

Introduction

Two Types of Grand Juries in Santa Cruz County

Although when they hear the term “Grand Jury” most people think of a criminal Grand Jury that issues indictments, there is a second, less familiar type of Grand Jury found in all California counties. The regular, or civil, Grand Jury is an investigative body composed of nineteen members that serve for one year. This jury is not involved with trials but instead serves as a watchdog over local government and other tax-supported entities.

Santa Cruz County impanels both a criminal and civil Grand Jury.

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 investigate citizens' complaints.
- To publish its investigative findings and recommendations.

The civil Grand Jury investigates local government agencies and officials to evaluate if they are acting properly. The jury summarizes its findings and makes recommendations in a public report, completed at the end of its year-long term. Government agencies or elected officials discussed in the report are generally obligated by law to formally and publicly respond.

Citizens may submit complaints directly to the Grand Jury requesting that it investigate what they perceive as wrongdoing by a public agency or official. The jury determines which of the complaints it receives to examine, considering the type of complaint and weighing the resources needed to conduct the investigation.

Complaint forms are available at the address and website shown below.

Santa Cruz County Grand Jury
701 Ocean Street, Room 318-I
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Telephone: (831) 454-2099

FAX: (831) 454-3387

Email: grandjury@co.santa-cruz.ca.us

Website: <http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/grandjury>