

PART H - SPECIFIC OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS

Introductory Commentary

The following policy statements address the relevance of certain offender characteristics to the determination of whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range and, in certain cases, to the determination of a sentence within the applicable guideline range. Under 28 U.S.C. § 994(d), the Commission is directed to consider whether certain specific offender characteristics "have any relevance to the nature, extent, place of service, or other incidents of an appropriate sentence" and to take them into account only to the extent they are determined to be relevant by the Commission.

The Commission has determined that certain factors are not ordinarily relevant to the determination of whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range. Unless expressly stated, this does not mean that the Commission views such factors as necessarily inappropriate to the determination of the sentence within the applicable guideline range or to the determination of various other incidents of an appropriate sentence (e.g., the appropriate conditions of probation or supervised release). Furthermore, although these factors are not ordinarily relevant to the determination of whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range, they may be relevant to this determination in exceptional cases. See §5K2.0 (Grounds for Departure).

In addition, 28 U.S.C. § 994(e) requires the Commission to assure that its guidelines and policy statements reflect the general inappropriateness of considering the defendant's education, vocational skills, employment record, family ties and responsibilities, and community ties in determining whether a term of imprisonment should be imposed or the length of a term of imprisonment.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1990 (see Appendix C, amendment 357); November 1, 1991 (see Appendix C, amendment 386); November 1, 1994 (see Appendix C, amendment 508).

§5H1.1. Age (Policy Statement)

Age (including youth) is not ordinarily relevant in determining whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range. Age may be a reason to impose a sentence below the applicable guideline range when the defendant is elderly and infirm and where a form of punishment such as home confinement might be equally efficient as and less costly than incarceration. Physical condition, which may be related to age, is addressed at §5H1.4 (Physical Condition, Including Drug or Alcohol Dependence or Abuse).

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1991 (see Appendix C, amendment 386); November 1, 1993 (see Appendix C, amendment 475).

§5H1.2. Education and Vocational Skills (Policy Statement)

Education and vocational skills are not ordinarily relevant in determining whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range, but the extent to which a defendant may have misused special training or education to facilitate criminal activity is an express guideline factor. See §3B1.3 (Abuse of Position of Trust or Use of Special Skill).

Education and vocational skills may be relevant in determining the conditions of probation or supervised release for rehabilitative purposes, for public protection by restricting activities that allow for the utilization of a certain skill, or in determining the appropriate type of community service.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1991 (see Appendix C, amendment 386).

§5H1.3. Mental and Emotional Conditions (Policy Statement)

Mental and emotional conditions are not ordinarily relevant in determining whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range, except as provided in Chapter Five, Part K, Subpart 2 (Other Grounds for Departure).

Mental and emotional conditions may be relevant in determining the conditions of probation or supervised release; e.g., participation in a mental health program (see §§5B1.3(d)(5) and 5D1.3(d)(5)).

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1991 (see Appendix C, amendment 386); November 1, 1997 (see Appendix C, amendment 569).

§5H1.4. Physical Condition, Including Drug or Alcohol Dependence or Abuse (Policy Statement)

Physical condition or appearance, including physique, is not ordinarily relevant in determining whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range. However, an extraordinary physical impairment may be a reason to impose a sentence below the applicable guideline range; e.g., in the case of a seriously infirm defendant, home detention may be as efficient as, and less costly than, imprisonment.

Drug or alcohol dependence or abuse is not a reason for imposing a sentence below the guidelines. Substance abuse is highly correlated to an increased propensity to commit crime. Due to this increased risk, it is highly recommended that a defendant who is incarcerated also be sentenced to supervised release with a requirement that the defendant participate in an appropriate substance abuse program (see §5D1.3(d)(4)). If participation in a substance abuse program is required, the length of supervised release should take into account the length of time necessary for the supervisory body to judge the success of the program.

Similarly, where a defendant who is a substance abuser is sentenced to probation, it is strongly recommended that the conditions of probation contain a requirement that the defendant participate in an appropriate substance abuse program (see §5B1.3(d)(4)).

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1991 (see Appendix C, amendment 386); November 1, 1997 (see Appendix C, amendment 569).

§5H1.5. Employment Record (Policy Statement)

Employment record is not ordinarily relevant in determining whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range.

Employment record may be relevant in determining the conditions of probation or supervised release (e.g., the appropriate hours of home detention).

