

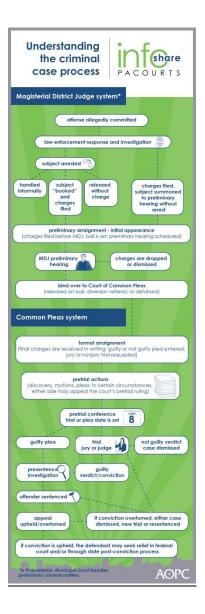
Infographic for Immediate Release *March 18, 2016*

Court 101: Understanding the criminal case process

HARRISBURG—A criminal charge alleges that a violation of the criminal law – an offense against the community – has occurred. An individual can be charged with murder of the first degree, murder of the second degree, a felony, a misdemeanor or a summary offense.

Murder and felony charges, such as arson, carry the most severe penalties, while misdemeanors and summary offenses carry lesser penalties. If the prosecutor proves to a jury or the judge hearing a case without a jury that a defendant is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, that person stands convicted and can face penalties, including prison, fines or probation. If the prosecutor does not prove to the fact finder that a defendant is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, the defendant is acquitted.

The course of a criminal case is outlined in the infographic below. A high-resolution file of the graphic is available for download at <u>www.pacourts.us</u> under <u>Media Resources</u>.



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