


What Is a Warrant? - Definition & Examples

Lesson Transcript

Cite this lesson 

This lesson will teach you about warrants. Initially, we'll learn what constitutes a warrant and learn what an arrest warrant and a search warrant are, including their basic differences. Then we'll review some examples of each one.

Definition

Since the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights provide certain basic freedoms, the police cannot simply go around making random arrests and performing random searches. They must use warrants. **Warrants** are used for two basic purposes: to arrest someone and to search a suspect's property.

In order to arrest an individual, an arrest warrant is used. In order to search one's property, a search warrant is used. Warrants help keep police procedures efficient and effective. In addition, warrants ensure that individual rights are protected by making sure that police follow procedures.

Arrest Warrants

An **arrest warrant** is a document signed by a judge that authorizes an arrest. It typically must be based upon probable cause that the person against whom the arrest warrant is sought committed a crime. The arrest warrant must be supported by evidence showing the probable cause, such as an affidavit. An **affidavit** is a sworn statement where a person states the facts of a matter.

Search Warrants

A **search warrant** is a document signed by a judge which authorizes police officers to look for certain items, usually based upon probable cause. Moreover, the document must indicate the specific location and time period in which the police may search. A failure to specify this information will make the warrant and anything found pursuant to the warrant invalid.

Examples

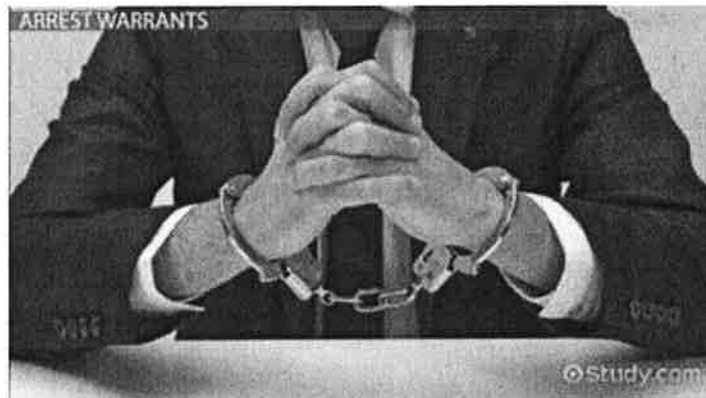
Let's look at some examples in order to get a better understanding of how warrants are used. Imagine that A robbed a grocery store and B and C were witnesses to the crime. B and C issue affidavits to D, a police officer. D presents the affidavits to a judge, who issues an arrest warrant for A. D locates A and arrests A with the arrest warrant. The arrest is valid.

Imagine the same example, but this time D would like to get some additional evidence. D believes that A is hiding bags of money in his apartment. D goes to a judge and gets a search warrant. The search warrant says that D can go to A's apartment on Tuesday, between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to execute the warrant. D goes on Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. and finds a bag of money. This is a valid search, based upon the search warrant. The bag of money can be used against A in a court of law.

Lesson Summary

Let's review. Warrants are used in connection with police procedures. **Warrants** help police perform their jobs efficiently while also protecting the public against violations of their rights. Warrants are used to arrest people and to search property. An **arrest warrant** pertains to arresting a suspect, while a **search warrant** applies to a search of a suspect's property.

A Warrant Overview



Terms	Explanations
Warrants	used for two basic purposes: to arrest someone and to search a suspect's property
Arrest warrant	a document signed by a judge that authorizes an arrest
Affidavit	a sworn statement in which a person states the facts of a matter
Search warrant	a document signed by a judge which authorizes police officers to look for certain items, usually based upon probable cause

Learning Outcomes

Your exploration and retention of the facts in the lesson will enable you to:

- Specify the two main purposes of warrants

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- Contrast arrest warrants and search warrants
- Give examples of the ways in which warrants work

Worksheet: What Is a Warrant? - Definition & Examples

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-a-warrant-definition-examples.html>

1. What does an arrest warrant authorize the police to do?

- To search a suspect
- To question a suspect
- To speak to a suspect
- To arrest a suspect

2. Warrants help police perform their jobs ____, while also protecting the public against violations of their ____.

- Enthusiastically; grievances
- Easily; persons
- Effectively; ideals
- Efficiently; rights

3. What are the two main types of warrants?

- Arrest and search warrants
- Accost and service warrants
- Applied and seizure warrants
- Criminal and civil warrants

4. What does a search warrant authorize the police to do?

- All of these answer choices are correct.
- To arrest a suspect
- To search anywhere the police would like
- To perform a search at a certain location

5. When is probable cause required in order for a judge to issue a warrant?

- Only a search warrant requires probable cause in order for a judge to issue a warrant.
- Neither an arrest warrant nor a search warrant require probable cause in order for a judge to issue a warrant.
- Both an arrest warrant and a search warrant require probable cause in order for a judge to issue a warrant.
- Only an arrest warrant requires probable cause in order for a judge to issue a warrant.