

CRIME VICTIM'S BILL OF RIGHTS:

- The right to confer with the prosecution.
- The right to be free from intimidation, harassment, and abuse throughout the criminal justice system.
- The right to be present at all proceedings where the defendant has the right to be present.
- The right to be heard, when relevant, at all critical stages of the criminal justice process as defined by the General Assembly.
- The right to be informed of all proceedings, and of the release, transfer, or escape of the accused or convicted person.
- The right to a speedy trial or disposition and a prompt and final conclusion of the case after the conviction or sentence.
- The right to restitution from the offender.
- The right to be informed of each of the rights established for victims.



Contact Information

West Tennessee Legal Services
210 W. Main Street
Jackson, TN 38301
731-423-0616
1-800-372-8346
www.wtls.org

Dyersburg Office
208 S. Church Street
Dyersburg, TN 38024

Huntingdon Office
113 W. Paris Street
Huntingdon, TN 38344

Selmer Office
141 N. Third Street
Selmer, TN 38375

Other resources

Wo/Men's Resource and Rape Assistance Program
(WRAP)
1-800-273-8712

Tennessee Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-356-6767

Pathways
1-800-372-0693

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The Criminal Justice Process for Victims



WTLS does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or handicapped status. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint by writing to the following:

WTLS EEOC Officer P.O. Box 2066 Jackson, TN 38302-2066

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

1. A CRIME OCCURS

- The suspect is arrested.
- Reports are sent to District Attorney's office for review.

2. FROM CHARGES TO COURT

- The District Attorney may charge the suspect with a crime(s). Not every report leads to a criminal charge.
- If arrested, the suspect is held in jail until the Initial Hearing/Arraignment. They may be released after the initial hearing.

3. INITIAL HEARING/ARRAIGNMENT

- The initial hearing/arraignment must occur within 48 hours of a suspect's arrest. This is the first time before a judge, and they are advised of the charges against them.
- A Defendant may be appointed an attorney or get time to find one.
- The defendant may enter a plea.
- If the defendant enters a "Not-Guilty" plea, the case goes to trial.
- If the defendant is in jail, the court can release them or hold them until the trial date.

4. PRE-TRIAL

- A preliminary hearing is where the judge decides if there is sufficient "probable cause" to go to trial.
- Probable cause means there is a reasonable belief that a crime has been committed.
- Pre-trial hearings are held to confirm that both sides are ready to move forward. There may be many.

5. PARTS OF A JURY TRIAL

- Jury Selection: when the jury is selected.
- Opening Statements: statements by both sides before evidence is presented.
- Presentation of Evidence and Testimony: both sides have the option to present evidence and question witnesses.
- Closing Argument: statements by both sides after all evidence is presented.
- Jury Deliberations: the jury leaves the court room to discuss if the defendant is guilty.
- Verdict: the announcement stating if the defendant is guilty.
- Sentencing: The judge decides the sentence or punishment for the defendant. Victims have a right to be heard at sentencing and may prepare a Victim Impact Statement.

