



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## **Police Service of Northern Ireland**

### **Notification of PSNI's Intention to Realign its Crime Recording Classifications with those in England & Wales from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011**

**Paper Compiled by:**

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## Background

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has for many years recorded crime in line with national guidance from the Home Office for police forces in England & Wales. This national guidance is based on the National Crime Recording Standard and the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and both are instrumental in getting a consistent measure of crimes reported to the police across all forces. However, as the PSNI does not come under the direct remit of the Home Office and because Northern Ireland has slight differences in its legislation and legal processes, the recording of crime and its comparability with that in England & Wales is not always straightforward.

Within Northern Ireland we have historically split recorded crime into nine broad crime classifications and these are very similar to those in England & Wales. However, there are some key differences and whilst they haven't caused major problems over the last 20 years or so, in recent years some difficulties have emerged as a result of the Home Office focusing on specific groups of offences under new titles such as 'more serious violence', 'more serious sexual crime' and 'violence with injury'.

## Proposal

As a result of these difficulties, the PSNI's Central Statistics Unit felt that the time was right to review the current crime classifications in Northern Ireland with a view to matching them as closely as possible with those in England & Wales. Levels of overall recorded crime and the overall detection rate will not be affected by this change. It was agreed at a recent PSNI senior management meeting (Chief Constables Forum dated 17<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010) that this change will be introduced within PSNI from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.

The main benefits of this approach are;

- a) it will make crime classifications in Northern Ireland more comparable with those in England & Wales; and
- b) it will be easier for PSNI to adapt to any new offence groupings that may be introduced by the Home Office in the future.

## Official Statistics: User Consultation

In accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the PSNI is required to inform key users of any impending changes to our processes that could affect existing statistics.

## Methodology

The PSNI's Central Statistics Unit undertook a thorough review of all offence types that have been recorded in Northern Ireland since 1998/99 and cross-referenced each against the Home Office Counting Rules. This was a very time consuming exercise and involved around 1000 different offence types. After much work we were able to clearly identify which of the Northern Ireland offences were currently recorded in the same classification as England & Wales and, for those that were not, where they should be classified.

The main findings at the headline level were as follows:

### Current PSNI Classification

- 1) Offences against the Person
- 2) Sexual Offences
- 3) Burglary
- 4) Robbery
- 5) Theft
- 6) Fraud & Forgery
- 7) Criminal Damage
- 8) Other Offences against the State
- 9) Other Notifiable Offences



### Proposed Change to match E&W

- 1) Violence against the Person
- 2) Sexual offences
- 3) Burglary
- 4) Robbery
- 5) Theft
- 6) Fraud & Forgery
- 7) Criminal Damage
- 8) Drug Offences
- 9) Other Miscellaneous Offences

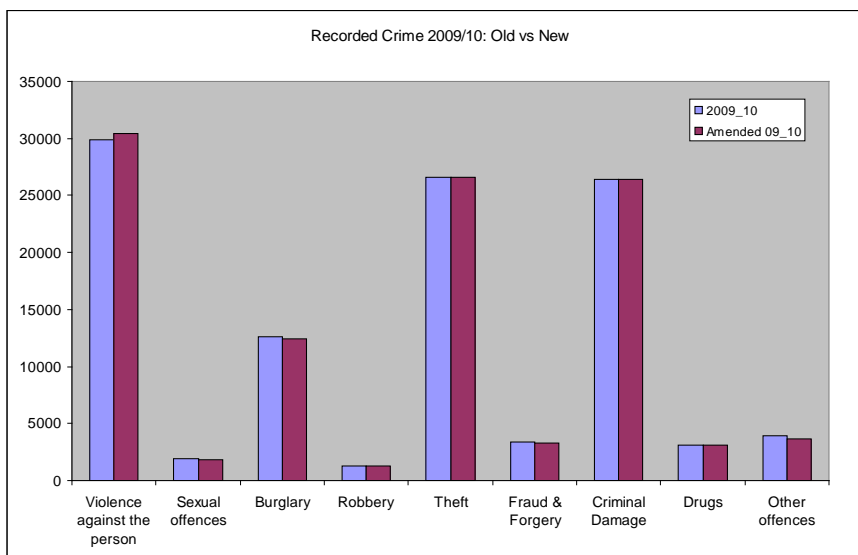
### Summary of Main Changes

Generally the existing crime recording classifications in Northern Ireland are quite similar to those that exist in England & Wales. However, there will be some significant changes as a result of the proposed changes:

