

Procedures differ depending on whether you have been charged with a felony or misdemeanor, in state, federal or juvenile court. In a felony case (any crime where punishment could involve over a year in prison), one would have basically the following court appearances:

- **Initial Arraignment** (plea of "not guilty") / Bail Review
- **Plea Bargaining**; Superior Court Review (SCR). At this hearing, your attorney, the district attorney and the judge try to work out a favorable disposition. If an agreement is reached, a plea of guilty is entered and the case is continued for sentencing.
  - **Preliminary examination**, Here the District Attorney puts on a mini version of his case against you. You will also have the opportunity to cross examine any of the witnesses against you, and testify if, helpful, A judge does not determine guilt or innocence beyond a reason of a doubt, like at trial. At this hearing, the judge simply decides if there is a "strong suspicion" that a crime was committed and that you committed it. If that burden is met, you are "bound-over" for trial.
  - **Arraignment**, Like the initial court appearance, you enter a "not guilty" plea and future court dates are assigned.
  - **Motions**, Depending on the facts of the case, certain motions may be filed, such as a motion to suppress an illegal search and seizure, a motion to quash a search warrant, a motion for discovery or motions to set aside the earlier judge's bound-over ruling. If any of these motions are successful, it may substantially lessen the charges or even dismiss the case.
  - **Plea bargaining; Pre-Trial Conference**, Again, your attorney reviews the case with the District Attorney and Judge. The offer may be better or worse than at the earlier plea bargaining session. Again, if the offer is accepted, a guilty plea is entered and the case is set for sentencing. If the parties are unable to resolve the matter, it is set for trial.
  - **Trial**, A jury of twelve people is selected to hear the evidence in the case. They must unanimously agree beyond a reasonable doubt that you are guilty in order to convict you.