



Guidelines E-News

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New Maryland Sentencing Guidelines Manual (Version 18.0)

The Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP or Commission) released a new version of the [Maryland Sentencing Guidelines Manual](#) (MSGM; Version 18.0). The new MSGM reflects the guidelines revisions detailed below and adopted in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) effective October 1, 2026. Please discard any prior versions of the MSGM, as information in prior versions may no longer be accurate.

Clarifying that Sex Offender Registration is Not Considered Involvement with the Criminal Justice System for the Purposes of Calculating the Offender Score

At its May 5, 2026, meeting, the MSCCSP voted to clarify the instructions for sex offender registration as it applies to the offender score. Specifically, the instructions now state that an individual is not involved with the criminal justice system (CJS) for the purposes of calculating *part A of the offender score* (i.e., the defendant's relationship to the CJS when the instant offense occurred) or the *criminal record decay factor* if the individual's only involvement was to comply with the ongoing reporting requirements associated with sex offender registration in the State or elsewhere. Note that this is not a new guidelines rule but rather clarification of an existing rule.

The clarification was adopted in COMAR effective October 1, 2026. The affected sections of the [MSGM](#) are *7.1.A. Relationship to the Criminal Justice System When Instant Offense Occurred* and *7.1.C.2. Additional Instructions (Criminal Record Decay Factor)*.

Streamlining the Sentencing Guidelines Worksheet by Removing Select Fields

The sentencing guidelines worksheet contains more than 80 fields. As such, the time required to complete the worksheet is notable. At its May 5, 2026, meeting, the MSCCSP voted to streamline the sentencing guidelines worksheet by removing select fields, the majority of which are victim-related items. The identified fields lack direct utility to the guidelines, are not widely utilized by outside parties, are often left blank by the justice partners responsible for completing the worksheet, and/or the information captured by the field is captured by another field on the worksheet. Prior to the vote to

remove worksheet fields, the MSCCSP solicited feedback from victims' advocacy groups. Consistent with that input, the Commission unanimously agreed to adopt the changes summarized in the table below.

The revisions were adopted in COMAR effective October 1, 2026. The affected section of the [MSGM](#) is *11 Victim Information*.

Revisions to Select Worksheet Fields

Victim-Related Fields	
Victim Court Costs Imposed	Specify whether the victim-related court costs were imposed pursuant to CJ, § 7-409, Annotated Code of Maryland, and Maryland Rule 4-353.
Victim	Was there a victim in this offense?
Victim Participation	Was the victim available to participate in the sentencing process?
Victim Notification Form	Was a Crime Victim Notification and Demand for Rights form filed by a victim?
Victim Notified Plea	Was victim notified of the terms and conditions of a plea agreement prior to entry of a plea?
Victim Notified Date	Was victim notified of the court date for sentencing?
Victim Present	Was the victim present at sentencing?
Victim Impact Statement (new - replaced Written VIS & Oral VIS)	Was there a written or an oral Victim Impact Statement (VIS)?
Written VIS (replaced with Victim Impact Statement)	Was a written VIS prepared?
Oral VIS (replaced with Victim Impact Statement)	Did victim or State make a request for an oral VIS by victim?
No Contact Requested	Did victim or State make a request that defendant have no contact with victim?
No Contact Ordered	Did the sentencing judge order the defendant to have no contact with the victim?
Other Fields	
Subsequent Offender Proven	Indicate if subsequent offender status was proven.
50% of Sentence Announced for COVs	Indicate whether or not there was an announcement regarding the mandatory serving of 50% of a sentence for violent offenses.

 Field removed. Field replaced. Field retained/added.

Clarifying the Definition of Physical Victim Injury

At its May 5, 2026, meeting, the MSCCSP voted to reorganize the instructions for scoring victim injury (part C of the offense score) for better clarity. The Commission also voted to relabel “no injury” as “no/minor injury” and to update the definition of physical victim injury to include examples of minor, non-permanent, and permanent injuries. The examples provided are as follows:

a. **No/Minor Injury**

Examples of no/minor injuries include, but are not limited to, small cuts, scrapes, minimal or superficial bruises, and mild sprains that do not require immediate emergency care.

b. **Non-Permanent Injury**

Non-permanent injury shall be more than minor. Examples of non-permanent injuries include, but are not limited to, significant bruises and contusions accompanied by demonstrable pain and discomfort; lacerations and abrasions that have no residual effect; concussions without lasting neurological impact; and fractures, internal injuries, wounds, and sexually transmitted infections, which are serious but not life-threatening.

c. **Permanent Injury or Death**

Permanent injury shall be based on a substantial impairment or loss of function likely to be of an extended or continuous duration, or death. Examples of permanent injuries include, but are not limited to, lasting muscle damage, amputation, paralysis, protracted disfigurement, significant scarring, and death. Offenses involving photographic or video evidence of child pornography shall be scored as permanent victim injury.

The revisions were adopted in COMAR effective October 1, 2026. The affected section of the [MSGM](#) is *6.1.B. Victim Injury*.

Note regarding the Maryland Automated Guidelines System (MAGS)

The Maryland Automated Guidelines System (MAGS; Version 14.0) has been updated to reflect the above guidelines revisions. MAGS users can find details on all the MAGS updates in [What’s New in MAGS 14.0](#).