

Criminal Terminology:

Arraignment – A court event where defendants are notified of their rights and the charges against them. They plead guilty or not guilty, and the terms of the defendants pretrial release status are set. Bail or bond Defendants may be released if they post money or property as a guarantee they will appear for trial.

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Complaint – A sworn statement charging a person with a criminal offense.

Continuance – A postponement of a trial or hearing to a later date that can be granted only by the court.

County Attorney – The chief law enforcement official elected in a jurisdiction to represent the State of Kansas. Each of the 105 counties of Kansas has its own County Attorney, with the exception of the 6 counties that have elected District Attorneys. Those six counties are Sedgwick, Wyandotte, Johnson, Shawnee, Douglas and Reno.

Defendant – A person formally accused of a crime.

Defense Attorney – An attorney who represents a defendant.

Felony – A serious crime, generally punishable by a penalty of more than one year in prison.

First Appearance – A court event where the offender is notified of his or her rights and the charges filed against them. At this hearing the offender is required to admit or deny the charges and the terms of their pre-trial release are set.

No-Contest Plea – The defendant does not dispute or contest the State's evidence resulting in a finding of guilty by the court.

Plea – In court, the defendant's formal response to the charges: "How do you plead, guilty or not guilty?"

Preliminary Hearing – The accused is entitled to a preliminary hearing where evidence is presented to a judge to determine if there is enough to justify a trial.

Probable Cause – Reasonable cause; having more evidence **for** than **against**; a reasonable belief that a crime has or is being committed and is the basis for all lawful searches and arrests.

Probation – The release, under condition of good behavior, of a person convicted of a crime as an alternative to imprisonment.

Prosecutor – An attorney for the State of Kansas who presents evidence to convict a defendant.

Restitution – A judge may order the defendant to pay something to the Victim for fiscal losses or personal injuries caused by the crime as a condition of the defendant's sentence.

Sentence – A judgment imposing punishment by the court upon the defendant after conviction in a criminal prosecution.

Subpoena – A written order to appear in court.

Testimony – Any statement made by a witness under oath in a legal proceeding.

Victim – The person against whom a crime has been committed.

Witness – The person who testifies before a court under oath regarding what he/she has seen, heard or otherwise observed.