

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I initiate a criminal complaint against someone?

If a crime is committed in the presence of a police officer, the police officer has the ability to arrest that person. Even if a crime is not committed in the presence of a police officer, a citizen can always contact the Charles County Sheriff's Office and request that the police take a report and conduct an investigation. In Maryland, a citizen may also initiate criminal charges on their own. The citizen can appear before a commissioner and fill out an application for a statement of charges. If the commissioner believes that probable cause is present, the commissioner will issue a charging document against the person alleged to have committed a crime. The citizen filling out the application will then need to meet with an Assistant State's Attorney shortly thereafter to discuss preparing the case.

What information do I need when calling or visiting the State's Attorney's Office?

If you are calling about a specific case, please have the defendant's name, case number, and trial date. The information is usually on your summons, subpoena, or other letters from the State's Attorney's Office. If you have been dealing with a police officer, it is also helpful to have the name and badge number of that person.

I received a subpoena to appear in court. Do I have to come?

Yes. If you refuse to come to court, there may be a body attachment issued for your arrest and you can be held in jail.

RESOURCES

Circuit Court for Charles County

200 Charles Street
La Plata, MD 20646
301-932-3201

District Court for Charles County

11 Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 3070
La Plata, Maryland 20646-3070
301-934-5110

Charles County District Court

Commissioner's Office
(24 hours, 7 days a week)
11 Washington Avenue
La Plata, MD 20646
301-934-5080

STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 3065, La Plata, MD 20646

Physical Address:

Charles County Courthouse Basement Level,
200 Charles St., La Plata, MD 20646

Phone: 301-932-3350

Website: CCSAO.us



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STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Anthony B. "Tony" Covington
State's Attorney

State's Attorney's Office for Charles County

The State's Attorney's Office (SAO) serves the citizens of Charles County by enforcing State criminal laws through prosecution within the geographical borders of the county. Our commitment is to hold individuals accountable for their crimes, uphold victims' rights, and keep the community safe and informed.

The SAO presents cases in the District and Circuit Court. After a crime has been committed, the SAO reviews the case and determines applicable charges. The SAO will then follow through with bail review, investigation, grand jury proceedings, trial, and sentencing. Once a crime has been charged, only the SAO can drop the charges.

The SAO is organized into the following specialized units: Administrative, District Court, Circuit Court, Juvenile Court, and Victim Witness Assistance.

Mission Statement

The mission of the State's Attorney's Office is to protect the innocent and punish the guilty with the highest level of fairness and professionalism.

District Court Unit

The District Court Unit manages the majority of the office's caseload and is responsible for prosecuting misdemeanor criminal offenses, including assault, destruction of property, violation of protective order, theft, and drug possession in the District Court for Charles County. The District Court Unit also prosecutes jailable traffic offenses such as drunk driving, fleeing and eluding, and driving while suspended.

Additionally, prosecutors in the District Court Unit conduct preliminary hearings for felony cases to determine if there is enough probable cause to transfer a defendant's case to Circuit Court.

Circuit Court Unit

The Circuit Court Unit is responsible for prosecuting felonies, including murder, rape, robbery, felony thefts, kidnapping, burglary, and drug distribution in the Circuit Court for Charles County.

Additionally, prosecutors handle cases transferred from District Court to Circuit Court as appeals and jury trial prayers.

Juvenile Court Unit

The Juvenile Court Unit handles delinquency cases involving people under the age of 18 charged with committing a criminal act. The SAO works alongside with the court, victims, families, and social service agencies to hold juveniles accountable for their actions, as well as provide rehabilitative resources to prevent future criminal acts.

Juvenile cases are tried before the magistrate and judge in Circuit Court.

Victim Witness Assistance Unit

The Victim Witness Assistance Unit provides guidance to victims and witnesses throughout the criminal justice process in order to ensure that they are aware of their rights and the resources available to them. Services include safety planning, court accompaniment, and agency referrals.

For more information, please contact the Victim Witness Assistance Unit at 301-932-3360.