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1991 (see Appendix C, amendment 386).

§5H1.6. Family Ties and Responsibilities, and Community Ties (Policy Statement)

Family ties and responsibilities and community ties are not ordinarily relevant in determining whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range. **In sentencing a defendant convicted of an offense under section 1201 involving a minor victim, an offense under section 1591, or an offense under chapter 71, 109A, 110, or 117 of title 18, United States Code, family ties and responsibilities and community ties are not relevant in determining whether a sentence should be below the applicable guideline range.** Family responsibilities that are complied with may be relevant to the determination of the amount of restitution or fine.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1991 (see Appendix C, amendment 386).

§5H1.7. Role in the Offense (Policy Statement)

A defendant's role in the offense is relevant in determining the appropriate sentence. See Chapter Three, Part B (Role in the Offense).

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5H1.8. Criminal History (Policy Statement)

A defendant's criminal history is relevant in determining the appropriate sentence. See Chapter Four (Criminal History and Criminal Livelihood).

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5H1.9. Dependence upon Criminal Activity for a Livelihood (Policy Statement)

The degree to which a defendant depends upon criminal activity for a livelihood is relevant in determining the appropriate sentence. See Chapter Four, Part B (Career Offenders and Criminal Livelihood).

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5H1.10. Race, Sex, National Origin, Creed, Religion, and Socio-Economic Status (Policy Statement)

These factors are not relevant in the determination of a sentence.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5H1.11. Military, Civic, Charitable, or Public Service; Employment-Related Contributions; Record of Prior Good Works (Policy Statement)

Military, civic, charitable, or public service; employment-related contributions; and similar prior good works are not ordinarily relevant in determining whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1991 (see Appendix C, amendment 386).

§5H1.12. Lack of Guidance as a Youth and Similar Circumstances (Policy Statement)

Lack of guidance as a youth and similar circumstances indicating a disadvantaged upbringing are not relevant grounds for imposing a sentence outside the applicable guideline range.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1992 (see Appendix C, amendment 466).

§5K2.0. Grounds for Departure (Policy Statement)

(a) Downward Departures in Criminal Cases Other Than Child Crimes and Sexual Offenses. – Under 18 U.S.C. § 3553(b), the sentencing court may impose a sentence outside the range established by the applicable guidelines, if the court finds "that there exists an aggravating or mitigating circumstance of a kind, or to a degree, not adequately taken into consideration by the Sentencing Commission in formulating the guidelines that should result in a sentence different from that described." Circumstances that may warrant departure from the guideline range pursuant to this provision cannot, by their very nature, be comprehensively listed and analyzed in advance. The decision as to whether and to what extent departure is warranted rests with the sentencing court on a case-specific basis. Nonetheless, this subpart seeks to aid the court by identifying some of the factors that the Commission has not been able to take into account fully in formulating the

guidelines. Any case may involve factors in addition to those identified that have not been given adequate consideration by the Commission. Presence of any such factor may warrant departure from the guidelines, under some circumstances, in the discretion of the sentencing court. Similarly, the court may depart from the guidelines, even though the reason for departure is taken into consideration in determining the guideline range (e.g., as a specific offense characteristic or other adjustment), if the court determines that, in light of unusual circumstances, the weight attached to that factor under the guidelines is inadequate or excessive.

Where, for example, the applicable offense guideline and adjustments do take into consideration a factor listed in this subpart, departure from the applicable guideline range is warranted only if the factor is present to a degree substantially in excess of that which ordinarily is involved in the offense. Thus, disruption of a governmental function, §5K2.7, would have to be quite serious to warrant departure from the guidelines when the applicable offense guideline is bribery or obstruction of justice. When the theft offense guideline is applicable, however, and the theft caused disruption of a governmental function, departure from the applicable guideline range more readily would be appropriate. Similarly, physical injury would not warrant departure from the guidelines when the robbery offense guideline is applicable because the robbery guideline includes a specific adjustment based on the extent of any injury. However, because the robbery guideline does not deal with injury to more than one victim, departure would be warranted if several persons were injured.

