

XXVII. Advice for all Court Appearances

The following advice applies to all court appearances that you will make, from arraignment through sentencing.

First, you should always be neatly dressed when appearing in court. While it may not always be necessary to wear a suit and tie, your appearance should indicate that you respect the court. You should be well groomed, and clothing such as T-shirts, shorts and tennis shoes should be avoided.

Second, make certain you locate your attorney when you get to court and let him or her know you are present. If you arrive before your attorney, you should let the court clerk know, so that he or she can place a notation on the file and, if necessary, inform the court and the prosecutor. Sometimes you will be in court several hours. Be prepared to miss a practice or a class at school on the date of court.

Third, you must appear in court on every scheduled date, unless your lawyer has arranged for you to be excused. If you do not appear, or even are late, the judge may issue a bench warrant to have you arrested. If you were released on bail, failure to appear may result in your bail money being forfeited. Also, if you were released on bail and fail to appear in court, bail jumping is a separate crime that you can be charged with in addition to the charges you already face.

An arrest warrant may stay on your record even if you are able to clear it up and appear in court. As a result, if you are ever arrested again, it may cause the judge to set higher bail or refuse to release you because you appear to have a history of not showing up for court appearances.

If you cannot come to court for any reason, make sure to call your lawyer and let him or her know. If you have a good excuse why you cannot make it for your court appearance, your lawyer can inform the judge and ask that an arrest warrant not be issued. Otherwise, the judge may issue an arrest warrant and, if applicable, order a bail forfeiture.