

TIP 62

# How Do I Get a Copy of a Maryland Criminal Case?

Criminal records are generally open to the public and may be accessed using the instructions below. Getting court records is not the same as a criminal background check. For a criminal background check, contact the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services at 1-888-795-0011 or visit their website at [dpscs.maryland.gov](https://dpscs.maryland.gov).

You may wish to have your criminal case removed from public records. This process, called expungement, is discussed in a separate video series. To find these videos go to [mdcourts.gov/videos](https://mdcourts.gov/videos).

Watch the Video



## Step One: Find Your Case Number

- Each criminal case has a different case number. If you were involved in more than one case, then you will need to find more than one case number. Your records may be spread across multiple files and even multiple court locations.
- Look up a case number either by **calling the clerk's office** where the case was held or **online through Case Search**.
  - **Call the clerk's office** - A clerk can look up the case number for you using your name. You may need to call more than one courthouse if you are looking for cases in different counties or cases that were appealed from one court to another. Court locations and phone numbers are at [mdcourts.gov/courtsdirectory](https://mdcourts.gov/courtsdirectory).
  - **Case Search** – Go to [mdcourts.gov/casesearch](https://mdcourts.gov/casesearch). Begin your search by entering your name. For best results, narrow your search by county, case type, or filing date. Case Search will then show you a list of cases. Click on a case number to see more information about that case. The name and address of the courthouse where the file is kept is at the top of the page.
    - Case Search will only show a summary of information. For instance, you may see names of people involved, dates of hearings, and names of documents. Copies of documents are not available through Case Search.
    - The following records may not be available on Case Search:
      - Certain cases involving possession of cannabis (marijuana).



Maryland Court Help

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- Cases where the outcome of all charges was nolle prosequi, dismissal, acquittal, or not guilty.

### **Step Two: Go to the Courthouse**

- You may call the courthouse in advance to confirm the file is at that location. Calling ahead is recommended for older cases, as the file may need to be retrieved from storage.
- When you arrive, go to the clerk's office. Give the staff the case number and let them know you would like to view the file. They may ask you to complete a request form and to see your identification.
- You may then look through the case file in the presence of a clerk or other court staff member. If the documents are online, the clerk may direct you to a computer terminal. Court staff members are there to help you by answering questions and identifying documents.

### **Step Three: Pay for the Copies**

- The clerk will charge you a fee for copies. The fee is based on the number of pages.
- True test or certified copies are also available for an additional fee.