

Criminal Defense

Attorneys

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Related Services

Criminal Defense
Domestic Violence
Defense
Drug Charges
Juvenile Crimes
Motor Vehicle Offenses
Operating Under the
Influence (OUI)
Probation Violations
White Collar Crime

Overview

Calm through complexity. Strategic defense when the stakes are high.

A criminal charge changes everything in an instant. Your job, your housing, your professional licenses, your immigration status, and your personal relationships all become vulnerable the moment the Commonwealth or the State of Rhode Island files a complaint. The pressure to resolve matters quickly is real, but speed without strategy is how defendants end up with permanent records that follow them for decades.

Cohen Cleary defends individuals across Massachusetts and Rhode Island who are facing charges ranging from first-time misdemeanors to serious felonies. Whether you were arrested last night or received a summons weeks ago, the critical window for building an effective defense is open right now. Our criminal defense attorneys are available for emergency matters, including same-day arraignments, and bring disciplined preparation and strict confidentiality to every stage of the process.

Misdemeanor and Felony Defense: Criminal Charges We Handle

Our criminal defense practice covers a range of offenses across Massachusetts and Rhode Island courts:

Operating Under the Influence (OUI)

[Defense against drunk driving and drug-impaired driving charges](#), including license suspension hearings and Melanie's Law consequences.

Domestic Violence and Restraining Orders

Representation for individuals [accused of domestic assault](#), as well as defense at Chapter 209A abuse prevention order hearings.

Drug Charges

[Defense for possession, distribution, and trafficking allegations](#), including school zone enhancements and mandatory minimum exposure.

Motor Vehicle Offenses

[Criminal driving charges](#), including reckless operation, leaving the scene, and operating after suspension.

Juvenile Crimes

[Defense of minors](#) in Juvenile Court with a focus on rehabilitation, diversion, and record protection.

White Collar Crime

Fraud, embezzlement, and [financial crime defense](#) at both the state and federal levels.

Probation Violations

[Representation at violation hearings](#) for both technical and new-law violations, with strategies focused on avoiding incarceration.

How Our Criminal Defense Attorneys Fight Your Charges

Criminal defense at Cohen Cleary begins before the first court date. When a client retains us, we immediately secure all available evidence: police reports, booking records, body camera footage, witness statements, and any surveillance materials the prosecution may rely on. In Bristol County District Court and Plymouth County courts, case volume means that critical evidence, particularly video footage, can be overwritten or lost if not preserved early. Prompt action on evidence preservation is one of the most consequential steps in any criminal case.

We assess suppression opportunities at every stage. If a traffic stop lacked reasonable suspicion, if a search exceeded the scope of a warrant, or if statements were obtained in violation of your constitutional rights, those issues become the foundation of a motion practice designed to weaken or eliminate the prosecution's case before trial.

[Our attorneys](#) also evaluate the full landscape of collateral consequences. A conviction that seems manageable in the courtroom can trigger immigration removal proceedings, professional license revocations, loss of public housing eligibility, and disqualification from certain employment. This same level of preparation applies when a client faces a probation violation hearing under M.G.L. c. 279, where the burden of proof is lower, and the consequences can be immediate. We factor these realities into every negotiation and every trial strategy, ensuring that the defense addresses not just the criminal docket but the broader impact on your life.

Why Clients Choose Cohen Cleary

At Cohen Cleary, our practice teams combine deep subject-matter experience with disciplined execution and responsive client service. We do not take a one-size-fits-all approach. Every matter is handled with careful preparation, clear communication, and a strategy tailored to the client's goals and the realities of the forum.

Clients choose Cohen Cleary because we deliver:

Practice-Focused Legal Experience

Our attorneys work in defined practice areas, allowing us to develop practical insight into the legal, procedural, and regulatory nuances that matter most in each case. This focus allows us to anticipate issues, avoid unnecessary delays, and position matters for efficient resolution.

Clear Guidance and Proactive Communication

We prioritize clarity at every stage. Clients receive straightforward explanations of their options, timely updates on developments, and practical advice grounded in real-world outcomes.

