



**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BUNCOMBE COUNTY**
BuncombeDA.org
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 27, 2020**

STATEMENT OF DA TODD WILLIAMS:

As Chief Justice Beasley's recent Order signals the beginning of the restoration of more normal courthouse operations, I want to take this opportunity to summarize where we are going and where we have been since the emergency shutdown of court was ordered March 13th.

1. The DA's Office worked with partners in the Sheriff's Office and the Judiciary to reduce jail population by up to 40% to reduce the chance of a Covid-19 outbreak in Buncombe Detention;
2. We continued hundreds of court dates well into the summer to reduce foot-traffic and prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the courthouse;
3. We dismissed thousands of minor traffic tickets and other matters for similar reasons.

As we move toward reopening next week I want to provide a summary of the DA's Office's re-opening strategy:

1. **In District Court, we will prioritize Domestic Violence, DWIs and Class A1 Misdemeanors* for prosecution. If you are charged with these crimes you must come to court. If you fail to come to court, we will ask judges to issue an order for your arrest.** (Common A1s include: Assault on a Female, Sexual Battery, Assault with a Deadly Weapon, Assault Inflicting Serious Injury, Assault by Pointing a Gun, Assault on a Child under 12, Misdemeanor Child Abuse, Assault on a Governmental Official, Secret Peeping, Stalking, Death by Motor Vehicle, and Violation of DV Protective Order).
2. **If you are charged with a felony pending in Superior Court you must come to court unless your attorney instructs otherwise. If you're charged with any other crime, contact your lawyer for information about your court date.** If you are charged with a non-Class A1 misdemeanor or a felony currently pending in District Court the DA's Office and the Courts will use social distancing technology and procedures when possible to resolve these cases without the physical presence of the defendant. **In short, contact your lawyer immediately for more information.**
3. **If you received a June or July administrative court date for a traffic matter or misdemeanor, your case has been rescheduled. Go to BuncombeDA.org to look up your new court date.** The DA's Office soon plans to add new services to BuncombeDA.org. If you don't know your court date, have a question about your case and you don't have a lawyer, you will soon be able to submit a question through the website. If you do not have access to the internet and do not have a lawyer, you may call 828/259-3410 for assistance.

The DA's Office appreciates that these are extraordinary times but our work advocating for public safety and victim's rights must continue while we also strive to do justice and ensure procedural fairness, case by case.

*A complete list of Class A1 Misdemeanors can be found at this link:

<https://www.nccourts.gov/assets/documents/publications/Misdemeanor-list-2017.pdf?GEXAuFJwm9ZYDJ9aM Mq5tlogdq6fWB0H>