

Chapter 10.00

FRAUD OFFENSES

Introduction to Fraud Instructions

The pattern instructions cover fraud offenses with five elements instructions:

Instruction 10.01 Mail Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1341);
Instruction 10.02 Wire Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1343);
Instruction 10.03A Bank Fraud – Scheme to Defraud a Bank (18 U.S.C. § 1344(1));
Instruction 10.03B Bank Fraud – Scheme to Obtain Bank Property by Means of False or
Fraudulent Representations (18 U.S.C. § 1344(2)); and
Instruction 10.05 Health Care Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1347).

In addition, Instruction 10.04 covers the good faith defense.

The elements of mail and wire fraud are similar except for the jurisdictional elements. The Committee drafted separate instructions for the two offenses as the most efficient way to reflect the different jurisdictional bases. Beyond the jurisdictional bases, the mail and wire fraud offenses are read in tandem and case law on the two is largely interchangeable. See *Carpenter v. United States*, 484 U.S. 19, 25 n.6 (1987) (“The mail and wire fraud statutes share the same language in relevant part, and accordingly we apply the same analysis to both sets of offenses here.”); *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 486 n.1 (6th Cir. 2003); *Hofstetter v. Fletcher*, 905 F.2d 897, 902 (6th Cir. 1988) (“This court has held that the wire fraud statutory language should be interpreted with the same breadth as the analogous language in the mail fraud statute.”) (citations omitted).

The crime of bank fraud is distinguishable from mail and wire fraud. The two numbered clauses in the bank fraud statute have “separate meanings.” *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384, 2391 (2014). Instructions 10.03A Bank Fraud – Scheme to Defraud a Bank (18 U.S.C. § 1344(1)) and 10.03B Bank Fraud – Scheme to Obtain Bank Property by Means of False or Fraudulent Representations (18 U.S.C. § 1344(2)) reflect these different clauses.

These instructions do not cover fraud based on a deprivation of the intangible right to honest services as provided in 18 U.S.C. § 1346.

10.01 MAIL FRAUD (18 U.S.C. § 1341)

(1) Count ____ of the indictment charges the defendant with mail fraud. For you to find the defendant guilty of mail fraud, you must find that the government has proved each and every one of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

(A) First, that the defendant [knowingly participated in] [devised] [intended to devise] a scheme to defraud in order to deprive another of money or property, that is _____ [*describe scheme from indictment*];

(B) Second, that the scheme included a material misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact;

(C) Third, that the defendant had the intent to defraud; and

(D) Fourth, that the defendant [used the mail] [caused another to use the mail] in furtherance of the scheme.

(2) Now I will give you more detailed instructions on some of these terms.

(A) A “scheme to defraud” includes any plan or course of action by which someone intends to deprive another of money or property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises.

(B) The term “false or fraudulent pretenses, representations or promises” means any false statements or assertions that concern a material aspect of the matter in question, that were either known to be untrue when made or made with reckless indifference to their truth. They include actual, direct false statements as well as half-truths and the knowing concealment of material facts.

(C) An act is “knowingly” done if done voluntarily and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.

(D) A misrepresentation or concealment is “material” if it has a natural tendency to influence or is capable of influencing the decision of a person of ordinary prudence and comprehension.

(E) To act with “intent to defraud” means to act with an intent to deceive or cheat for the purpose of depriving another of money or property.

(F) To “cause” the mail to be used is to do an act with knowledge that the use of the mail will follow in the ordinary course of business or where such use can reasonably be foreseen.

(3) [It is not necessary that the government prove [all of the details alleged concerning the precise nature and purpose of the scheme] [that the material transmitted by mail was itself false

or fraudulent] [that the alleged scheme actually succeeded in defrauding anyone] [that the use of the mail was intended as the specific or exclusive means of accomplishing the alleged fraud] [that someone relied on the misrepresentation or false statement] [that the defendant obtained money or property for his own benefit].]

(4) If you are convinced that the government has proved all of the elements, say so by returning a guilty verdict on this charge. If you have a reasonable doubt about any one of the elements, then you must find the defendant not guilty of this charge.

Use Note

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1341 that relates to a major disaster or affects a financial institution, the maximum penalty is increased; the court should modify the instruction and consider using special verdict forms like those included with Instructions 14.07(A) and (B).

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1341 in connection with telemarketing, the maximum penalty is increased under 18 U.S.C. § 2326. Because the jury must unanimously agree on any fact (other than a prior conviction) that increases the maximum penalty, the telemarketing must be proved to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt. *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). In this situation, the Committee recommends that the court give an instruction like Instruction 14.07(A) or (B) and use a special verdict form like those following Instructions 14.07(A) and (B).

Throughout the instruction, the word “mail” should be replaced by the term “private or commercial interstate carrier” if the facts warrant.

Paragraph (1)(D) should be amended to include the receipt of mail if the facts warrant.

In paragraph (2)(D), the word “person” should be replaced with entity or corporation or agency if the facts warrant. Also, if the prosecution’s theory of fraud is based on concealment of required reports, the court should consider instructing that a failure to file required reports may be a material omission. This provision is discussed in the commentary below.

The provisions of paragraph (3) should be used only if relevant.

See also Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance.

If there is any evidence at all of good faith, the court should refer to Instruction 10.04 Fraud – Good Faith Defense.

Brackets indicate options for the court. Brackets with italics are notes to the court.

The mail fraud statute provides:

18 U.S.C. § 1341 Frauds and swindles

Whoever, having devised or intending to devise any scheme or artifice to defraud, or for obtaining money or property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises, or to sell, dispose of, loan, exchange, alter, give away, distribute, supply, or furnish or procure for unlawful use any counterfeit or spurious coin, obligation, security, or other article, or anything represented to be or intimated or held out to be such counterfeit or spurious article, for the purpose of executing such scheme or artifice or attempting so to do, places in any post office or authorized depository for mail matter, any matter or thing whatever to be sent or delivered by the Postal Service, or deposits or causes to be deposited any matter or thing whatever to be sent or delivered by any private or commercial interstate carrier, or takes or receives therefrom, any such matter or thing, or knowingly causes to be delivered by mail or such carrier according to the direction thereon, or at the place at which it is directed to be delivered by the person to whom it is addressed, any such matter or thing, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both. If the violation occurs in relation to, or involving any benefit authorized, transported, transmitted, transferred, disbursed, or paid in connection with, a presidentially declared major disaster or emergency (as those terms are defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122)), or affects a financial institution, such person shall be fined not more than \$ 1,000,000 or imprisoned not more than 30 years, or both.

This instruction does not cover mail fraud based on a deprivation of the intangible right to honest services as provided in 18 U.S.C. § 1346.

The elements of mail fraud in paragraph (1) are based on the statute and case law. In paragraph (1)(A), the terms “devised,” “intended to devise” and “scheme to defraud” are drawn from the statute. The term “knowingly participated in” is based on *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 487 (6th Cir. 2003); *United States v. Gold Unlimited, Inc.*, 177 F.3d 472, 478 (6th Cir. 1999); *United States v. DeSantis*, 134 F.3d 760, 764 (6th Cir. 1998); and *United States v. Frost*, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997). This term is discussed further below. The phrase “deprive another of money or property” is based on numerous Supreme Court and Sixth Circuit cases. In the Supreme Court, *see Ciminelli v. United States*, 143 S. Ct. 1121, 1124 (2023) (holding that the “right to control” theory is not a valid basis for mail and wire fraud liability because potentially valuable economic information necessary to make discretionary economic decisions is not a traditional property interest); *Cleveland v. United States*, 121 S. Ct. 365, 379 (2000) (*quoting McNally v. United States*, 107 S. Ct. 2875, 2880 (1987)); and *Carpenter v. United States*, 108 S. Ct. 316, 321 (1987). In the Sixth Circuit, *see, e.g., United States v. Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (*quoting United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 580-81 (6th Cir. 2010)); and *United States v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 957-58 (6th Cir. 2013). This phrase requiring

“money or property” is discussed further below.

In paragraph (1)(B), the element that the scheme included a material misrepresentation or concealment is based on *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 16 (1999) (*quoting* *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995)) and *Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 448 (6th Cir. 2019).

In paragraph (1)(C), the element that the defendant had the “intent to defraud” is drawn from *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 487 (6th Cir. 2003) (referring to “the requisite intent to defraud”); *United States v. Gold Unlimited, Inc.*, 177 F.3d 472, 478 (6th Cir. 1999); *United States v. Frost*, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997); *United States v. Smith*, 39 F.3d 119, 122 (6th Cir. 1994); and *United States v. Stull*, 743 F.2d 439, 442 (6th Cir. 1984).

In paragraph (1)(D), the jurisdictional element that the defendant used the mail in furtherance of the scheme is based on the statute and *Schmuck v. United States*, 489 U.S. 705, 710 (1989). *See also* *United States v. Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (requiring that defendant used or caused to be used an interstate wire communication or the United States mail in furtherance of the scheme); *United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 581 (stating that an element of wire fraud is that defendant used or caused to be used an interstate wire communication in furtherance of the scheme); *United States v. Prince*, 214 F.3d 740, 748 (6th Cir. 2000) (same).

The definition of “scheme to defraud” in paragraph (2)(A) was quoted with approval in *United States v. Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (*quoting* *United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 581 (6th Cir. 2010)). In *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 486 (6th Cir. 2003), the court elaborated, “The scheme to defraud element required under 18 U.S.C. § 1341 is not defined according to a technical standard. The standard is a ‘reflection of moral uprightness, of fundamental honesty, fair play and right dealing in the general and business life of members of society.’” *Daniel, id.* (cleaned up), *quoting* *United States v. Van Dyke*, 605 F.2d 220, 225 (6th Cir. 1979). A pyramid scheme is a scheme to defraud. *See* *United States v. Gold Unlimited, Inc.*, 177 F.3d 472, 484-85 (6th Cir. 1999).

In paragraph (2)(B), the definition of “false or fraudulent pretenses, representations or promises” is supported by *United States v. Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 443-444 (6th Cir. 2019) *citing* *United States v. Kurlemann*, 736 F.3d 439, 445, 446 (6th Cir. 2013). The *Kurlemann* court quoted the complete definition in paragraph (2)(B) with approval for the offense of mail fraud in a case based on false statements to a lending institution under § 1014. *See Kurlemann* at 449. The phrase “reckless indifference to the[] truth” in the instruction is further supported by *Kennedy*, 714 F.3d at 958 (“The government met the mail- and wire-fraud statutes’ intent requirements through proof that K. Kennedy was reckless in his disregard for the truth of the statements that he made to victims to obtain their money.”) (citations omitted). The reference to “concealment of material facts” at the end of paragraph (2)(B) is supported by *Maddux*, where the court stated that, “Specifically, for purposes of the fraud statutes, fraudulent pretenses or representations can include ‘concealment’ – where one says nothing ‘but has a duty to speak.’” *Maddux* at 443-444, *quoting Kurlemann and citing, inter alia*, *Pasquantino v. United States*, 544 U.S. 349, 357 (2005) and *United States v. Perry*, 757 F.3d 166, 176 (4th Cir. 2014)). The *Maddux* court concluded that the indictment sufficiently alleged a conspiracy to commit mail and

wire fraud where it alleged the defendants had a duty to file reports under the Jenkins Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 376(a) and 377, and failed to do so. *Maddux* at 441, 444, 445.

The definition of “knowingly” in paragraph (2)(C) (“An act is done knowingly if it is done voluntarily and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.”) is drawn from the jury instructions given in *United States v. McGuire*, 744 F.2d 1197, 1201 (6th Cir. 1984) with one modification. The full definition of knowingly in *McGuire* stated, “An act is ‘knowingly’ done if done voluntarily *and intentionally*, and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.” (emphasis added). This instruction on mail fraud deletes the italicized words referring to “intentionally” to avoid confusion with the mens rea element of intent to defraud stated in paragraph (1)(C). Another possible definition of knowingly is, “An act is done knowingly if it is done with awareness, understanding or consciousness.” See *Arthur Andersen v. United States*, 125 S.Ct. 2129, 2135-36 (2005) (quoting “[K]nowledge’ and ‘knowingly’ are normally associated with awareness, understanding, or consciousness.”) (citations omitted) (construing term “knowingly” in 18 U.S.C. § 1512).

In paragraph (2)(D), the definition of “material” is based on *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 16 (1999) (quoting *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995)) and *Maddux*, 917 F.3d at 448 (characterizing this definition as “fine”). The definition of materiality for concealment cases is discussed further below.