Also, a factor may be listed as a specific offense characteristic under one guideline but not under all guidelines. Simply because it was not listed does not mean that there may not be circumstances when that factor would be relevant to sentencing. For example, the use of a weapon has been listed as a specific offense characteristic under many guidelines, but not under other guidelines. Therefore, if a weapon is a relevant factor to sentencing under one of these other guidelines, the court may depart for this reason. Finally, an offender characteristic or other circumstance that is, in the Commission's view, "not ordinarily relevant" in determining whether a sentence should be outside the applicable guideline range may be relevant to this determination if such characteristic or circumstance is present to an unusual degree and distinguishes the case from the "heartland" cases covered by the guidelines.

(b) Downward Departures in Child Crimes and Sexual Offenses.—Under 18 U.S.C. § 3553(b)(2), the sentencing court may impose a sentence below the range established by the applicable guidelines only if the court finds that there exists a mitigating circumstance of a kind, or to a degree, that —

(1) has been affirmatively and specifically identified as a permissible ground of downward departure in the sentencing guidelines or policy statements issued under section 994(a) of title 28, United States Code, taking account of any amendments to such sentencing guidelines or policy statements by act of Congress;

(2) has not adequately been taken into consideration by the sentencing Commission

in formulating the guidelines; and

(3) should result in a sentence different from that described.

The grounds enumerated in this Part K of chapter 5 are the sole grounds that have been affirmatively and specifically identified as a permissible ground of downward departure in these sentencing guidelines and policy statements. Thus, notwithstanding any other reference to authority to depart downward elsewhere in this Sentencing Manual, a ground of downward departure has not been affirmatively and specifically identified as a permissible ground of downward departure within the meaning of section 3553(b)(2) unless it is expressly enumerated in this Part K as a ground upon which a downward departure may be granted.

Commentary

The United States Supreme Court has determined that, in reviewing a district court's decision to depart from the guidelines, appellate courts are to apply an abuse of discretion standard, because the decision to depart embodies the traditional exercise of discretion by the sentencing court. Koon v. United States, 518 U.S. 81 (1996). Furthermore, "[b]efore a departure is permitted, certain aspects of the case must be found unusual enough for it to fall outside the heartland of cases in the Guideline. To resolve this question, the district court must make a refined assessment of the many facts bearing on the outcome, informed by its vantage point and day-to-day experience in criminal sentencing. Whether a given factor is present to a degree not adequately considered by the Commission, or whether a discouraged factor nonetheless justifies departure because it is present in some unusual or exceptional way, are matters determined in large part by comparison with the facts of other Guidelines cases. District Courts have an institutional advantage over appellate courts in making these sorts of determinations, especially as they see so many more Guidelines cases than appellate courts do." Id. at 98.

The last paragraph of this policy statement sets forth the conditions under which an offender characteristic or other circumstance that is not ordinarily relevant to a departure from the applicable guideline range may be relevant to this determination. The Commission does not foreclose the possibility of an extraordinary case that, because of a combination of such characteristics or circumstances, differs significantly from the "heartland" cases covered by the guidelines in a way that is important to the statutory purposes of sentencing, even though none of the characteristics or circumstances individually distinguishes the case. However, the Commission believes that such cases will be extremely rare.

In the absence of a characteristic or circumstance that distinguishes a case as sufficiently atypical to warrant a sentence different from that called for under the guidelines, a sentence outside the guideline range is not authorized. See 18 U.S.C. § 3553(b). For example, dissatisfaction with the available sentencing range or a preference for a different sentence than that authorized by the guidelines is not an appropriate basis for a sentence outside the applicable guideline range.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective June 15, 1988 (see Appendix C, amendment 57); November 1, 1990 (see Appendix C, amendment 358); November 1, 1994 (see Appendix C, amendment 508); November 1, 1997 (see Appendix C, amendment 561); November 1, 1998 (see Appendix C, amendment 585).

§5K2.1. Death (Policy Statement)

If death resulted, the court may increase the sentence above the authorized guideline range.

Loss of life does not automatically suggest a sentence at or near the statutory maximum. The sentencing judge must give consideration to matters that would normally distinguish among levels of homicide, such as the defendant's state of mind and the degree of planning or preparation. Other appropriate factors are whether multiple deaths resulted, and the means by which life was taken. The extent of the increase should depend on the dangerousness of the defendant's conduct, the extent to which death or serious injury was intended or knowingly risked, and the extent to which the offense level for the offense of conviction, as determined by the other Chapter Two guidelines, already reflects the risk of personal injury. For example, a substantial increase may be appropriate if the death was intended or knowingly risked or if the underlying offense was one for which base offense levels do not reflect an allowance for the risk of personal injury, such as fraud.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.2. Physical Injury (Policy Statement)

