



Fast Facts – Sign and Release Warrants

What is a Sign and Release warrant?

Effective January 1, 2024, [Minn. Stat. § 629.415](#) provides that the court shall issue a Sign and Release Warrant if:

- the defendant is charged with a misdemeanor other than a targeted misdemeanor, or with a gross misdemeanor other than those excluded in the statute;
- the court mailed a summons that was returned as undeliverable;
- the defendant fails to appear; and
- the defendant had not previously failed to appear in the case.

A Sign and Release warrant does not authorize arrest. Instead, when law enforcement has contact with a defendant who has a Sign and Release warrant, law enforcement will get an **updated address** from the defendant, complete the [Sign and Release Warrant Defendant Information and Court Date form](#), give a copy of the form to the defendant which lists a new court date, release the defendant at the scene, and clear the warrant.

How will court notify law enforcement that a warrant is a Sign and Release warrant?

When the district court issues a Sign and Release Warrant, court staff will indicate a \$0 bail amount and include the words “Sign and Release” within the narrative section of the warrant in MNCIS. The court will communicate the Sign and Release Warrant information to law enforcement following the existing processes for communicating arrest warrant information.

How will law enforcement know that a warrant is a Sign and Release warrant?

When law enforcement staff enter a Sign and Release warrant into BCA Hot Files, they will identify a warrant as a Sign and Release warrant. If the only outstanding warrant for that county is a Sign and Release warrant, law enforcement staff will select a Sign and Release indicator when entering the warrant, which will be prominently displayed when law enforcement perform a warrant check on a defendant.

If a defendant has multiple warrants, law enforcement staff will enter the highest level of offense warrant as the primary warrant in their system and indicate multiple warrants in the Miscellaneous field. Law enforcement may need to contact the court or look up each additional warrant in Minnesota Government Access (MGA) to confirm the specific type.



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How are court dates provided to law enforcement?

Local courts will determine the day of the week and time that hearings for Sign and Release warrants will be held and communicate this to the local sheriff's office and Emergency Communication Center (ECC or dispatch) staff. The law enforcement officer who makes contact with the defendant on a Sign and Release Warrant will get the court hearing information from ECC (dispatch) in the county in which the warrant was issued.

How is the court date provided to the defendant?

The law enforcement officer will complete a Sign and Release Warrant Defendant Information and Court Date form and give a copy of the form to the defendant.

How is the court notified of the defendant's contact information and the court date that was provided?

The law enforcement officer or agency will e-file a copy of the completed Sign and Release Warrant Defendant Information and Court Date form into the court file within 2 business days of the contact.

What if the Defendant has other warrants, or refuses to provide an address, or sign the Sign and Release Warrant Defendant Information and Court Date form?

Law enforcement officers will exercise their own judgment when determining how to handle a defendant they come in contact with, including whether there is a basis to arrest the defendant on other warrants or based on the defendant's behavior toward law enforcement. If a defendant is arrested, any issues requiring booking and/or a court appearance will be resolved first, and the agency that is set to release the defendant should handle any Sign and Release warrants before release, if not already resolved when the defendant appeared in court.

If the defendant refuses to sign the form or the officer is unable to obtain an updated address, but the officer is able to provide a court date to the defendant, the officer should complete the form, including any notation about the inability to get an address and/or checking the applicable box regarding the defendant's signature, and file the form with the court.

How will the Sign and Release warrant be cleared?

Sign and Release warrants will be cleared in the same way as any other warrant. After the defendant has provided an updated address and been given a new court date, law enforcement will clear the warrant from the Hot Files and court staff will inactivate the warrant in MNCIS.



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What if the defendant fails to appear again?

The action taken after a subsequent failure to appear is decided by the judicial officer. However, the statute, [Minn. Stat. § 629.415](#), anticipates that one Sign and Release Warrant will be issued per qualifying case.

Can the judicial officer issue a Sign and Release warrant for an offense not included in the statute?

Whether to issue an arrest warrant or a Sign and Release Warrant is decided by the judicial officer.