The “intent to defraud” definition in paragraph (2)(E) requires the defendant to intend both to deceive or cheat another and to deprive him of money or property. The “intent to deprive” another of money or property is, as noted above, based on many Supreme Court and Sixth Circuit cases. Supreme Court cases include *Cleveland v. United States*, 121 S. Ct. 365, 379 (2000) (“Reviewing the history of § 1341, we concluded that ‘the original impetus behind the mail fraud statute was to protect the people from schemes to deprive them of their money or property.’” (quoting *McNally v. United States*, 107 S.Ct. 2875, 2880 (1987))); *Carpenter v. United States*, 108 S. Ct. 316, 321 (1987) (“Sections 1341 and 1343 reach any scheme to deprive another of money or property”); see also *Shaw v. United States*, 137 S. Ct. 462, 469 (2016) (construing the phrase “scheme to defraud” in the bank fraud statute, § 1344(1) and stating, “The parties agree, as do we, that the scheme must be one to deceive the bank *and* deprive it of something of value.”).

Numerous Sixth Circuit cases also identify the intent to “deprive” another of money or property as an element of mail fraud. See *United States v. Turner*, 465 F.3d 667, 680 and note 18 (6th Cir. 2006) (mail fraud requires “intent to deprive a victim of money or property”); *United States v. Jamieson*, 427 F.3d 394, 402 (6th Cir. 2005) (scheme to defraud includes depriving someone else of money); *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 485-486, 488 (6th Cir. 2003) (scheme to defraud includes any plan to deprive another of money or property) (quoting *Gold Unlimited, Inc.*, 177 F.3d 472, 479 (6th Cir. 1999)); and *United States v. Prince*, 214 F.3d 740, 747-748 (6th Cir. 2000) (intent to deprive a victim of money or property is an element of wire fraud) (citing *United States v. Merklinger*, 16 F.3d 670, 678 (6th Cir. 1994) and *United States v. Ames Sintering Co.*, 927 F.2d 232, 234 (6th Cir. 1990)).

The mail and wire fraud statutes criminalize only schemes to deprive people of

“traditional property interests.” *See Ciminelli v. United States*, 143 S. Ct. 1121, 1124 (2023) (holding that the “right to control” theory is not a valid basis for mail and wire fraud liability because potentially valuable economic information necessary to make discretionary economic decisions is not a traditional property interest); *see also* the Supreme Court cases cited *supra*. As the Court noted in *Ciminelli*, this limit on liability to deprivations of money or property had been the law in the Sixth Circuit since 2014. *See Ciminelli*, 143 S. Ct. at 1127 note 3 (identifying two circuits which had expressly repudiated the right-to-control theory and citing *United States v. Sadler*, 750 F.3d 585, 590-592 (6th Cir. 2014), abrogated on other grounds, *Kousisis v. United States*, 2025 WL 1459593)). *See also Maddux*, 917 F.3d at 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (quoting *United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 580-81 (6th Cir. 2010)); and *U.S. v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 957-58 (6th Cir. 2013) (same). The instruction includes this limit to traditional property interests in several paragraphs by requiring “money or property,” *see* paragraphs (1)(A), (2)(A) and (2)(E).

The Sixth Circuit noted the requirement of the intent to “deprive” another of money or property in *Maddux*, 917 F.3d at 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (quoting *United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 580-81 (6th Cir. 2010)); *see also* *U.S. v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 957-58 (6th Cir. 2013) (same). *But cf.* *Kousisis v. United States*, 2025 WL 1459593 (May 22, 2025) (holding that a defendant violates the wire fraud statute by scheming to obtain a victim’s money or property regardless of whether he seeks to leave the victim economically worse off, resolving a circuit split and abrogating *United States v. Sadler*, 750 F.3d 585 (6th Cir. 2014)).

In describing the intent to defraud, the court has sometimes referred to the mens rea as the “specific” intent to defraud, *see, e.g., Daniel*, 329 F.3d at 487; *Frost*, 125 F.3d at 354 (“A defendant does not commit mail fraud unless he possesses the specific intent to deceive or defraud . . .”); *United States v. Smith*, 39 F.3d 119, 121-22 (6th Cir. 1994). The instruction omits the word “specific.” *See also* Committee Commentary to Instruction 2.07 Specific Intent.

The definition of “cause” in paragraph (2)(F) is based on *Frost*, 125 F.3d at 354 (*citing* *United States v. Oldfield*, 859 F.2d 392, 400 (6th Cir. 1988)).

Paragraph (3) lists some but not all items the government is not required to prove. Many pattern instructions include such a provision. This language is patterned after First Circuit Instruction 4.12; Fifth Circuit Instruction 2.59; Eighth Circuit Instruction 6.18.1341; and Eleventh Circuit Instruction 50.1. These provisions should be used only if relevant. The final bracketed provision, that the government need not prove that the defendant obtained money or property for his own benefit, is based on *United States v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 958 (6th Cir. 2013).

In paragraph (1)(A), the instruction provides that the defendant must have devised, intended to devise, or “knowingly participated” in a scheme to defraud. For participation, Sixth Circuit cases often describe the mental state as “knowing.” *See United States v. Sadler*, 750 F.3d 585, 590 (6th Cir. 2014) (“the government had to prove [defendant] knowingly used an interstate wire communication”), abrogated on other grounds, *Kousisis v. United States*, 2025 WL 1459593; *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 487 (6th Cir. 2003) (“defendant must knowingly make a material misrepresentation or knowingly omit a material fact”); *United States*

v. Gold Unlimited, Inc., 177 F.3d 472, 478 (6th Cir. 1999) (“defendant knowingly devised a scheme to defraud . . . with the intent to defraud”); United States v. DeSantis, 134 F.3d 760, 764 (6th Cir. 1998) (“defendant must knowingly make a material misrepresentation or knowingly omit a material fact”); United States v. Frost, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997) (it is a crime to “knowingly devise” a scheme to defraud; a scheme to defraud includes “knowing concealment of facts and information done with the intent to defraud”).

In contrast, some Sixth Circuit authority provides that the participation must be “willful.” See United States v. Maddux, 917 F.3d 437, 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (defendant “willfully participated in a scheme to defraud”); United States v. Kennedy, 714 F.3d 951, 957 (6th Cir. 2013) (same); United States v. Faulkenberry, 614 F.3d 573, 581 (6th Cir. 2010) (same) (citing United States v. Stull, 743 F.2d 439, 442 (6th Cir. 1984)). The instruction continues to use the term “knowing” rather than “willful” to describe the participation based on the weight of Sixth Circuit authority and to avoid any suggestion that knowledge of illegality is an element of mail fraud.

For the requirement that the scheme to defraud must deprive the victim of “money or property,” in *McNally v. United States*, 483 U.S. 350 (1987), the Court noted that based on the disjunctive phrasing of the mail fraud statute, which refers to “a scheme to defraud, or for obtaining money or property,” it was arguable that the two phrases should be construed independently. However, the Court then rejected this construction, explaining that the second phrase merely modifies the first. *McNally*, 483 U.S. at 358-59. In *Cleveland v. United States*, 531 U.S. 12 (2000), the Court reiterated this interpretation of the statute:

We reaffirm our reading of § 1341 in *McNally*. . . . Were the Government correct that the second phrase of § 1341 defines a separate offense, the statute would appear to arm federal prosecutors with power to police false statements in an enormous range of submissions to state and local authorities. . . . [W]e decline to attribute to § 1341 a purpose so encompassing where Congress has not made such a design clear.

Cleveland, 531 U.S. at 25-26. *Accord*, *Kelly v. United States*, 140 S. Ct. 1565, 1571 (2020) (describing the disjunctive language as a “unitary whole”).

In *Neder v. United States*, *supra* at 25, the Court held that materiality is an element of a “scheme or artifice to defraud” under mail, wire and bank fraud. Although this element is not found in a “natural reading” of the statute, the court relied on the rule of construction “‘[w]here Congress uses terms that have accumulated settled meaning under . . . the common law, a court must infer, unless the statute otherwise dictates, that Congress means to incorporate the established meaning of these terms.’” 527 U.S. at 21. At common law, the word “fraud” required proof of materiality. Because Congress did not indicate otherwise, the Court presumed that Congress intended to incorporate “materiality.”

The definition of materiality is as follows: “In general, a false statement is material if it has ‘a natural tendency to influence, or [is] capable of influencing, the decision of the decision making body to which it was addressed.’” *Neder* at 16, *quoting Gaudin*, 515 U.S. at 509.

In *Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 448-49 (6th Cir. 2019), the court reviewed an instruction defining materiality when the government's theory of fraud was based on concealment. The instruction provided:

A misrepresentation or concealment is ~~material~~ if it has a natural tendency to influence or is capable of influencing the decision of a person of ordinary prudence and comprehension. A material omission, such as a failure to file required reports, may constitute a misrepresentation or concealment under the Mail and Wire Fraud statutes.

The court concluded that, "By all accounts the first sentence of this instruction was fine." *Maddux* at 448. As for the second sentence, the court stated it did not rise to the level of plain error but implied that it was error because as a grammatical matter, it "tells the reader that such a failure is always material." *Maddux, id.* The court explained, "By way of contrast, the instruction would have been fine if it had said, 'A failure to file required reports may be a material omission.'" *Maddux, id.* This sentence suggested by the court is identified in the Use Note for cases involving fraud by omission of required reports.

As to whether the fraud must be capable of deceiving persons based on a subjective ("however gullible") standard or an objective ("person of ordinary prudence") standard, case law supports the objective standard provided in paragraph (2)(D) of the instruction. *See United States v. Petlechkov*, 922 F.3d 762, 766 (6th Cir. 2019) (*citing United States v. Jamieson*, 427 F.3d 394, 415-16 (6th Cir. 2005)).

The mail fraud and wire fraud statutes are interpreted the same except for the jurisdictional element. *Carpenter v. United States*, 484 U.S. 19, 25 n.6 (1987) ("The mail and wire fraud statutes share the same language in relevant part, and accordingly we apply the same analysis to both sets of offenses here."); *United States v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 958 (6th Cir. 2013) (*citing United States v. Bibby*, 752 F.2d 1116, 1126 (6th Cir. 1985)); *Hofstetter v. Fletcher*, 905 F.2d 897, 902 (6th Cir. 1988) ("This court has held that the wire fraud statutory language should be interpreted with the same breadth as the analogous language in the mail fraud statute.").

Jurisdiction for a mail fraud conviction requires the defendant to deposit, receive, or cause to be deposited any matter or thing to be sent or delivered by the United States Postal Service or any private or commercial interstate carrier for the purpose of executing a scheme to defraud. 18 U.S.C. § 1341.

As to the required connection between the scheme to defraud or obtain property and the use of the mails, the Supreme Court has stated: "The federal mail fraud statute does not purport to reach all frauds, but only those limited instances in which the use of the mails is a part of the execution of the fraud" *Schmuck v. United States*, 489 U.S. 705, 710 (1989). The Court explained: "To be a part of the execution of the fraud . . . the use of the mails need not be an essential element of the scheme. It is sufficient for the mailing to be 'incident to an essential part of the scheme,' or 'a step in [the] plot.'" *Schmuck*, 489 U.S. at 710 (internal citations and

quotation marks omitted). The Court then stated: “The relevant question at all times is whether the mailing is part of the execution of the scheme as conceived by the perpetrator at the time, regardless of whether the mailing later, through hindsight, may prove to have been counterproductive and return to haunt the perpetrator of the fraud.” *Id.* at 715.

A mail fraud conviction can be based on mailings that were legally required. As the court explains, “Further, ‘the mailings may be innocent or even legally necessary.’” *Frost*, 125 F.3d at 354, *quoting* *United States v. Oldfield*, 859 F.2d 392, 400 (6th Cir. 1988), *in turn quoting* *United States v. Decastris*, 798 F.2d 261, 263 (7th Cir. 1986).

It is not necessary that the defendant actually mail the material. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1341 (mail fraud committed where defendant causes the mails to be used). The Supreme Court has explained that one causes a mailing when “one does an act with knowledge that the use of the mails will follow in the ordinary course of business, or where such use can reasonably be foreseen, even though not actually intended.” *Pereira v. United States*, 347 U.S. 1, 8-9 (1954); *accord*, *Frost*, 125 F.3d at 354 (mailing need only be reasonably foreseeable).

Intent and knowledge need not be proved directly. Pattern Instruction 2.08 Inferring Required Mental State states this principle and should be given in appropriate cases. In addition, Pattern Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance explains one approach to proving knowledge.

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1341 that relates to a major disaster or affects a financial institution, the maximum penalty is increased. Because the jury must unanimously agree on any fact (other than a prior conviction) that increases the maximum penalty, the major disaster or effect on a financial institution must be proved to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt. *Appendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). In this situation, the Committee recommends that the court give an instruction like Instruction 14.07(A) or (B) and use a special verdict form like those following Instructions 14.07(A) and (B). *See also* 18 U.S.C. § 2326 (maximum penalty increased for violation in connection with telemarketing).

