

**812.3 Mental incompetency of accused.**

1. If at any stage of a criminal proceeding the defendant or the defendant's attorney, upon application to the court, alleges specific facts showing that the defendant is suffering from a mental disorder which prevents the defendant from appreciating the charge, understanding the proceedings, or assisting effectively in the defense, the court shall suspend further proceedings and determine if probable cause exists to sustain the allegations. The applicant has the burden of establishing probable cause. The court may on its own motion schedule a hearing to determine probable cause if the defendant or defendant's attorney has failed or refused to make an application under [this section](#) and the court finds that there are specific facts showing that a hearing should be held on that question. The defendant shall not be compelled to testify at the hearing and any testimony of the defendant given during the hearing shall not be admissible on the issue of guilt, except such testimony shall be admissible in proceedings under [section 811.2, subsection 8](#), and [section 811.8](#), and in perjury proceedings.

2. Upon a finding of probable cause sustaining the allegations, the court shall suspend further criminal proceedings and order the defendant to undergo a psychiatric evaluation to determine whether the defendant is suffering from a mental disorder which prevents the defendant from appreciating the charge, understanding the proceedings, or assisting effectively in the defense. The order shall also authorize the evaluator to provide treatment necessary and appropriate to facilitate the evaluation. If an evaluation has been conducted within thirty days of the probable cause finding, the court is not required to order a new evaluation and may use the recent evaluation during a hearing under [this chapter](#). Any party is entitled to a separate psychiatric evaluation by a psychiatrist or licensed, doctorate-level psychologist of their own choosing.

[C51, §3260, 3261; R60, §5015, 5016; C73, §4620, 4621; C97, §5540; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §13905; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §783.1; C79, 81, §812.3]

[2004 Acts, ch 1084, §5](#)

Referred to in [§812.5, §812.8](#)