

MISSOURI RISK CLASSIFICATION MATRIX

This classification matrix should provide guidance to juvenile justice professionals in the 22nd Circuit in linking youthful offenders with different risk levels and offense types to a set of appropriately graduated dispositions. Using sanctions outside those recommended within the matrix is permitted when unusual case circumstances are evident; however, the use of these discretionary alternatives requires approval and an explanation.

Using the Classification Matrix

If the youth has more than one immediate allegation, the most serious allegation should be used to determine sanctions. If the presenting referral was reduced or otherwise altered after screening for legal sufficiency, the officer should use the modified referral for identifying sanctions. There may be occasions when it is appropriate to choose more than one option from those listed in the matrix cell. Officers may choose more than one option when there is reason to believe that more than one sanction is needed. In unusual circumstances, the officer may exercise discretion by “working outside” of the Risk Classification Matrix guidelines; however, as outlined below, approval and a detailed explanation will be needed for that to occur. Mandatory certification hearings are required by statute for all Class A Felonies. In the event the youth is not certified, the juvenile officer should refer to the appropriate felony column on the matrix for classification purposes.

Instructions for Classification Matrix

- 1) After completing the Risk Assessment scale, locate the youth's risk level.
- 2) Locate the youth's risk level down the far-left column of the Classification Matrix.
- 3) Locate the severity of the youth's offense across the top row of the Classification Matrix.
- 4) Locate the cell in the matrix where the youth's risk level and offense severity intersect. This cell contains the suggested graduated dispositions recommended by the matrix for a given case. The dispositions are listed from least to most restrictive. The officer should explore and consider the least restrictive option first before moving down the list. If the officer feels there are case factors that warrant consideration of options outside the matrix, he/she must explain that to, and receive approval from, the DJO supervisor.
- 5) Record the dispositional recommendation that was applied on the Risk Assessment Form.
- 6) Record your reason for electing to use a recommended disposition not recommended in the matrix. Disposition= the penalty for noncompliance specified in a law, or any penalty that acts to insure compliance or conformity.

Sanction Definitions

Alternatives to Supervision (ATS)

As an alternative to Informal Supervision the Alternative to Supervision recommendation may be used in instances for example: 1.) a seventeen year old youth (17) who is not in need of supervision services but has a restitution obligation. They may be adjudicated and the disposition is held pending the youth's completion of the restitution obligation; 2.) a youthful offender who lacks the maturity level to understand a supervision process but is in need of services. These cases can either be adjudicated or an agreement may be set forth that the youth is provided services and the case is closed; 3.) a youth is in Children's Division custody and may also be in residential placement and supervision services are not required; however, if the youth has restitution or a required service that can only be effected by this court, the youth could be placed on an ATS until the obligation is met. There may be other examples when an officer may choose an ATS and that can be discussed with their supervisory staff.

Formal/informal Supervision

The juvenile officer meets regularly with the youth and their parent/custodian for the following purposes:

- 1) providing and/or monitoring intervention programs, and prevention and education programs, to ensure the youth is receiving those services as expected;
- 2) ensuring that the youth is complying with sanctions, as ordered by the court, or agreed to by the youth and their parent/custodian through the informal adjustment agreement.

Intensive Supervision

The youth is adjudicated and placed under intensive supervision, a type of formal supervision. Distinctive features of intensive supervision programs include low caseloads, frequent contacts with the youth, regular collateral contacts with other family members, school personnel, and/or community members who have knowledge of the youth's behavior. During the early stage of intensive supervision, contacts may be surveillance-oriented, with emphasis on empowerment and encouragement.

Frequency of contacts may diminish as the youth demonstrates progress. Youths on intensive supervision may be placed on GPS or other Detention Alternative Programs.