

§36. Ignorance or mistake

1. Evidence of ignorance or mistake as to a matter of fact or law may raise a reasonable doubt as to the existence of a required culpable state of mind.

[PL 1981, c. 324, §14 (NEW).]

2. Ignorance or mistake as to a matter of fact or law is a defense only if the law provides that the state of mind established by such ignorance or mistake constitutes a defense.

[PL 1981, c. 324, §14 (NEW).]

3. Although ignorance or mistake would otherwise afford a defense to the crime charged, the defense is not available if the defendant would be guilty of another crime had the situation been as the defendant supposed.

[PL 2007, c. 173, §9 (AMD).]

4. It is an affirmative defense if the defendant engages in conduct that the defendant believes does not legally constitute a crime if:

A. The statute violated is not known to the defendant and has not been published or otherwise reasonably made available prior to the conduct alleged; or [PL 1981, c. 324, §14 (NEW).]

B. The defendant acts in reasonable reliance upon an official statement, afterward determined to be invalid or erroneous, contained in:

(1) A statute, ordinance or other enactment;

(2) A final judicial decision, opinion or judgment;

(3) An administrative order or grant of permission; or

(4) An official interpretation of the public officer or body charged by law with responsibility for the interpretation, administration or enforcement of the statute defining the crime. This subsection does not impose any duty to make any such official interpretation. [PL 1981, c. 324, §14 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 173, §10 (AMD).]

5. A mistaken belief that facts exist which would constitute an affirmative defense is not an affirmative defense, except as otherwise expressly provided.

[PL 1981, c. 324, §14 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1981, c. 324, §14 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 173, §§9, 10 (AMD).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the Second Regular Session of the 131st Maine Legislature and is current through January 1, 2025. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.