- The existing classification of 'Offences against the State' (class 8) would disappear in the new approach with the vast majority of these offences merging with 'Other Miscellaneous Offences' (class 9). However, possession of offensive weapons which is currently recorded in 'Offences against the State' (class 8) would move to the category of 'Violence against the Person' (Class 1).
- Going equipped offences currently rest within 'Burglary' (class 3) but under the new arrangement they would be grouped instead with 'Other Miscellaneous Offences' (class 9).
- The drug-related offences of possession and trafficking currently recorded in 'Other Notifiable Offences' (class 9) would form their own stand alone grouping of 'Drug Offences' (class 8).
- Intimidation offences relating to witnesses would move from 'Offences against the Person' (class 1) to 'Other Miscellaneous Offences' (class 9).
- Offences relating to obscene publications & protected sexual material and offences relating to sex offenders would move from 'Sexual Offences' (class 2) to 'Other Miscellaneous Offences' (class 9).

### Impact of these Changes

By applying the reclassification to the published 2009/10 crime statistics for Northern Ireland we can get an idea as to the level of impact this change will bring about to the various crime classifications. This is highlighted in the chart below. Please note that these are based on provisional estimates that we have prepared in order to show the envisaged effects of reclassification. However, a small number of specific queries still need to be resolved before we can provide final figures.



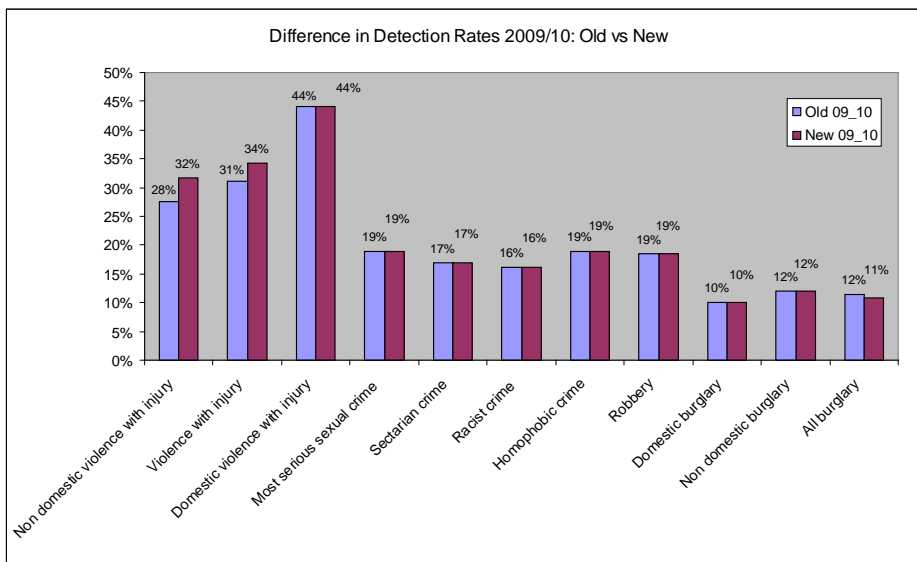
The chart above shows that based on the figures for 2009/10, the main affect of the proposed realignment changes would be:

- a slight increase in offences of 'Violence against the Person' , up by 421 offences or +1.4%;
- a slight decrease in Sexual Offences, down by 144 offences or -7.4%;
- a slight decrease in Burglary, down by 124 offences or -1.0%; and
- a slight decrease in 'Other Miscellaneous Offences', down 128 offences or -3.3%.

**Impact on Detection Rates**

As previously mentioned, the overall detection rate will remain unchanged but the proposed changes will have an impact on some of the underlying detection rates.

The chart below highlights the detection rates for the current policing plan targets as measured by the 2009/10 crime statistics. For each of the targets we have provided the original and corrected detection rates after the realignment changes are applied (based on provisional estimates).



