

Ala. Code 1975, § 13A-9-4

Forgery IV

The defendant is charged with forgery in the fourth degree.

A person commits the crime of forgery in the fourth degree if, with intent to defraud, he/she falsely makes, completes or alters a written instrument.

To convict, the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt each of the following elements:

- (1) The defendant falsely made, completed or altered a written instrument, **[describe instrument]; (AND)**
- (2) The defendant acted with intent to defraud.

[Read as appropriate]: To *falsely make* a written instrument means to make or draw a complete written instrument in its entirety, or an incomplete written instrument, which purports to be authentic creation of its ostensible maker, but which is not either because the ostensible maker is fictitious or because, if real, he/she did not authorize the making or drawing thereof. [13A-9-1(4)]

[Read as appropriate]: To *falsely complete* a written instrument means to transform, by adding, inserting or changing matter, an incomplete written instrument into a complete one, without lawful authority, so that the completed written instrument falsely appears or purports to be in all respects an authentic creation of its ostensible maker or authorized by him/her. [13A-9-1(5)]

[Read as appropriate]: To *falsely alter* a written instrument means to change, without lawful authority, a written instrument, whether complete or incomplete, by means of erasure, obliteration, deletion, addition or transportation of matter, or in any other manner, so that the instrument so changed falsely appears or purports to be in all respects an authentic creation of its ostensible maker or authorized by him/her. [13A-9-1(6)]

A *written instrument* means **[Read as appropriate]:**

- a. Any paper, document or other instrument containing written or printed matter or its equivalent; **(OR)**
- b. Any token, stamp, seal, badge, trademark or other evidence or symbol of value, right, privilege or identification;

which is capable of being used to the advantage or disadvantage of some person. [13A-9-1(1)]

A *complete written instrument* is one which purports to be a genuine written instrument fully drawn with respect to every essential feature thereof. [13A-9-1(2)]

An *incomplete written instrument* is one which contains some matter by way of content or authentication, but which requires additional matter in order to render it a complete written instrument. [13A-9-1(3)]

Intent to defraud is a purpose to use deception, or to injure another person's interest which has value. [13A-9-1(8)]

[Read as appropriate]: *Deception* occurs when a person knowingly:

- a. Creates or confirms another's impression which is false and which the defendant does not believe to be true; or
- b. Fails to correct a false impression which the defendant previously has created or confirmed; or
- c. Fails to correct a false impression when the defendant is under duty to do so; or
- d. Prevents another from acquiring information pertinent to the disposition of the property involved; or
- e. Sells or otherwise transfers or encumbers property, failing to disclose a lien, adverse claim, or other legal impediment to the enjoyment of the property when the defendant is under a duty to do so, whether that impediment is or is not valid, or is not a matter of official record; or
- f. Promises performance which the defendant does not intend to perform or knows will not be performed. Failure to perform, standing alone, however, is not proof that the defendant did not intend to perform.

The term *deception* does not, however, include falsity as to matters having no pecuniary significance, or puffing by statements unlikely to deceive ordinary persons. "Puffing" means an exaggerated commendation of wares or services. [13A-8-1(1)]

[Read as appropriate]: *Value* is the market value of the property at the time and place of the criminal act. Whether or not they have been issued or delivered, certain written instruments, not including those having a readily ascertainable market value such as some public and corporate bonds and securities shall be evaluated as follows:

- a. The value of an instrument constituting as evidence of debt, such as a check, draft, or promissory note, shall be deemed the amount due or collectible thereon or thereby, that figure ordinarily being the face amount of the indebtedness less any portion thereof which has been satisfied.
- b. The value of any other instrument that creates, releases, discharges, or otherwise affects any valuable legal right, privilege, or obligation shall be deemed the greatest amount of economic loss which the owner of the instrument might reasonably suffer by virtue of the loss of the instrument.

When the value of property cannot be ascertained pursuant to the standards set forth above, its value shall be deemed to be an amount not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500).

Amounts involved in thefts committed pursuant to one scheme or course of conduct, whether from the same person or several persons, may be aggregated in determining the grade of the offense; provided, that only one conviction may be had and only one sentence enforced for all thefts included in such aggregate. [13A-8-1(14)]

If you find from the evidence that the State has proved beyond a reasonable doubt each of the elements of the offense of forgery in the fourth degree, then you shall find the defendant guilty of forgery in the fourth degree.

If you find that the State has failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt any one or more of the elements of the offense of forgery in the fourth degree, then you cannot find the defendant guilty of forgery in the fourth degree.

[If lesser-included offenses are included, the Court should instruct on these offenses at this point.]

[Approved 6-17-16.]