Strategic Advocacy with Trial Readiness

Whether a matter calls for negotiation, mediation, or litigation, our attorneys prepare every

case with discipline and foresight. We pursue efficient resolution when possible and are fully prepared to advocate aggressively when necessary to protect our clients' interests.

Regional Knowledge and Local Presence

With offices throughout Massachusetts and experience across New England courts and agencies, we bring local insight and regional reach to every matter.

Client-Centered Service

We treat every matter with urgency and respect. Our clients rely on us for responsive service, sound judgment, and steady counsel through complex legal challenges.

In our criminal defense work, this approach helps clients navigate the pressures of criminal prosecution with clarity, efficiency, and confidence.

Pre-Trial Strategy: Why What You Say Matters More Than What They Found

The biggest mistake defendants make is talking. To police, to friends, on social media. Every word becomes evidence. The constitutional right to remain silent exists because the system is designed to use your own statements against you, and it is extraordinarily effective at doing so. We tell our clients this at the first meeting and reinforce it throughout the case: protect yourself by letting your attorney speak for you.

Our defense strategy starts with silence and builds outward. We investigate independently, challenge the prosecution's evidence at every procedural checkpoint, and prepare for trial from day one, even when we expect to negotiate a resolution.

Serving Clients Across Massachusetts and Rhode Island Courts

Cohen Cleary's criminal defense attorneys appear regularly in District Courts, Superior Courts, and Juvenile Courts across Massachusetts, including Bristol County, Plymouth County, and Norfolk County courts served by our [Taunton](#) and [Plymouth](#) offices. We also represent clients facing criminal charges in Rhode Island District and Superior Courts. Criminal law is inherently state-specific, and our familiarity with local prosecutors, court procedures, and sentencing tendencies in southeastern Massachusetts gives our clients an informed advocate who understands how cases move through these particular courtrooms. Every consultation is handled with the discretion that criminal matters require.

Your Defense Starts With a Conversation With a Trusted Massachusetts Criminal Defense Attorney

If you are facing criminal charges in Massachusetts or Rhode Island, the decisions you make now will shape the outcome of your case. [Contact](#) Cohen Cleary to speak with a criminal defense attorney about your situation, your options, and the strategy that fits your circumstances. We are available for emergency consultations and same-day arraignment representation.

Frequently Asked Questions About Criminal Defense

What should I do immediately after being arrested in Massachusetts?

Exercise your right to remain silent and contact a criminal defense attorney before making any statements to police. You are not required to answer questions beyond providing your name and basic identifying information. Anything you say, including casual remarks or attempts to explain the situation, can be used against you. Contact Cohen Cleary for emergency representation, including same-day arraignment coverage.

Will a first offense result in a dismissal?

Not automatically. While first-time offenders may be eligible for pretrial diversion, continuances without a finding (CWO), or other alternative dispositions, none of these outcomes are guaranteed. The availability of these options depends on the specific charge, the facts of the case, the jurisdiction, and the prosecutor's position. Having experienced counsel significantly improves the likelihood of a favorable resolution for first-time defendants.

Should I just plead guilty to get the case over with?

Pleading guilty may seem like the fastest path to resolution, but it is rarely the wisest one. A guilty plea results in a permanent criminal record that can affect employment, housing, immigration status, and professional licensing for years. In many cases, alternatives exist that avoid a conviction entirely, including pretrial probation, CWO dispositions, and diversion programs. An experienced defense attorney can evaluate whether these options are available before you make a decision that cannot be undone.

How is a criminal defense attorney different from a public defender?

Public defenders are qualified attorneys, but their caseloads in Massachusetts courts are often extremely heavy. A private criminal defense attorney can devote more time to investigation, motion practice, and individualized strategy development. Private counsel also provides greater flexibility in scheduling, communication, and the ability to retain expert witnesses or independent investigators when the case warrants it.

Do police have to read me my Miranda rights during an arrest?

Police are required to provide Miranda warnings before conducting a custodial interrogation. However, the failure to read Miranda rights does not automatically result in a case dismissal. It means that statements obtained during the unwarned interrogation may be suppressed and excluded from evidence. Other evidence in the case may still be admissible. This is a common misconception that leads defendants to underestimate the strength of the prosecution's remaining case.