

TITLE 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE
PART I - CRIMES
CHAPTER 63 - MAIL FRAUD AND OTHER FRAUD OFFENSES

§ 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.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 763; May 24, 1949, ch. 139, § 34, 63 Stat. 94; Pub. L. 91–375, § (6)(j)(11), Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 778; Pub. L. 101–73, title IX, § 961(i), Aug. 9, 1989, 103 Stat. 500; Pub. L. 101–647, title XXV, § 2504(h), Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 4861; Pub. L. 103–322, title XXV, § 250006, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(H), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2087, 2147; Pub. L. 107–204, title IX, § 903(a), July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 805; Pub. L. 110–179, § 4, Jan. 7, 2008, 121 Stat. 2557.)

Historical and Revision Notes

1948 Act

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 338 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 215, 35 Stat. 1130).

The obsolete argot of the underworld was deleted as suggested by Hon. Emerich B. Freed, United States district judge, in a paper read before the 1944 Judicial Conference for the sixth circuit in which he said:

A brief reference to § 1341, which proposes to reenact the present section covering the use of the mails to defraud. This section is almost a page in length, is involved, and contains a great deal of superfluous language, including such terms as “sawdust swindle, green articles, green coin, green goods and green cigars.” This section could be greatly simplified, and now-meaningless language eliminated.

The other surplusage was likewise eliminated and the section simplified without change of meaning.

A reference to causing to be placed any letter, etc. in any post office, or station thereof, etc. was omitted as unnecessary because of definition of “principal” in section 2 of this title.

1949 Act

This section [section 34] corrects a typographical error in section 1341 of title 18, U.S.C.

Amendments

2008—Pub. L. 110–179 inserted “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” after “If the violation”.

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 5, 2009 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscpri.html>).

2002—Pub. L. 107–204 substituted “20 years” for “five years”.

1994—Pub. L. 103–322, § 330016(1)(H), substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$1,000” after “thing, shall be”.

Pub. L. 103–322, § 250006, inserted “or deposits or causes to be deposited any matter or thing whatever to be sent or delivered by any private or commercial interstate carrier,” after “Postal Service,” and “or such carrier” after “causes to be delivered by mail”.

1990—Pub. L. 101–647 substituted “30” for “20” before “years”.

1989—Pub. L. 101–73 inserted at end “If the violation affects a financial institution, such person shall be fined not more than \$1,000,000 or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both.”

1970—Pub. L. 91–375 substituted “Postal Service” for “Post Office Department”.

1949—Act May 24, 1949, substituted “of” for “or” after “dispose”.

Effective Date of 1970 Amendment

Amendment by Pub. L. 91–375 effective within 1 year after Aug. 12, 1970, on date established therefor by Board of Governors of United States Postal Service and published by it in Federal Register, see section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91–375, set out as an Effective Date note preceding section 101 of Title 39, Postal Service.

Short Title of 2002 Amendment

Pub. L. 107–204, title IX, § 901, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 804, provided that: “This title [enacting sections 1349 and 1350 of this title, amending this section, section 1343 of this title, and section 1131 of Title 29, Labor, and enacting provisions set out as notes under section 994 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure] may be cited as the ‘White-Collar Crime Penalty Enhancement Act of 2002.’”