



COMMUNITY LIAISON UNIT

COLUMBUS DIVISION OF POLICE • STRATEGIC RESPONSE BUREAU

Common Terms in Criminal Court:

Arraignment: Initial appearance where the defendant is formally notified of the crime(s) with which he/she is charged. Arraignment court is also where initial bond is set or adjusted and Protection Orders may be granted.

Bond: After an arrest, a judge will determine what bond to set to make sure the defendant appears in court. There are 3 types of bonds:

- Recognizance/Unsecured Appearance Bond (ROR) - allows the defendant to get out of jail on his/her signature.
- Appearance Bond - the defendant must give the court 10% of the bond amount plus a court fee before being released. (For example, a \$1500 appearance bond will require at least \$170 - including a \$20 court fee - to get out of jail.)
- Cash/Surety Bond - defendant must pay the entire bond amount in cash or hire a bail bondsman (a bondsman's non-refundable fees are 10% of the entire bond).

Complaint: The official sworn statement of the offense that gives the statute under which the defendant was arrested.

Continuance or Continued: A delay of a court hearing to another day. (e.g. "The case will be continued").

Court (or Bench) Trial: A trial before a judge, not a jury.

Defendant: The person against whom a charge is brought.

Defense Attorney: A lawyer hired or appointed to represent the defendant (can be either public or private).

Evidence: Anything shown in court to support a case. This can include testimony by the victim, defendant or another witness, documents, photographs, items of clothing, weapons, and police or medical records.

Grand Jury: A group of people who consider cases presented for felony indictment. Proceedings are confidential and closed to the public.

Plea Agreement: When a defendant agrees to plead guilty, often to a lesser charge, in order to avoid a trial.

Preliminary Hearing: An initial hearing to determine if there is sufficient evidence to go forward with felony charges.

Probable Cause: A showing prior to a trial that there is enough evidence against the defendant to proceed with the case.

Probation/Community Control: A condition of a sentence that requires the defendant to report to a probation officer, and to follow the rules as ordered by a judge, (for example: attend counseling, maintain employment, obtain drug and alcohol screening) in order to stay out of jail or prison.

Prosecutor: The attorney who represents the State of Ohio in a criminal case.

P.S.I. (Presentence Investigation): Report that is prepared by the Probation Department in order to provide the judge information needed to sentence the defendant.

SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner): Nurses who are specially trained in the field of forensic nursing and the collection of evidence for sexual assault kits.

Summons: A court order for a defendant to appear in court.

Subpoena: A court order for a victim or witness to appear in court.

Trial: Where the defendant takes their case for hearing before members of the jury or a judge.

VINE (Victim Information & Notification System): A free automated telephone service that will allow victims of crime to access offender information 24 hours a day. Victims can also register their phone number anonymously with VINE to be notified when there is a change with the offender's status. (1-800-770-0192).

Warrant/ Capias: A term used for an order issued by a judge when the defendant does not appear in court.