It is clear from the chart above that the vast majority of detection rates will not be affected to any great degree by the realignment process. However, there will be a marked increase in the detection rates for the ‘violence with injury’ measures. This is because in England & Wales they differentiate between assaults on police that result in injury and those that result in no injury, and include the former in their violence with injury figures. Within Northern Ireland up until now, we have not been in a position to split assault on police offences in this way. However, this will now be possible as a result of a process change involved in the reclassification exercise and we would therefore propose including the offences of assault on police with injury within the ‘violence with injury’ measure. As the vast majority of assault on police offences result in a detection, the net result of this change will be to increase the violence with injury detection rate by around 3-4 percentage points.

**Conclusion**

The classifications that PSNI records its crime within have remained unchanged since the 1990s or earlier and are in need of a review to bring them more into line with those used within England & Wales. While any resultant changes will be fairly marginal, the main benefit will be that it will improve the comparability of recorded crime in Northern Ireland with that recorded in England & Wales (and across the 43 individual police forces). Also, with the recent tendency of the Home Office to focus on specific groups of offences within the broad classifications (eg violence with injury), the realigning of our offence classifications should make it far easier for us to follow any similar such developments in the future.

We propose introducing the change from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 and will also apply the same realignment to the crime datasets for earlier years (1998/99 – 2010/11), thus ensuring that performance against any targets during 2011/12 can be compared on a like for like basis with that in previous years. Appendix 1 shows the current crime classification as published in the PSNI Annual Report, along with the format of the crime figures that are updated on a monthly basis on the PSNI website. Appendix 2 shows the proposed classification for these two formats which, by and large, replicates tables produced by the Home Office for England & Wales. It is also our intention to continue to provide figures for existing Northern Ireland classifications that are not separately identified by the Home Office, such as assault on police with injury, intimidation, attempted rape, exposure, armed robbery,

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hijacking, petrol bombing offences, explosives and firearms offences, making off without payment, breaches of non molestation orders and offences under anti-terrorist legislation.

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**Appendix 1****a) Current classification breakdown of Recorded Crime provided through PSNI Annual Report****Offences against the person (class 1)**

Murder  
 Manslaughter  
 Infanticide  
 Causing/allowing death of vulnerable person  
 Attempted murder  
 Threat or conspiracy to murder  
 Causing death/GBH by dangerous driving or aggravated vehicle taking  
 Wounding with intent/GBH with intent  
 Wounding/GBH  
 AOABH  
 Common assault/aggravated assault  
 Assault on police  
 Intimidation  
 Harassment  
 Explosives offences endangering life  
 Firearms offences endangering life  
 Other offences against the person

**Totals****Sexual offences (class 2)**

Rape  
 Attempted rape  
 Sexual assault/Sexual activity  
 Exposure  
 Other sexual offences

**Totals****Burglary (class 3)**

Domestic Burglary (Total)  
     *Burglary in a dwelling*  
     *Aggravated burglary in a dwelling*  
 Non-Domestic Burglary (Total)  
     *Burglary in a building other than a dwelling*  
     *Aggravated burglary other than in a dwelling*  
 Going equipped

**Totals****Robbery (class 4)**

Robbery  
 Armed robbery  
 Hijacking

**Totals****Theft (class 5)**

Theft, one person from another  
 Theft in a dwelling  
 Theft by an employee  
 Theft of pedal cycles  
 Shoplifting  
 Vehicle Crime (Total)  
     *Theft from motor vehicles*  
     *Theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicles*  
 Vehicle tampering/interference  
 Handling of stolen goods  
 Other thefts

**Totals**

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**Fraud and forgery (class 6)**

Deception  
Forgery and counterfeiting  
Making off without payment  
Other frauds

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**Totals**

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**Criminal damage (class 7)**

Arson  
Petrol bombing offences  
Explosives offences  
Criminal damage/malicious damage offences  
Other criminal damage offences

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**Totals**

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**Offences against the state (class 8)**

Offences under anti-terrorism legislation  
Firearms offences  
Offences under the Public Order (NI) Order  
Other offences against the public order

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**Totals**

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**Other notifiable offences (class 9)**

