

## **§3D1.5**

In determining the number of Units for purposes of this section:

- (a) Count as one Unit the Group with the highest offense level. Count one additional Unit for each Group that is equally serious or from **1** to **4** levels less serious.
- (b) Count as one-half Unit any Group that is **5** to **8** levels less serious than the Group with the highest offense level.
- (c) Disregard any Group that is **9** or more levels less serious than the Group with the highest offense level. Such Groups will not increase the applicable offense level but may provide a reason for sentencing at the higher end of the sentencing range for the applicable offense level.

### **Commentary**

#### **Application Notes:**

1. Application of the rules in §§3D1.2 and 3D1.3 may produce a single Group of Closely Related Counts. In such cases, the combined offense level is the level corresponding to the Group determined in accordance with §3D1.3.
2. The procedure for calculating the combined offense level when there is more than one Group of Closely Related Counts is as follows: First, identify the offense level applicable to the most serious Group; assign it one Unit. Next, determine the number of Units that the remaining Groups represent. Finally, increase the offense level for the most serious Group by the number of levels indicated in the table corresponding to the total number of Units.

**Background:** When Groups are of roughly comparable seriousness, each Group will represent one Unit. When the most serious Group carries an offense level substantially higher than that applicable to the other Groups, however, counting the lesser Groups fully for purposes of the table could add excessive punishment, possibly even more than those offenses would carry if prosecuted separately. To avoid this anomalous result and produce declining marginal punishment, Groups 9 or more levels less serious than the most serious Group should not be counted for purposes of the table, and that Groups 5 to 8 levels less serious should be treated as equal to one-half of a Group. Thus, if the most serious Group is at offense level 15 and if two other Groups are at level 10, there would be a total of two Units for purposes of the table (one plus one-half plus one-half) and the combined offense level would be 17.

*Historical Note*

Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1990 (amendment 350); November 1, 2023 (amendment 824); November 1, 2025 (amendment 836).

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## **§3D1.5. Determining the Total Punishment**

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Use the combined offense level to determine the appropriate sentence in accordance with the provisions of Chapter Five.