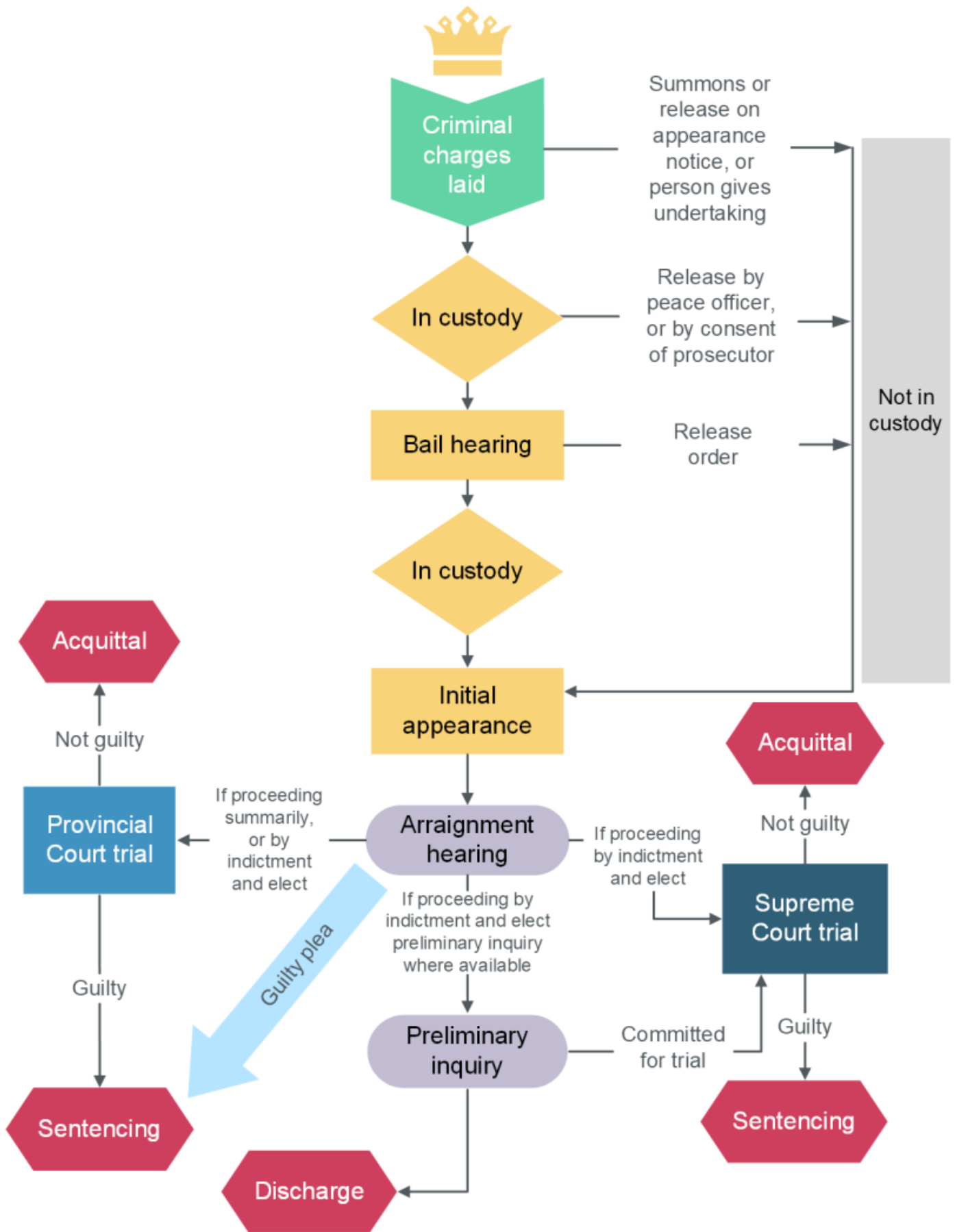




Step-by-step overview of each stage of a criminal case and basic information about the criminal charge process, types of criminal offences and where criminal trials are held.

## **Overview of criminal prosecutions from beginning to end**

The *Criminal Code of Canada* sets out the steps in criminal cases which are summarized in the diagram below.



The Court is not involved in all of these steps. For example, the Court is not involved in the process of laying charges.

The steps in a criminal case that happen in Provincial Court are briefly summarized below. There is more detail about each step in the linked pages. You can also navigate through the steps using the navigation links in the sidebar (or at the top of the page on mobile).

[Charges and types of offences](#)

## **Bail hearing**

If the accused person was kept in custody after being charged, the bail hearing is where the Court decides whether they should be granted bail (released with or without conditions) or kept in custody until the trial.

[Bail hearing](#)

## **Initial appearance**

At the initial appearance, the Court tells the accused person what they are charged with.

[Initial appearance](#)

## **Arraignment hearing**

An arraignment hearing is a court hearing where the accused person or their lawyer tells the Court if they will plead guilty or not guilty. If the accused person is charged with an indictable offence, some procedural choices are also made at the arraignment hearing.

[Arraignment hearing](#)

## **Preliminary inquiry hearing**

In cases where the trial will be held in BC Supreme Court, there may be a preliminary inquiry in Provincial Court to decide if there is enough evidence for the trial to proceed.

[Preliminary inquiry hearing](#)

## **Criminal pre-trial conference**

In some cases, there is a mandatory pre-trial conference for criminal files to ensure only those requiring a trial are set for trial and to ensure there are accurate trial time estimates.

[Pre-trial conference](#)

## **Pleading guilty**

A guilty plea means that you accept responsibility for the offence charged resulting in a conviction being entered and, if this occurs before trial, you will not have a trial. If you enter a guilty plea the next step is sentencing by a judge.

## **Provincial Court trial**

This is the process where the Court decides if the accused person is innocent or guilty.

[Provincial Court trial](#)

## **Sentencing**

If someone pleads guilty to a criminal charge or is found guilty after a trial, there will be a sentencing hearing where the judge will read and explain the sentence.

[Sentencing](#)

## **Notices, policies, practice directions**

Find notices, policies and practice directions related to criminal matters.



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