Blackmail  
Kidnapping and false imprisonment  
Drug offences (Total)  
    *Trafficking offences*  
    *Non-Trafficking offences*  
Dangerous driving  
Breach of orders  
Other notifiable offences

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**Totals**

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**Violent Crime (classes 1, 2 and 4)**

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**Grand Total (all classes)**

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**b) Current classification breakdown provided through monthly updates of Recorded Crime on PSNI Website**

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**Offences**

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1. Offences against the person
2. Sexual offences
3. Burglary  
*Domestic burglary*
4. Robbery
5. Theft  
*Theft from motor vehicles*  
*Theft/unauthorised taking of motor vehicles*  
*Vehicle tampering/interference*
6. Fraud and forgery
7. Criminal damage
8. Offences against the state
9. Other notifiable offences  
*Drug trafficking offences*  
*Drug non-trafficking offences*  
*Breach of non-molestation order*

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Total violent crime (classes 1, 2 & 4)

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**Total (all classes)**

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**Appendix 2****a) Proposed classification breakdown of Recorded Crime to be provided through PSNI Annual Report**

<b>Offence</b>	
1	Murder
4.1	Manslaughter
4.2	Infanticide
4.10	Corporate manslaughter
2	Attempted murder
4.3	Intentional destruction of viable unborn child
4.7	Causing or allowing death of a child or vulnerable person
4.4	Causing death by dangerous driving
4.6	Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs
4.8	Causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving
4.9	Causing death by driving: unlicensed drivers etc.
37.1	Causing death by aggravated vehicle taking
5A	Inflicting grievous bodily harm (GBH) with intent
5B	Use of substance or object to endanger life
5C	Possession of items to endanger life
8F	Inflicting grievous bodily harm (GBH) without intent <sup>1</sup>
8G	Actual bodily harm (ABH) and other injury <sup>1</sup>
8K	Poisoning or female genital mutilation
	<b>Violence against the person – with injury</b>
3A	Conspiracy to murder
3B	Threats to kill
6	Endangering railway passengers
7	Endangering life at sea
10A	Possession of firearms with intent
10C	Possession of other weapons
10D	Possession of article with blade or point
8L	Harassment <sup>1</sup>
9A	Public fear, alarm or distress <sup>2</sup>
11	Cruelty to and neglect of children
12	Abandoning a child under the age of two years
13	Child abduction
14	Procuring illegal abortion
104	Assault without injury on a constable
105A	Assault without injury <sup>1</sup>
	<b>Violence against the person – without injury</b>
	<b>TOTAL VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON OFFENCES</b>
19A-H	Rape <sup>3</sup>
17	Indecent assault on a male
17A	Sexual assault on a male aged 13 and over
17B	Sexual assault on a male child under 13
20	Indecent assault on a female
20A	Sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over
20B	Sexual assault on a female child under 13
21	Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13
21	Sexual activity involving a child under 13
22	Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16
22B	Sexual activity involving a child under 16
22A	Causing sexual activity without consent
70	Sexual activity etc. with a person with a mental disorder
71	Abuse of children through prostitution and pornography
72	Trafficking for sexual exploitation
74	Gross indecency with a child
	<b>Most serious sexual crime</b>

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16	Buggery
18	Gross indecency between males
23	Incest or familial sexual offences
24	Exploitation of prostitution
25	Abduction of female
27	Soliciting for the purpose of prostitution
73	Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature
88A	Sexual grooming
88C	Other miscellaneous sexual offences
88D	Unnatural sexual offences
88E	Exposure and voyeurism

**TOTAL SEXUAL OFFENCES**

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34A	Robbery of business property
34B	Robbery of personal property

**TOTAL ROBBERY OFFENCES**

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28A	Burglary in a dwelling <sup>3</sup>
28B	Attempted burglary in a dwelling <sup>3</sup>
29	Aggravated burglary in a dwelling

**Total burglary in a dwelling**

30A	Burglary in a building other than a dwelling
30B	Attempted burglary in a building other than a dwelling
31	Aggravated burglary in a building other than a dwelling

**Total burglary in a building other than a dwelling**

**TOTAL BURGLARY OFFENCES**

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37.2	Aggravated vehicle taking
45	Theft from a vehicle
48	Theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicle
126	Interfering with a motor vehicle

