- ASR date is:
  - Lowest mitigated minimum sentence the defendant could have received
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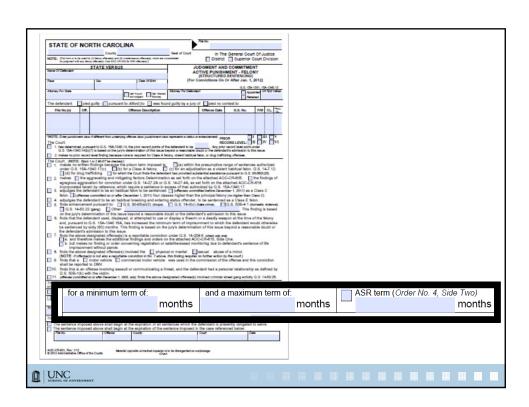




After January 1, a Prior Record Level III defendant pleads guilty to a Class H felony. The plea agreement calls for a sentence at the top of the presumptive range and admission to the ASR program. What is the sentence, including the ASR date?

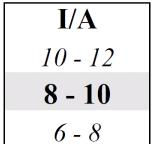
I/A
10 - 12
8 - 10
6 - 8

10-21 months
ASR date: 6 months

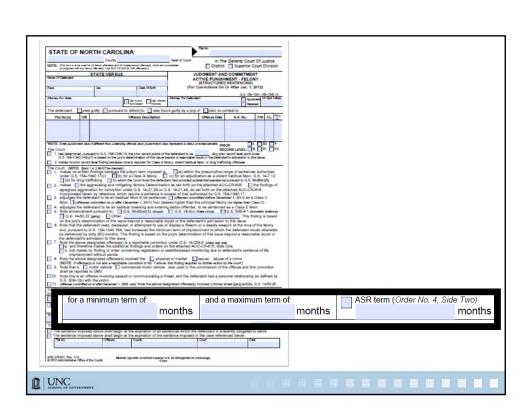




After January 1, a Prior Record Level III defendant pleads guilty to a Class H felony. The plea agreement calls for a sentence at the bottom of the mitigated range and admission to the ASR program. What is the sentence, including the ASR date?



6-17 months
ASR date: 4.8 months





#### **ASR Eligibility**

Pleas and findings of guilt on or after January 1, 2012

