

The Bail Forfeiture Timeline

Typical notice and return windows after a defendant misses court.

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5	STAGE 6
Missed court	Forfeiture entered	Notice to surety	Return window	Judgment & payment	Possible remission
Judge notes the failure to appear and usually issues a bench warrant.	The bond is declared forfeited, often the same day.	The court must notify the agent or surety, typically within 5–90 days in the states we track.	The agent can surrender the defendant or show good cause to set the forfeiture aside.	If the window closes, the court enters judgment and the surety pays.	Some states refund part of a paid forfeiture if the defendant is later returned.

DAYS THE SURETY HAS TO RETURN THE DEFENDANT

Florida	60 days · notice 5d
Kansas	60 days
Maryland	90 days
Mississippi	90 days · notice 10d
Montana	90 days · notice 10d
Oklahoma	90 days · notice 30d
Pennsylvania	90 days
South Carolina	90 days · notice 30d
Virginia	150 days · notice 5d
California	180 days · notice 30d
Idaho	180 days · notice 5d
Louisiana	180 days · notice 60d
Nevada	180 days · notice 20d
Utah	180 days
Indiana	365 days · notice 30d

Shown: 15 states with a confirmed return window. Others use show-cause hearings, have no fixed period, or weren't confirmed.

[Look up any state's forfeiture rules →](#)

Day counts come from the recovery and forfeiture reference (reviewed 2026-11-01), showing only entries rated medium or high confidence. Clocks start at different events by state — the missed appearance, the forfeiture order, mailing of notice or service — and courts may extend, toll or shorten them. Some states have no fixed window. Always calendar the deadline from the actual court notice and confirm with the court or counsel.

Sources: Cal. Penal Code §§ 1305, 1305.4, 1306 and each listed state's forfeiture statute; full list at the page link below.

Source: [BailBondsMagazine.com](#) · [bailbondsmagazine.com/infographics/forfeiture-timeline](#)