



COMMUNITY LIAISON UNIT

COLUMBUS DIVISION OF POLICE • STRATEGIC RESPONSE BUREAU

Steps in the Prosecution of a Felony

Felony charges are filed by the police. Felony crimes are considered very serious and can result in the offender being sent to prison. Felony cases are prosecuted by:

Franklin County Prosecutor
373 S. High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 525-3555

If you contact the police about a felony, they will usually assign a detective to investigate the complaint. When the detective believes they have sufficient evidence, they present the case to the Franklin County Prosecutor.

1. Grand Jury

- The Franklin County Prosecutor presents the police information to the Grand Jury who decides whether or not criminal charges should be filed.
- The defendant may be in jail at this time if the police filed a warrant.
- The victim may be required to testify at the Grand Jury hearing.
- The Grand Jury is not open to the public and the information is kept confidential. The defendant is not present.
- If the defendant has not already been arrested, a warrant may be issued after the Grand Jury hearing.

2. Arraignment

- Defendant enters a plea (almost always 'Not Guilty').
- An Order of Protection can be requested .
- Judge sets bond. Offender may or may not be able to get out of jail.

NOTE: Contact VINE for information about offender's incarceration status.

3. Pretrial Conference

- The trial court judge may schedule a pre-trial conference to meet with the prosecutor and the defense attorney to discuss the case.
- Victim is usually not required to be present.

4. Trial

- The case can go to trial where a jury or a judge, after hearing all of the evidence, decides whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty of the charges.
- The victim may be requested to appear, but in certain circumstances may be placed on telephone standby by the prosecutor.
- The victim will generally have to testify at trial.

NOTE: There will likely be many trial dates set. Continuances are very common, and are not indicative of the strength or importance of a case. (Most often, the trial date will be continued for scheduling purposes).

5. Pre-Sentence Investigation (P.S.I.)

- A pre-sentence investigation report is prepared in order to provide the judge information needed in order to sentence the defendant. The victim may include a victim impact statement in the report.

6. Sentencing

- The victim has the right to make a written and/or oral victim impact statement at the sentencing hearing. A victim witness assistant can assist you with the preparation of a victim impact statement.
- The judge will decide what penalty to impose on the defendant. This could range from probation and/or a fine to prison time, depending on the crime and other factors.

7. Appeal

- If the defendant is found guilty, the defendant and his/her attorney will likely appeal the verdict and/or the sentence of the court.
- If the defendant accepts a plea agreement, there is usually no appeal.

NOTES:

- Remember - there will be a victim witness assistant available to assist you throughout this process.
- It is the sole discretion of the prosecutor to dismiss charges, it is not up to you to decide if charges will be dropped or dismissed.
- Please be prepared to wait. There are many cases set in each courtroom each day. You may be here for a few hours, so prepare accordingly (it is not recommended that you park at a meter, as you may be ticketed). Bringing something to read is a good idea.

FELONY CASES