If significant physical injury resulted, the court may increase the sentence above the authorized guideline range. The extent of the increase ordinarily should depend on the extent of the injury, the degree to which it may prove permanent, and the extent to which the injury was intended or knowingly risked. When the victim suffers a major, permanent disability and when such injury was intentionally inflicted, a substantial departure may be appropriate. If the injury is less serious or if the defendant (though criminally negligent) did not knowingly create the risk of harm, a less substantial departure would be indicated. In general, the same considerations apply as in §5K2.1.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.3. Extreme Psychological Injury (Policy Statement)

If a victim or victims suffered psychological injury much more serious than that resulting from commission of the offense, the court may increase the sentence above the authorized guideline range. The extent of the increase ordinarily should depend on the severity of the psychological injury and the extent to which the injury was intended or knowingly risked.

Normally, psychological injury would be sufficiently severe to warrant application of this adjustment only when there is a substantial impairment of the intellectual, psychological, emotional, or behavioral functioning of a victim, when the impairment is likely to be of an extended or continuous

duration, and when the impairment manifests itself by physical or psychological symptoms or by changes in behavior patterns. The court should consider the extent to which such harm was likely, given the nature of the defendant's conduct.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.4. Abduction or Unlawful Restraint (Policy Statement)

If a person was abducted, taken hostage, or unlawfully restrained to facilitate commission of the offense or to facilitate the escape from the scene of the crime, the court may increase the sentence above the authorized guideline range.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.5. Property Damage or Loss (Policy Statement)

If the offense caused property damage or loss not taken into account within the guidelines, the court may increase the sentence above the authorized guideline range. The extent of the increase ordinarily should depend on the extent to which the harm was intended or knowingly risked and on the extent to which the harm to property is more serious than other harm caused or risked by the conduct relevant to the offense of conviction.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.6. Weapons and Dangerous Instrumentalities (Policy Statement)

If a weapon or dangerous instrumentality was used or possessed in the commission of the offense the court may increase the sentence above the authorized guideline range. The extent of the increase ordinarily should depend on the dangerousness of the weapon, the manner in which it was used, and the extent to which its use endangered others. The discharge of a firearm might warrant a substantial sentence increase.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.7. Disruption of Governmental Function (Policy Statement)

If the defendant's conduct resulted in a significant disruption of a governmental function, the court may increase the sentence above the authorized guideline range to reflect the nature and extent of the disruption and the importance of the governmental function affected. Departure from the guidelines ordinarily would not be justified when the offense of conviction is an offense such as bribery or obstruction of justice; in such cases interference with a governmental function is inherent in the offense, and unless the circumstances are unusual the guidelines will reflect the appropriate punishment for such interference.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.8. Extreme Conduct (Policy Statement)

If the defendant's conduct was unusually heinous, cruel, brutal, or degrading to the victim, the court may increase the sentence above the guideline range to reflect the nature of the conduct. Examples of extreme conduct include torture of a victim, gratuitous infliction of injury, or prolonging of pain or humiliation.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.9. Criminal Purpose (Policy Statement)

If the defendant committed the offense in order to facilitate or conceal the commission of another offense, the court may increase the sentence above the guideline range to reflect the actual seriousness of the defendant's conduct.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.10. Victim's Conduct (Policy Statement)

If the victim's wrongful conduct contributed significantly to provoking the offense behavior, the court may reduce the sentence below the guideline range to reflect the nature and circumstances of the offense. In deciding the extent of a sentence reduction, the court should consider:

- (a) the size and strength of the victim, or other relevant physical characteristics, in comparison with those of the defendant;
- (b) the persistence of the victim's conduct and any efforts by the defendant to prevent confrontation;
- (c) the danger reasonably perceived by the defendant, including the victim's reputation for violence;
- (d) the danger actually presented to the defendant by the victim; and
- (e) any other relevant conduct by the victim that substantially contributed to the danger presented.