It is also a crime to conspire to violate § 1341. Conspiracy can be charged under either 18 U.S.C. §§ 371 or 1349. The Committee did not draft a separate instruction for conspiracy to commit mail fraud because an instruction may be compiled by combining the mail fraud instruction with the instructions in Chapter 3 Conspiracy with one caveat. Conspiracies under § 371 require an overt act whereas conspiracies under § 1349 do not require an overt act. *See United States v. Rogers*, 769 F.3d 372, 379-82 (6th Cir. 2014). Thus if the conspiracy to commit mail fraud is charged under § 371, Instruction 3.01A Conspiracy to Commit an Offense (§ 371) – Basic Elements should be used as is, but if the conspiracy is charged based on § 1349, Instruction 3.01A should be modified to omit paragraph (2)(C) on overt acts. All other references to overt acts should be deleted as well.

10.02 WIRE FRAUD (18 U.S.C. § 1343)

(1) Count ____ of the indictment charges the defendant with wire fraud. For you to find the defendant guilty of wire fraud, you must find that the government has proved each and every one of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

(A) First, that the defendant [knowingly participated in] [devised] [intended to devise] a scheme to defraud in order to deprive another of money or property, that is _____ [*describe scheme from indictment*];

(B) Second, that the scheme included a material misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact;

(C) Third, that the defendant had the intent to defraud; and

(D) Fourth, that the defendant [used wire, radio or television communications] [caused another to use wire, radio or television communications] in interstate [foreign] commerce in furtherance of the scheme.

(2) Now I will give you more detailed instructions on some of these terms.

(A) A “scheme to defraud” includes any plan or course of action by which someone intends to deprive another of money or property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises.

(B) The term “false or fraudulent pretenses, representations or promises” means any false statements or assertions that concern a material aspect of the matter in question, that were either known to be untrue when made or made with reckless indifference to their truth. They include actual, direct false statements as well as half-truths and the knowing concealment of material facts.

(C) An act is “knowingly” done if done voluntarily and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.

(D) A misrepresentation or concealment is “material” if it has a natural tendency to influence or is capable of influencing the decision of a person of ordinary prudence and comprehension.

(E) To act with “intent to defraud” means to act with an intent to deceive or cheat for the purpose of depriving another of money or property.

(F) To “cause” wire, radio or television communications to be used is to do an act with knowledge that the use of the communications will follow in the ordinary course of business or where such use can reasonably be foreseen.

(G) The term “interstate [foreign] commerce” includes wire, radio or television

communications which crossed a state line.

(3) [It is not necessary that the government prove [all of the details alleged concerning the precise nature and purpose of the scheme] [that the material transmitted by wire, radio or television communications was itself false or fraudulent] [that the alleged scheme actually succeeded in defrauding anyone] [that the use of the wire, radio or television communications was intended as the specific or exclusive means of accomplishing the alleged fraud] [that someone relied on the misrepresentation or false statement] [that the defendant obtained money or property for his own benefit].]

(4) If you are convinced that the government has proved all of the elements, say so by returning a guilty verdict on this charge. If you have a reasonable doubt about any one of the elements, then you must find the defendant not guilty of this charge.

Use Note

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1343 that relates to a major disaster or affects a financial institution, the maximum penalty is increased; the court should modify the instruction and consider using special verdict forms like those included with Instructions 14.07(A) and (B).

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1343 in connection with telemarketing, the maximum penalty is increased under 18 U.S.C. § 2326. Because the jury must unanimously agree on any fact (other than a prior conviction) that increases the maximum penalty, the telemarketing must be proved to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt. *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). In this situation, the Committee recommends that the court give an instruction like Instruction 14.07(A) or (B) and use a special verdict form like those following Instructions 14.07(A) and (B).

In paragraph (2)(D), the word “person” should be replaced with entity or corporation or agency if the facts warrant. Also, if the prosecution’s theory of fraud is based on concealment of required reports, the court should consider instructing that a failure to file required reports may be a material omission. This provision is discussed in the commentary below.

The provisions of paragraph (3) should be used only if relevant.

See also Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance.

If there is any evidence at all of good faith, the court should refer to Instruction 10.04 Fraud – Good Faith Defense.

Brackets indicate options for the court. Brackets with italics are notes to the court.

The wire fraud statute provides:

18 U.S.C. § 1343 Fraud by wire, radio, or television

Whoever, having devised or intending to devise any scheme or artifice to defraud, or for obtaining money or property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises, transmits or causes to be transmitted by means of wire, radio, or television communication in interstate or foreign commerce, any writings, signs, signals, pictures, or sounds for the purpose of executing such scheme or artifice, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both. If the violation occurs in relation to, or involving any benefit authorized, transported, transmitted, transferred, disbursed, or paid in connection with, a presidentially declared major disaster or emergency (as those terms are defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122)), or affects a financial institution, such person shall be fined not more than \$ 1,000,000 or imprisoned not more than 30 years, or both.

This instruction does not cover wire fraud based on a deprivation of the intangible right to honest services as provided in 18 U.S.C. § 1346.

The wire fraud statute was modeled after the mail fraud statute, and therefore the same analysis should be used for both. *Carpenter v. United States*, 484 U.S. 19, 25 n.6 (1987); *United States v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 958 (6th Cir. 2013) (*citing* *United States v. Bibby*, 752 F.2d 1116, 1126 (6th Cir. 1985)). “The wire fraud statutory language should be interpreted with the same breadth as the analogous language in the mail fraud statute.” *Hofstetter v. Fletcher*, 905 F.2d 897, 902 (6th Cir. 1988). The only difference in the two offenses is the jurisdictional element.

The elements of wire fraud in paragraph (1) are based on the statute and case law. In paragraph (1)(A), the terms “devised,” “intended to devise” and “scheme to defraud” are drawn from the statute. The term “knowingly participated in” is based on *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 487 (6th Cir. 2003); *United States v. Gold Unlimited, Inc.*, 177 F.3d 472, 478 (6th Cir. 1999); *United States v. DeSantis*, 134 F.3d 760, 764 (6th Cir. 1998); and *United States v. Frost*, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997). This term is discussed further below. The phrase “deprive another of money or property” is based on numerous Supreme Court and Sixth Circuit cases. In the Supreme Court, *see Ciminelli v. United States*, 143 S. Ct. 1121, 1124 (2023) (holding that the “right to control” theory is not a valid basis for mail and wire fraud liability because potentially valuable economic information necessary to make discretionary economic decisions is not a traditional property interest); *Cleveland v. United States*, 121 S. Ct. 365, 379 (2000) (*quoting* *McNally v. United States*, 107 S. Ct. 2875, 2880 (1987)); and *Carpenter v. United States*, 108 S. Ct. 316, 321 (1987). In the Sixth Circuit, *see, e.g.*, *United States v. Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (*quoting* *United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 580-81 (6th Cir. 2010)); and *United States v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 957-58 (6th Cir. 2013). This phrase requiring

“money or property” is discussed further below.

In paragraph (1)(B), the element that the scheme included a material misrepresentation or concealment is based on *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 16 (1999) (*quoting* *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995)) and *Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 448 (6th Cir. 2019).

In paragraph (1)(C), the element that the defendant had the “intent to defraud” is drawn from *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 487 (6th Cir. 2003) (referring to “the requisite intent to defraud”); *United States v. Gold Unlimited, Inc.*, 177 F.3d 472, 478 (6th Cir. 1999); *United States v. Frost*, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997); *United States v. Smith*, 39 F.3d 119, 122 (6th Cir. 1994); and *United States v. Stull*, 743 F.2d 439, 442 (6th Cir. 1984).

In paragraph (1)(D), the phrase “wire, radio or television communications” is drawn from the statute. Some Sixth Circuit cases use the term “electronic communications,” *see, e.g.*, *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 489 (6th Cir. 2003); *VanDenBroeck v. CommonPoint Mortgage Co.*, 210 F.3d 696, 701 (6th Cir. 2000), *overruled on other grounds*, *Bridge v. Phoenix Bond & Indemnity Co.*, 128 S.Ct. 2131 (2008); *United States v. Smith*, 39 F.3d 119, 122 (6th Cir. 1994).

The definition of “scheme to defraud” in paragraph (2)(A) was quoted with approval in *United States v. Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (*quoting* *United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 581 (6th Cir. 2010)). In *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 486 (6th Cir. 2003), the court elaborated, “The scheme to defraud element required under 18 U.S.C. § 1341 is not defined according to a technical standard. The standard is a ‘reflection of moral uprightness, of fundamental honesty, fair play and right dealing in the general and business life of members of society.’” *Daniel, id.* (cleaned up), *quoting* *United States v. Van Dyke*, 605 F.2d 220, 225 (6th Cir. 1979). A pyramid scheme is a scheme to defraud. *See* *United States v. Gold Unlimited, Inc.*, 177 F.3d 472, 484-85 (6th Cir. 1999).

In paragraph (2)(B), the definition of “false or fraudulent pretenses, representations or promises” is supported by *United States v. Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 443-444 (6th Cir. 2019) *citing* *United States v. Kurlemann*, 736 F.3d 439, 445, 446 (6th Cir. 2013). The *Kurlemann* court quoted the complete definition in paragraph (2)(B) with approval for the offense of mail fraud in a case based on false statements to a lending institution under § 1014. *See Kurlemann* at 449. The phrase “reckless indifference to the[] truth” in the instruction is further supported by *Kennedy*, 714 F.3d at 958 (“The government met the mail- and wire-fraud statutes’ intent requirements through proof that K. Kennedy was reckless in his disregard for the truth of the statements that he made to victims to obtain their money.”) (citations omitted). The reference to

“concealment of material facts” at the end of paragraph (2)(B) is supported by *Maddux*, where the court stated that, “Specifically, for purposes of the fraud statutes, fraudulent pretenses or representations can include ‘concealment’ – where one says nothing ‘but has a duty to speak.’” *Maddux* at 443-444, *quoting Kurlemann and citing, inter alia*, *Pasquantino v. United States*, 544 U.S. 349, 357 (2005) and *United States v. Perry*, 757 F.3d 166, 176 (4th Cir. 2014)). The *Maddux* court concluded that the indictment sufficiently alleged a conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud where it alleged the defendants had a duty to file reports under the Jenkins Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 376(a) and 377, and failed to do so. *Maddux* at 441, 444, 445.

The definition of “knowingly” in paragraph (2)(C) (“An act is done knowingly if it is done voluntarily and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.”) is drawn from the jury instructions given in *United States v. McGuire*, 744 F.2d 1197, 1201 (6th Cir. 1984) with one modification. The full definition of knowingly in *McGuire* stated, “An act is ‘knowingly’ done if done voluntarily *and intentionally*, and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.” (emphasis added). This instruction on wire fraud deletes the italicized words referring to “intentionally” to avoid confusion with the mens rea element of intent to defraud stated in paragraph (1)(C). Another possible definition of knowingly is, “An act is done knowingly if it is done with awareness, understanding or consciousness.” See *Arthur Andersen v. United States*, 125 S.Ct. 2129, 2135-36 (2005) (‘[K]nowledge’ and ‘knowingly’ are normally associated with awareness, understanding, or consciousness.”) (citations omitted) (construing term “knowingly” in 18 U.S.C. § 1512).

In paragraph (2)(D), the definition of “material” is based on *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 16 (1999) (*quoting* *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995)) and *Maddux*, 917 F.3d at 448 (characterizing this definition as “fine”). The definition of materiality for concealment cases is discussed further below.

The “intent to defraud” definition in paragraph (2)(E) requires the defendant to intend both to deceive or cheat another and to deprive him of money or property. The “intent to deprive” another of money or property is, as noted above, based on many Supreme Court and Sixth Circuit cases. Supreme Court cases include *Cleveland v. United States*, 121 S. Ct. 365, 379 (2000) (“Reviewing the history of § 1341, we concluded that ‘the original impetus behind the mail fraud statute was to protect the people from schemes to deprive them of their money or property.’” *McNally v. United States*, 107 S.Ct. 2875, 2880 (1987)); *Carpenter v. United States*, 108 S. Ct. 316, 321 (1987) (“Sections 1341 and 1343 reach any scheme to deprive another of money or property”); see also *Shaw v. United States*, 137 S. Ct. 462, 469 (2016) (construing the phrase “scheme to defraud” in the bank fraud statute, § 1344(1) and stating, “The parties agree, as do we, that the scheme must be one to deceive the bank *and* deprive it of something of value.”).

