



Judge Quick Reference Guide - U.S. District Court Criminal Cases

This guide serves to direct standard timelines and processes in criminal litigation within the U.S. District Court. First, it should be noted that case numbers shall contain a two digit code for the year, i.e. 23 for 2023. Likewise it shall be followed by a CV for civil litigation or CR for criminal litigation. Examples of case numbers could be 23-CR-220 or 23-CV-984. For criminal matters, CR is the accepted case designator.

This document is to serve as a guide of how an officer of the judiciary should proceed with docket events to protect the speedy trial rights of individuals before the court. Below is a simple guide to criminal complaints filed before the U.S. District Court.

The following events shall occur upon an accepted criminal filing on behalf of the Department of Justice:

First Step – Appearance & Arraignment

Upon receiving a document of criminal information filed with the court, if probable cause is found the case shall move to arraignment. This would mean the issuance of a **warrant** or **criminal summons** to a defendant with a 48 hour deadline. An **arraignment** shall then occur once the defendant appears. At arraignment, the defendant must enter a plea of guilty or not guilty.

Second Step – Pretrial Conference & Change of Pleas

Following arraignment, the presiding judge shall issue an Order for Reciprocal Discovery. This order will mandate all parties to comply with initial discovery, and allow them to docket a **Pretrial Conference** where a plea offer may be discussed.

If an offer is presented, the prosecutor *must* type the deal offered in the court record (Discord Chat) regardless if it is to be accepted or not. *The judge will not be present for this event, therefore it is important to place deals or rejections on the record.*

If accepted, the judge shall then schedule a **Change of Plea Hearing** and take the plea deal. The defendant shall then waive final sentencing for immediate sentencing, or request final sentencing done on a separate date.

Third Step – Status Hearing/Motion Hour

If no plea deal is offered or a deal is not accepted, the court shall then proceed to a **Status Hearing** period of 48 hours which shall allow for motions to be filed.

Likewise *supplemental discovery* filings will be accepted by the court. Within 48 hours it *must* be decided when the trial shall occur and if the trial shall be by bench or by jury.

Fourth Step – Trial & Sentencing

At this point the trial shall occur. Per the Federal Rules of Evidence only exhibits received by the court during discovery shall be included as trial exhibits. Following the conclusion of a trial, the court shall enter final sentencing to determine the sentence of the offender based upon a jury verdict or verdict reached through findings of the court.