

July 29, 2020

Dear Defense Bar,

The following procedure is being implemented to address scheduling issues regarding pleas. The new policy goes in effect **August 1, 2020**.

1. **Scheduling a plea.** Once a prosecutor has made an offer, the Defense Attorney will be responsible for contacting that prosecutor to formally accept the offer. The Prosecutor will then email paperwork to the Defense Attorney and copy the county coordinator's office on the email at CountyCrtCoor@bellcounty.texas.gov. The coordinator's office will then place the case in an assigned time slot on the scheduled plea date. Defense Attorney will be responsible for contacting the coordinator's office to specify whether they are requesting an in person or remote plea.

****Please note the Defense Attorney will need to notify the Prosecutor by Wednesday at 4:00pm if they want to set a plea for a Defendant on bond the following week (For example, a Defense Attorney must notify the Prosecutor by 4:00pm on August 5, 2020 to set a plea during the week of August 10-14).**

2. **Previously Confirmed Plea Deals.** Cases set for a plea after August 5, 2020, will need to be reconfirmed following the procedure outlined in provision 1 of this document.
3. **Continuances.** Continuances are due no later than 48 hours before the scheduled court date to the Bell County Attorney's Office. This will allow sufficient time for the assigned prosecutor to review the continuance and send it up to the coordinator's office for processing.

****As a reminder cases set August 5, 2020-August 14,2020 in County Court 2 will automatically be reset.**