

City of Pasco

Court Appointed Attorney Complaint Process

Defendants appointed an attorney by Municipal Court in the City of Pasco have the right to adequate legal representation. If you feel you are not getting adequate representation, the following is the process to file a complaint:

I. Before Filing a Complaint E-mail your concerns to Attorney

Filing a complaint against your public defender is a serious step and should be considered a last resort. Among other things, it can seriously degrade the working relationship you have with someone (sometimes the only person) who is 100% on your side. Therefore, we request you first e-mail your concerns to your court appointed attorney to try and solve the problem. Here is a [directory of Court Appointed Attorneys email addresses](#):

Cirilo Gomez 509 783-5551 cgomez@rihr-law.com

Eric Scott 509-591-9269 escott@tri-citylegal.com

Judy Chang Phone: 509-542-7610 Hchang.law@gmail.com

Mark Cano 509-367-8499 mark@cano-law.com

Michael Nguyen 509-619-8897 MichaelNlaw@gmail.com

We can help with communication. Let us know if you are having difficulty reaching your public defender and we can try to contact them. You may contact us by e-mail at indigentdefense@pasco--wa.gov. Or, you can call us at (509) 302-3001.

If after emailing your concerns to your attorney and the issues are unresolved, then you may file a formal complaint.

II. Filing a Complaint : Complaints may only be filed **by clients.**

Step 1

Complete the Attached “Court Appointed Attorney Complaint Form”

To be actionable, complete the attached “Court Appointed Attorney Complaint Form” and return it to the City Clerk’s Office located at 525 N. 3rd Avenue, Pasco, WA 99301 between the hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. You may also scan and email the Complaint Form to:

indigentdefense@pasco-wa-gov. Attention Raymond Hui, Indigent Defense Contract Administrator.

Step 2

We will investigate your complaint

Upon receiving your complaint, we will email you confirmation that we received your complaint. We will take the necessary steps to investigate your complaint. We will share your complaint with your public defender and he/she will be asked to provide a written response.

Step 3

We will make written findings

Once we have investigated your complaint and your public defender has had an opportunity to provide a written response, then we will provide you with a notice of our findings and a determination of the disposition of your complaint. You will also receive a copy of the written response provided by your public defender. The possible dispositions are:

- **Unfounded** - after our investigation, we have determined that either 1) the facts as presented do not constitute a valid complaint about the representation provided by your public defender; or 2) there is a dispute between you and your public defender as to the facts, and there is insufficient evidence supporting the facts in your complaint by which to take action against your public defender.
- **Founded & Minor Concern Noted** - your complaint is founded but is considered "minor." This usually means either the substance of the complaint was not severe, the conduct complained about was not intentional, and/or the public defender has not been warned about this conduct before (and is less experienced than other public defenders in this regard). While you will not be advised of the action we have taken against your public defender, under these circumstances a letter of concern will be placed in his/her file .
- **Founded & Serious Concern Noted** - your complaint was founded and is considered "serious." This may be because it involves intentional and obviously inappropriate conduct, obvious malpractice, or conduct bringing the public defender's honesty into question. While you will not be advised of the action we have taken against your public defender, under these circumstances significant disciplinary steps will likely be taken, often in conjunction with the Court.

If You Want a New Public Defender: The only person with the authority to assign you a

new public defender is the Judge. We recommend you go to your next court appearance and explain to the judge why you want a new public defender.