**TOTAL OFFENCES AGAINST VEHICLES**

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38	Profiting from or concealing knowledge of the proceeds of crime
39	Theft from the person
40	Theft in a dwelling other than from automatic machine or meter
41	Theft by an employee
42	Theft of mail
43	Dishonest use of electricity
44	Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle
46	Shoplifting
47	Theft from automatic machine or meter
49	Other theft or unauthorised taking
54	Handling stolen goods

**OTHER THEFT OFFENCES**

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51	Fraud by company director
52	False accounting
53A-J	Fraud <sup>3</sup>
55	Bankruptcy and insolvency offences
60	Forgery or use of false drug prescription
61	Other forgery
61A	Possession of false documents
814	Vehicle/driver document fraud

**TOTAL FRAUD AND FORGERY OFFENCES**

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NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

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56A	Arson endangering life
56B	Arson not endangering life
58A	Criminal damage to a dwelling
58B	Criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling
58C	Criminal damage to a vehicle
58D	Other criminal damage
59	Threat etc. to commit criminal damage

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**TOTAL CRIMINAL DAMAGE OFFENCES**

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**TOTAL PROPERTY CRIME**

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92A	Trafficking in controlled drugs
92C	Other drug offences
92D	Possession of controlled drugs (excluding cannabis)
92E	Possession of controlled drugs (cannabis)

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**TOTAL DRUG OFFENCES**

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10B	Possession of firearms offences
81	Other firearms offences
15	Concealing an infant death close to birth
26	Bigamy
33	Going equipped for stealing, etc.
35	Blackmail
36	Kidnapping
62	Treason
64	Riot
65	Violent disorder
66	Other offences against the State and public order
67	Perjury
68	Libel
69	Offender Management Act offences
75	Betting, gaming and lotteries
76	Aiding suicide
78	Immigration offences
79	Perverting the course of justice
80	Absconding from lawful custody
82	Customs and Revenue offences
83	Bail offences
84	Trade descriptions, etc.
85	Health and Safety offences
86	Obscene publications, etc. and protected sexual material
87	Protection from eviction
89	Adulteration of food
90	Other knives offences
91	Public health offences
94	Planning laws
95	Disclosure, obstruction, false or misleading statements etc.
99	Other indictable or triable-either-way offences
802	Dangerous driving

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**TOTAL OTHER MISCELLANEOUS OFFENCES**

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**TOTAL RECORDED CRIME – ALL OFFENCES**

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1. While the Home Office have additional classifications recording racially or religiously aggravated offences of this nature, PSNI record all offences with a hate motivation within this classification.
2. The Home Office classification of Public fear, alarm or distress records offences under Sections 4 & 5 of the Public Order Act 1986. This act does not apply within Northern Ireland.
3. PSNI cannot provide the same level of breakdown as is provided by the Home Office.

**b) Proposed classification breakdown provided through monthly updates of Recorded Crime on PSNI Website**

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**Offence**

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Violence against the person offences

*Violence against the person – with injury<sup>1</sup>*

*Violence against the person – without injury<sup>2</sup>*

Sexual offences

*Most serious sexual crime*

*Other sexual offences*

Robbery offences

*Robbery of business property*

*Robbery of personal property*

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Burglary offences

*Burglary in a dwelling*

*Burglary in a building other than a dwelling*

Offences against vehicles<sup>3</sup>

Other theft offences

*of which:*

*Theft from the person*

*Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle*

*Shoplifting*

Fraud and forgery offences

Criminal damage offences

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**TOTAL PROPERTY CRIME**

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Drug offences

Other miscellaneous offences

*of which:*

*Breach of non molestation order*

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**TOTAL RECORDED CRIME – ALL OFFENCES**

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1. Includes homicide, attempted murder, intentional destruction of viable unborn child, causing death by dangerous driving/careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs, more serious wounding or other act endangering life (including grievous bodily harm with and without intent), causing death by aggravated vehicle taking and less serious wounding offences.

2. Includes threat or conspiracy to murder, harassment, possession of weapons, other offences against children and assault without injury.

3. Includes aggravated vehicle taking, theft of and from a vehicle and interfering with a motor vehicle.