

## CHAPTER 960.

## CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS IN JUSTICE COURTS.

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**960.01 Justices' jurisdiction.** Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, justices of the peace shall have jurisdiction throughout their respective counties to hold court to try and determine all charges under ss. 940.20 and 947.01. Neither justices of the peace nor municipal justices of the peace shall have jurisdiction to hold preliminary examinations in felony cases.

**History:** 1961 c. 561.

**Cross Reference:** As to costs and fees, see 307.01 and 307.02.

**960.03 Applicability of chapter 954.** All provisions of ch. 954 relating to complaints, warrants and summonses shall apply to proceedings under this chapter.

**History:** 1961 c. 495.

**960.04 General statutes apply.** (1) Statutes relating to form or substance or amendment of indictments or informations, the statement of crimes and the evidence thereunder, so far as applicable, shall apply to complaints, amendments, proceedings and trials before justices of the peace.

(2) The forms prescribed by ch. 954 may be used as far as applicable in all criminal proceedings in justice courts.

**960.05 Docket entries.** The justice shall enter an action in his docket in which the state of Wisconsin is plaintiff and the accused is the defendant, and shall make the other entries required in civil cases.

**960.06 Trial; change of venue.** On the return of the warrant with the defendant or on the defendant's appearing pursuant to a summons, the justice shall proceed to try the action, unless continued for cause. If the defendant, before he pleads to the complaint, makes oath that from prejudice he believes the justice will not decide impartially in the action, the justice shall transmit all the papers and a copy of his docket entries to the nearest justice of the county who is able to try the action, and he shall proceed with the action as though originally begun before him, and the defendant, if in custody, shall be taken before such nearest justice.

**960.07 Bail, commitment.** The defendant may give bail in such sum, with or without sureties, as the justice directs, for his appearance at the trial and at any time thereafter until discharged by law. On his failure to give bail, he shall be committed to jail.

**960.08 Form of bail.** The following form of bail may be used in all actions and examinations under this chapter and under ch. 954 upon the adjournment of the action, proceeding or examination:

STATE OF WISCONSIN,  
 .... County,  
 Town (city, village) of .... }  
 State of Wisconsin,

v.  
 Name of defendant.

We, A. B. and C. D. and E. F., hereby give bail in the sum of .... dollars, for the

appearance of said A.B. upon the . . . . day of . . . ., 19. . ., at . . . . M. of that day, before G. H., a . . . . of said county, at his office in the (town, village or city) of . . . ., in said county, to answer a (criminal prosecution, examination or proceeding) for (state the crime), and from time to time thereafter until discharged by law.

Dated . . . ., 19. . .

(Signed) A. B.

C. D.

E. F.

Bail, entered in substantially the foregoing form, shall bind the principal and sureties jointly and severally for the appearance of the defendant and his attendance upon the specified court or magistrate at all times to which the trial or examination may be adjourned and until he is discharged by law.

**960.09 Defendant to plead; motor vehicle violation.** The charge stated in the warrant or complaint shall be read to the defendant and he shall plead thereto. The justice shall enter the plea in his docket. The defendant may plead guilty, not guilty or nolo contendere; if he refuses to plead, the justice shall enter a plea of not guilty. When a summons is issued by a police officer for a violation of any provision of chs. 194 and 340 to 348, the defendant if he resides, or if a corporation if it has principal place of business, outside the county in which the justice is located, may enter a plea of not guilty based on such summons by registered letter to the justice at the address indicated on the summons, the letter to show the defendant's return address. Such letter may include a request for trial during normal daytime business hours. Upon receipt of the letter, the justice shall reply by mail to the defendant's address setting forth a time and place for trial, such time to be during normal business hours if requested by the defendant; the warrant and complaint shall be included in the reply and the date of trial shall be at least 10 days from the mailing thereof by the justice. Nothing herein shall be construed as forbidding the setting of the trial at any time convenient to all parties concerned. The procedure prescribed in this section shall also apply to municipal, county and inferior courts.

**960.10 When justice to try issue.** If the defendant pleads not guilty and no jury is demanded by him, the justice shall try and determine the action according to the evidence.

