

609.821 FINANCIAL TRANSACTION CARD FRAUD.

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given them:

(a) "Financial transaction card" means any instrument or device, whether known as a credit card, credit plate, charge plate, courtesy card, bank services card, banking card, check guarantee card, debit card, electronic benefit system (EBS) card, electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, assistance transaction card, or by any other name, issued with or without fee by an issuer for the use of the cardholder in obtaining credit, money, goods, services, public assistance benefits, or anything else of value, and includes the account or identification number or symbol of a financial transaction card.

(b) "Cardholder" means a person in whose name a card is issued.

(c) "Issuer" means a person, firm, or governmental agency, or a duly authorized agent or designee, that issues a financial transaction card.

(d) "Property" includes money, goods, services, public assistance benefit, or anything else of value.

(e) "Public assistance benefit" means any money, goods or services, or anything else of value, issued under chapters 256, 256B, 256D, or section 393.07, subdivision 10.

(f) "Trafficking of SNAP benefits" means:

(1) the buying, selling, stealing, or otherwise effecting an exchange of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits issued and accessed via an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, card number and personal identification number (PIN), or manual voucher and signature, for cash or consideration other than eligible food, either directly, indirectly, in complicity or collusion with others, or acting alone;

(2) the exchange of one of the following for SNAP benefits: firearms, ammunition, explosives, or controlled substances as defined in United States Code, title 21, section 802;

(3) purchasing a product with SNAP benefits that has a container requiring a return deposit with the intent of obtaining cash by discarding the product and returning the container for the deposit amount, intentionally discarding the product, and intentionally returning the container for the deposit amount;

(4) purchasing a product with SNAP benefits with the intent of obtaining cash or consideration other than eligible food by reselling the product, and intentionally reselling the product purchased with SNAP benefits in exchange for cash or consideration other than eligible food;

(5) intentionally purchasing products originally purchased with SNAP benefits in exchange for cash or consideration other than eligible food; or

(6) attempting to buy, sell, steal, or otherwise effect an exchange of SNAP benefits issued and accessed via an EBT card, card number and PIN number, or manual voucher and signature, for cash or consideration other than eligible food, either directly, indirectly, in complicity or collusion with others, or acting alone.

Subd. 2. **Violations; penalties.** A person who does any of the following commits financial transaction card fraud:

(1) without the consent of the cardholder, and knowing that the cardholder has not given consent, uses or attempts to use a card to obtain the property of another, or a public assistance benefit issued for the use of another;

(2) uses or attempts to use a card knowing it to be forged, false, fictitious, or obtained in violation of clause (6);

(3) sells or transfers a card knowing that the cardholder and issuer have not authorized the person to whom the card is sold or transferred to use the card, or that the card is forged, false, fictitious, or was obtained in violation of clause (6);

(4) without a legitimate business purpose, and without the consent of the cardholders, receives or possesses, with intent to use, or with intent to sell or transfer in violation of clause (3), two or more cards issued in the name of another, or two or more cards knowing the cards to be forged, false, fictitious, or obtained in violation of clause (6);

(5) being authorized by an issuer to furnish money, goods, services, or anything else of value, knowingly and with an intent to defraud the issuer or the cardholder:

(i) furnishes money, goods, services, or anything else of value upon presentation of a financial transaction card knowing it to be forged, expired, or revoked, or knowing that it is presented by a person without authority to use the card; or

(ii) represents in writing to the issuer that the person has furnished money, goods, services, or anything else of value which has not in fact been furnished;

(6) upon applying for a financial transaction card to an issuer, or for a public assistance benefit which is distributed by means of a financial transaction card:

(i) knowingly gives a false name or occupation;

(ii) knowingly and substantially overvalues assets or substantially undervalues indebtedness for the purpose of inducing the issuer to issue a financial transaction card; or

(iii) knowingly makes a false statement or representation for the purpose of inducing an issuer to issue a financial transaction card used to obtain a public assistance benefit;

(7) with intent to defraud, falsely notifies the issuer or any other person of a theft, loss, disappearance, or nonreceipt of a financial transaction card;

(8) without the consent of the cardholder and knowing that the cardholder has not given consent, falsely alters, makes, or signs any written document pertaining to a card transaction to obtain or attempt to obtain the property of another; or

(9) engages in trafficking of SNAP benefits.

Subd. 3. **Sentence.** (a) A person who commits financial transaction card fraud may be sentenced as follows:

(1) for a violation of subdivision 2, clause (1), (2), (5), (8), or (9):

(i) to imprisonment for not more than 20 years or to payment of a fine of not more than \$100,000, or both, if the value of the property the person obtained or attempted to obtain was more than \$35,000, or the aggregate amount of the transactions under this subdivision was more than \$35,000; or

(ii) to imprisonment for not more than ten years or to payment of a fine of not more than \$20,000, or both, if the value of the property the person obtained or attempted to obtain was more than \$2,500, or the aggregate amount of the transactions under this subdivision was more than \$2,500; or

(iii) to imprisonment for not more than five years or to payment of a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both, if the value of the property the person obtained or attempted to obtain was more than \$250 but not more than \$2,500, or the aggregate amount of the transactions under this subdivision was more than \$250 but not more than \$2,500; or

(iv) to imprisonment for not more than five years or to payment of a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both, if the value of the property the person obtained or attempted to obtain was not more than \$250, or the aggregate amount of the transactions under this subdivision was not more than \$250, and the person has previously been convicted within the preceding five years for an offense under this section, section 609.24; 609.245; 609.52; 609.53; 609.582, subdivision 1, 2, or 3; 609.625; 609.63; or 609.631, or a statute from another state in conformity with any of those sections, and the person received a felony or gross misdemeanor sentence for the offense, or a sentence that was stayed under section 609.135 if the offense to which a plea was entered would allow imposition of a felony or gross misdemeanor sentence; or

(v) to imprisonment for not more than one year or to payment of a fine of not more than \$3,000, or both, if the value of the property the person obtained or attempted to obtain was not more than \$250, or the aggregate amount of the transactions under this subdivision was not more than \$250;

(2) for a violation of subdivision 2, clause (3) or (4), to imprisonment for not more than three years or to payment of a fine of not more than \$5,000, or both; or

(3) for a violation of subdivision 2, clause (6) or (7):

(i) if no property, other than a financial transaction card, has been obtained by the defendant by means of the false statement or false report, to imprisonment for not more than one year or to payment of a fine of not more than \$3,000, or both; or

(ii) if property, other than a financial transaction card, is so obtained, in the manner provided in clause (1).

(b) In any prosecution under paragraph (a), clause (1), the value of the transactions made or attempted within any six-month period may be aggregated and the defendant charged accordingly in applying the provisions of this section. When two or more offenses are committed by the same person in two or more counties, the accused may be prosecuted in any county in which one of the card transactions occurred for all of the transactions aggregated under this paragraph.

History: 1985 c 243 s 10; 1987 c 329 s 14-16; 1988 c 712 s 16; 1Sp1993 c 1 art 6 s 53,54; 1999 c 218 s 5; 2015 c 78 art 4 s 60