

**RCW 9A.04.020 Purposes—Principles of construction.** (1) The general purposes of the provisions governing the definition of offenses are:

(a) To forbid and prevent conduct that inflicts or threatens substantial harm to individual or public interests;

(b) To safeguard conduct that is without culpability from condemnation as criminal;

(c) To give fair warning of the nature of the conduct declared to constitute an offense;

(d) To differentiate on reasonable grounds between serious and minor offenses, and to prescribe proportionate penalties for each.

(2) The provisions of this title shall be construed according to the fair import of their terms but when the language is susceptible of differing constructions it shall be interpreted to further the general purposes stated in this title. [1975 1st ex.s. c 260 s 9A.04.020.]