**960.11 Judgment on plea of guilty.** If the defendant pleads guilty or nolo contendere, the justice shall convict him of the crime charged and render judgment.

**960.12 Jury, how obtained.** If a jury is demanded by the defendant before the trial begins, the justice shall direct the sheriff or any constable of the county to write the names of 18 residents of the county qualified to serve as jurors in courts of record, from which list the defendant and the complainant may each strike 6 names. If either party neglects to strike out names, the justice shall strike out names for him. The justice shall issue a venire to the sheriff or constable to summon the 6 persons whose names are not struck out to appear at the time and place named in the venire.

See note to 255.04, citing State ex rel. Peterson v. County Court, 13 W (2d) 37, 108 NW (2d) 146.

**960.14 Service of venire.** The officer shall summon the jurors personally and shall make a list of the persons summoned, which he shall certify and annex to the venire and return to the justice within the time therein specified.

**960.15 Talesmen.** If a juror named in the venire fails to attend or if there is any legal objection to any who appears, the justice shall direct the sheriff or constable to summon bystanders to act as jurors.

**960.16 Second jury.** If the officer fails to return the venire as required or if the jury fails to agree and is discharged, a new jury shall be selected and summoned in the same manner as the preceding one, and the same proceedings shall thereupon be had as that prescribed in respect to the first jury, unless the defendant consents to be tried by the justice, in which case he shall proceed as if no jury had been demanded.

**960.17 Challenges for cause.** Either party may challenge a juror for cause, as in civil actions.

**960.19 Jury, duty.** After the jurors are sworn they shall sit together and hear the evidence in the action, which shall be delivered publicly in the presence of the defendant unless he has waived the right to be present. After hearing the evidence the jury shall be kept together in some convenient place until they agree on a verdict or are discharged. The sheriff or a constable shall be sworn to take charge of the jury.

**960.20 Verdict.** The jury shall deliver their verdict publicly to the justice, who shall copy it in his docket.

**960.21 Judgment and sentence.** If the defendant is found guilty, the justice shall render judgment according to law and shall issue a commitment or order as may be required.

**960.22 Discharge of accused; costs; appeal.** (1) If the defendant is acquitted, he shall be discharged; and if the justice certifies in his docket that the complaint was malicious and without probable cause, he shall enter judgment against the complainant to pay all the taxable costs that have accrued, including the fees of witnesses.

(2) The complainant may stay such judgment for 30 days by giving a bond to the state with one or more sureties conditioned for the payment of the judgment at the expiration of 30 days; but if the complainant neglects to give such bond, the court may (if the complainant gave security for costs in the manner provided in s. 960.33) issue execution against both the complainant and the surety, and if the complainant does not satisfy the execution and the officer cannot find sufficient property belonging to him upon which to levy, the officer shall levy upon the property of the surety; and in case the complainant has not given such security, the court may issue a body execution against the complainant, as in civil actions.

(3) The complainant may appeal from the judgment as in civil actions, and the action shall be tried and determined on such appeal upon the records in the action certified and returned by the justice.

**960.23 Stay of execution.** An appellant (or relator on certiorari to a justice) may secure a stay of execution of judgment by giving bail in such sum as the justice or the judge of the appellate court requires, and by complying with s. 954.42.

**960.24 Execution of judgment.** The judgment shall be carried out by the sheriff or constable in accordance with the commitment or execution issued by the court.

**960.25 Nonattendance of jurors and witnesses.** If any person summoned to appear before a justice of the peace as a juror or witness fails to appear or if any witness refuses to be sworn or to testify, he shall be liable to the same penalties and may be proceeded against in the manner provided in respect to jurors and witnesses in justices' courts in civil proceedings.

**960.26 Certificate of conviction.** If there is a conviction, the justice shall make and sign a certificate of conviction in which it shall be sufficient to state the crime charged and the conviction and judgment thereon, and if any fine has been collected the amount thereof.

**960.27 Certificate filed.** Within 20 days after conviction the justice shall file such certificate in the office of the clerk of the circuit court of the county; except in counties having a court other than a circuit court vested with exclusive appellate criminal jurisdiction, in which case the certificate shall be filed with the clerk of that court. The clerk shall make an alphabetical record thereof.

