FAILURE TO APPEAR
CHARGED WITH A CRIME IN SEATTLE?

After you have been arrested and accused of a crime in Seattle, you will be scheduled to appear at court hearings in the appropriate criminal courts. These hearings are determined by the court's schedule rather than yours, and this can make it easy for you to forget about when your court hearing is. Regardless of whether the timing of your hearing is inconvenient for you or not, you are expected to show up for the proceeding.

It is against the law in Washington for you to miss any type of courtroom proceeding, and failure to show up for your hearing will result in penalties and possibly criminal charges. Depending on the circumstances surrounding your arrest and your charges, a failure to appear in court may be classified as a misdemeanor or felony charge. In some jurisdictions, you may even be charged with contempt of court. Here at Lewis & Laws, PLLC, we understand that things come up and emergency situations, car trouble, or other factors can bring about a legitimate reason to miss your court date.

PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO APPEAR

The consequences for missing a court date will vary depending on the charges brought against you. Upon your arrest and prior to your release, you must agree to appear in court on a specific day and time, and failure to do so will likely result in a bench warrant issued for your arrest. If you are apprehended, you may be required to post bail or you may be denied release prior to the conclusion of your trial. Bail is a term that refers to the amount of money that you must put up to be released from jail pending further court dates.

If you posted bail after your arrest and then failed to appear for court or failed to report to a correctional facility, you can be charged with bail jumping. Bail jumping will result in harsh penalties under the law, and you must take action to protect your rights and your future immediately. The more serious your original criminal charge, the more severe your bail jumping charge will be.

If your original charge was a misdemeanor, your bail jumping charge could land you up to one year in jail and fines up to $5,000. If your original charge was a Class B or Class C felony, a bail jumping charge could result in up to 43 months in prison and fines up to $10,000. If your original charge was a Class A felony (except for murder), your bail jumping charge could result in up to 68 months in prison and fines of up to $20,000. While these potential sentences represent the extremes, it is good to keep in mind what you are facing when you fail to appear for your criminal court hearing. The circumstances of your crime and your criminal history will have a much larger impact on your sentence.

HELP FROM A SEATTLE CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY

After you have missed a court hearing, you have a couple of options. You can worry about what potential charges you will face and how you will avoid an arrest because of your bench warrant, or you can contact our Seattle criminal defense lawyers for help. With more than 45 years of combined experience on our side, we are prepared and equipped to help you seek the best possible outcome in court. This includes keeping you informed of all the steps involving in a failure to appear or bail jumping case. Receive your free case evaluation today.