**When Do You Need a Criminal Defense Lawyer?**

Many people will never need a criminal defense lawyer, but for the ones that do, it's essential to have all of the relevant information if you ever need to hire one. This article will discuss when and why you might need a criminal defense lawyer and how to find the best one for your situation.

**What Is A Criminal Defense Attorney?**

A criminal defense lawyer specializes in defending people (or companies) who have been charged with a crime or believe they may be charged with a crime in the near future. Some criminal defense lawyers work for non-profit organizations, such as Legal Aid, The ACLU, or certain Public Defender offices throughout the country. Others work for themselves or a law firm.

**Who Needs A Criminal Defense Lawyer?**

If you have been charged with a crime or think you might be charged with a crime in the near future, you should find a lawyer who can help guide you through this situation. For most people, being arrested is a traumatic and scary experience. It's best to let a professional help you with your situation so youachievethe best possible outcome.

Sometimes the police want to speak with someone, but there haven't been any charges filed yet. Before speaking with the police in a matter that you think may implicate you in criminal activity, you should consult with an attorney and hire one if necessary**.**Even if you don't get charged with a crime, it will be money well spent. Criminal defense lawyers deal with the police and the criminal justice system every day. They know what you should and shouldn't say to the police, which is usually nothing at all! Let them help you.

**What Kinds of Crimes Would I Need A Lawyer For?**

If you've been charged with any type of criminal activity, it's in your best interest to hire a lawyer if you can afford it. If you can't afford a lawyer, every county in the United States has a Public Defender's Office (or equivalent) that will offer you criminal defense services at no charge. The following is a list of some of the most common crimes that people are charged with.

**Drug Crimes**

This category of criminal activity includes several different things. Drug crimes could refer to simply being in possession of an illegal substance. Another common example of a drug crime is manufacturing or selling drugs.

Driving under the influence (DUI) is another prevalent offense. Many counties have stringent DUI laws. In some places, if you have any marijuana in your system, it's statutorily a DUI. If a driver smoked marijuana the night before being pulled over by the police, they could still be convicted of a DUI. Even though they are not impaired at the time, the drug will still be in their system, and it will be considered driving under the influence.

Another common drug/alcohol crime could be something minor, like an open container of alcohol in public or public drunkenness. In most places in the United States, this is going to be a fairly low-level crime. It may seem like it's not worth getting a lawyer for something like this, but it really is. There are intricacies in the criminal justice system that most people just aren't aware of, and having a lawyer to guide you through it can be beneficial.

For example, if you're arrested for possession of a controlled substance, some counties have programs that will allow you to get your charges dismissed if you complete drug and alcohol treatment. There are also a number of other diversionary programs. If you complete certain requirements, your case will automatically get expunged and won't show up on your record anymore. This is really important because a criminal history can severely affect your ability to gain or maintain employment and housing.

**Gun Crimes**

If you've been charged with a crime relating to purchasing or possessing a gun illegally, you should immediately reach out to a criminal defense attorney. These are very serious charges, and you will need someone experienced to walk you through it. There are some legal nuances that a layperson might not be aware of. For example, you can be charged with possession of a gun even if it isn't actually in your possession. If you're in a car and there's a gun near you in the vehicle, you can and likely will be charged with possession of that gun. This is called constructive possession.

**Violent Crimes**

Another common category of crimes is violent crimes, such as domestic violence, assault, and even murder. Most of these charges are very, very serious and should not be handled alone. Even if you are charged with a serious crime that you didn't commit, you should still hire a lawyer before speaking with the police or anyone else about the situation.

**How Do I Choose A Lawyer?**

Finding the right lawyer can be a complex process. Most attorneys offer a free 15-minute consultation, so your best bet is to set up multiple consultations so you can find the right person for you. If you and your friends and family don't know any criminal defense lawyers, you can start with Google. Just search for criminal defense attorneys in your area. Take a look at their website and see what they specialize in. Also take a look at their reviews. Most experienced and accomplished lawyers will have a large number of positive reviews. If you see someone who has a bunch of negative reviews, you probably want to move on.

**Find Someone Who Will Go To Bat For You**

Being arrested and charged with a crime is a terrifying experience. Make sure you find a criminal defense attorney who is passionate about what they do and who works hard for all of their clients. Having a good, experienced lawyer can be the difference between probation and jail time, so choose wisely. Are they easy to reach? Do they call clients back? Do they have experience? These are all critical aspects in selecting the proper criminal defense lawyer.

Whatever you do, make sure you are an active participant in your criminal matter. Make sure your lawyer knows how important this is for you, and make sure you stay on top of things. If you have a good lawyer, this likely won't be an issue, but no one will care moreabout your case than you do.