**960.28 Certificate as evidence.** Such certificate of conviction or a duly certified copy thereof shall be evidence of the facts therein contained.

**960.29 Breach of bail bond.** If a bail bond is breached, that fact shall be certified to the circuit court and a rearrest may be had as provided in s. 954.06.

**960.30 Procedure if justice has no jurisdiction to try.** If in the progress of a trial before a justice under this chapter it appears to the justice from the evidence that there is probable cause to believe the defendant guilty of a crime of which the justice has not trial jurisdiction and that the defendant ought to be put upon trial for a crime cognizable before another court, the justice shall stop the trial and bind the defendant over or commit him to jail to answer to said court in the same manner as he would have done had the defendant been brought before the justice for a preliminary examination for the crime of which the justice finds there is probable cause to believe him guilty.

**960.31 Witnesses; subpoenas.** (1) The justice shall subpoena all persons whose testimony is deemed material.

(2) If the trial is continued it is not necessary for the justice to again subpoena any witness who is present, but the justice shall verbally notify such witnesses as either party may require to attend before him to testify in the action on the day set for trial, which notice shall be effective as a subpoena.

960.33 Security for costs. The justice may require the complainant to give security for costs as in civil actions, and if he refuses, the justice may dismiss the complaint.

960.34 Fines; record, payment, entry, report. All fines imposed by a justice court, municipal justice of the peace or other magistrate, if paid before the defendant is committed, shall be received by the court or magistrate. The amount thereof, the date when received and the title of the action shall be entered on the docket or other record required to be kept and be paid to the county treasurer within 30 days after the receipt thereof. And the court or magistrate shall at the same time report in writing to the treasurer the date of conviction, the title of the action and the crime for which the fine was imposed.

History: 1961 c. 614.

960.35 Payment to sheriff. If the defendant is committed, payment of his fine and the costs may be made to the sheriff, who shall, within 30 days after receipt thereof, pay the same to the county treasurer.

960.36 Forms. The following forms may be used:

COMPLAINT

STATE OF WISCONSIN, }  
.... County, } In .... Court  
..... } Before ...., Magistrate  
The State of Wisconsin,  
v.  
Name of defendant.

...., being duly sworn, says that on the .... day of ...., 19.., at said county (name of the defendant or alias) did (state the crime), contrary to section .... of the statutes and against the peace and dignity of the state.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this .... day of ...., 19...  
....., Magistrate

SUMMONS

(If defendant is a corporation, strike words "arrested and" and amend last clause to read: "and in case of your failure to appear, judgment will be rendered against you.")

STATE OF WISCONSIN, }  
.... County, } In Justice Court  
Town (city, village) of .... } Before ...., Justice of the Peace  
The State of Wisconsin,  
v.  
Name of defendant.

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, to said defendant:

Whereas, ..... has this day complained in writing to me on oath that you did, on the .... day of .... 19.., in said county (here insert the complaint), and has prayed that you might be arrested and dealt with according to law; now, therefore, you are summoned to appear before me at my office in (state the location) in said town (city, village), to answer said complaint, on the .... day of ...., 19.., at 10 o'clock in the forenoon, and in case of your failure to appear a warrant for your arrest will be issued.

Given under my hand this .... day of ...., 19...  
....., Justice of the Peace

WARRANT

STATE OF WISCONSIN, }  
.... County, } In Justice Court  
Town (city, village) of .... } Before ...., Justice of the Peace  
The State of Wisconsin,  
v.  
Name of defendant.

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, to the sheriff or any peace officer of said county:

Whereas, ..... has this day complained in writing to me on oath that .... did, on the .... day of ...., 19.., in said county (here insert the complaint), and prayed that said .... might be arrested and dealt with according to law; now, therefore, you are commanded forthwith to arrest him and to bring him before me.

Given under my hand this .... day of ...., 19...  
....., Justice of the Peace

CERTIFICATE OF CONVICTION

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
.... County,
Town (city, village) of ....
The State of Wisconsin,
v.
Name of defendant.

