



# PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of North Carolina  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 14, 2021**

## **PLEASE TAKE NOTICE OF CHANGES TO DISTRICT CRIMINAL COURT SESSIONS FOR JANUARY 2022:**

We have accumulated a significant backlog of criminal cases in our district court due to the complex challenges that have crippled our ability to schedule sessions of district criminal court over the last year and a half. The District Attorney's Office, Defense Bar and the court have adapted practices to the moment, and we have acquired new ways of doing business that create 1) more meaningful court events, 2) court date certainty and 3) timely case resolution. These are the principles of court administration that should persist in our case management practices beyond the pandemic. These are the principles that have shaped previous efforts to improve case-flow, but the structure of the court has not supported past efforts. Our success is attributable to changes in the structure of district criminal court. We have achieved these objectives over the last year through practice change, including advanced case preparation, pretrial conferences, limited dockets, time-specific scheduling and the expectation that cases on trial calendars will be resolved on that date. These practices will be strategically implemented to move our backlog into a posture that advances case resolution.

### **For the month of January 2022:**

- Domestic Violence matters will be scheduled according to procedures implemented throughout the pandemic and will be heard in Courtroom 4130 beginning January 3, 2022.
- Cases will be placed on one of two tracks
  - Non-Complex Cases
  - Complex Cases
    - Complex Cases are defined as
      - Impaired Driving Offenses
      - Death by Vehicle
      - Assault with a Deadly Weapon
      - Assault Inflicting Serious Injury
      - Assault on a Female
      - Domestic Violence Protection Order Violation
      - Stalking (Regular and Cyber)
      - Contributing to Delinquency of Minor
      - Assault on Child Under 12
      - Sexual Battery
- Non-Complex Cases will be scheduled for TRIAL in Courtroom 4170, beginning on January 3, 2022.
  - Assistant District Attorneys, defense attorneys, witnesses, and defendants are expected to be prepared for TRIAL or other case resolution.
  - 12 cases will be scheduled in each of four 90-minute quads per day
- Complex Cases will be scheduled for a Pretrial Readiness Conference (PTRC) in Courtroom 4310, beginning on January 10, 2022.
  - 25 cases will be scheduled in each of two sessions per day
  - Attorneys are **REQUIRED TO APPEAR** at the PTRC; defendants and witnesses should not appear.
  - Attorneys should familiarize themselves with the [PTRC Scheduling Order](#)
  - Attorneys shall make every reasonable effort to investigate the facts of cases in advance of the PTRC, including, but not limited to:
    - Request DMVR/Video
    - Request Knoll docs
    - Verify status of blood test results
    - Verify review of documents in the shuck
    - Verify status of Driving Record
    - Verify efforts to communicate with defendant
- Private defense attorneys who have been retained or appointed on a case currently pending on a district court criminal trial docket are required to enter a notice of limited or general appearance with the Clerk of Superior Court within 30 days of the next scheduled court event. Attorneys are required to use form [AOC-G-312 – Notice of Appearance by Counsel](#).