

Testifying at a Grand Jury

If you receive a grand jury subpoena, be aware that the DA's office may be required to schedule it quickly. If the suspect is in jail, the DA's office has only 5 days to bring the case before the Grand Jury, or the suspect will be released.

The Grand Jury subpoena will not contain the name of the suspect, to protect the suspect (whom the Grand Jury may decide not to charge) and/or to avoid any risk to victims or witnesses.

The subpoena will direct you to appear, usually in the afternoon on a weekday, at the Grand Jury. Report to the District Attorney's receptionist, on the third floor of the Clatsop County Courthouse, at least 5 to 10 minutes before the time indicated on your subpoena.

The office makes every attempt to be efficient and not to keep you waiting, but some cases take longer than expected.

The elected District Attorney's name (Ron Brown) appears on every subpoena. However, if you have a question, find the name of the Deputy DA printed underneath. The assigned Deputy DA may be able to discuss why you have been summoned. Sometimes the questions are very simple: Did you give the suspect permission to take your car? To enter your home?

Grand Jury testimony is always given under oath. The proceedings may appear less formal than a courtroom but they are just as serious. False testimony is perjury. The deputy DA will ask you some questions and then some of the grand jurors may have questions for you. You generally cannot say what people other than the suspect told you. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so.

You will probably not be told immediately the result of the Grand Jury's deliberations. Under Oregon law, indictments are secret until the defendant is arraigned – ie., formally told of charges and likely appointed a lawyer in open court.

If an indictment is issued, the District Attorney's office will contact you if you are needed for further hearings or a trial.