Understanding Your Criminal History (Rap Sheet)

Your criminal history, which is often referred to as a "rap sheet" can be confusing. This guide will walk you through how to read your criminal history for Utah.

Rap Sheets vs. Court Dockets

- **Court Docket:** This is the log of what happened in court during a case.
- **Rap Sheet:** Your actual criminal history. In Utah, this is not a public record.

What is and is not on your Rap Sheet

What is included:

- Arrests and reportable citations.
- Court dispositions (the final case outcome).
- Warrants.

What is NOT included:

- Non-reportable violations (such as a speeding ticket).
- Arrests where fingerprints were not taken.
- Successful expungements.
- Federal charges.

Rap Sheet Sections

Records are organized chronologically, starting with your oldest incident first. Criminal history is broken into the two main sections: Identification and Incidents.

Identification Section

This is your basic information taken during your arrest and booking. It includes:

- Your name and any aliases.
- Your date of birth and social security number.
- Known addresses.
- Physical demographics at the time.

Incidents Section

Incidents are separated into arrest details and what happened in court.

Arrest Information:

- **The Agencies:** It will show the Arresting Agency (e.g., South Jordan Police Department) and the Booking Agency that fingerprinted you (e.g., Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office).
- **Dates:** You will see both the date the offense occurred and the date you were arrested.
- **Initial Charges:** This lists the charges at the time of your arrest. Keep in mind, these charges can change once your case goes to the prosecutor and the courts.

Court Actions and Charges

- The court that handled the case.
- The case number.
- The prosecuting agency.

Understanding Charges

When reviewing the charges on your record, you will see specific terminology about the offense:

Offense Literal

This is simply the wording used on the record to describe the charge.

Statute

The specific violation code associated with the offense.

Jurisdiction

This shows whether the charge falls under a state or city code.

Charge Severity

Offenses are ranked by how severe they are, categorized as a Felony (1, 2, or 3), Misdemeanor (A, B, or C), or Infraction.

Charge Modifiers

Additional terms added to the charge to describe the nature of the act, such as "attempt" or "conspiracy".

Charge Attributes

Specific details of the incident required by law that can be used to enhance a penalty (for example, noting that the incident occurred in a "School Zone").

Dispositions (Outcome of the Case)

Convicted

You were found guilty by a judge or jury.

Acquitted

You were found not guilty.

Dismissed with Prejudice

The charges were dropped, and the prosecutor cannot re-file them.

Dismissed without Prejudice

The charges were dropped, but the prosecutor can re-file them later.

Plea in Abeyance (PIA)

An agreement where the prosecutor will dismiss the charges if you meet specific terms. If you fail to meet those terms, it can result in a conviction.

Declined to Prosecute

The prosecutor chose not to pursue the case.

Fail to File

The charges were not filed within the legal timeframe allowed.

Pending

"Pending" means the case is ongoing.

Adjud Unknown

"Adjud Unknown" means the system could not find a final court disposition.

Warrants on Your Record

Warrant arrests will occasionally show up on your criminal history.

- **Duplicate appearance:** Warrant arrests can sometimes look like duplicate arrests for the same charge being listed repeatedly.
- **Active status:** Just because a warrant appears on your history does not necessarily mean it is currently active or hasn't been resolved with the courts.

Questions about Your Record?

Our Records team can help with basic questions about your Utah criminal history, but cannot provide legal advice or guidance.

If you believe something on your record is incorrect, see our Challenge page for more information on the process.