

**609.498 TAMPERING WITH WITNESS.**

Subdivision 1. **Tampering with witness in the first degree.** Whoever does any of the following is guilty of tampering with a witness in the first degree and may be sentenced as provided in subdivision 1a:

(a) intentionally prevents or dissuades or intentionally attempts to prevent or dissuade by means of force or threats of injury to any person or property, a person who is or may become a witness from attending or testifying at any trial, proceeding, or inquiry authorized by law;

(b) by means of force or threats of injury to any person or property, intentionally coerces or attempts to coerce a person who is or may become a witness to testify falsely at any trial, proceeding, or inquiry authorized by law;

(c) intentionally causes injury or threatens to cause injury to any person or property in retaliation against a person who was summoned as a witness at any trial, proceeding, or inquiry authorized by law, within a year following that trial, proceeding, or inquiry or within a year following the actor's release from incarceration, whichever is later;

(d) intentionally prevents or dissuades or attempts to prevent or dissuade, by means of force or threats of injury to any person or property, a person from providing information to law enforcement authorities concerning a crime;

(e) by means of force or threats of injury to any person or property, intentionally coerces or attempts to coerce a person to provide false information concerning a crime to law enforcement authorities; or

(f) intentionally causes injury or threatens to cause injury to any person or property in retaliation against a person who has provided information to law enforcement authorities concerning a crime within a year of that person providing the information or within a year of the actor's release from incarceration, whichever is later.

Subd. 1a. **Penalty.** Whoever violates subdivision 1 may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than five years or to payment of a fine not to exceed \$10,000.

Subd. 1b. **Aggravated first-degree witness tampering.** (a) A person is guilty of aggravated first-degree witness tampering if the person causes or, by means of an implicit or explicit credible threat, threatens to cause great bodily harm or death to another in the course of committing any of the following acts intentionally:

(1) preventing or dissuading or attempting to prevent or dissuade a person who is or may become a witness from attending or testifying at any criminal trial or proceeding;

(2) coercing or attempting to coerce a person who is or may become a witness to testify falsely at any criminal trial or proceeding;

(3) retaliating against a person who was summoned as a witness at any criminal trial or proceeding within a year following that trial or proceeding or within a year following the actor's release from incarceration, whichever is later;

(4) preventing or dissuading or attempting to prevent or dissuade a person from providing information to law enforcement authorities concerning a crime;

(5) coercing or attempting to coerce a person to provide false information concerning a crime to law enforcement authorities; or

(6) retaliating against any person who has provided information to law enforcement authorities concerning a crime within a year of that person providing the information or within a year of the actor's release from incarceration, whichever is later.

(b) A person convicted of committing any act prohibited by paragraph (a) may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than 20 years or to payment of a fine of not more than \$30,000, or both.

**Subd. 2. Tampering with a witness in the second degree.** Whoever does any of the following is guilty of tampering with a witness in the second degree and may be sentenced as provided in subdivision 3:

(a) intentionally prevents or dissuades or intentionally attempts to prevent or dissuade by means of any act described in section 609.27, subdivision 1, clause (3), (4), or (5), a person who is or may become a witness from attending or testifying at any trial, proceeding, or inquiry authorized by law;

(b) by means of any act described in section 609.27, subdivision 1, clause (3), (4), or (5), intentionally coerces or attempts to coerce a person who is or may become a witness to testify falsely at any trial, proceeding, or inquiry authorized by law;

(c) intentionally prevents or dissuades or attempts to prevent or dissuade by means of any act described in section 609.27, subdivision 1, clause (3), (4), or (5), a person from providing information to law enforcement authorities concerning a crime; or

(d) by means of any act described in section 609.27, subdivision 1, clause (3), (4), or (5), intentionally coerces or attempts to coerce a person to provide false information concerning a crime to law enforcement authorities.

**Subd. 2a. Tampering with a witness in the third degree.** (a) Unless a greater penalty is applicable under subdivision 1, 1b, or 2, whoever does any of the following is guilty of tampering with a witness in the third degree and may be sentenced as provided in subdivision 3:

(1) intentionally prevents or dissuades or intentionally attempts to prevent or dissuade by means of intimidation, a person who is or may become a witness from attending or testifying at any trial, proceeding, or inquiry authorized by law;

(2) by means of intimidation, intentionally influences or attempts to influence a person who is or may become a witness to testify falsely at any trial, proceeding, or inquiry authorized by law;

(3) intentionally prevents or dissuades or attempts to prevent or dissuade by means of intimidation, a person from providing information to law enforcement authorities concerning a crime; or

(4) by means of intimidation, intentionally influences or attempts to influence a person to provide false information concerning a crime to law enforcement authorities.

(b) In a prosecution under this subdivision, proof of intimidation may be based on a specific act or on the totality of the circumstances.

**Subd. 3. Sentence.** (a) Whoever violates subdivision 2 is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

(b) Whoever violates subdivision 2a is guilty of a misdemeanor.

**Subd. 4. No bar to conviction.** Notwithstanding section 609.035 or 609.04, a prosecution for or conviction of the crime of aggravated first-degree witness tampering is not a bar to conviction of or punishment for any other crime.

**History:** *1976 c 178 s 1; 1983 c 262 art 2 s 6; 1984 c 628 art 3 s 11; 1987 c 194 s 1,2; 1995 c 244 s 18; 1997 c 239 art 3 s 15,16; 2010 c 299 s 6,7*