

Questions to Ask Your Attorney

First Meeting

- What are the charges against me?
- What experience do you have fighting these particular charges?
- How far along in my case do you plan to represent me? Will I have to switch lawyers at any point? (Note: You may get a different Public Defender for different stages of your case)
- What would be your strategy for defending me?
- (If you are hiring a paid attorney): How much do you charge? What services do you guarantee in exchange for each payment?

*** **IMPORTANT:** If you hire an attorney, make sure you have a signed contract stating exactly what services the attorney will provide in exchange for each payment or installment before you pay any money ***

Pre-Trial Hearing

- Do you have the discovery?
- When can we review the discovery together?
- What is the evidence against me?
- Are there any items of evidence you are still waiting for?
- Are there any motions to file?
- What are the best and worst possible outcomes?
- What is the max sentence?
- What is the likely sentence if I go to trial and lose?
- Should I ask for a waiver trial or a jury trial? Why do you recommend one or the other in my case?

Preparation for Trial

- What are the possible trial strategies?
- What is our theory of defense?
- What is the theme of our defense story?
- Should I testify?
- What are the good facts (in my favor) and bad facts (against me)?
- How will we cross-examine the difficult witnesses? What will we ask?
- What is the judge like?
- What is your experience with and/or relationship to this particular judge?