Numerous Sixth Circuit cases also identify the intent to “deprive” another of money or property as an element of wire fraud. See *United States v. Turner*, 465 F.3d 667, 680 and note 18 (6th Cir. 2006) (mail fraud requires “intent to deprive a victim of money or property”); *United States v. Jamieson*, 427 F.3d 394, 402 (6th Cir. 2005) (scheme to defraud includes depriving someone else of money); *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 485-486, 488 (6th Cir. 2003) (scheme to defraud includes any plan to deprive another of money or property) (*quoting* *Gold Unlimited, Inc.*, 177 F.3d 472, 479 (6th Cir. 1999)); and *United States v. Prince*, 214 F.3d 740, 747-748 (6th Cir. 2000) (intent to deprive a victim of money or property is an element of wire fraud) (*citing* *United States v. Merklinger*, 16 F.3d 670, 678 (6th Cir. 1994) and *United States v. Ames Sintering Co.*, 927 F.2d 232, 234 (6th Cir. 1990)).

The mail and wire fraud statutes criminalize only schemes to deprive people of “traditional property interests.” See *Ciminelli v. United States*, 143 S. Ct. 1121, 1124 (2023) (holding that the “right to control” theory is not a valid basis for mail and wire fraud liability

because potentially valuable economic information necessary to make discretionary economic decisions is not a traditional property interest); *see also* the Supreme Court cases cited *supra*. As the Court noted in *Ciminelli*, this limit on liability to deprivations of money or property had been the law in the Sixth Circuit since 2014. *See Ciminelli*, 143 S. Ct. at 1127 note 3 (identifying two circuits which had expressly repudiated the right-to-control theory and citing *United States v. Sadler*, 750 F.3d 585, 590-592 (6th Cir. 2014), abrogated on other grounds, *Kousisis v. United States*, 2025 WL 1459593)). *See also Maddux*, 917 F.3d at 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (quoting *United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 580-81 (6th Cir. 2010)); and *U.S. v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 957-58 (6th Cir. 2013) (same). The instruction includes this limit to traditional property interests in several paragraphs by requiring “money or property,” *see* paragraphs (1)(A), (2)(A) and (2)(E).

The Sixth Circuit noted the requirement of the intent to “deprive” another of money or property in *Maddux*, 917 F.3d at 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (quoting *United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 580-81 (6th Cir. 2010)); *see also* *U.S. v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 957-58 (6th Cir. 2013) (same). *But cf.* *Kousisis v. United States*, 2025 WL 1459593 (May 22, 2025) (holding that a defendant violates the wire fraud statute by scheming to obtain a victim’s money or property regardless of whether he seeks to leave the victim economically worse off, resolving a circuit split and abrogating *United States v. Sadler*, 750 F.3d 585 (6th Cir. 2014)).

In describing the intent to defraud, the court has sometimes referred to the mens rea as the “specific” intent to defraud, *see, e.g., Daniel*, 329 F.3d at 487; *Frost*, 125 F.3d at 354 (“A defendant does not commit mail fraud unless he possesses the specific intent to deceive or defraud”); *United States v. Smith*, 39 F.3d 119, 121-22 (6th Cir. 1994). The instruction omits the word “specific.” *See also* Committee Commentary to Instruction 2.07 Specific Intent.

The definition of “cause” in paragraph (2)(F) is based on *Frost*, 125 F.3d at 354 (*citing* *United States v. Oldfield*, 859 F.2d 392, 400 (6th Cir. 1988)).

Paragraph (3) lists some but not all items the government is not required to prove. Many pattern instructions include such a provision. This language is patterned after First Circuit Instruction 4.12; Fifth Circuit Instruction 2.59; Eighth Circuit Instruction 6.18.1341; and Eleventh Circuit Instruction 50.1. These provisions should be used only if relevant. The final bracketed provision, that the government need not prove that the defendant obtained money or property for his own benefit, is based on *United States v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 958 (6th Cir. 2013).

In paragraph (1)(A), the instruction provides that the defendant must have devised, intended to devise, or “knowingly participated” in a scheme to defraud. For participation, Sixth Circuit cases often describe the mental state as “knowing.” *See* *United States v. Sadler*, 750 F.3d 585, 590 (6th Cir. 2014) (“the government had to prove [defendant] knowingly used an interstate wire communication”), abrogated on other grounds, *Kousisis v. United States*, 2025 WL 1459593; *United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 487 (6th Cir. 2003) (“defendant must knowingly make a material misrepresentation or knowingly omit a material fact”); *United States v. Gold Unlimited, Inc.*, 177 F.3d 472, 478 (6th Cir. 1999) (“defendant knowingly devised a scheme to defraud . . . with the intent to defraud”); *United States v. DeSantis*, 134 F.3d 760, 764

(6th Cir. 1998) (“defendant must knowingly make a material misrepresentation or knowingly omit a material fact”); *United States v. Frost*, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997) (it is a crime to “knowingly devise” a scheme to defraud; a scheme to defraud includes “knowing concealment of facts and information done with the intent to defraud”).

In contrast, some Sixth Circuit authority provides that the participation must be “willful.” See *United States v. Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 443 (6th Cir. 2019) (defendant “willfully participated in a scheme to defraud”); *United States v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 957 (6th Cir. 2013) (same); *United States v. Faulkenberry*, 614 F.3d 573, 581 (6th Cir. 2010) (same) (citing *United States v. Stull*, 743 F.2d 439, 442 (6th Cir. 1984)). The instruction continues to use the term “knowing” rather than “willful” to describe the participation based on the weight of Sixth Circuit authority and to avoid any suggestion that knowledge of illegality is an element of mail fraud.

For the requirement that the scheme to defraud must deprive the victim of “money or property,” in *McNally v. United States*, 483 U.S. 350 (1987), the Court noted that based on the disjunctive phrasing of the mail fraud statute, which refers to “a scheme to defraud, or for obtaining money or property,” it was arguable that the two phrases should be construed independently. However, the Court then rejected this construction, explaining that the second phrase merely modifies the first. *McNally*, 483 U.S. at 358-59. In *Cleveland v. United States*, 531 U.S. 12 (2000), the Court reiterated this interpretation of the statute:

We reaffirm our reading of § 1341 in *McNally*. . . . Were the Government correct that the second phrase of § 1341 defines a separate offense, the statute would appear to arm federal prosecutors with power to police false statements in an enormous range of submissions to state and local authorities. . . . [W]e decline to attribute to § 1341 a purpose so encompassing where Congress has not made such a design clear.

Cleveland, 531 U.S. at 25-26. *Accord*, *Kelly v. United States*, 140 S. Ct. 1565, 1571 (2020) (describing the disjunctive language as a “unitary whole”).

In *Neder v. United States*, *supra* at 25, the Court held that materiality is an element of a “scheme or artifice to defraud” under mail, wire and bank fraud. Although this element is not found in a “natural reading” of the statute, the court relied on the rule of construction “‘[w]here Congress uses terms that have accumulated settled meaning under . . . the common law, a court must infer, unless the statute otherwise dictates, that Congress means to incorporate the established meaning of these terms.’” 527 U.S. at 21. At common law, the word “fraud” required proof of materiality. Because Congress did not indicate otherwise, the Court presumed that Congress intended to incorporate “materiality.”

The definition of materiality is as follows: “In general, a false statement is material if it has ‘a natural tendency to influence, or [is] capable of influencing, the decision of the decision making body to which it was addressed.’” *Neder* at 16, *quoting Gaudin*, 515 U.S. at 509.

In *Maddux*, 917 F.3d 437, 448-49 (6th Cir. 2019), the court reviewed an instruction

defining materiality when the government's theory of fraud was based on concealment. The instruction provided:

A misrepresentation or concealment is material if it has a natural tendency to influence or is capable of influencing the decision of a person of ordinary prudence and comprehension. A material omission, such as a failure to file required reports, may constitute a misrepresentation or concealment under the Mail and Wire Fraud statutes.

The court concluded that, "By all accounts the first sentence of this instruction was fine." *Maddux* at 448. As for the second sentence, the court stated it did not rise to the level of plain error but implied that it was error because as a grammatical matter, it "tells the reader that such a failure is always material." *Maddux, id.* The court explained, "By way of contrast, the instruction would have been fine if it had said, 'A failure to file required reports may be a material omission.'" *Maddux, id.* This sentence suggested by the court is identified in the Use Note for cases involving fraud by omission of required reports.

As to whether the fraud must be capable of deceiving persons based on a subjective ("however gullible") standard or an objective ("person of ordinary prudence") standard, case law supports the objective standard provided in paragraph (2)(D) of the instruction. *See United States v. Petlechkov*, 922 F.3d 762, 766 (6th Cir. 2019) (*citing United States v. Jamieson*, 427 F.3d 394, 415-16 (6th Cir. 2005)).

As to the required connection between the scheme to defraud or obtain property and the use of the wires, the Supreme Court has stated: "The federal mail fraud statute does not purport to reach all frauds, but only those limited instances in which the use of the mails is a part of the execution of the fraud" *Schmuck v. United States*, 489 U.S. 705, 710 (1989). The Court explained: "To be a part of the execution of the fraud . . . the use of the mails need not be an essential element of the scheme. It is sufficient for the mailing to be 'incident to an essential part of the scheme,' or 'a step in [the] plot.'" *Schmuck*, 489 U.S. at 710 (internal citations and quotation marks omitted). The Court then stated: "The relevant question at all times is whether the mailing is part of the execution of the scheme as conceived by the perpetrator at the time, regardless of whether the mailing later, through hindsight, may prove to have been counterproductive and return to haunt the perpetrator of the fraud." *Id.* at 715.

Intent and knowledge need not be proved directly. Pattern Instruction 2.08 Inferring Required Mental State states this principle and should be given in appropriate cases. In addition, Pattern Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance explains one approach to proving knowledge.

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1343 that relates to a major disaster or affects a financial institution, the maximum penalty is increased. Because the jury must unanimously agree on any fact (other than a prior conviction) that increases the maximum penalty, the major disaster or effect on a financial institution must be proved to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt. *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). In this situation, the Committee recommends that the court give an instruction like Instruction 14.07(A) or (B) and use a special verdict form like those following Instructions 14.07(A) and (B). *See also* 18 U.S.C.

§ 2326 (maximum penalty increased for violation in connection with telemarketing).

It is also a crime to conspire to violate § 1343. Conspiracy can be charged under either 18 U.S.C. §§ 371 or 1349. The Committee did not draft a separate instruction for conspiracy to commit wire fraud because an instruction may be compiled by combining the wire fraud instruction with the instructions in Chapter 3 Conspiracy with one caveat. Conspiracies under § 371 require an overt act whereas conspiracies under § 1349 do not require an overt act. See *United States v. Rogers*, 769 F.3d 372, 379-82 (6th Cir. 2014). Thus if the conspiracy to commit wire fraud is charged under § 371, Instruction 3.01A Conspiracy to Commit an Offense (§ 371) – Basic Elements should be used as is, but if the conspiracy is charged based on § 1349, Instruction 3.01A should be modified to omit paragraph (2)(C) on overt acts. All other references to overt acts should be deleted as well.

10.03A BANK FRAUD – Scheme to Defraud a Bank (18 U.S.C. § 1344(1))

(1) Count ____ of the indictment charges the defendant with bank fraud. For you to find the defendant guilty of bank fraud, you must find that the government has proved each and every one of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

(A) First, that the defendant [knowingly executed] [attempted to execute] a scheme to defraud, that is, a scheme to deceive [cheat] a bank [financial institution] and to deprive it of something of value.

(B) Second, that the scheme [related to a material fact] [included a material misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact].

(C) Third, that the defendant had the intent to deceive [cheat] the bank [financial institution] and to deprive it of something of value.

(D) Fourth, that the bank [financial institution] was federally insured.

(2) Now I will give you more detailed instructions on some of these terms.

(A) A “scheme” means any deliberate plan of action or course of conduct.

(B) [The term “misrepresentation or concealment” means any false statements or assertions that concern a material fact of the matter in question, that were either known to be untrue when made or made with reckless indifference to their truth. They include actual, direct false statements as well as half-truths and the knowing concealment of material facts.]

(C) An act is done “knowingly” if it is done voluntarily, and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.

(D) A misrepresentation or concealment of fact is “material” if it has a natural tendency to influence or is capable of influencing the decision of a person of ordinary prudence and comprehension.

[(3) It is not necessary that the government prove *[insert from options below as appropriate]*].

(A) [that the bank [financial institution] suffered financial harm].

(B) [that the defendant intended to cause the bank financial harm].

(C) [that the alleged scheme actually succeeded].

(4) If you are convinced that the government has proved all of the elements, say so by returning a guilty verdict on this charge. If you have a reasonable doubt about any one of the elements, then you must find the defendant not guilty of this charge.

