

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND TEEN COURT

Children under the age of 18 may be referred by any law enforcement officer through the issuance of a Civil Citation pursuant to a misdemeanor charge. When law enforcement encounters the juvenile, and there is reasonable belief that the law has been violated, the juvenile shall be temporarily detained. A Civil Citation is issued and an explanation of the procedures the juvenile must follow shall be given to them. The procedures are on the back of the gold copy of the citation, which the juvenile receives and they include:

1. The juvenile is required to have the parent or legal guardian sign the Citation form indicating approval to participate in Teen Court.
2. The juvenile and his/her parent or legal guardian shall report to the Teen Court Program within seven (7) working days of the date the Citation was issued.
3. The juvenile will be assigned sanctions by the Teen Court Jury which shall include community work service and Teen Court jury duty, and may include counseling referrals, urinalysis monitoring, apology letters, essays, etc. as deemed appropriate.

Law enforcement must submit the Citation (white copy) to the Teen Court Program, located at the Sheriff's Department, by the working day following the citation's issuance.

NOTE: A Citation may be issued for an offense not witnessed by law enforcement, but subject to arrest (i.e., shoplifting).

A Citation issued for possession of illicit drugs or alcohol will require contact with the parent or legal guardian before the juvenile can be released.

It shall be the on-scene law enforcement officer who will make the initial assessment to issue a Civil Citation for a battery case.

The child, parent, or legal guardian has the option to accept or reject the Citation. Refusal of the Citation removes the juvenile from the Civil Citation process and it proceeds through the court as a law violation.

TEEN VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Teen Court Volunteers must:

- Be age 13 –17.
- Be in satisfactory academic standing.
- Respect the Oath of Confidentiality.
- Demonstrate maturity and sensitivity.
- Meet the requirements of the Teen Court Agreement
- Teen Courts allow youth the opportunity to act as defending and prosecuting attorneys, clerks, bailiffs, and jurors who decide the sentence for an offender who has admitted guilt for breaking the law. Teen Court assigns responsibility to student volunteers and relies on their participation and judgment in handling referrals from law enforcement officers, school administrators, the Department of Juvenile Justice.

TEEN COURT OFFICES

KEY WEST

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Monroe County Sheriff



Teen Court



Monroe County Sheriff's Office

Robert P. Peryam, Sheriff

WHAT IS TEEN COURT?

Teen Court, a nationally acclaimed diversion program designed to divert juvenile misdemeanants away from Circuit Juvenile Court, was implemented in 1998 under then State Attorney, Kirk Zuelch. The program has continued to provide service to the youth and their families under the Sheriff's direction since January 2001.

Due to State funding changes in 2004, the Sheriff's companion program to Teen Court, the Civil Citation Program, has ended. It is Sheriff Peryam's desire to work with the youth of Monroe County by continuing to offer them the additional opportunity to participate in a diversion program when otherwise the only alternative to law enforcement for a second misdemeanor offense would be **arrest**. Thus we have expanded the Teen Court program criteria to fulfill the role of the Civil Citation Program and accommodate these youth. Teen Court will now allow a youth to enter the program if they commit a misdemeanor offense, and it is their first or second law violation.

The Teen Court process provides:

- A forum for defendants to explain their involvement in the offense.
- A structured environment in which the words and actions of defendants who admit their wrongful acts reevaluated and judged by their peers.
- The opportunity for defendants to accept responsibility for their actions by fulfilling the jury's sentence, which is designed to be constructive and rehabilitative.

Teen Court is based upon the premise that youthful offenders will more readily accept responsibility for their actions when judged by their peers.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

The juvenile who commits a criminal misdemeanor, or who violates a criminal municipal ordinance, is eligible for Teen Court. The youth and the parent or legal guardian must agree to participate in, and abide by, the rules of the program.

WHO IS INELIGIBLE?

The juvenile is not eligible when he/she has a history reflecting two or more prior charges.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

After receiving a Civil Citation for a misdemeanor offense, the youth and/or parent/guardian must contact the Teen Court office within seven (7) days to set an appointment for an interview. At the interview, if the youth admits to the charge, he/she is informed of the rules of the Teen Court program and given a date to appear in Teen Court.

At the Teen Court hearing the youth's case is presented to the Teen Court jury. The jury may decide that the youth must perform community service, abide by a curfew, serve jury duty, prepare an essay, apology letter or write a report, and, when loss or damage applies, pay restitution. The youth may also have to participate in other appropriate sanctions.

As a condition of the second teen court appearance, the youth must explain, through testimony to the jury, what has been learned pursuant to a second offense, why the child thinks things will be different from now on, and what may have caused the lapse in judgment. This testimony will impact the weight of the sanctions. The intent is to place focus on the issues, allowing the youth to achieve some insight into the causes of his or her behavior.

HOW LONG IS THE TEEN COURT PROGRAM?

After the appearance at Teen Court the youth has a specified period of time to complete the assigned sanctions (30 days for a first offense, 90 days for a second offense) during which he/she is under the supervision of the Teen Court counselor.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHILD COMPLETES THE TEEN COURT PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY?

A successful completion of the Teen Court Program constitutes diversion from the criminal justice system. The case is dropped and there are no further requirements.

WHAT HAPPENS TO CLIENTS WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THE RULES OF THE TEEN COURT PROGRAM?

When the youth fails to complete the sanctions in the time allotted, or when there is a subsequent law violation while the youth is involved with the Teen Court Program, the youth will be violated, referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice, and referred to the State Attorney's office for a decision on prosecution in Juvenile Court.