Victim misconduct ordinarily would not be sufficient to warrant application of this provision in the context of offenses under Chapter Two, Part A.3 (Criminal Sexual Abuse). In addition, this provision usually would not be relevant in the context of non-violent offenses. There may, however, be unusual circumstances in which substantial victim misconduct would warrant a reduced penalty in the case of a non-violent offense. For example, an extended course of provocation and harassment might lead a defendant to steal or destroy property in retaliation.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.11. Lesser Harms (Policy Statement)

Sometimes, a defendant may commit a crime in order to avoid a perceived greater harm. In such instances, a reduced sentence may be appropriate, provided that the circumstances significantly diminish society's interest in punishing the conduct, for example, in the case of a mercy killing. Where the interest in punishment or deterrence is not reduced, a reduction in sentence is not warranted. For example, providing defense secrets to a hostile power should receive no lesser punishment simply because the defendant believed that the government's policies were misdirected.

In other instances, conduct may not cause or threaten the harm or evil sought to be prevented by the law proscribing the offense at issue. For example, where a war veteran possessed a machine gun or grenade as a trophy, or a school teacher possessed controlled substances for display in a drug education program, a reduced sentence might be warranted.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.12. Coercion and Duress (Policy Statement)

If the defendant committed the offense because of serious coercion, blackmail or duress, under circumstances not amounting to a complete defense, the court may decrease the sentence below the applicable guideline range. The extent of the decrease ordinarily should depend on the reasonableness of the defendant's actions and on the extent to which the conduct would have been less harmful under the circumstances as the defendant believed them to be. Ordinarily coercion will be sufficiently serious to warrant departure only when it involves a threat of physical injury, substantial damage to property or similar injury resulting from the unlawful action of a third party or from a natural emergency. The Commission considered the relevance of economic hardship and determined that personal financial difficulties and economic pressures upon a trade or business do not warrant a decrease in sentence.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.13. Diminished Capacity (Policy Statement)

A sentence below the applicable guideline range may be warranted if the defendant committed the offense while suffering from a significantly reduced mental capacity. However, the court may not depart below the applicable guideline range if (1) the significantly reduced mental capacity was caused by the voluntary use of drugs or other intoxicants; (2) the facts and circumstances of the defendant's offense indicate a need to protect the public because the offense involved actual violence or a serious threat of violence; ~~or~~ (3) the defendant's criminal history indicates a need to incarcerate the defendant to protect the public; ~~or~~ (4) the defendant has been convicted of an offense under chapter 71, 109A, 110, or 117 of title 18, United States Code. If a departure is warranted, the extent of the departure should reflect the extent to which the reduced mental capacity contributed to the commission of the offense.

Commentary

Application Note:

1. For purposes of this policy statement—

"Significantly reduced mental capacity" means the defendant, although convicted, has a significantly impaired ability to (A) understand the wrongfulness of the behavior comprising the offense or to exercise the power of reason; or (B) control behavior that the defendant knows is wrongful.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1998 (see Appendix C, amendment 583).

§5K2.14. Public Welfare (Policy Statement)

If national security, public health, or safety was significantly endangered, the court may increase the sentence above the guideline range to reflect the nature and circumstances of the offense.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1987.

§5K2.15. [Deleted]

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1989 (see Appendix C, amendment 292), was deleted effective November 1, 1995 (see Appendix C, amendment 526).

§5K2.16. Voluntary Disclosure of Offense (Policy Statement)

If the defendant voluntarily discloses to authorities the existence of, and accepts responsibility for, the offense prior to the discovery of such offense, and if such offense was unlikely to have been discovered otherwise, a departure below the applicable guideline range for that offense may be warranted. For example, a downward departure under this section might be considered where a defendant, motivated by remorse, discloses an offense that otherwise would have remained undiscovered. This provision does not apply where the motivating factor is the defendant's knowledge that discovery of the offense is likely or imminent, or where the defendant's disclosure occurs in connection with the investigation or prosecution of the defendant for related conduct.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1991 (see Appendix C, amendment 420).

§5K2.17. High-Capacity, Semiautomatic Firearms (Policy Statement)

If the defendant possessed a high-capacity, semiautomatic firearm in connection with a crime of violence or controlled substance offense, an upward departure may be warranted. A "high-capacity, semiautomatic firearm" means a semiautomatic firearm that has a magazine capacity of more than ten cartridges. The extent of any increase should depend upon the degree to which the nature of the weapon increased the likelihood of death or injury in the circumstances of the particular case.

Commentary

Application Note:

1. "Crime of violence" and "controlled substance offense" are defined in §4B1.2 (Definitions of Terms Used in Section 4B1.1).

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1995 (see Appendix C, amendment 531).