Use Note

The two numbered clauses in the bank fraud statute, § 1344(1) and 1344(2), have “separate meanings.” *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384, 2391 (2014). The bank fraud instructions reflect the two clauses in separate instructions: Inst. 10.03A Bank Fraud – Scheme to Defraud a Bank (18 U.S.C. § 1344(1)) and Inst. 10.03B Bank Fraud – Scheme to Obtain Bank Property by Means of False or Fraudulent Representations (18 U.S.C. § 1344(2)).

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1344 in connection with telemarketing, the maximum penalty is increased under 18 U.S.C. § 2326. Because the jury must unanimously agree on any fact (other than a prior conviction) that increases the maximum penalty, the telemarketing must be proved to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt. *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). In this situation, the Committee recommends that the court give an instruction like Instruction 14.07(A) or (B) and use a special verdict form like those following Instructions 14.07(A) and (B).

As to the terms “bank” or financial institution,” the instruction uses the term “bank” as the default and then offers the term “financial institution” in brackets as an option. The statute defining the offense uses the term “bank” in the title of the offense but then uses the term “financial institution” in the text. See 18 U.S.C. § 1344. The term “financial institution” is broader than the term “bank.” See 18 U.S.C. § 20. The Committee recommends that the court use the term raised by the facts of the case.

Paragraph (1)(D) (that the bank [financial institution] was federally insured) fits most cases but the statute defining “financial institution,” 18 U.S.C. § 20, includes other definitions for financial institution beyond institutions that are federally insured. If the definition of “financial institution” is an issue in the case, the court should consult the list of definitions for “financial institution” in 18 U.S.C. § 20.

The definition of “misrepresentation or concealment” in paragraph (2)(B) should be given only when the bracketed option including those terms in paragraph (1)(B) is used.

The provisions of paragraph (3) stating items the government need not prove are bracketed and should be used only if relevant.

See also Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance.

If there is any evidence at all of good faith, the court should refer to Instruction 10.04 Fraud – Good Faith Defense.

Brackets indicate options for the court; bracketed italics are notes to the court.

Committee Commentary Instruction 10.03A

(current through May 29, 2026)

This instruction covers Bank Fraud – Scheme to Defraud a Bank under 18 U.S.C. § 1344(1).

Section 1344 provides:

§ 1344. Bank fraud

Whoever knowingly executes, or attempts to execute, a scheme or artifice--

(1) to defraud a financial institution; or

(2) to obtain any of the moneys, funds, credits, assets, securities, or other property owned by, or under the custody or control of, a financial institution, by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises;

shall be fined not more than \$ 1,000,000 or imprisoned not more than 30 years, or both.

The two numbered clauses in the bank fraud statute have separate meanings. See *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384 (2014) at 2390 (describing the statute as having “two entirely distinct statutory phrases”) and 2391 (describing § 1344's two clauses as having separate numbers and punctuation indicating that they have “separate meanings.”) The bank fraud instructions reflect these two clauses in separate instructions: Inst. 10.03A Bank Fraud – Scheme to Defraud a Bank (18 U.S.C. § 1344(1)) and Inst. 10.03B Bank Fraud – Scheme to Obtain Bank Property by Means of False or Fraudulent Representations (18 U.S.C. § 1344(2)). In the wake of *Loughrin*, the Sixth Circuit has not ruled on whether these two clauses state different offenses or just different means of committing a single offense. In the absence of authority from the Sixth Circuit on whether these two clauses are multiple crimes or multiple means, the court should consider whether to give a specific unanimity instruction or use a special verdict form.

In paragraph (1), the elements are based on the statute and case law. In paragraph (1)(A), the first phrase tracks the statutory language with one exception. The statute refers to a “scheme or artifice,” but the instruction uses the term “scheme” and omits “artifice” based on a plain-English approach and for consistency with the other fraud instructions. The last part of paragraph (1)(A) is based on *Shaw v. United States*, 137 S. Ct. 462 (2016) (holding that a knowing execution of a scheme to defraud a bank was established under § 1344(1) when the defendant made false statements to the bank leading it to release money from another customer’s deposit account). In *Shaw*, the Court stated, “The parties agree, as do we, that the scheme must be one to deceive the bank *and* deprive it of something of value.” (emphasis in original). *Id.* at 469; *see also* *United States v. Hall*, 979 F.3d 1107, 1117 (6th Cir. 2020) (quoting *Shaw*). The term “cheat” is offered as a synonym for “deceive” based on its repeated use in *Shaw*. *See also* *United States v. Reaume*, 338 F.3d 577, 580 (bank fraud requires “intent to defraud”) and *United States v. Hoglund*, 178 F.3d 410, 412-13 (6th Cir. 1999) (bank fraud under § 1344(1) requires intent to defraud). The definition of “something of value” is discussed below.

In paragraph (1)(B), the language describing the materiality element is based on *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S.1, 20-23 (1999) and *Field v. Mans*, 516 U.S. 59 (1995).

In paragraph (1)(C), the element that the defendant had the intent to deceive [cheat] the bank and to deprive it of something of value, is based on *Shaw v. United States*, 137 S. Ct. 462, 469 (2016), quoted above. *See also* *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384, 2389-90 (2014) (“[T]he *first* clause of § 1344, as all agree, includes the requirement that a defendant intend to ‘defraud a financial institution’; indeed, that is § 1344(1)’s whole sum and substance.”).

In paragraph (1)(D), the element that the bank was federally insured is based on the statutory definition of financial institution as one which is insured by, *inter alia*, the F.D.I.C. or the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund, *see* 18 U.S.C. § 20(1) and (2). The Sixth Circuit has held that it is an element of bank fraud that the financial institution is federally insured. *See, e.g.,* *United States v. Reaume*, 338 F.3d 577, 580 (6th Cir. 2003); *United States v. Everett*, 270 F.3d 986, 989 (6th Cir. 2001); *United States v. Hoglund*, 178 F.3d 410, 413 (6th Cir. 1999).

The definition of “scheme” in paragraph (2)(A) is based on *United States v. Frost*, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997) (construing scheme to defraud under mail fraud statute).

In paragraph (2)(B), the definition of “misrepresentation or concealment” is based on *United States v. Stull*, 743 F.2d 439, 446 (6th Cir. 1984) and *United States v. O’Boyle*, 680 F.2d 34, 36 (6th Cir. 1982). The reference to reckless indifference to the truth is further supported by *United States v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 958 (6th Cir. 2013) (construing mail and wire fraud) (“The government met the mail- and wire-fraud statutes’ intent requirements through proof that K. Kennedy was reckless in his disregard for the truth of the statements that he made to victims to obtain their money.”) (citations omitted). *See also* Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance.

The definition of “knowingly” in paragraph (2)(C) (“An act is done knowingly if it is done voluntarily, and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.”) is supported by *United States v. Skouteris*, 51 F.4th 658, 670-671 (6th Cir. 2022).

The definition of “material” in paragraph (2)(D) is based on *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 16, *quoting* *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995).

Paragraph (3) lists some but not all items the government is not required to prove. These provisions identifying items the government need not prove are bracketed and should be used only if relevant.

In paragraph (3)(A), the statement that the government need not prove that the bank suffered financial harm is based on *Shaw*, 137 S. Ct. at 467 (“We have found no case from this Court interpreting the bank fraud statute as requiring that the victim bank ultimately suffer financial harm”); *see also* *United States v. Hoglund*, 178 F.3d 410, 412 (6th Cir. 1999) (approving an instruction stating “it is not necessary for the government to prove anyone lost money.”).

In *United States v. Hall*, 979 F.3d 1107 (6th Cir. 2020), the court stated that this offense requires no proof that the victim bank suffered financial harm or financial loss but does require proof that the defendant executed a scheme to deprive the bank of “something of value,” *see* paragraph (1)(A). In *Hall*, the defendant took out bank loans in relatives’ names without their

consent. She later filed a request for the bank's forbearance on one of the loans, signing her sister's name electronically. The bank granted the forbearance. The defendant argued that the evidence of bank fraud was insufficient because forbearance on a loan did not deprive the bank of "something of value." The Sixth Circuit disagreed, analogizing forbearance on a loan to a loss of the chance to bargain knowing all the facts:

A signee putting someone else's name on a request for forbearance deprives the bank of knowing the financial status and ability of the signee to pay back that money. Instead, the bank thinks the person whose name appears is the individual who can stand by paying back the money related to the forbearance request. So the bank loses the chance to bargain with the facts before it, which is something of value.

Hall, supra at 1117 (cleaned up). The government need not prove financial loss to the bank to establish that the object of the scheme was something of value because the definition of financial loss or harm is "narrower" than the definition of something of value. *Hall, supra* at 1117, *citing Shaw*, 137 S. Ct. at 467, 469 and *United States v. Springer*, 866 F.3d 949, 954 (8th Cir. 2017).

In paragraph (3)(B), the statement that the government need not prove that the defendant intended to cause the bank financial harm is based on *Shaw*, 137 S. Ct. at 469 ("[T]he Government need not prove that the defendant intended that the bank ultimately suffer monetary loss.")

In paragraph (3)(C), the statement that the government need not prove that the alleged scheme actually succeeded is based on *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. at 2395 n. 9 *citing Neder*, 527 U.S. at 25 (stating that gravamen of § 1344 is the scheme and damage is not required); *Pasquantino v. United States*, 544 U.S. 349, 371 (2005) (stating that scheme to defraud under wire fraud statute was complete when scheme was executed; success of scheme was not required); and *United States v. Turner*, 465 F.3d 667, 680 (6th Cir. 2006) ("Of course, the mail fraud statute does not require an actual loss of property because success of the scheme is not an element of the offense.").

In cases decided before *Shaw*, the Sixth Circuit held that the government need not prove that defendant's conduct exposed the bank to a risk of loss as long as the defendant intended to expose the bank to a risk of loss, and that the government need not prove that the defendant benefitted personally from the scheme to defraud the bank. *United States v. Hoglund*, 178 F.3d 410, 413 (6th Cir. 1999) and *United States v. Knipp*, 963 F.2d 839, 846 (6th Cir. 1992), *citing United States v. Goldblatt*, 813 F.2d 619, 624 (3rd Cir. 1987). These cases should be consulted until the Sixth Circuit has the opportunity to reaffirm, modify, or repudiate these precedents in light of *Shaw*.

Generally, the bank fraud statute was modeled on and is similar to the mail and wire fraud statutes. *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 20-21 (1999). However, in *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384 (2014), the Court distinguished the bank fraud statute from the mail fraud statute. The mail fraud statute sets forth just one offense. *Loughrin* at 2391, *citing McNally v. United States*, 483 U.S. 350, 358-59 (1987). In contrast, the bank fraud statute includes two clauses with separate meanings: scheming to defraud a bank under § 1344(1), and scheming to obtain bank

property by means of false or fraudulent representations under § 1344(2). *See Loughrin* at 2390 (describing the statute as having “two entirely distinct statutory phrases”) and 2391 (describing § 1344's two clauses as having separate numbers and punctuation indicating that they have “separate meanings.”)

Intent and knowledge need not be proved directly. Pattern Instruction 2.08, Inferring Required Mental State, states this principle and should be given in appropriate cases. In addition, Pattern Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance describes one approach to proving knowledge.

In *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 4, the Court held that materiality is an element of the bank fraud offense. Although this element is not found in a “natural reading” of the statute, the Court relied on the rule of construction that “[w]here Congress uses terms that have accumulated settled meaning under . . . the common law, a court must infer, unless the statute otherwise dictates, that Congress means to incorporate the established meaning of these terms.” *Id.* at 21 (citations omitted). At common law, the words “fraud” and “defraud” required proof of materiality. *Id.* at 22-23. Likewise, the terms “false pretenses” and “false representations” are common-law terms of art with meanings that imply elements that the common law defined them to include. *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 23 n.6, *quoting* *Field v. Mans*, 516 U.S. 59, 69 (1995). Because Congress did not indicate otherwise, the Court presumed that Congress intended to incorporate the common-law element of “materiality” into the crime of bank fraud.

The definition of materiality is as follows: “In general, a false statement is material if it has ‘a natural tendency to influence, or [is] capable of influencing, the decision of the decision making body to which it was addressed.’” *Id.* at 16, *quoting* *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. at 509.

