

The Grand Jury may also examine the fiscal administration of municipalities.

While it is a part of the judicial system, a Grand Jury is an entirely independent body. The presiding judge of the criminal department of the Superior Court, the District Attorney, the County Counsel and the State Attorney General act as its advisors, but cannot prevent the actions of the jury unless the jury's action violates the law.

Because of the confidential nature of a Grand Jury's work, much of it must be conducted in closed session. Members of a Grand Jury are sworn to secrecy to assure that all complaints will be handled in an entirely confidential manner. No one may be present during the sessions of a Grand Jury except those specified by law, and the minutes of its meetings may not be inspected by anyone, nor can its records be subpoenaed.

The conduct of criminal investigations and the return of indictments is the smaller part of a Grand Jury's function in California. In this state the vast majority of criminal cases are presented to the court at a preliminary hearing by a complaint issued by the District Attorney.

The Grand Jury serves as an ombudsman for citizens of the county. The jury receives and investigates complaints by individuals regarding the actions and performance of public officials.

If you have a serious concern  
or complaint, write to:

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

GRAND JURY

P. O. BOX 542

SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061

~~RR SC Pal & Gow~~  
*Grand Jury*  
1/78



**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

**GRAND JURY**

## HISTORY

The Grand Jury is one of the oldest and most powerful civil institutions in our country. The Grand Jury can be traced back to the reign of the English King, Henry II (1154-1189). Historically, the Grand Jury has had two functions: the evaluation of the prosecution's evidence to determine if the state is justified in bringing the accused to trial, and independent investigations of offenses committed by public officeholders. Although forty-two states have some form of Grand Jury, only California and Nevada mandate that Grand Juries be empaneled every year to conduct civil investigations of county government and to hear evidence to decide whether to return indictments.

## DUTIES AND POWERS

As constituted today, the Grand Jury is a part of the judicial branch of government -- "an arm of the court." It is an investigative body and is a part of the workings of government whose object is the detection and correction of flaws in government and the return of indictments. The primary function of the Grand Jury, and the most important reason for its existence, is the examination of all aspects of county government and special districts, seeing that the county's monies are handled judiciously and that all accounts are properly audited; in general, assuring honest, efficient government in the best interests of the people.

## COMMITTEES

The accomplishments of the Grand Jury depend to a great extent upon the work of its committees. The major committees of the Grand Jury are:

AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE provides for the completion and review of all the audits of the county offices as required by law. It also concerns itself with the accurate and most efficient conduct of county government and makes recommendations with these concerns in mind.

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE conducts a public information program to encourage citizens who have serious concerns or complaints regarding any aspect of county government or its services, to contact the Grand Jury.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE considers all matters concerning criminal justice and penal institutions such as: detention facilities, District Attorney, Municipal and Superior Courts, court officers, criminal complaints, police conduct, probation, public defender, and sheriff/coroner.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE concerns itself with the educational institutions and public libraries within the county such as: county office of education, public libraries, school districts, special schools which may be coordinated through the county schools and/or the Probation Department.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE concerns itself with any investigations of the offices of county government and administration

of all county agencies, including Personnel, Board of Supervisors, and County Administrative Office.

GRAND JURY REVIEW AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE concerns itself with legislative proposals (County, State, or Federal), which would affect the Grand Jury.

HEALTH COMMITTEE concerns itself with all aspects of health care operations in the county, including: county health programs, mental health, detoxification centers, and school health.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE considers all matters, departments, and agencies having an impact on the environment.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES COMMITTEE conducts inspections to determine the maintenance and physical quality of county properties.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE considers matters regarding sanitation, special districts such as harbor, flood control, roads, water, cemetery, etc.

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE concerns itself with facets of social services of the county, including: day care centers, occupational program, office of consumer affairs, senior citizens programs, veterans services, welfare programs: AFDC, food stamps, public administrator, general assistance.

Ad hoc committees may be formed as needed.