

An allegation is an unproven claim that someone has done something wrong. It is usually made before or during an investigation when evidence is lacking. An accusation, however, is a formal or informal charge of wrongdoing that generally implies a higher level of certainty or supporting evidence.

Key Differences:

- **Proof:** Allegations explicitly denote claims made without proof. Accusations can also be unsubstantiated, but they typically act as the "finger-pointing" phase where specific evidence is being presented or relied upon.
- **Formality:** Allegations are largely used in legal or journalistic contexts. For example, a Cornell Law School Wex entry notes that allegations are assertions of fact put forth in a legal complaint that must be proven at trial. Accusations can be either formal (like an official indictment) or informal (like a verbal argument).
- **Implication:** The term "alleged" is often used in news reporting to protect publishers from libel claims while a legal case is pending. An accusation directly places blame and declares who is responsible.