As to whether the fraud must be capable of deceiving persons based on a subjective (“however gullible”) standard or an objective (“person of ordinary prudence”) standard, in most cases the objective standard provided in paragraph (2)(C) of the instruction is appropriate. The Sixth Circuit has stated that the standard to be used is an objective one. *See, e.g.,* *United States v. Jamieson*, 427 F.3d 394, 415-16 (6th Cir. 2005); *Berent v. Kemper Corp.*, 973 F.2d 1291, 1294 (6th Cir. 1992); *Blount Fin. Servs., Inc. v. Walter E. Heller and Co.*, 819 F.2d 151, 153 (6th Cir. 1987); *United States v. Van Dyke*, 605 F.2d 220, 225 (6th Cir. 1979); and *United States v. Bohn*, 2008 WL 2332226 at 9, 2008 U.S. App. LEXIS 12474 at 26 (6th Cir. 2008) (unpublished). *But see* *Norman v. United States*, 100 F.2d 905, 907 (6th Cir. 1939) (using a subjective standard, explaining that: “the lack of guile on the part of those generally solicited may itself point with persuasion to the fraudulent character of the artifice.”). In *United States v. Frost*, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997), the court affirmed an instruction with an objective standard, but the issue of objective-vs.-subjective standard was not raised. *See id.* (affirming instruction which provided, “There must be proof of either a misrepresentation, false statement, or omission calculated to deceive a person of ordinary prudence and comprehension.”). However, none of these cases involved vulnerable victims who were targeted by the defendant specifically because of their vulnerability. If this situation arises, the parties should address whether the appropriate standard is objective or subjective based on the facts of the case.

In *United States v. Svete*, 556 F.3d 1157 (11th Cir. 2009) (en banc), the court adopted a

subjective standard, concluding that “[m]ail fraud does not require proof that a scheme to defraud would deceive persons of ordinary prudence.” *Id.* at 1169. In discussing the Sixth Circuit decisions in *Norman* (using a subjective standard) and *Jamieson* (stating an objective standard, but not citing or distinguishing *Norman*), the Eleventh Circuit found *Norman* more persuasive because in *Jamieson*, the “‘ordinary prudence’ language was invoked to . . . affirm [a] conviction . . .” *Svete* at 1168-69. The subjective standard articulated by the Sixth Circuit in *Norman* is consistent with other older Sixth Circuit precedent. *See Henderson v. United States*, 218 F.2d 14, 19 (6th Cir. 1955); *Tucker v. United States*, 224 F. 833, 837 (6th Cir. 1915); *O'Hara v. United States*, 129 F. 551, 555 (6th Cir. 1904).

Check kiting constitutes a “scheme to defraud” under the bank fraud statute. *United States v. Stone*, 954 F.2d 1187, 1190 (6th Cir. 1992).

It is also a crime to attempt or conspire to violate § 1344. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1344 (attempt); §§ 371 and 1349 (conspiracy). If the charge is based on attempt, an instruction may be compiled by combining this instruction with the instructions in Chapter 5 Attempts. If the charge is based on conspiracy, an instruction may be compiled by using the instructions in Chapter 3 Conspiracy with one caveat. Conspiracies under § 371 require an overt act whereas conspiracies under § 1349 do not require an overt act. *See United States v. Rogers*, 769 F.3d 372, 377 (6th Cir. 2014) (listing elements of conspiracy under § 1349 without including overt act). Thus if the conspiracy to commit fraud charge is based on § 371, Instruction 3.01A Conspiracy to Commit an Offense—Basic Elements should be used as is, but if the charge is based on § 1349, Instruction 3.01A should be modified to omit paragraph (2)(C) on overt acts. All other references to overt acts should be deleted as well.

10.03B BANK FRAUD – Scheme to Obtain Bank Property by Means of False or Fraudulent Representations (18 U.S.C. § 1344(2))

(1) Count ____ of the indictment charges the defendant with bank fraud. For you to find the defendant guilty of bank fraud, you must find that the government has proved each and every one of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

(A) First, that the defendant [knowingly executed] [attempted to execute] a scheme to obtain any of the money, funds, or property [owned by] [under the control of] a bank [financial institution] by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations or promises.

(B) Second, that the scheme [related to a material fact] [included a material misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact].

(C) [Third, that the defendant had the intent to deceive or cheat someone for the purpose of either causing a financial loss to another or bringing about a financial gain to himself [to another person].]

(D) Fourth, that the bank [financial institution] was federally insured.

(2) Now I will give you more detailed instructions on some of these terms.

(A) The term “false or fraudulent pretenses, representations or promises” means any false statements or assertions that concern a material aspect of the matter in question, that were either known to be untrue when made or made with reckless indifference to their truth. They include actual, direct false statements as well as half-truths and the knowing concealment of material facts.

(B) An act is done “knowingly” if it is done voluntarily, and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.

(C) A misrepresentation or concealment of fact is “material” if it has a natural tendency to influence or is capable of influencing the decision of a person of ordinary prudence and comprehension.

[(3) It is not necessary that the government prove *[insert from options below as appropriate]*].

(A) [that the bank [financial institution] suffered a financial loss.]

(B) [that defendant intended to defraud a bank [financial institution].]

(C) [that the defendant’s scheme created a risk of financial loss to the bank [financial institution].]

(D) [that the false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises were made to a bank [financial institution].]

(E) [that the alleged scheme actually succeeded.]

(F) [that someone relied upon the misrepresentation.]

(4) If you are convinced that the government has proved all of the elements, say so by returning a guilty verdict on this charge. If you have a reasonable doubt about any one of the elements, then you must find the defendant not guilty of this charge.

Use Note

In paragraph (1)(C), the element that the defendant had the intent to deceive or cheat for the purpose of causing a financial loss or a financial gain is bracketed to indicate some conflicting authority. The authority is detailed below in the Commentary.

The two numbered clauses in the bank fraud statute, § 1344(1) and 1344(2), have separate meanings. *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384, 2391 (2014). The bank fraud instructions reflect the two clauses in separate instructions: Inst. 10.03A Bank Fraud – Scheme to Defraud a Bank (18 U.S.C. § 1344(1)) and Inst. 10.03B Bank Fraud – Scheme to Obtain Bank Property by Means of False or Fraudulent Representations (18 U.S.C. § 1344(2)).

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1344 in connection with telemarketing, the maximum penalty is increased under 18 U.S.C. § 2326. Because the jury must unanimously agree on any fact (other than a prior conviction) that increases the maximum penalty, the telemarketing must be proved to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt. *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). In this situation, the Committee recommends that the court give an instruction like Instruction 14.07(A) or (B) and use a special verdict form like those following Instructions 14.07(A) and (B).

As to the terms “bank” or financial institution,” the instruction generally uses the term “bank” as the default and then offers the term “financial institution” in brackets as an option. The statute defining the offense uses the term “bank” in the title of the offense but then uses the term “financial institution” in the two numbered clauses of its text. See 18 U.S.C. § 1344. The term “financial institution” is broader than the term “bank.” See 18 U.S.C. § 20. The Committee recommends that the court use the term raised by the facts of the case.

In paragraph (1)(A), some of the types of property listed in § 1344(2), i.e., “credits, assets, securities,” were omitted because they are adequately covered by the simpler phrase “money, funds, or property.” If a case raises issues about this definition, substitute the more detailed statutory language.

Paragraph (1)(D) (that the bank [financial institution] was federally insured) fits most cases but the statute defining “financial institution,” 18 U.S.C. § 20, includes other definitions for financial institution beyond institutions that are federally insured. If the definition of “financial institution” is an issue in the case, the court should consult the list of definitions for “financial institution” in 18 U.S.C. § 20.

The provisions of paragraph (3) stating items the government need not prove are bracketed and should be used only if relevant.

See also Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance.

If there is any evidence at all of good faith, the court should refer to Instruction 10.04 Fraud – Good Faith Defense.

Brackets indicate options for the court; bracketed italics are notes to the court.

Committee Commentary Instruction 10.03B
(current through May 29, 2026)

This instruction covers Bank Fraud – Scheme to Obtain Bank Property by Means of False or Fraudulent Representations under 18 U.S.C. § 1344(2).

Section 1344 provides:

§ 1344. Bank fraud

Whoever knowingly executes, or attempts to execute, a scheme or artifice--

(1) to defraud a financial institution; or

(2) to obtain any of the moneys, funds, credits, assets, securities, or other property owned by, or under the custody or control of, a financial institution, by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises;

shall be fined not more than \$ 1,000,000 or imprisoned not more than 30 years, or both.

The two numbered clauses in the bank fraud statute have separate meanings. See *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384 (2014) at 2390 (describing the statute as having “two entirely distinct statutory phrases”) and 2391 (describing § 1344's two clauses as having separate numbers and punctuation indicating that they have “separate meanings.”) The bank fraud instructions reflect these two clauses in separate instructions: Inst. 10.03A Bank Fraud – Scheme to Defraud a Bank (18 U.S.C. § 1344(1)) and Inst. 10.03B Bank Fraud – Scheme to Obtain Bank Property by Means of False or Fraudulent Representations (18 U.S.C. § 1344(2)). In the wake of *Loughrin*, the Sixth Circuit has not ruled on whether these two clauses state different offenses or different means of committing a single offense. In the absence of authority from the Sixth Circuit on whether these two clauses are multiple crimes or multiple means, the court should consider whether to give a specific unanimity instruction or use a special verdict form.

In paragraph (1), the elements are based on the statute and case law. Paragraph (1)(A) tracks the statutory language with two exceptions. First, the statute refers to a “scheme or artifice,” but the instruction uses the term “scheme” and omits “artifice” based on a plain-English approach and for consistency with the other fraud instructions. Second, some of the types of property listed in § 1344(2) of the statute, *i.e.*, “credits, assets, securities,” were omitted because

they are adequately covered by the simpler phrase “money, funds, or property.” If a case raises issues about this definition, the court should consider using the more detailed statutory language.

The statutory phrase “by means of” in paragraph (1)(A) was defined by the Court in *Loughrin v. United States*, *supra*. In *Loughrin*, the defendant stole checks and forged them in order to buy merchandise at Target. He then immediately returned the merchandise for cash. He argued that there was no evidence he intended to defraud a bank, only evidence that he intended to defraud Target. The Supreme Court held that the government need not prove the defendant intended to defraud a bank, and that § 1344(2)’s “by means of” language is satisfied when “the defendant’s false statement is the mechanism naturally inducing a bank (or custodian of bank property) to part with money in its control.” *Loughrin*, 134 S. Ct. at 2393.

In paragraph (1)(B), the language describing the materiality element is based on *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 20-23 (1999) and *Field v. Mans*, 516 U.S. 59 (1995).

In paragraph (1)(C), the element that the defendant had the intent to deceive or cheat for the purpose of causing a financial loss or a financial gain is based on *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384 (2014) and *United States v. Kerley*, 784 F.3d 327, 343 (6th Cir. 2015). This element is bracketed to indicate some conflicting authority on what kind of intent is an element under § 1344(2). In *Loughrin*, the Court states repeatedly that § 1344(2) requires no “intent to defraud a bank.” *See, e.g.*, 134 S. Ct. at 2387 (stating “The question presented is whether the Government must prove that a defendant charged with violating that provision intended to defraud a bank.”); *see also id.* at 2388 and 2389. While *Loughrin* makes clear that the defendant need not intend to defraud a bank, whether the defendant must nonetheless intend to defraud someone is uncertain. The *Loughrin* Court also states:

We begin with common ground. All parties agree, as do we and the Courts of Appeals, that § 1344(2) requires that a defendant knowingly execute[], or attempt[] to execute, a scheme or artifice with at least two elements. First, the clause requires that the defendant intend to obtain any of the moneys ... or other property owned by, or under the custody or control of, a financial institution. (We refer to that element, more briefly, as intent to obtain bank property.)

Loughrin, 134 S. Ct. at 2388-2389 (citations omitted). This passage supports the conclusion that while the defendant must intend to obtain money or property under the control of a bank, he need not intend to defraud anyone. In *United States v. Kerley*, 784 F.3d 327, 343 (6th Cir. 2015), decided in the wake of *Loughrin*, the Sixth Circuit states:

The elements of bank fraud under 18 U.S.C. § 1344 are: (1) the defendant knowingly executed or attempted to execute a scheme to defraud a financial institution; (2) the defendant had an intent to defraud, and (3) the financial institution was insured by the FDIC. *United States v. Dowlen*, 514 Fed. Appx. 559, 563 (6th Cir. 2013) (citing *United States v. Everett*, 270 F.3d 986, 989 (6th Cir. 2001)). Intent to defraud means to act with intent to deceive or cheat for the purpose of causing a financial loss to another or bringing about a financial gain to oneself. *United States v. Olds*, 309 Fed. Appx. 967, 972 (6th Cir. 2009).

This passage supports the conclusion that intent to defraud remains an element in the wake of *Loughrin*.

