



## **DA Daniel P. Rubinstein Statement - Released on March 16, 2020**

Mesa County, Colo. -- The 21st Judicial District Attorney, Daniel P. Rubinstein, has issued the following notice and implemented the following practice with regard to the COVID-19 impact in our area. The following information has been shared with the staff of the District Attorney's Office, presiding Judges and magistrates and their staff, earlier today.

Effective immediately, walk-ins to the 21st Judicial District Attorney's Office will not be permitted. If a member of the public has an appointment with the DA's staff, someone will come get them from the main lobby of the Justice Center. Anyone needing to contact the DA's staff, should call. If they get our voicemail system they should leave a message. There is appropriate signage indicating these visitation steps throughout the Justice Center.

Staff with the DA's Office have been assigned to work from home or remotely, including all attorneys, paralegals, investigators and victim services personnel. At this current time, front line staff are on a rotating schedule to provide minimal phone coverage in the office. Emergent cases, felonies and domestic violence cases will continue to be handled with a minimal amount of legal staff in the office, also on a rotating schedule. Normal operations are expected to continue for all workers from their remote work areas.

**All non-essential court appearances** will be handled in one of the following ways:

1. Defendants should work directly with their defense counsel to continue the hearing until such time as a meaningful resolution or contested hearing is ready to occur.
2. The DA's Office will work with defense attorneys when appropriate to resolve their case via attorney plea or plea by mail.
3. The DA's and defense attorneys are working with the court to conduct hearings by telephone. Defendants will be notified, if this option is available to be implemented for their case.
4. In-court appearances will be held as a last resort.

Warrants will be reviewed with an effort to convert them to a summons (ticket), if possible. Summonses will have appearance dates in court approximately 6 to 8 weeks out. Cases where warrants are requested due to unknown whereabouts of a defendant may be filed, but unless circumstances show an immediate public safety risk, the warrant may not be activated until further direction from the DA.

"There is a conscious decision right now to limit the number of people going through the jail," Dan Rubinstein, 21st Judicial District Attorney, said. "Implementing these changes to how warrants are handled and the number of court appearances will reduce the chance of the justice system contributing to the public spread of this virus."

Rubinstein went on to say, all of these steps are being taken proactively and in an effort to be a good steward, we hope to return to normal operating procedures soon. We will modify our plans as we determine what is or is not working for the overall good of conducting court business.

“Public safety, and the health and safety of my staff are paramount, but we expect that customer service and honoring our victim's rights will continue at the same high level that this community has come to expect from us,” Rubinstein said.

###