



# CRIMINAL VS CIVIL

## UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCES

**CRIMINAL**

**VS**

**CIVIL**

## WHAT'S AT STAKE



### Personal Liberty

If you are a party in a criminal trial, then you are the defendant and there may be prison time involved if you lose the trial, depending on the severity of the crime.



### Money and Property

If you are a party in a civil trial, you may be either the plaintiff or the defendant. The stakes in a civil trial usually involve money and/or property. There is no threat of prison in a civil trial unless you commit a crime during the trial (such as lying under oath or being found in contempt).

## THE BURDEN OF PROOF



### Beyond All Reasonable Doubt

The criminal standard is much more difficult to meet than the civil standard. The prosecutor must prove the defendant is guilty beyond all reasonable doubt.



### Preponderance of the Evidence

The Plaintiff in a civil trial has a much lower burden of proof than the prosecutor in a criminal trial. To win the case, the Plaintiff only has to prove that it was more likely than not that the defendant was liable for the accident.