Other circuits' pattern instructions reflect the confusion in interpreting *Loughrin*. For example, in the Fifth Circuit, pattern instruction 2.58B Bank Fraud 18 U.S.C. § 1344(2) does not include intent to defraud as an element and explains in commentary, "The Loughrin Court made clear that, for offenses charged under § 1344(2), the Government need prove neither intent to defraud nor that the defendant placed the financial institution at risk. See *id.*, 134 S. Ct. at 2387, 2395 n.9. Accordingly, these elements have not been included in this instruction." (However, the Fifth Circuit instruction does include an "intent to deceive" as part of the definition of scheme or artifice.) Meanwhile, in the Ninth Circuit, the pattern instruction retains intent to defraud as element. See Ninth Circuit Instruction 8.127 Bank Fraud—Scheme to Defraud by False Promises (18 U.S.C. § 1344(2)). In view of the conflicting authority in the Sixth Circuit, the Committee decided to bracket the element and alert the court and parties to the question.

In paragraph (1)(D), the element that the bank was federally insured is based on the statutory definition of financial institution as one which is insured by, *inter alia*, the F.D.I.C. or the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund, *see* 18 U.S.C. § 20(1) and (2). The Sixth Circuit has held that it is an element of bank fraud that the financial institution is federally insured. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Reaume*, 338 F.3d 577, 580 (6th Cir. 2003); *United States v. Everett*, 270 F.3d 986, 989 (6th Cir. 2001); *United States v. Hoglund*, 178 F.3d 410, 413 (6th Cir. 1999).

In paragraph (2)(A), the definition of "false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises" is based on the Sixth Circuit's approval of similar definitions, *see United States v. Stull*, 743 F.2d 439, 446 (6th Cir. 1984) and *United States v. O'Boyle*, 680 F.2d 34, 36 (6th Cir. 1982). The reference to reckless indifference to the truth is further supported by *United States v. Kennedy*, 714 F.3d 951, 958 (6th Cir. 2013) (construing mail and wire fraud) ("The government met the mail- and wire-fraud statutes' intent requirements through proof that K. Kennedy was reckless in his disregard for the truth of the statements that he made to victims to obtain their money.") (citations omitted). *See also* Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance.

The definition of "knowingly" in paragraph (2)(B) ("An act is done knowingly if it is done voluntarily, and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason.") is drawn from the jury instructions given in *United States v. McGuire*, 744 F.2d 1197, 1201 (6th Cir. 1984) with one modification. The full definition of knowingly in *McGuire* stated, "An act is 'knowingly' done if done voluntarily *and intentionally*, and not because of mistake or some other innocent reason." (emphasis added). This instruction on bank fraud deletes the italicized words referring to intent based on the Court's discussion of bank fraud under § 1344(1) in *Shaw v. United States*, 137 S. Ct. 462 (2016). In *Shaw*, the Court distinguished the terms knowingly and purposefully and concluded that the correct mens rea under § 1344(1) was knowingly. *See Shaw*, 137 S. Ct. at 468 ("[T]he statute itself makes criminal the the '*knowin[g]*' execut[ion of] a scheme ... to defraud."). Another possible definition of knowingly is, "An act is done knowingly if it is done with awareness, understanding or consciousness." *See Arthur Andersen v. United States*, 125 S.Ct. 2129, 2135-36 (2005) ("'[K]nowledge' and 'knowingly' are normally associated with awareness, understanding, or consciousness.") (citations omitted) (construing term "knowingly" in 18 U.S.C. § 1512).

The definition of “material” in paragraph (2)(C) is based on *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 16, *quoting* *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995).

Paragraph (3) lists some but not all items the government is not required to prove. These provisions are bracketed and should be used only if relevant. They are based on *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384 (2014).

The statements in paragraphs (3)(A) and (3)(C), that the government need not prove that the bank suffered a financial loss and need not prove that the defendant’s scheme created a risk of financial loss to the bank, are based on *Loughrin*, 134 S. Ct. at 2395 n. 9 (explaining that language of § 1344(2) is broad and “appears calculated to avoid entangling courts in technical issues of banking law” about who suffers the loss) (citation omitted).

In paragraph (3)(B), the statement that the government need not prove that the defendant intended to defraud a bank is based on *Loughrin*, 134 S. Ct. at 2387 and at 2388 n. 2, *citing* *United States v. Everett*, 270 F.3d 986, 991 (6th Cir. 2001).

In paragraph (3)(D), the statement that the government need not prove that the false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises were made to a bank, is based on *Loughrin*, 134 S. Ct. at 2393 & n. 6.

In paragraph (3)(E), the statement that the government need not prove that the alleged scheme actually succeeded is based on *Loughrin*, 134 S. Ct. at 2393-94 *quoting* *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 25 (“And we have long made clear that such failure is irrelevant in a bank fraud case, because § 1344 punishes not ‘completed frauds’ but instead fraudulent ‘scheme[s].’”).

In paragraph (3)(F), the statement that the government need not prove that someone relied upon the misrepresentation is based on *Loughrin*, 134 S. Ct. at 2395 n. 9 (referring to “our prior holding that . . . the [bank fraud] offense . . . does not require ‘damage’ or ‘reliance’”) (*citing* *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 25 (1999)).

Generally, the bank fraud statute was modeled on and is similar to the mail and wire fraud statutes. *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 20-21 (1999). However, in *Loughrin v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 2384 (2014), the Court distinguished the bank fraud statute from the mail fraud statute. The mail fraud statute sets forth just one offense. *Loughrin* at 2391, *citing* *McNally v. United States*, 483 U.S. 350, 358-59 (1987). In contrast, the bank fraud statute includes two clauses with separate meanings: scheming to defraud a bank under § 1344(1), and scheming to obtain bank property by means of false or fraudulent representations under § 1344(2). *See Loughrin*, 134 S. Ct. at 2390 (describing the statute as having “two entirely distinct statutory phrases”) and 2391 (describing § 1344's two clauses as having separate numbers and punctuation indicating that they have “separate meanings.”)

Intent and knowledge need not be proved directly. Pattern Instruction 2.08, Inferring Required Mental State, states this principle and should be given in appropriate cases. In addition, Pattern Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance describes one approach to proving knowledge.

In *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 4, the Court held that materiality is an element of the bank fraud offense. Although this element is not found in a “natural reading” of the statute, the Court relied on the rule of construction that “ ‘[w]here Congress uses terms that have accumulated settled meaning under . . . the common law, a court must infer, unless the statute otherwise dictates, that Congress means to incorporate the established meaning of these terms.’ ” *Id.* at 21 (citations omitted). At common law, the words “fraud” and “defraud” required proof of materiality. *Id.* at 22-23. Likewise, the terms “false pretenses” and “false representations” are common-law terms of art with meanings that imply elements that the common law defined them to include. *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 23 n.6, *quoting* *Field v. Mans*, 516 U.S. 59, 69 (1995). Because Congress did not indicate otherwise, the Court presumed that Congress intended to incorporate the common-law element of “materiality” into the crime of bank fraud.

The definition of materiality is as follows: “In general, a false statement is material if it has ‘a natural tendency to influence, or [is] capable of influencing, the decision of the decision making body to which it was addressed.’ ” *Neder*, 527 U.S. at 16, *quoting* *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. at 509.

As to whether the fraud must be capable of deceiving persons based on a subjective (“however gullible”) standard or an objective (“person of ordinary prudence”) standard, in most cases the objective standard provided in paragraph (2)(C) of the instruction is appropriate. The Sixth Circuit has stated that the standard to be used is an objective one. *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Jamieson*, 427 F.3d 394, 415-16 (6th Cir. 2005); *Berent v. Kemper Corp.*, 973 F.2d 1291, 1294 (6th Cir. 1992); *Blount Fin. Servs., Inc. v. Walter E. Heller and Co.*, 819 F.2d 151, 153 (6th Cir. 1987); *United States v. Van Dyke*, 605 F.2d 220, 225 (6th Cir. 1979); and *United States v. Bohn*, 2008 WL 2332226 at 9, 2008 U.S. App. LEXIS 12474 at 26 (6th Cir. 2008) (unpublished). *But see* *Norman v. United States*, 100 F.2d 905, 907 (6th Cir. 1939) (using a subjective standard, explaining that: “the lack of guile on the part of those generally solicited may itself point with persuasion to the fraudulent character of the artifice.”). In *United States v. Frost*, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997), the court affirmed an instruction with an objective standard, but the issue of objective-vs.-subjective standard was not raised. *See id.* (affirming instruction which provided, “There must be proof of either a misrepresentation, false statement, or omission calculated to deceive a person of ordinary prudence and comprehension.”). However, none of these cases involved vulnerable victims who were targeted by the defendant specifically because of their vulnerability. If this situation arises, the parties should address whether the appropriate standard is objective or subjective based on the facts of the case.

In *United States v. Svete*, 556 F.3d 1157 (11th Cir. 2009) (en banc), the court adopted a subjective standard, concluding that “[m]ail fraud does not require proof that a scheme to defraud would deceive persons of ordinary prudence.” *Id.* at 1169. In discussing the Sixth Circuit decisions in *Norman* (using a subjective standard) and *Jamieson* (stating an objective standard, but not citing or distinguishing *Norman*), the Eleventh Circuit found *Norman* more persuasive because in *Jamieson*, the “‘ordinary prudence’ language was invoked to . . . affirm [a] conviction . . .” *Svete* at 1168-69. The subjective standard articulated by the Sixth Circuit in *Norman* is consistent with other older Sixth Circuit precedent. *See* *Henderson v. United States*, 218 F.2d 14, 19 (6th Cir. 1955); *Tucker v. United States*, 224 F. 833, 837 (6th Cir. 1915); *O'Hara v. United States*, 129 F. 551, 555 (6th Cir. 1904).

It is also a crime to attempt or conspire to violate § 1344. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1344 (attempt); §§ 371 and 1349 (conspiracy). If the charge is based on attempt, an instruction may be compiled by combining this instruction with the instructions in Chapter 5 Attempts. If the charge is based on conspiracy, an instruction may be compiled by using the instructions in Chapter 3 Conspiracy with one caveat. Conspiracies under § 371 require an overt act whereas conspiracies under § 1349 do not require an overt act. *See United States v. Rogers*, 769 F.3d 372, 377 (6th Cir. 2014) (listing elements of conspiracy under § 1349 without including overt act). Thus if the conspiracy to commit fraud charge is based on § 371, Instruction 3.01A Conspiracy to Commit an Offense—Basic Elements should be used as is, but if the charge is based on § 1349, Instruction 3.01A should be modified to omit paragraph (2)(C) on overt acts. All other references to overt acts should be deleted as well.

10.04 FRAUD – GOOD FAITH DEFENSE

- (1) The good faith of the defendant is a complete defense to the charge of _____ contained in [Count ____ of] the indictment because good faith on the part of the defendant is, simply, inconsistent with an intent to defraud.
- (2) A person who acts, or causes another person to act, on a belief or an opinion honestly held is not punishable under this statute merely because the belief or opinion turns out to be inaccurate, incorrect, or wrong. An honest mistake in judgment or an honest error in management does not rise to the level of criminal conduct.
- (3) A defendant does not act in good faith if, even though he honestly holds a certain opinion or belief, that defendant also knowingly makes false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises to others.
- (4) While the term “good faith” has no precise definition, it encompasses, among other things, a belief or opinion honestly held, an absence of malice or ill will, and an intention to avoid taking unfair advantage of another.
- (5) The burden of proving good faith does not rest with the defendant because the defendant does not have any obligation to prove anything in this case. It is the government’s burden to prove to you, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant acted with an intent to defraud.
- (6) If the evidence in this case leaves you with a reasonable doubt as to whether the defendant acted with an intent to defraud or in good faith, you must acquit the defendant.

Use Note

Brackets indicate options for the court.

Committee Commentary Instruction 10.04 (current through May 29, 2026)

This instruction is based on Kevin F. O’Malley et al., Federal Jury Practice and Instructions (5th ed. 2000), § 19.06 The Good Faith Defense – Explained.

Several Sixth Circuit cases endorse instructions including good faith provisions. *See* United States v. Frost, 125 F.3d 346, 372 (6th Cir. 1997) (endorsing an instruction that stated, *inter alia*, “good faith on the part of a defendant is inconsistent with an intent to defraud.”); United States v. McGuire, 744 F.2d 1197, 1200-02 (6th Cir. 1984); United States v. Stull, 743 F.2d 439, 445-46 (6th Cir. 1984).

In *Stull*, 743 F.2d at 446, the court approved a good faith instruction that stated, *inter alia*, “Good faith does not include the defendant’s belief or faith that the venture will eventually meet his or her expectations.” This provision can be added to the instruction if relevant in the case.

The good faith instruction should be given if there is any evidence at all to support the charge. United States v. McGuire, 744 F.2d 1197, 1201 (6th Cir. 1984), *quoting* United States v. Curry, 681 F.2d 406, 416 (5th Cir. 1982).

