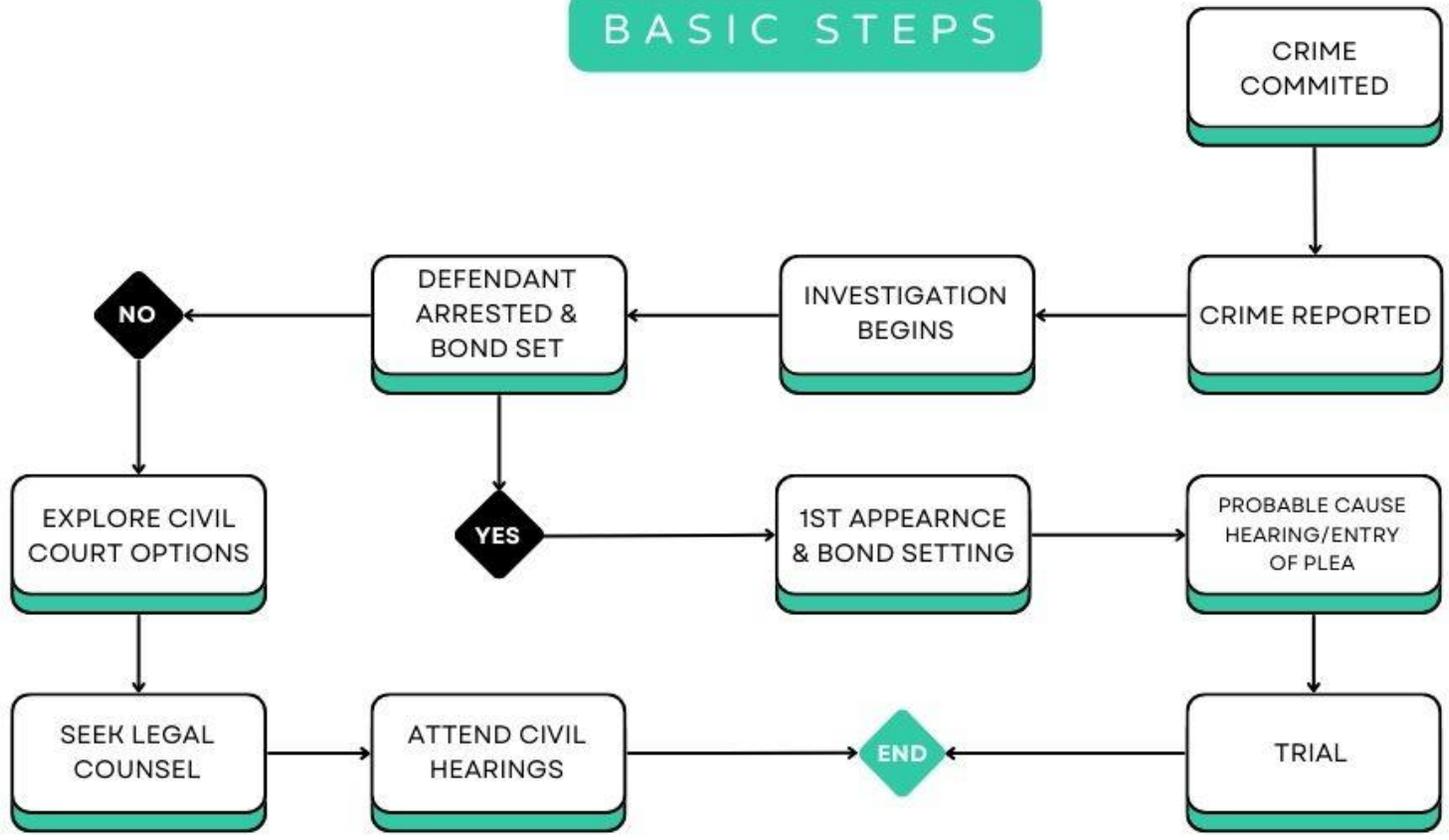


CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

BASIC STEPS



Criminal Justice Process

The most serious offenses, which may result in a prison sentence of a year or more, are called felonies. Felonies include offenses such as breaking and entering, sale or delivery of controlled substances, rape, and murder. Less serious offenses, punishable by a maximum of 150 days in custody, are called misdemeanors.

Crime Reported

- Law enforcement officer arrives at the scene of the crime and determines that there is probable cause for an arrest, the defendant *might be* arrested.
- Law enforcement officer may need to wait for an arrest warrant.

Investigation Begins

- The investigation period will continue throughout the legal processes

Defendant Arrested & Bond Set

- After the arrest, the bond is set as soon as possible.
- If the defendant is arrested on Friday or holiday they *might not* have their bond set or be released until the following business day.
- Secured bail bond requires you to pay the amount owed upfront or offer some form of collateral.
- Non-secured bail bond usually means no money is exchanged.

Frist Appearance and Bond Set

- A court docket with a list of names will be posted outside the courtrooms, or the courthouse staff can assist the person with locating the correct courtroom.
- Once the courtroom is opened, all defendants, attorneys, and members of the public may enter, unless the judge closes the courtroom for a particular case.
- If a person has been arrested and is unable to post bond, he or she will be brought to court by a uniformed law enforcement officer on the court date.
- If a person is free on bond or other pretrial release conditions, he or she must be in court at the appointed time indicated on the release order.
- If a person has been served with a citation or summons, he or she must report to the county courthouse at the designated time and find the courtroom in which the case will be heard.

Probable Cause Hearing/Entry of Plea

- A court hearing where the defendant is formally charged and responds to criminal charges by entering a plea.
- The defendant can plead guilty, not guilty, or enter a no-contest plea.

Trial

- The prosecution has the burden of proof.
- Witness testimonies and cross examinations help the judge and/or jury understand the evidence in the case.
- This process is designed to protect the *defendant's rights* and keep the justice system fair.