

## Anyone charged with any crime in Colorado should start with these four basic steps:

- 1) **Find the Statute:** For anyone charged with a crime, you should start by getting a copy of the statute you have been charged with violating, and read it very carefully several times. Every statute has a number that shows where it is located in the laws of Colorado. This statute number may be listed on the summons issued by law enforcement, or it may be listed in the documents you got from the court.

- You can find free copies of any Colorado statute at [https://checkerboard.co/CB2/2\\_FCS/FCS\\_1.pdf](https://checkerboard.co/CB2/2_FCS/FCS_1.pdf)  
Click on: "Find Colorado Statutes"

- Exactly what does the prosecution have to prove? These are called the "elements" of the crime, and are the specific things that the Prosecution must prove in order to get a conviction. For a Defendant to be found guilty of a crime, the judge (*or jury*) must find that every "element" has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt. *Click here to learn more about "elements".*

- When you look up the statute, also pay attention to the appellate cases at the bottom of the statute. These are examples where the Defendant was convicted under the same statute and appealed the verdict (*sometimes successfully and sometimes not*). Even if none of the examples are similar to your case, reading them will give you a much better understanding of the elements of the statute and how they are applied.

- 2) **Request Discovery:** Go to:

[https://checkerboard.co/CB2/7\\_GRFC/Discovery-Request\\_28Nov21.pdf](https://checkerboard.co/CB2/7_GRFC/Discovery-Request_28Nov21.pdf)

and fill out the discovery request so you get a copy of all the evidence the prosecution has available to use against you. Turn it in to the Prosecutor's office. Within a couple weeks, they will provide you a copy of all the evidence against you. There is usually a small charge for making the copies in your discovery package.

- You cannot prepare your defense unless you know: 1) exactly what you are accused of (*the statute*), and 2) exactly what evidence they have against you (*discovery*).

- 3) **Think About Your Defense:** Now you know the elements that the Prosecution must prove, and you know what evidence they have to do it. Think about how you will prepare your defense by reviewing the materials at: [https://checkerboard.co/CB2/7\\_GRFC/GRFC\\_1.pdf](https://checkerboard.co/CB2/7_GRFC/GRFC_1.pdf)

- Especially important are **a)** the 3-part video on *Evidence*, **b)** the 2-part video on *Trial Preparation*, and **c)** the graphic on *Dynamics of a Trial* which explains when you talk in a trial, and when you don't. Additional information about subpoenas, witnesses, and other important trial topics can be found here too.

- 4) **Find a Lawyer:** Information from the internet may be better than nothing, but it's no substitute for legal counsel. Apply for a free lawyer if you possibly can qualify. Appointment of a free lawyer (*a public defender*) is based on your income. Here's the court form to apply for one: <https://www.courts.state.co.us/Forms/PDF/JDF208.pdf>

If you don't qualify for a public defender, then hire your own lawyer if you possibly can. To search for a lawyer, go to:

<https://www.licensedlawyer.org/Find-a-Lawyer/Power-Search#STATECD=CO|Y=1|Y=1>

*There's plenty more involved of course, but this is a great place to start.*