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NIBRS Coding Scenarios

Assaults

Issue: How do you know whether to code an assault as “13A – Aggravated Assault” or “13B – Simple Assault”. What is the difference?

Usually, the weapons used or the extent of the injury sustained will be the deciding factors in distinguishing “Aggravated” from “Simple” Assault. To be classified as an Aggravated Assault, the incident should involve a weapon and/or the victim should have received serious injury requiring medical attention.

Simple Assaults do not involve a weapon and the victim should have no injuries or only minor injuries. Included are offenses such as minor assault, hazing, assault and battery, and injury caused by culpable negligence. As with Aggravated Assault, there are no attempted Simple Assaults.

Definitions: The definition for “13A – Aggravated Assault”, according to the FBI, “An unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.”

The definition for “13B – Simple Assault” is “An unlawful attack by one person upon another person where neither the offender displays a weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.”

Example #1: A husband and wife had an argument. The wife later returned with a gun and shot her husband, attempting to kill him. The husband recovered. This would be coded as a “13A – Aggravated Assault”.

Example #2: A husband and wife had an argument. The wife slapped the husband across his face and punched him in the stomach. This would be coded as a “13B – Simple Assault”. Weapon Type would be “40 – Personal Weapons (i.e. hands, feet, teeth, etc.).

Reference: *Volume 1: Data Collection Guidelines, (blue cover), Pages 22-23.*

Note that the preceding gives general examples. It is not meant to be all inclusive. Coding is based on individual case circumstances. Please direct NIBRS questions to:



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