

## Insufficient Court System Creates Inefficiencies in Criminal Justice System

The following list documents the problems caused to the Anchorage Police Department by an insufficient court system. This translates to problems for citizens, victims, police employees and overall to the impact system-wide on the safety of the public.

1. At this time, detectives at APD screen prosecutable cases due to the nature of the crime or the amount of loss. For example, the bulk of white collar and property crimes are never presented to the DA's Office for charges because the court system cannot handle the workload.
2. Trailing case calendars sometimes exist for years. At this time there are approximately 80-100 trailing felony trials. Any of these may be called up for trial thus providing no preparation time for witnesses or officers. The original subpoena holds officers and witnesses to their commitment. Delays like this wreak havoc in personal lives and compromise cases due to evidence deterioration and witness relocation or retirement.
3. As the system becomes clogged, defense attorneys take advantage of the delays and actually create more delays when possible. This allows more chances for cases to be lost, witnesses to move, and officers to retire. It is a negative feedback loop that exacerbates an already over-burdened system.
4. Since the system is already over-burdened, The DA's office is reluctant to initially charge a suspect because they are required to get them to court within 120 days. Many times this is not possible and the defense also uses this to their advantage. In either case, criminals are left on or returned to the community.
5. The traffic ticket calendar is nearly filled out to 90 days. Soon tickets will be lost due to time restrictions (right to speedy trial). Officers already are having trouble planning leave and violators used the delay method to maneuver trials to location on the calendar where officers have leave scheduled. Magistrates are very lenient in re-scheduling for violators but never re-schedule for officers. Magistrates are very lenient and feel that fines are at their discretion, so even if a violator is found guilty, there is no compensation for the amount of time spent by the city in proving that guilt.
6. There is no way of proving how far behind the court is with their own statistics or showing trends in sentencing for time management. Everything is kept in a separate file for every case.
7. Officers and Detectives must wait 2-3 hours sometimes for bail hearings and search warrant application hearings while the magistrates are handling other court matters.

**Bottom Line:** There are too few judges, too few scheduled hearings, no consideration for impact on the mission of other agencies, no method of tracking performance for the court system, no consideration for the impact on budgets of other agencies.