

## **Theft**

Under the laws of California, the crime of theft (also referred to as larceny) is defined as the unlawful taking of someone else's property. Theft is divided into two classifications - petty theft and grand theft.

PC 484(a) and PC 488 PC define petty theft as any theft crime that meets the following:

- The value of the property stolen is \$950 or less;
- The property was not taken directly off another person (such as a robbery or mugging offense); AND
- The item stolen was not a gun or an automobile

If an individual in California is convicted of petty theft, the individual's crime is punishable by up to 6 months in jail and/or a maximum fine of \$1,000.

Generally speaking, any theft that does not meet all of the requirements of a petty theft according to California Penal Code Section 484(a) and California Penal Code Section 488 PC will constitute a grand theft. In most cases, grand theft in California is a wobbler, meaning that it can be charged as either a misdemeanor or felony grand theft. A misdemeanor grand theft is punishable up to one year in county jail. If it's a felony, one may be sentenced to sixteen months, two years, or three years of incarceration in the county jail.

### **Defenses to Theft Charges in California**

Sanford and Christy Horowitz are experienced California criminal defense attorneys. With their help, you may be able to beat theft charges using certain legal defenses, such as:

- You did not intend to steal,
- The allegedly stolen property actually belonged to you,
- The person who owed the item consented to you taking it, and/or,

There are additionally many other defenses that the skilled trial attorneys at Sanford & Christy Horowitz Criminal Defense are prepared to engage to vigorously defend their clients.