

3. **Offenses Involving Public Officials and Other Extortion Offenses.**—Guidelines for bribery involving public officials are found in Part C, Offenses Involving Public Officials. “Extortion under color of official right,” which usually is solicitation of a bribe by a public official, is covered under §2C1.1 unless there is use of force or a threat that qualifies for treatment under this section. Certain other extortion offenses are covered under the provisions of Part E, Offenses Involving Criminal Enterprises and Racketeering.
4. **Cumulative Application of Subsections (b)(3) and (b)(4).**—The combined adjustments for weapon involvement and injury are limited to a maximum enhancement of 11 levels.
5. **Definition of “Loss to the Victim”.**—“*Loss to the victim*,” as used in subsection (b)(2), means any demand paid plus any additional consequential loss from the offense (*e.g.*, the cost of defensive measures taken in direct response to the offense).
6. **Defendant’s Preparation or Ability to Carry Out a Threat.**—In certain cases, an extortionate demand may be accompanied by conduct that does not qualify as a display of a dangerous weapon under subsection (b)(3)(A)(v) but is nonetheless similar in seriousness, demonstrating the defendant’s preparation or ability to carry out the threatened harm (*e.g.*, an extortionate demand containing a threat to tamper with a consumer product accompanied by a workable plan showing how the product’s tamper-resistant seals could be defeated, or a threat to kidnap a person accompanied by information showing study of that person’s daily routine). Subsection (b)(3)(B) addresses such cases.

Background: The Hobbs Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1951, prohibits extortion, attempted extortion, and conspiracy to extort. It provides for a maximum term of imprisonment of twenty years. 18 U.S.C. §§ 875–877 prohibit communication of extortionate demands through various means. The maximum penalty under these statutes varies from two to twenty years. Violations of 18 U.S.C. § 875 involve threats or demands transmitted by interstate commerce. Violations of 18 U.S.C. § 876 involve the use of the United States mails to communicate threats, while violations of 18 U.S.C. § 877 involve mailing threatening communications from foreign countries. This guideline also applies to offenses under 18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(7) involving a threat to impair the operation of a “protected computer.”

<i>Historical Note</i>	Effective November 1, 1987. Amended effective November 1, 1989 (amendments 112, 113, and 303); November 1, 1990 (amendment 316); November 1, 1991 (amendment 366); November 1, 1993 (amendment 479); November 1, 1997 (amendment 551); November 1, 1998 (amendment 586); November 1, 2000 (amendment 601); November 1, 2003 (amendment 654); November 1, 2015 (amendment 791); November 1, 2023 (amendment 824); November 1, 2024 (amendment 831); November 1, 2025 (amendments 832 and 836).
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§2B3.3. Blackmail and Similar Forms of Extortion

- (a) Base Offense Level: **9**
- (b) Specific Offense Characteristic
 - (1) If the greater of the amount obtained or demanded (A) exceeded \$2,500 but did not exceed \$6,500, increase by 1 level; or (B) exceeded \$6,500, increase by the number of levels from the table in §2B1.1 (Theft, Property Destruction, and Fraud) corresponding to that amount.