RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT CHARGES IN WASHINGTON
HOW A SEATTLE CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY CAN HELP

Reckless endangerment is a **gross misdemeanor** offense under Washington law, punishable by a $5,000 fine and one year in jail. According to RCW 9A.36.050, "A person is guilty of reckless endangerment when he or she recklessly engages in conduct not amounting to drive-by shooting but that creates a substantial risk of death or serious physical injury to another person."

RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO DUI

Although the law does not offer specific criteria for "reckless endangerment," this crime is often associated with drunk driving; however, a reckless endangerment conviction is less significantly less devastating than a DUI – especially compared to felony DUI, DUI with injury, or multiple DUIs.

RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT VS. DRUNK DRIVING

Reckless endangerment differs from drunk driving in a variety of ways. For example, there is no mandatory jail sentence for a reckless endangerment conviction, while DUI comes with mandatory penalties. If you are convicted of reckless endangerment, the judge can enforce a sentence of one year in jail, but this is not an obligation. Similarly, there is no mandatory fine for reckless endangerment, but you can face up to $5,000 in fines.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- **Gross misdemeanor offense**
- **Punishable by one year in jail**
- **Punishable by a $5,000 fine**
- **Often used as a DUI reduction**

OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES THAT QUALIFY AS "RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT"

While reckless endangerment is typically used as a reduction from standard DUI charges, Washington law does not exclude other situations from qualifying as "reckless endangerment." Generally speaking, any form of behind-the-wheel negligence could be reckless endangerment. Carrying a weapon while operating a motor vehicle could merit a reckless endangerment charge too. Rarely, RCW 9A.36.050 is used to prosecute criminal offenses unrelated to driving.

Charged with reckless endangerment or DUI? Contact us now**.**

If you were charged with driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, our team of Seattle criminal defense lawyers can help you fight for your rights. Depending on the unique circumstances surrounding your case, we may be able to seek a lesser charge, such as reckless endangerment.

If you were charged with reckless endangerment of for a non-DUI related offense, our team has the experience, knowledge, and skill to help you avoid the potential penalties associated with this crime. To learn more, call our office today or fill out a free case evaluation form below.