LAW CLASS  
How Courts Work

Steps in a Trial

Pre-trial Procedures in Criminal Cases

Pre-trial procedures in criminal cases follow the general pattern of civil cases, but with important variations.

For one thing, the process is likely to be very different depending on the severity of the crime.

In general, the more important the offense, the more elaborate the process.

The most serious crimes are felonies , crimes such as robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, and sexual assault, for which the punishment on conviction is imprisonment at least a year, usually in a state or federal penitentiary.

Misdemeanors are less serious crimes, such as simple assault, driving while intoxicated, and trespassing, for which punishment on conviction could be a term of incarceration of less than a year, usually in a local jail.

Traffic infractions and petty misdemeanors include minor moving violations, parking violations and littering. They’re usually just punished by fines.