10.05 HEALTH CARE FRAUD (18 U.S.C. § 1347)

(1) Count ____ of the indictment charges the defendant with health care fraud. For you to find the defendant guilty of health care fraud, you must find that the government has proved each and every one of the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

(A) First, that the defendant knowingly and willfully [executed] [attempted to execute] a scheme [*insert at least one of two options below*]

--[to defraud any health care benefit program]

--[to obtain, by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises any of the money or property [owned by] [in the control of] a health care benefit program]

in connection with the [delivery of] [payment for] health care benefits, items, or services.

(B) Second, that the scheme [related to a material fact] [included a material misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact].

(C) Third, that the defendant had the intent to defraud.

(2) Now I will give you more detailed instructions on some of these terms.

(A) A “health care benefit program” is any [public or private] [plan or contract], affecting interstate [foreign] commerce, under which any medical benefit, item, or service is provided to any individual, and includes any individual or entity who is providing a medical benefit, item, or service for which payment may be made under the plan or contract. A health care program affects commerce if the health care program had any impact on the movement of any money, goods, services, or persons from one state to another [between another country and the United States]. The government need only prove that the health care program itself either engaged in interstate [foreign] commerce or that its activity affected interstate [foreign] commerce to any degree.

[(B) A “scheme to defraud” includes any plan or course of action by which someone intends to deprive another of money or property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises.]

[(C) The term “false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises” means any false statements or assertions that concern a material aspect of the matter in question, that were either known to be untrue when made or made with reckless indifference to their truth. They include actual, direct false statements as well as half-truths and the knowing concealment of material facts.]

(D) An act is done “knowingly” if the defendant has knowledge of the facts which make up the offense. An act is done “willfully” if the defendant acted with knowledge that his conduct was unlawful, although the defendant need not know which particular statute he violated.

(E) A misrepresentation [concealment] is “material” if it has a natural tendency to influence or is capable of influencing the decision of a person of ordinary prudence and comprehension.

(F) To act with “intent to defraud” means to act with an intent to deceive or cheat for the purpose of either causing a financial loss to another or bringing about a financial gain to oneself [to another person].

[(3) [The government need not prove [that the defendant had actual knowledge of the health care fraud statute or specific intent to commit a violation of the health care fraud statute] [that the health care benefit program suffered any financial loss] [that the defendant engaged in interstate [foreign] commerce or that the acts of the defendant affected interstate commerce].]

(4) If you are convinced that the government has proved all of the elements, say so by returning a guilty verdict on the charge. If you have a reasonable doubt about any of the elements, then you must find the defendant not guilty of this charge.

Use Note

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1347 that results in serious bodily injury or death, the maximum penalty is increased; the court should modify the instruction and consider using special verdict forms like those included with Instructions 14.07(A) and (B).

If there is any evidence at all of good faith, the court should refer to Instruction 10.04 Fraud – Good Faith Defense.

In paragraph (2)(A) defining health care benefit program, the instruction presumes that the commerce involved is interstate commerce, and the bracketed term “foreign” should be substituted if warranted by the facts.

The bracketed provisions in paragraph (3) should be used only if relevant.

Brackets indicate options for the court. Bracketed italics are notes to the court.

Committee Commentary (current through May 29, 2026)

This instruction covers health care fraud under 18 U.S.C. § 1347. That statute provides:

§ 1347. Health care fraud

(a) Whoever knowingly and willfully executes, or attempts to execute, a scheme or artifice--

(1) to defraud any health care benefit program; or

(2) to obtain, by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises, any of the money or property owned by, or under the custody or control of, any health care benefit program,

in connection with the delivery of or payment for health care benefits, items, or services, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both. If the violation results in serious bodily injury (as defined in section 1365 of this title), such person shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both; and if the violation results in death, such person shall be fined under this title, or imprisoned for any term of years or for life, or both.

(b) With respect to violations of this section, a person need not have actual knowledge of this section or specific intent to commit a violation of this section.

In paragraph (1), the elements are based on the statute and case law. The two options in paragraph (1)(A) track the statutory language of § 1347(a)(1) and (a)(2) with one exception: The statute refers to a “scheme or artifice,” while the instruction uses the term “scheme” and omits “artifice” based on a plain-English approach and for consistency with the other fraud instructions.

Paragraph (1)(A) states the scienter element of “knowingly and willfully.” This phrase is drawn verbatim from the statute. The definitions of these terms are discussed below.

In paragraph (1)(B), the materiality element is based on *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1 (1999) and Sixth Circuit authority. The term “materiality” does not appear in the health care fraud statute. The statute was adopted in 1996. Three years later, in *Neder*, the Court construed three other fraud statutes that similarly did not include the term “materiality,” and held that materiality was an element of the crime of fraud. The Court’s theory was that Congress meant to adopt the well established common law meaning of the term fraud, which included materiality. *Neder* at 22. *See also* U.S. v. Bertram, 900 F.3d 743, 748-749 (6th Cir. 2018) (approving health care fraud jury instruction requiring materiality as an element).

In paragraph (1)(C), the intent to defraud element is based on *United States v. Semrau*, 693 F.3d 510, 524 (6th Cir. 2012); *United States v. Jones*, 641 F.3d 706, 710 (6th Cir. 2011); *United States v. Martinez*, 588 F.3d 301, 314 (6th Cir. 2009); *United States v. Hunt*, 521 F.3d 636, 645 (6th Cir. 2008); and *United States v. Raithatha*, 385 F.3d 1013, 1021 (6th Cir. 2004), *vacated on other grounds*, 543 U.S. 1136 (2005).

In paragraph (2)(A), the definition of health care benefit program is based on 18 U.S.C. § 24(b). That statute defines “health care benefit program” as one that “affect[s] commerce.” The instruction adds the terms “interstate [foreign]” based on *United States v. Klein*, 543 F.3d 206, 211 n.2 (5th Cir. 2008). The phrasing of paragraph (2)(A) is drawn from Seventh Circuit Pattern Instruction 18 U.S.C. § 1347 HEALTH CARE BENEFIT PROGRAM/INTERSTATE COMMERCE – DEFINITION.

In bracketed paragraph (2)(B), the definition of “scheme to defraud” is based on *United*

States v. Daniel, 329 F.3d 480, 485-86 (6th Cir. 2003), *citing* United States v. Gold Unlimited, Inc., *supra* at 479. In the instruction, the words "by deception" were omitted because that requirement is adequately covered in paragraph (2)(F) defining intent to defraud. In *Daniel*, the court further states, "The scheme to defraud element required under 18 U.S.C. § 1341 is not defined according to a technical standard. The standard is a 'reflection of moral uprightness, of fundamental honesty, fair play and right dealing in the general and business life of members of society.'" *Daniel*, 329 F.3d at 486 (brackets and some internal quotation marks omitted), *quoting* United States v. Van Dyke, 605 F.2d 220, 225 (6th Cir. 1979).

Paragraph (2)(C) defining the term "false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises" has been quoted by Sixth Circuit as a correct definition of fraud. U.S. v. Bertram, 900 F.3d 743, 748-749 (6th Cir. 2018) (affirming health care fraud convictions). In the instruction, the Committee omitted a reference to the intent to defraud because that element is covered in paragraph (2)(F). The reference to reckless indifference to the truth is further supported by U.S. v. Kennedy, 714 F.3d 951, 958 (6th Cir. 2013) ("The government met the mail- and wire-fraud statutes' intent requirements through proof that K. Kennedy was reckless in his disregard for the truth of the statements that he made to victims to obtain their money.") (citations omitted). *See also* Instruction 2.09 Deliberate Ignorance.

Bertram also confirmed that the health care fraud statute is violated by omissions of material fact. *Bertram* at 748 (stating that knowing concealment of material facts "suffices to violate the statute because omissions of material fact constitute a scheme to defraud.") The court reaffirmed this conclusion also in U.S. v. Clay, 162 F.4th 757, 768-769 (6th Cir. 2025) (per curiam), finding no plain error when the defendant's conviction for health care fraud was based on material omissions despite the absence of a duty to disclose. The *Clay* court acknowledged that *Bertram* could be interpreted different ways but relied on U.S. v. Montgomery, 2022 WL 2284387 (6th Cir. 2022) (unpublished) to establish that a defendant can be guilty of fraud through the concealment of material information in the absence of a positive legal duty to disclose that information. *Clay* at 769, *quoting* U.S. v. Montgomery, 2022 WL 2284387 at *10.

In paragraph (2)(D), the definitions of "knowingly" and "willfully" are based on U.S. v. Clay, 162 F.4th 757 (6th Cir. 2025) and U.S. v. Singh, 147 F.4th 652 (6th Cir. 2025). In *Singh*, the court vacated a conviction for health care fraud because the instructions did not require the government to prove that the defendant acted with knowledge that his conduct was unlawful. The court explained,

[K]nowingly and willfully are distinct levels of criminal intent. Whereas knowingly requires only proof of knowledge of the facts that constitute the offense, more is required with respect to conduct that is criminal only when done willfully. [I]n order to establish a "willful" violation of a statute, the Government must prove that the defendant acted with knowledge that his conduct was unlawful.

Singh at 658, *quoting* Bryan v. U.S., 524 U.S. 184, 193, 118 S. Ct. 1939 (1998) and Ratzlaf v. U.S., 510 U.S. 135, 137, 114 S.Ct. 655 (1994)) (cleaned up). Then in *Clay*, the court reaffirmed these holdings from *Singh* and went on to conclude that the incorrect instruction on

“knowingly and willfully” given in *Clay* did not amount to plain error. The language in the instruction at the end of paragraph (2)(D) stating that “the defendant need not know which particular statute he violated” is based on § 1347(b) (“[w]ith respect to violations of this section, a person need not have actual knowledge of this section or specific intent to commit a violation of this section”); *see also Clay* at 766.

In paragraph (2)(E), the definition of “material” is based on *Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 16 (1999), *quoting* *United States v. Gaudin*, 515 U.S. 506, 509 (1995).

In paragraph (2)(F) the definition of “intent to defraud” is a restatement of the language in *United States v. Frost*, 125 F.3d 346, 371 (6th Cir. 1997). The court quoted this definition with approval in *United States v. McAuliffe*, 490 F.3d 526, 531 (6th Cir. 2007). For other phrasing of the definition, *see United States v. Daniel*, 329 F.3d 480, 487 (6th Cir. 2003) (*quoting United States v. DeSantis*, 134 F.3d 760, 764 (6th Cir. 1998)).

Bracketed paragraph (3) lists some but not all items the government is not required to prove. These provisions should be used only if relevant. The first bracketed item, that the government need not prove that the defendant had actual knowledge of or specific intent to violate the health care fraud statute, is based on § 1347(b) and *Clay* at 766. The second bracketed item, that the government need not prove that the health care benefit program suffered any loss, is based on *United States v. Davis*, 490 F.3d 541, 547 (6th Cir. 2007). The third bracketed item (that for the jurisdictional element, the government need not prove that the defendant engaged in interstate commerce or that the defendant’s acts affected interstate commerce) is based on Seventh Circuit Pattern Instruction 18 U.S.C. § 1347 HEALTH CARE BENEFIT PROGRAM/INTERSTATE COMMERCE – DEFINITION.

The Use Note counseling the court on when to give Instruction 10.04 Fraud – Good Faith Defense in health care fraud prosecutions is based on *United States v. Semrau*, 693 F.3d 510, 528 (6th Cir. 2012).

It is also a crime to attempt or conspire to violate § 1347. Attempt can be charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1344; conspiracy can be charged under either 18 U.S.C. §§ 371 or 1349. The Committee did not draft separate instructions for these crimes. If the charge is based on attempt, an instruction may be compiled by combining this instruction with the instructions in Chapter 5 Attempts. If the charge is based on conspiracy, an instruction may be compiled by using the instructions in Chapter 3 Conspiracy with one caveat. Conspiracies under § 371 require an overt act whereas conspiracies under § 1349 do not require an overt act. *United States v. Rogers*, 769 F.3d 372, 379-82 (6th Cir. 2014). Thus if the conspiracy to commit health care fraud is charged under § 371, Instruction 3.01A Conspiracy to Commit an Offense (18 U.S.C. § 371) – Basic Elements should be used as is, but if the conspiracy is charged under § 1349, Instruction 3.01A should be modified to omit paragraph (2)(C) on overt acts. All other references to overt acts should be deleted as well.

If the prosecution is based on a violation of § 1347 that results in serious bodily injury or death, the maximum penalty is increased. Because the jury must unanimously agree on any fact (other than a prior conviction) that increases the maximum penalty, the serious bodily injury or death must be proved to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt. *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S.

466 (2000). In this situation, the Committee recommends that the court give an instruction like Instruction 14.07(A) or (B) and use a special verdict form like those following Instructions 14.07(A) and (B).