



## San Francisco Public Defender's Office

# COVID-19

## Message from Mano Raju, SF Public Defender

### For help, contact our office & your attorney:

#### By phone:

**Downtown:** 415.533.1671  
from jail: dial #44

**Juvenile:** 415.753.7601

#### By mail:

**Downtown:** 555 7th St.,  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**Juvenile:** 375 Woodside Ave.,  
San Francisco, CA 94127

The Public Defender's Office knows that the Coronavirus pandemic has had the biggest impact on our community members who are incarcerated, who have loved ones on the inside, and who are experiencing housing instability or a lack of other basic necessities.

The Public Defender's Office is recognized as an essential city service, allowing us to continue to fight for our community every single day. Our top priorities during this crisis are to get folks out of jails, prisons, and immigration detention facilities so they can safely shelter-in-place, and to fight to protect the communities that are over-policed and under-supported. We at the Public Defender's Office want to acknowledge the challenges you may be facing, but we also want to assure you that we are fighting harder than ever for our clients.

I hope this guide provides you with valuable information about protecting your health and understanding the changes that are happening in the courtroom. We are here to protect and defend the community.

## How COVID-19 affects your case and court dates

The Courts & the Governor made many temporary changes to the law during this state of emergency affecting when hearings are conducted, how bail is set, and how you may appear for your case. Things change day-to-day, so please call your lawyer or our office for the most up-to-date information.

### Major changes

**Preliminary Hearings** (felony cases only): The right to have a preliminary hearing in 10 court days from your arraignment is now extended to 30 court days.

**Bail:** An "Emergency Bail Schedule" was put in place reducing the amount of bail in certain cases to \$0. If you're in jail already, your attorney is assessing whether you qualify for reduced bail. If you are arrested during this time, the Emergency Bail Schedule will apply to your case, and depending on the charges, you may be released on \$0 bail right after booking.

**Trials:** You still have the right to a speedy trial, but your deadline to begin trial is being extended 90 days.

**Going to Court:** If you aren't in jail, you *may* be required to attend court in-person, but check with your attorney first. To attend court, you must cover your face (e.g. bandana, scarf, or mask covering your mouth and nose area) or you will not be let into the courthouse. If you do not have a face covering, talk to your attorney.

Some hearings are being held, but the court is extending many hearing dates.

**What will not change is that we will continue to fight for your rights!**

## How to protect yourself

*Coronavirus  
(COVID-19)  
is a contagious  
virus that attacks  
the respiratory  
system.*

The best ways to protect yourself and those around you while you are in-custody is to do the following:

- **Physically Distance.** Avoid close contact with others. Stay at least 6 feet apart;
- **Wash your hands often** with soap for 20 seconds;
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands;
- **Cover your mouth** when coughing or sneezing;
- **Wear a mask** or cloth face covering over your nose and mouth; and
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched areas.

**Inform your attorney if you cannot protect yourself.**

## Sick or with symptoms?

**Contact jail medical & your attorney if you feel sick or have any of these symptoms:**

- Cough
- Fever
- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all-inclusive & is updated on a regular basis. Always review official information posted within the jail about the virus & protecting yourself.

*People over the  
age of 65 and  
individuals with  
some pre-existing  
medical  
conditions are at  
a higher risk of  
developing severe  
complications due  
to the virus.*

## How to cope with the stress of COVID-19

- **Take breaks** from watching, reading, or listening to news stories about the pandemic.
- **Take care of your body.** Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate, exercise regularly, & get plenty of sleep.
- **Connect with others** over the phone. If you are housed in San Francisco county jail, you receive a weekly \$5 phone call credit and may use it to make free phone calls -- in addition to the free phone calls you may make to your attorney.
- If you have a **pre-existing mental health condition**, you should continue your treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.
- **Need to talk?** The Salvation Army has trained staff available: 844.458.HOPE (4673).

### **Need food, shelter, and/or mental health care?**

If you are out of custody or want to share this information with your family, you can find free resources in San Francisco by visiting the SF Public Defender website at <http://sfpublicdefender.org/covid19/>