



CONNECTICUT TEENAGE SEXTING LAW

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RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

Child Pornography

By law, "child pornography" is any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a person younger than age 16. It may include a photograph, film, videotape, or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, digital, mechanical, or other method ([CGS § 53a-193\(13\)](#)).

Electronic Communication Device

An "electronic communication device" is any electronic device that can transmit a visual depiction, including a computer, computer network, computer system, or cellular phone ([CGS § 53a-196h\(b\)](#)).

ISSUE

Does Connecticut have a law about teenagers who send sexually explicit images via an electronic device (i.e., "sexting")? Are there any legal repercussions for teenagers who are caught "sexting"?

SUMMARY

Connecticut has a law that makes sexting between certain teenagers a crime. This law addresses sexting between senders of child pornography, ages 13 to 15 years old, and recipients, ages 13 to 17 years old ([CGS § 53a-196h](#)).

The sexting law does not address situations in which the (1) image transmitted from the sender to the recipient is subsequently sent by the recipient to a larger audience or (2) sender or recipient's age is outside of the ranges provided above. Depending on the circumstances, these situations may fall under the adult child pornography laws, which are felony crimes.

TEENAGE SEXTING LAW

Connecticut law punishes both the teenage sender of a "sexting" for electronically transmitting child pornography and the receiver for possessing it.

A teenager breaks this law if he or she is (1) age 13 to 15 and knowingly and voluntarily sends an image of him or herself that is considered child pornography using an electronic communication device or (2) age 13 to 17 and knowingly possesses this image.



LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS FOR VIOLATING CGS § 53A-196H

Violation of the teenage sexting law is a class A misdemeanor, ordinarily punishable by up to one year in prison, a fine of up to \$2,000, or both. Teenage violators, however, are generally prosecuted through the juvenile justice system, thus receiving punishments appropriate for juvenile delinquents. This may include, among other things, a warning, fine, probation, or commitment to Department of Children and Families custody for up to 18 months with a possible extension.

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