

**331.754 Absence or disqualification of county attorney and assistants.**

1. In case of absence, sickness, or disability of the county attorney and the assistant county attorneys, the board of supervisors may appoint an attorney to act as county attorney. Upon application of the county attorney or the attorney general, the chief judge or the chief judge's designee may appoint an attorney to act temporarily as county attorney until the board has had sufficient time to appoint an acting county attorney. As an alternative, upon the application of the county attorney or the attorney general, the chief judge or the chief judge's designee may appoint the attorney general to temporarily act as county attorney if the attorney general consents to the appointment.

2. If the county attorney and all assistant county attorneys are disqualified because of a conflict of interest from performing duties and conducting official business in a juvenile, criminal, contempt, or commitment proceeding which requires the attention of the county attorney, the chief judge or the chief judge's designee, upon application by the county attorney or the attorney general certifying that there is a bona fide reason for the disqualification based upon a principle of law or court rule, may appoint an attorney to act as county attorney in the proceeding. As an alternative, upon application of the county attorney or attorney general certifying that there is a bona fide reason for the disqualification, the chief judge or the chief judge's designee may appoint the attorney general to act as county attorney in the proceeding if the attorney general consents to the appointment. If the attorney general does not consent to the appointment, the chief judge or the chief judge's designee may appoint an attorney designated by the attorney general.

3. Upon any application of the attorney general pursuant to [subsection 1 or 2](#), the county attorney shall be given notice and shall be provided an opportunity to file an objection prior to the appointment of any attorney. [This subsection](#) shall not apply if giving notice would jeopardize a criminal investigation.

4. The board may appoint an attorney to act as county attorney in a civil proceeding if the county attorney and all assistant county attorneys are disqualified because of a conflict of interest from performing duties and conducting official business.

5. A temporary or acting county attorney has the same authority and is subject to the same responsibilities as a county attorney.

6. A temporary or acting county attorney shall receive a reasonable compensation as determined by the board for services rendered in proceedings before a judicial magistrate or rendered on behalf of a county officer or employee. If the proceedings are held before a district associate judge or a district judge, the judge shall determine a reasonable compensation for the temporary or acting county attorney. If the proceedings are held before an associate juvenile judge or a judicial hospitalization referee, the temporary or acting county attorney shall be compensated at a rate approved by the judge who appointed the associate juvenile judge or referee. The compensation shall be paid from funds to be appropriated to the office of county attorney by the board.

7. Notwithstanding [subsections 1 through 6](#), upon request by a county attorney, the attorney general or an assistant attorney general may act as county attorney in a criminal proceeding, on behalf of the state, without appointment by the board, the chief judge, or the chief judge's designee.

[C97, §304; C24, §13675; C27, 31, 35, §5180-a1; C39, §5180.1; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §336.3; S81, §331.754; [81 Acts, ch 117, §754](#)]

[88 Acts, ch 1066, §1](#); [92 Acts, ch 1124, §3](#); [2000 Acts, ch 1057, §2](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1052, §1](#)