

**RCW 9A.42.037 Criminal mistreatment in the fourth degree.** (1) A person is guilty of the crime of criminal mistreatment in the fourth degree if the person is the parent of a child, is a person entrusted with the physical custody of a child or other dependent person, is a person who has assumed the responsibility to provide to a dependent person the basic necessities of life, or is a person employed to provide to the child or dependent person the basic necessities of life, and either:

(a) With criminal negligence, creates an imminent and substantial risk of bodily injury to a child or dependent person by withholding any of the basic necessities of life; or

(b) With criminal negligence, causes bodily injury or extreme emotional distress manifested by more than transient physical symptoms to a child or dependent person by withholding the basic necessities of life.

(2) For purposes of this section, "a person who has assumed the responsibility to provide to a dependent person the basic necessities of life" means a person other than: (a) A government agency that regularly provides assistance or services to dependent persons, including but not limited to the department of social and health services; or (b) a good samaritan as defined in RCW 9A.42.010.

(3) Criminal mistreatment in the fourth degree is a misdemeanor. [2006 c 228 § 5; 2002 c 219 § 2.]

**Intent—Finding—2002 c 219:** "The legislature recognizes that responses by the department of social and health services and public safety agencies have varied between jurisdictions when allegations of withholding of the basic necessities of life are made. The legislature intends to improve the capacity of the department of social and health services and public safety agencies to respond to situations where the basic necessities of life are withheld by allowing an earlier intervention in such cases. The legislature finds that improved coordination between the department of social and health services and public safety agencies at an earlier point will lead to better treatment of children and families and will reduce the likelihood of serious harm." [2002 c 219 § 1.]