

Victim Services Division

Commitment to Serving Our Community

The San Mateo County Victim Services Division has been providing support to victims of crime and their families since 1975. Our Victim Advocates care for a victim's physical, emotional and financial needs after a crime. We do this by providing support, information, links to community resources and assisting in the enforcement of victim's rights.

Our services are free of charge and are provided to all individuals regardless of immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion or income.



Jail Inmate Locator:

To sign up to be notified when an offender is released from jail, please visit <https://smc-inmatelocator.org> or call (650) 363-4424. You will need the offender's name, date of birth and/or inmate number.

VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION (650) 599-7479

E-mail: victimservices@smcgov.org
Web: da.smcgov.org

400 County Center, 3rd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

222 Paul Scannell Drive, 2nd Floor
San Mateo, CA 94402

1050 Mission Road
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YOUR RIGHTS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION



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The criminal justice process

Navigating the criminal justice system can be confusing, discouraging and intimidating. The Victim Services Division is here to help. Our Victim Advocates work to make the criminal justice system more understandable, accessible, and responsive to the concerns of victims and their families. We can guide you through the criminal justice process and provide you with information about your rights at each stage of the criminal case. Below are some common terms that you may encounter in the criminal justice process.

Criminal charges: Allegations of criminal acts.

the crime occurred and that the defendant committed the crime.

Arraignment: The court hearing at which a defendant hears the charges alleged and is advised of his rights. The amount of bail is often determined at the arraignment.

Plea: A defendant's response to the criminal charges. A defendant may plead "not guilty", "guilty" or "no contest". A defendant can plead guilty at any time during the criminal justice process.

Pretrial Conference: The pretrial conference is a meeting that occurs between the judge, assigned deputy district attorney and defense attorney. The purpose of the pretrial conference is to consult with the judge to see if the case can settle before trial.

Trial: The most common and well known type of trial is a jury trial. Alternately, a defendant has a right to have a trial heard by a judge, also known as a bench, or court, trial.

Preliminary Hearing: In felony cases, a preliminary hearing is a hearing where the deputy district attorney presents evidence to show that there is probable cause that

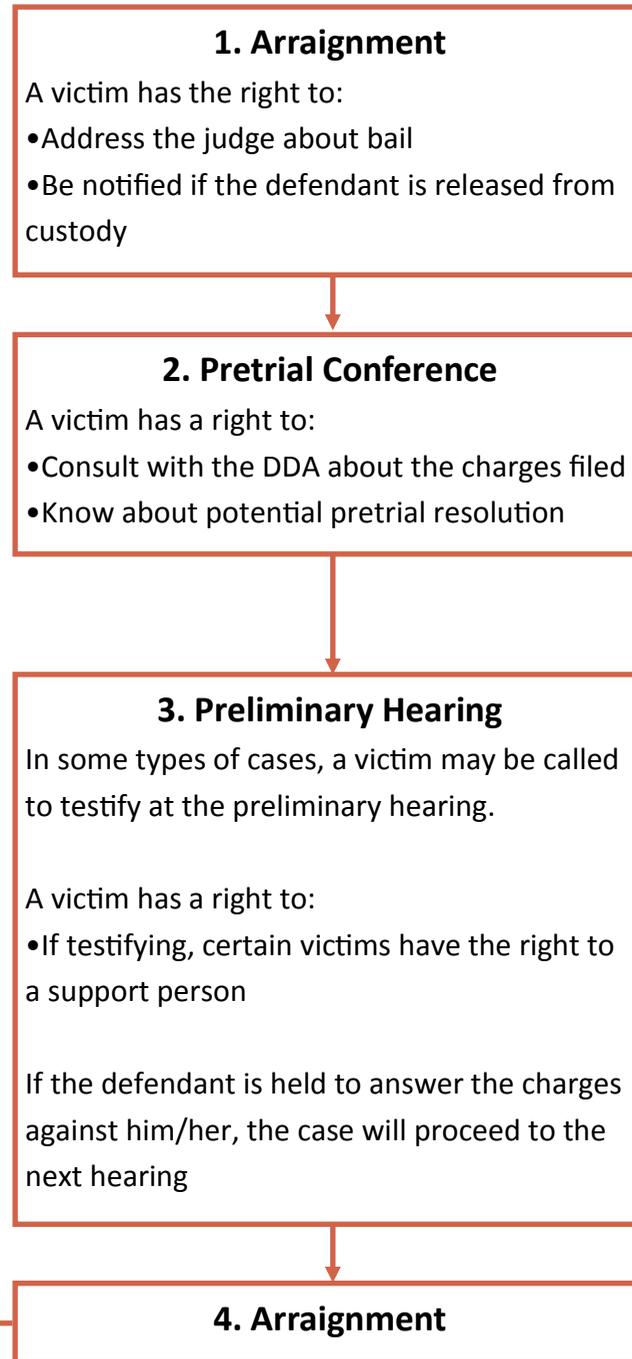
Sentencing: A hearing that occurs after the guilt stage of the case where the judge sets a sentence for the crimes committed.

Victims' rights in the criminal justice system

The District Attorney's Office believes that justice requires the voice of victims. There are rights that a victim has at every stage of the process. For example, victims have a right to respect, protection, to be notified of hearings and to be present at most hearings. For more information about victim's rights, contact a Victim Advocate.

Felony cases

A felony is a crime that is punishable by more than a year in county jail or state prison. Many felony cases often move through the criminal justice process slowly. Below is the typical course that a felony case follows through the criminal justice process and the rights that a victim has at each hearing.



Misdemeanor cases

A misdemeanor is a crime that is punishable by no more than a year in county jail. Misdemeanor cases often move through the criminal justice process very quickly. Below is the typical course that a misdemeanor case follows through the criminal justice process and the rights that a victim has at each hearing.

