



Sentencing Guidelines

Minnesota Judicial Branch

Vision

The general public and those who use the court system will refer to it as accessible, fair, consistent, responsive, free of discrimination, independent, and well managed.

Mission

To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

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The Sentencing Guidelines System promotes uniform and proportional sentences for convicted felons and helps to ensure that sentencing decisions are not influenced by factors such as race, gender, or the exercise of constitutional rights by the defendant.

The goals are:

1. To Assure Public Safety;
2. To Promote Uniformity in Sentencing;
3. To Promote Proportionality in Sentencing;
4. To Provide Truth and Certainty in Sentencing; and
5. To Coordinate Sentencing Practices with Correctional Resources.

Minnesota's guidelines recommend sentences based first on the seriousness of the offense and second on the criminal record of the offender. Offenders who are convicted of similar crimes and have similar criminal backgrounds are to receive similar sentences. Offenders who commit the most serious and violent offenses or have more extensive criminal records are to receive the harshest sentences.

The court has sentencing discretion. While following the guidelines is expected, they are recommendations based on typical circumstances. A case that is not typical is reason for departure. If the court does depart, the judge must state the reasons for departure and either the prosecution or the defense may appeal the pronounced sentence.

The Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission, created in 1978, is responsible for maintaining the guidelines. The Commission also collects and analyzes information on actual sentencing practices as compared to the sentences recommended by the guidelines. The Commission consists of 11 members representing the criminal justice system, the public, and victims. The Commission modifies the guidelines each year, in response to legislative changes, case law, problems identified by the monitoring system, and issues raised by various groups.

If you would like more information on Sentencing Guidelines, please visit:
<http://www.msgc.state.mn.us/>