

Witnesses and Victims

Who is a witness?

A witness is anyone who has useful information that can help in proving that the accused committed the crime.

Who is a victim?

A victim is a person who has suffered physical, emotional or financial harm as a result of a criminal act. A victim may also be a witness in a trial.

How will a witness know when he should go to court?

Prior to the commencement of the trial, the witness will be contacted and served with a summons to appear before the court. The summons will contain the date, time and location.

What is the process for a witness in court?

A witness called by the prosecution will be asked questions, the responses will portray what information the witness knows about the case. After, the defence will have the opportunity to ask questions of the witness in cross-examination. At the completion of the cross-examination the prosecution has an opportunity to ask questions for clarification purposes only. After all questions have been asked the witness is relieved by the Court.

Will the witness meet the prosecutor before going to court?

The prosecutor usually arranges a meeting with the witnesses and victims of a case before the trial date. The prosecutor can provide them with a copy of the statement given to the police at the initial investigation.

Does a witness need to be in the courtroom when an accused is there?

An accused has the right to hear all that occurs in his trial, therefore a witness cannot remain anonymous. Typically, witnesses enter the courtroom and give evidence from the witness stand. However, where a witness is unable to be present in court, or wishes to be away, the prosecutor can make an application for the witness to testify virtually.

Are there interpreters available for non-English speakers?

Yes, the Court provides interpreters for accused persons and witnesses who do not understand or speak English.

For further assistance:

If you have given a statement to the police detailing what you witnessed about the commission of a crime, you may be a witness in the case.

If you wish to inquire more about a matter in which you provided you may contact our office.

Northern Zone (Corozal District and Orange Walk District) [email address]

Central Zone (Belize District and Cayo District) [email address]

Southern Zone (Stann Creek District and Toledo District) [email address]