



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GO TO COURT?

Developed by Shared Safety Workgroup in partnership with SCC District Attorney's Office

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FILING PROCESS



Once the investigation is underway, the police will send their findings to the District Attorney's (DA) office. Based on the evidence presented, the DA's office will decide on the charges, if any. However, filing a decision may take time, especially if further investigation or evidence collection is required, or if no crime has been committed.

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WAITING ON A FILING DECISION



If you or someone in your family is involved in a case, you can contact the DA's office to get updates and ask questions. For more information, call (831) 454-2299.

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COURT PROCESS



After a decision is made to press charges, the court will arrange an arraignment for the person who caused harm. Prior to the arraignment, a victim advocate will be assigned to the case in order to keep the victim informed and provide them with necessary services.

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THE ARRAIGNMENT



At this stage, the accused person will meet with a lawyer who will be appointed or hired to represent them. They will then enter a plea of either guilty or not guilty. Anyone involved in the case may also meet with the lawyers from both sides to discuss options.

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IF IT IS A FELONY



After the arraignment, there will be a preliminary hearing scheduled for a judge to determine if there is enough evidence to proceed. Based on the discretion of the DA's office, the victim may or may not have to testify at this time.

If the court finds enough evidence, the case will move forward to another arraignment. If the case is a misdemeanor, a future court date or a trial by jury will be scheduled.

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THE SECOND ARRAIGNMENT



At the second arraignment, the person who caused harm can choose to plead guilty or not guilty. If they plead not guilty, the case will be scheduled either for a future date or a jury trial. The timing of the trial depends on several factors, however they will have the right to request a speedy trial within 30 days for misdemeanors and 60 days for felonies.

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JURY TRIALS



At a jury trial, witnesses, including law enforcement and the victim, will testify before a dozen or more jurors. The jury determines by a unanimous decision whether the individual in question is guilty or not guilty of the crimes charged.

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VICTIM'S RIGHTS



Victims of crime in California have legal rights under "Marcy's Law" at all stages of the process. For more information, scan the QR Code or call 831-454-2299.



**Please note that every incident is treated differently, and may not occur exactly as outlined.
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IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, PLEASE DIAL 9-1-1

PLEASE DIAL 2-1-1 FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DEFINITIONS KEY

Victim's Advocate: A victim's advocate helps crime victims by providing support, information, and resources to navigate the legal process and manage their rights and needs.

Arraignment: The first step in a criminal case.

Felony: A felony is a serious crime, typically involving violence, that is punishable by imprisonment for a year or more.