



**THE CLERK OF THE COURT
YOUR PUBLIC TRUSTEE**
OCTOBER 2007 – GRAND JURY SELECTION

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Clerk of the Circuit Court
Pinellas County
<http://www.pinellasclerk.org>

Q. I have been summoned in the past to serve on a jury, but never for a grand jury. How is a grand jury selected?

A. There are two types of juries, petit and grand. Petit juries is present at a trial and renders the verdict. The purpose of a grand jury, on the other hand, is to listen to evidence presented by an attorney and determine whether the case merits being brought to trial.

Serving on a grand jury is an awesome responsibility, with potentially grave consequences for both the accused and the citizenry, and its selection is therefore limited to those considered to possess the strongest sense of justice and integrity. To emphasize the profound nature of the grand jury, consider that no person can be brought to trial or prosecuted for a capital crime (punishable by death) in Florida except by vote of a grand jury!

Grand jurors must be United States citizens and legal residents of this state and their respective counties who are at least 18 years of age and who possess a driver's license or identification card issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, or who execute an affidavit indicating a desire to serve as a juror.

All jurors are selected at random from lists prepared by the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

The process of selecting jurors is done in most counties by the county commissioners and in some counties by a specially constituted jury commission. The process of selecting the statewide grand jury is handled by the State Courts Administrator for the Florida Supreme Court.

When making up the jury list, the officers compiling it are required to select only citizens they believe to be law-abiding, and of proven integrity, good character, sound judgment and intelligence, and who are not mentally infirm.

Any person who has been convicted of a felony or bribery, forgery, perjury, or larceny is disqualified to sit as a juror, unless his or her civil rights have been restored. A person under prosecution for any crime is not eligible.

The statewide grand jury's term is for a period of 12 months, but may be extended for up to 18 months. The grand jury will not be in continuous session but will be called in from time to time as necessary.