

Understanding Criminal Law

This document provides an overview of basic criminal law concepts and procedures. It is intended as general information and not as legal advice for specific situations.

Types of Crimes

Crimes are typically classified as either misdemeanors or felonies. Misdemeanors are less serious offenses that typically carry penalties of less than one year in jail. Felonies are more serious crimes that can result in imprisonment for more than one year.

Criminal Procedure

The criminal justice process typically includes investigation, arrest, charging, arraignment, discovery, plea bargaining, trial, and sentencing. At each stage, defendants have specific rights that must be respected by law enforcement and the courts.

Rights of the Accused

Individuals accused of crimes have several constitutional rights, including the right to remain silent, the right to an attorney, the right to a fair and speedy trial, the right to confront witnesses, and the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures.