

#### 4. Article 80—Attempts

##### a. Text of statute.

(a) **An act, done with specific intent to commit an offense under this chapter, amounting to more than mere preparation and tending, even though failing, to effect its commission, is an attempt to commit that offense.**

(b) **Any person subject to this chapter who attempts to commit any offense punishable by this chapter shall be punished as a court-martial may direct, unless otherwise specifically prescribed.**

(c) **Any person subject to this chapter may be convicted of an attempt to commit an offense although it appears on the trial that the offense was consummated.**

##### b. Elements.

(1) That the accused did a certain overt act;

(2) That the act was done with the specific intent to commit a certain offense under the code;

(3) That the act amounted to more than mere preparation; and

(4) That the act apparently tended to effect the commission of the intended offense.

##### c. Explanation.

(1) *In general.* To constitute an attempt there must be a specific intent to commit the offense accompanied by an overt act which directly tends to accomplish the unlawful purpose.

(2) *More than preparation.* Preparation consists of devising or arranging the means or measures necessary for the commission of the offense. The overt act required goes beyond preparatory steps and is a direct movement toward the commission of the offense. For example, a purchase of matches with the intent to burn a haystack is not an attempt to commit arson, but it is an attempt to commit arson to applying a burning match to a haystack, even if no fire results. The overt act need not be the last act essential to the consummation of the offense. For example, an accused could commit an overt act, and then voluntarily decide not to go through with the intended offense. An attempt would nevertheless have been committed, for the combination of a specific intent to commit an offense, plus the commission of an overt act directly tending to accomplish it, constitutes the offense of attempt. Failure to complete the offense, whatever the cause, is not a defense.

(3) *Factual impossibility.* A person who purposely engages in conduct which would constitute the offense if the attendant circumstances were as that person believed them to be is guilty of an attempt. For example, if A, without justification or excuse and with intent to kill B, points a gun at B and pulls the trigger, A is guilty of attempt to murder, even though, unknown to A, the gun is defective and will not fire. Similarly, a person who reaches into the pocket of another with the intent to steal that person's billfold is guilty of an attempt to commit larceny, even though the pocket is empty.

(4) *Voluntary abandonment.* It is a defense to an attempt offense that the person voluntarily and completely abandoned the intended crime, solely because of the person's own sense that it was wrong, prior to the completion of the crime. The voluntary abandonment defense is not allowed if the abandonment results, in whole or in part, from other reasons, for example, the person feared detection or apprehension, decided to await a better opportunity for success, was unable to complete the crime, or encountered unanticipated difficulties or unexpected resistance. A person who is entitled to the defense of voluntary abandonment may nonetheless be guilty of a lesser included, completed offense. For example, a person who voluntarily abandoned an attempted armed robbery may nonetheless be guilty of assault with a dangerous weapon.

(5) *Solicitation.* Soliciting another to commit an offense does not constitute an attempt. See paragraph 6 for a discussion of Article 82, solicitation.

(6) *Attempts not under Article 80.* While most attempts should be charged under Article 80, the following attempts are specifically addressed by some other article, and should be charged accordingly:

- (a) Article 85—desertion
- (b) Article 94—mutiny or sedition.
- (c) Article 100—subordinate compelling
- (d) Article 104—aiding the enemy
- (e) Article 106a—espionage
- (f) Article 119a—attempting to kill an unborn child
- (g) Article 128—assault

(7) *Regulations.* An attempt to commit conduct which would violate a lawful general order or regulation under Article 92 (see paragraph 16) should be charged under Article 80. It is not necessary in such cases to prove that the accused intended to violate the order or regulation, but it must be proved that the accused intended to commit the prohibited conduct.

d. *Lesser included offenses.* If the accused is charged with an attempt under Article 80, and the offense attempted has a lesser included offense, then the offense of attempting to commit the lesser included offense would ordinarily be a lesser included offense to the charge of attempt. For example, if an accused was charged with attempted larceny, the offense of attempted wrongful appropriation would be a lesser included offense, although it, like the attempted larceny, would be a violation of Article 80.

e. *Maximum punishment.* Any person subject to the code who is found guilty of an attempt under Article 80 to commit any offense punishable by the code shall be subject to the same maximum punishment authorized for the commission of the offense attempted, except that in no case shall the death penalty be adjudged, and in no case, other than attempted murder, shall confinement exceeding 20 years be adjudged. Except in the cases of attempts of Article 120(a) or (b), rape or sexual assault of a child under Article 120b(a) or (b), and forcible sodomy under Article 125, mandatory minimum punishment provisions shall not apply.

f. *Sample specification.*

In that \_\_\_\_\_ (personal jurisdiction data) did, (at/on board—location) (subject-matter jurisdiction data, if required), on or about 20\_\_\_\_, attempt to (describe offense with sufficient detail to include expressly or by necessary implication every element).