

Introduction to the Santa Cruz County Grand Jury

Two Types of Grand Juries in Santa Cruz County

As with many California counties, Santa Cruz County has two types of Grand Juries. The regular, or civil, Grand Jury is an investigative body that serves for one year. There are nineteen members on the jury. The civil Grand Jury is not involved with trials but rather serves as a watchdog over local government and other tax-supported entities.

The other Grand Jury is a criminal Grand Jury that deals with issuing indictments (charging a person with a criminal or public offense). This jury is called up on a case-by-case basis.

Duties and Powers of the Civil Grand Jury

The Civil Grand Jury has three primary functions:

- to randomly audit local governmental agencies and officials;
- to publish its investigative findings and recommendations toward improving those governmental operations in the interest of the community being served; and
- to investigate citizens' complaints

The Civil Grand Jury investigates local government agencies and officials to evaluate if they are acting properly. If a Grand Jury determines that they are not, it has various options. The most frequently used option is the presentation of a report outlining the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations in the matter. Such reports are public and sometimes attract media attention. Agencies or elected officials discussed in the report must respond specifically to the report's findings and recommendations.

Citizens may file complaints with the Grand Jury to request that it investigate what they perceive as wrongdoing by a public agency, such as a school district or a police department. The Jury will decide if the complaint has merit and is not obligated to pursue the complaint. County complaint forms are available from the following address:

Santa Cruz County Grand Jury
701 Ocean Street, Room 318-I
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-2099
FAX (831) 454-3387
grandjury@co.santa-cruz.ca.us
www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/grandjury