§5K2.18. Violent Street Gangs (Policy Statement)

If the defendant is subject to an enhanced sentence under 18 U.S.C. § 521 (pertaining to criminal street gangs), an upward departure may be warranted. The purpose of this departure provision is to enhance the sentences of defendants who participate in groups, clubs, organizations, or associations that use violence to further their ends. It is to be noted that there may be cases in which 18 U.S.C. § 521 applies, but no violence is established. In such cases, it is expected that the guidelines will account adequately for the conduct and, consequently, this departure provision would not apply.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 1995 (see Appendix C, amendment 532).

§5K2.19. Post-Sentencing Rehabilitative Efforts (Policy Statement)

Post-sentencing rehabilitative efforts, even if exceptional, undertaken by a defendant after imposition of a term of imprisonment for the instant offense are not an appropriate basis for a downward departure when resentencing the defendant for that offense. (Such efforts may provide a basis for early termination of supervised release under 18 U.S.C. § 3583(e)(1).)

Commentary

Background: The Commission has determined that post-sentencing rehabilitative measures should not provide a basis for downward departure when resentencing a defendant initially sentenced to a term of imprisonment because such a departure would (1) be inconsistent with the policies established by Congress under 18 U.S.C. § 3624(b) and other statutory provisions for reducing the time to be served by an imprisoned person; and (2) inequitably benefit only those who gain the opportunity to be resentenced de novo.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 2000 (see Appendix C, amendment 602).

§5K2.20. Aberrant Behavior (Policy Statement)

⚠ Except where a defendant is convicted of an offense under section 1201 involving a minor victim, an offense under section 1591, or an offense under chapter 71, 109A, 110, or 117 of title 18, United States Code, a sentence below the applicable guideline range may be warranted in an extraordinary case if the defendant's criminal conduct constituted aberrant behavior. However, the court may not depart below the guideline range on this basis if (1) the offense involved serious bodily injury or

death; (2) the defendant discharged a firearm or otherwise used a firearm or a dangerous weapon; (3) the instant offense of conviction is a serious drug trafficking offense; (4) the defendant has more than one criminal history point, as determined under Chapter Four (Criminal History and Criminal Livelihood); or (5) the defendant has a prior federal, or state, felony conviction, regardless of whether the conviction is countable under Chapter Four.

Commentary

Application Notes:

1. *For purposes of this policy statement—*

"Aberrant behavior" means a single criminal occurrence or single criminal transaction that (A) was committed without significant planning; (B) was of limited duration; and (C) represents a marked deviation by the defendant from an otherwise law-abiding life.

"Dangerous weapon," "firearm," "otherwise used," and "serious bodily injury" have the meaning given those terms in the Commentary to §1B1.1(Application Instructions).

"Serious drug trafficking offense" means any controlled substance offense under title 21, United States Code, other than simple possession under 21 U.S.C. § 844, that, because the defendant does not meet the criteria under §5C1.2 (Limitation on Applicability of Statutory Mandatory Minimum Sentences in Certain Cases), results in the imposition of a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment upon the defendant.

2. *In determining whether the court should depart on the basis of aberrant behavior, the court may consider the defendant's (A) mental and emotional conditions; (B) employment record; (C) record of prior good works; (D) motivation for committing the offense; and (E) efforts to mitigate the effects of the offense.*

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 2000 (see Appendix C, amendment 603).

§5K2.21. Dismissed and Uncharged Conduct (Policy Statement)

The court may increase the sentence above the guideline range to reflect the actual seriousness of the offense based on conduct (1) underlying a charge dismissed as part of a plea agreement in the case, or underlying a potential charge not pursued in the case as part of a plea agreement or for any other reason; and (2) that did not enter into the determination of the applicable guideline range.

Historical Note: Effective November 1, 2000 (see Appendix C, amendment 604).

§5K2.22. Specific Offender Characteristics as Grounds for Downward Departure in Child Crime and Sexual Offenses (Policy Statement)

In sentencing a defendant convicted of an offense under section 1201 involving a minor victim, an offense under section 1591, or an offense under chapter 71, 109A, 110, or 117 of title 18, United States Code, age may be a reason to impose a sentence below the applicable guideline range only if and to the extent permitted in § 5H1.1.

An extraordinary physical impairment may be a reason to impose a sentence below the applicable guideline range only if and to the extent permitted by §5H1.4. Drug, alcohol, or gambling dependence or abuse is not a reason for imposing a sentence below the guidelines.