In Justice Court
Before ...., Justice of the Peace

At a justice's court held at my office in said town before me, ...., a justice of the peace for said county, for the trial of .... for the crime hereinafter stated, the said .... was convicted of having, on the .... day of ...., 19.., in said county (here state the crime as in the warrant), and upon such conviction the court adjudged that he pay a fine of .... dollars and costs (and if imprisonment be imposed, add), and be imprisoned in the county jail .... days; (if the fine be paid, add) and said fine has been paid to me.

Given under my hand this .... day of ...., 19...
...., Justice of the Peace

EXECUTION

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
.... County,
Town (city, village) of ....
The State of Wisconsin,
v.
Name of defendant.

In Justice Court
Before ...., Justice of the Peace

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, to the sheriff or any peace officer of said county:

Whereas, at a justice's court held at my office in said town for the trial of .... for the crime hereinafter stated he was convicted of having, on the .... day of ...., 19.., in said county (here state the crime as in the warrant), and upon conviction the court adjudged that he pay a fine of .... dollars and costs; and whereas, said fine and costs have not been paid, you are commanded to levy on the personal property, etc. (as in an execution against the goods or body in civil cases).

COMMITMENT UPON SENTENCE

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
.... County,
Town (city, village) of ....
The State of Wisconsin,
v.
Name of defendant.

In Justice Court
Before ...., Justice of the Peace

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, to the sheriff or any peace officer of said county:

Whereas, at a justice's court held before me at my office in said town for the trial of .... for the crime hereinafter stated, he was convicted of having, on the .... day of ...., 19.., in said county (here state the crime as in the warrant), and upon conviction the court adjudged that he be imprisoned in the county jail for .... days, therefore you are commanded forthwith to convey and deliver said .... to the keeper of such jail; and the keeper is commanded to keep him there until the expiration of said .... days or until he is discharged by due course of law.

Given under my hand this .... day of ...., 19...
...., Justice of the Peace

COMMITMENT AFTER ARREST AND BEFORE TRIAL

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
.... County,
Town (city, village) of ....
The State of Wisconsin,
v.
Name of defendant.

In Justice Court
Before ...., Justice of the Peace

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, to the sheriff or any peace officer of said county:

Whereas, .... has been this day brought before me, a justice of the peace in and for said county, charged with having on the .... day of ...., 19.., in said county (here state the crime as in the warrant), and said .... not having given bail to appear and answer for the crime, therefore you are commanded forthwith to deliver him

to the keeper of the county jail; and said keeper is commanded to keep him there until he is brought before the court or is otherwise discharged by due course of law.

Given under my hand this .... day of ....., 19...  
....., Justice of the Peace

ORDER TO BRING UP PRISONER

STATE OF WISCONSIN, }  
.... County, } In Justice Court  
Town (city, village) of .... } Before ....., Justice of the Peace  
The State of Wisconsin,

v.  
Name of defendant.

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, to the sheriff of said county:

The undersigned, a justice of the peace in and for said county, sitting as a court for the trial of ...., now in your custody, do hereby order you to bring him forthwith before me at my office in said town, together with the warrant by which he was committed to your custody.

Given under my hand this .... day of ....., 19...  
....., Justice of the Peace

COMMITMENT WHERE JUSTICE HAS NOT JURISDICTION

STATE OF WISCONSIN, }  
.... County, } In Justice Court  
Town (city, village) of .... } Before ....., Justice of the Peace  
The State of Wisconsin,

v.  
Name of defendant.

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, to the sheriff or any peace officer of said county:

Whereas, .... has been brought before the undersigned, a justice of the peace of said county, charged with having, on the .... day of ....., 19.., in said county, committed the crime of (here state the crime charged in the warrant), and in the trial on said charge it appearing to me that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant is guilty of the crime of (here state the new crime found on trial), committed at the time and place aforesaid, of which crime the justice has not trial jurisdiction; and whereas, after an examination had in due form of law, touching the crime last aforesaid, I found that said crime had been committed and that there was probable cause to believe the defendant is guilty thereof; now, whereas he has not offered sufficient bail for his appearance to answer for said crime, you are commanded to take him to the county jail, and the keeper thereof is required to detain him in said jail until he is discharged according to law.

Given under my hand this .... day of ....., 19...  
....., Justice of the Peace

History: 1961 c. 561.