

20. SENTENCE - The punishment imposed on a defendant after a plea of guilty or a guilty finding at trial. Punishments given by the court could include incarceration; probation with conditions such as community service, restitution, substance abuse counseling; fines; or any combination of these.

21. STATUS CONFERENCE - An open court hearing(s) prior to trial at which the status of all pre-trial motions and plea negotiations are reviewed by the judge.

22. SUBPOENA - A written official document summoning a person to court or Grand Jury to give testimony under possible penalty of law for failure to appear.

23. VICTIM - The person who suffers personal, physical or psychological injury as a result of the commission of a crime. In the case of a death due to a crime, the next-of-kin is considered the victim survivor.

24. VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT - A written or oral statement from the victim which informs the judge of the impact of the crime on the victim's life.

25. VICTIMS OF CRIME COMPENSATION (VCCA) AGENCY - A state agency which reviews applications for compensation to victims for losses due to injuries or death caused by a violent crime.

USEFUL ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS

Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy Somerset County Prosecutor's Office

40 North Bridge Street
P.O. Box 3000 • Somerville, NJ 08876-1262
908-575-3359

Case Management Family & Criminal Divisions Somerset County Courthouse

P.O. Box 3000 • Somerville, NJ 08876-1262
908-231-7600

Victims of Crime Compensation Agency

50 Park Place
Newark, NJ 07102
973-648-2107
Toll Free: 877-658-2221

Somerset County Prosecutor's Office

40 North Bridge Street
P.O. Box 3000 • Somerville, NJ 08876-1262
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TIPS HOTLINE 1-888-577-TIPS (8477)

Common Terminology



For the Criminal Justice System

Somerset County
Prosecutor's Office

Office of
Victim-Witness Advocacy
(908) 575-3359

www.scpo.net

1. **APPEAL** - An application to take the case to a higher court for a rehearing or a review of the rulings made by the lower court.
2. **ARRAIGNMENT/STATUS CONFERENCE**- A pretrial hearing at which the defendant appears with his/her attorney. The judge reviews the indictment and discovery with the defendant and the defendant then enters a guilty or not guilty plea to the charges.
3. **BAIL** - Amount of money/bond set by the court to assure the defendant's appearance in court for all scheduled dates.
4. **BAIL MOTION** - A motion made by the defendant, who is being held in jail because of being unable to post bail, asking the court to reduce the amount of bail. Motions to reduce bail may be made at any time during the course of the criminal proceedings.
5. **TRUE BILL** - The term which indicates that the Grand Jury has decided that there is enough evidence for the defendant to be formally charged with a crime for purposes of standing trial.
6. **COMPLAINT** - The initial document outlining the charges against the defendant. The complaint is signed by a police officer or victim in the municipality where the criminal act occurred.
7. **DEFENDANT** - The person who is accused of the crime.
8. **DISCOVERY** - Written information about the case, including police reports and witness statements, that must be exchanged by the parties prior to the trial.
9. **GRAND JURY** - A panel of 23 citizens who hear evidence presented by the prosecutor in order to determine whether there is probable cause (sufficient evidence) to formally charge (indict) the defendant. The Grand Jury may vote for a (1) No Bill, (2) No Bill/Remand, or (3) True Bill.
10. **INDICTMENT** - A formal document returned by the Grand Jury which outlines the charges against the defendant.
11. **JURY (PETIT JURY)** - A group of 12 citizens selected at trial to hear evidence relating to the charges and, from that evidence, vote on whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty of the crime(s) charged.
12. **MOTION** - An application made to the judge, usually before trial, in order to obtain a ruling, order or direction.
13. **MUNICIPAL COURT** - The court in the local municipality where disorderly persons offenses and motor vehicle summonses are heard.
14. **NO BILL** - A vote by the Grand Jury that the evidence presented by the prosecutor is not sufficient to return an indictment against the defendant. The case is then concluded. (closed)
15. **NO BILL/REMAND** - An opinion by the Grand Jury not to indict the defendant to stand trial in the Superior Court but to keep the charges open and return them to the municipal court for trial.
16. **PAROLE** - The early release, under conditions of supervision, of a person who has been convicted of a crime, sentenced to prison, and has served a part of the sentence.
17. **PLEA BARGAIN** - An agreement reached between the assistant prosecutor and the defendant, through the defense attorney, whereby the defendant agrees to plead guilty to a charge or charges in return for some considerations granted by the assistant prosecutor.
18. **PRETRIAL INTERVENTION** - A program geared primarily to first-time offenders charged with less serious offenses. This offender is placed on probation prior to trial or guilty plea. If the defendant successfully completes the term of probation, the charges are dismissed.
19. **PROBATION** - A sentencing alternative, imposed by the judge which allows the defendant to remain free under supervision as long as certain conditions are observed.