

**ASSAULT AND BATTERY BY MEANS OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON
ON A PREGNANT WOMAN**

**The defendant is charged with having committed (an intentional) (or)
(a reckless) assault and battery with a dangerous weapon upon
____ [the alleged victim] _____ when ____ [the alleged victim] _____ was pregnant and the defendant
knew, or had reason to know, that she was pregnant.**

G.L. c. 265, § 15A(c)(ii).

If the Commonwealth relies solely upon a theory of intentional assault and battery, continue with "I" below. If the Commonwealth relies on both theories, continue with both "I" and "II.A" below. If the Commonwealth relies solely upon a theory of reckless assault and battery, skip to "II.B." below.

**I. INTENTIONAL ASSAULT AND BATTERY WITH A DANGEROUS WEAPON
ON A PREGNANT WOMAN**

**In order to prove the defendant guilty of an intentional assault and
battery by means of a dangerous weapon on a pregnant woman, the
Commonwealth must prove five things beyond a reasonable doubt:**

***First:* That the defendant touched the person of ____ [the alleged victim] _____ ,
however slightly, without having any right or excuse for doing so;**

***Second:* That the defendant intended to touch ____ [the alleged victim] _____ ;**

Third: That the touching was done with a dangerous weapon;

Fourth: That [the alleged victim] was pregnant at the time of the alleged assault and battery; and

Fifth: That the defendant knew, or had reason to know, that [the alleged victim] was pregnant.

You should consider all the circumstances and any reasonable inferences which you draw from the evidence to determine whether the Commonwealth has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant knew or had reason to know that [the alleged victim] was pregnant.

Here the jury must be instructed on the definition of dangerous weapon from Instruction 6.300 (Assault and Battery by Means of a Dangerous Weapon).

If additional language on intent is appropriate. **As I just mentioned, to prove an intentional assault and battery, the Commonwealth must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant *intended to touch* [the alleged victim], in the sense that the defendant consciously and deliberately intended the touching to occur, and that the touching was not merely accidental or negligent. The Commonwealth is not required to prove that the**

defendant specifically intended to cause injury to [the alleged victim] .

**II. RECKLESS ASSAULT AND BATTERY WITH A DANGEROUS WEAPON
ON A PREGNANT WOMAN**

A. *Continue here if the jury is charged on both intentional and reckless conduct.* **There is a**

second way in which a person may commit the crime of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon on a pregnant woman. Instead of intentional conduct, it involves a reckless touching that results in bodily injury.

B. *Begin here if the jury is charged solely on reckless conduct.* **The defendant is (also)**

charged with having committed an assault and battery with a dangerous weapon upon a pregnant woman, [the alleged victim] , by reckless conduct, thereby causing bodily injury.

In order to prove the defendant guilty of having committed this offense, the Commonwealth must prove five things beyond a reasonable doubt:

***First:* That the defendant acted recklessly;**

***Second:* That the defendant's reckless conduct included an intentional act which resulted in bodily injury to [the alleged victim] ;**

***Third:* That the injury was inflicted by a dangerous weapon;**

***Fourth:* That [the alleged victim] was pregnant at the time of the alleged assault and battery; and**

***Fifth:* That the defendant knew, or had reason to know, that she was pregnant.**

It is not enough for the Commonwealth to prove that the defendant acted negligently — that is, acted in a way that a reasonably careful person would not. It must be shown that the defendant’s actions went beyond mere negligence and amounted to recklessness. The defendant acted recklessly if (he) (she) knew, or should have known, that such actions were very likely to cause substantial harm to someone, but (he) (she) ran that risk and went ahead anyway.

The defendant must have intended (his) (her) acts which resulted in the touching, in the sense that those acts did not happen accidentally. But it is not necessary that (he) (she) intended to injure or strike the alleged victim, or that (he) (she) foresaw the harm that resulted. If the defendant actually realized in advance that (his) (her) conduct was very likely to cause substantial injury and decided to run that risk, such conduct would of course be reckless. But even if (he) (she) was not conscious of the serious danger that was inherent in such conduct, it is still reckless conduct if a

reasonable person, under the circumstances as they were known to the defendant, would have recognized that such actions were so dangerous that it was very likely that they would result in substantial injury.

Here the jury must be instructed on "Accident" (Instruction 9.100) if the issue of accident is raised by the evidence.

The Commonwealth must prove the injury was sufficiently serious to interfere with the alleged victim's health or comfort. It need not be permanent, but it must be more than trifling. For example, an act that only shakes up a person or causes only momentary discomfort would not be sufficient.

Here, if not previously done, the jury must be instructed on the definition of dangerous weapon from Instruction 6.300 (Assault and Battery by Means of a Dangerous Weapon).

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

Victim injured while escaping. As I mentioned earlier, the defendant's touching must have directly caused [alleged victim's] injury or must have directly and substantially set in motion a chain of events that produced the injury in a natural and continuous sequence. You have heard some evidence

suggesting that [alleged victim] was injured while escaping from [place]. To establish that element of the offense — that the defendant caused the injury which occurred as a result of the escape — the Commonwealth must prove beyond a reasonable doubt: (1) that [the alleged victim] was pregnant at the time; (2) that the defendant knew, or had reason to know, that [the alleged victim] was pregnant; (3) that the defendant caused [the alleged victim] reasonably to fear an immediate attack from the defendant; (4) that this fear led her to try to (escape) (or) (defend herself) from the defendant; and (5) that a dangerous weapon caused more than a trifling bodily injury to [the alleged victim] from or during that attempt to (escape) (or) (defend).

Commonwealth v. Parker, 25 Mass. App. Ct. 727, 522 N.E.2d 2 (1988).

Here the jury must be instructed on “Accident” (Instruction 9.100) if the issue of accident is supported by the evidence.

See Instruction 6.300 (Assault and Battery by Means of a Dangerous Weapon) for additional notes.