

Arrest An arrest is made when the police officially take a person into custody. Once the warrant is issued, the Police Department or Sheriff's Office will arrest the suspect.

Bond After the arrest, the accused in certain crimes may be offered an opportunity to make bail (also called bond). By paying the amount specified by a Judge, the accused is allowed to be released from jail to await further legal proceedings.

Accustion The document which lists the formal misdemeanor charges against a particular defendant. Often, the accusation will mirror the charges on the warrant(s) or citation(s). However, the accusation may also include additional charges.

Arraignment After a case is accused, a proceeding is scheduled in which the accused answers the charges against him. At this point the defendant enters his/her official plea to the charges--GUILTY or NOT GUILTY. If the defendant pleads NOT GUILTY, the case is set for trial. If the defendant pleads GUILTY, he may be sentenced that day.

It is not necessary for victims to be present at arraignment. Victims will receive notification by mail of the date of arraignment. Please contact the Victim-Advocate or Assistant Solicitor assigned to your case prior to the date of the arraignment to discuss any particular concerns you have regarding restitution for stolen property, property damage, medical expenses, or other financial loss.

Motions In many cases the attorneys may raise questions of law which must be decided by the court before the trial can proceed. The judge will conduct the necessary hearings and decide on the legal questions presented. Usually, victims and witnesses are not required to attend such motions, but in the event your presence becomes necessary, you will be contacted.

Subpoena When a person is required to testify in court, he or she will be notified by a subpoena. A subpoena is legal notification issued by the clerk of the court and will specify the date, time, and place of the hearings which the individual is required to attend. Often there is no way of knowing which defendants will plead guilty to their cases and the order which the cases will be called. Sometimes, "on call" subpoenas are sent to victims and witnesses. When you receive an "on call" subpoena, YOU MUST TELEPHONE the number on the subpoena IMMEDIATELY and let the Assistant Solicitor know how to contact you at all times during the week of the trial calendar. This is done for your convenience and usually will allow you to continue your daily routine. If you receive a subpoena without the words "on call" typed on it, YOU MUST APPEAR in court on the date and time specified. You will probably be required to wait outside the courtroom until you are called to testify. Every effort will be made to avoid unnecessary delays and inconvenience.

Trial The purpose of the trial is to determine the facts in the case. In a criminal trial, the Solicitor-General's Office represents the State of Georgia. The Assistant Solicitor assigned to the case may be referred to as the "prosecutor" during the trial. The accused may choose to represent themself, hire a private attorney, or utilize a court-provided attorney if they cannot afford to hire their own. Several cases are usually scheduled for trial during the same week. On the first day of the trial week, the Judge will decide which cases are ready to be tried and in what order. The Court also will take guilty pleas from some defendants.

At the trial, the prosecution presents its evidence to the judge and jury first. When you are called into the courtroom, you will be sworn in as a witness, and the Assistant Solicitor will ask you questions about the case. When the Assistant Solicitor is finished, the defense will then have an opportunity to ask questions of you.

Upon completion of the closing arguments, the Judge delivers the "jury charge." The jury charge is the Court's instruction to the jury as to the laws that should be applied to the evidence they heard during the trial.

Once the jury has been instructed as to the law, the jury retires to the jury room. Only the jury members are allowed into the room. There, the jury decides whether there is enough evidence to convict the defendant. Their final decision is called the verdict.

Sentencing Sentencing may take place immediately upon a guilty plea or a guilty verdict. If the Judge sentences the defendant on multiple charges, he may impose the sentences to run either concurrently (the time to serve runs together) or consecutively (the time to serve runs separately).

Probation If the defendant is sentenced to serve a specified amount of time on probation, he is assigned to a particular probation officer. While serving probation, the defendant must report periodically to the probation officer and must fulfill all the conditions of probation imposed by the sentencing judge.