

When a family hears that a loved one has been arrested on a felony property charge in Virginia, one of the first questions is usually simple and urgent: can they get out on bond?

The answer is not always yes, and even when release is possible, it is not always on the easiest terms. Virginia courts can release someone on a promise to appear, on an unsecured bond, or on a secured bond. Judges can also add conditions such as supervision, travel limits, or no-contact rules. What many people do not realize at first is that some felony cases are treated more strictly from the start, not necessarily because the charge sounds dramatic, but because Virginia law requires a secure bond in certain situations.

That distinction matters. It affects how quickly someone can be released, how much money or property security may be needed, and how much pressure falls on relatives trying to help. In places like Danville, the practical questions are often handled by criminal defense counsel, the court, and sometimes a bail bondsman Danville VA families contact when they are trying to understand what a secured bond really means.

The difference between release and the type of bond

People often use the word “bond” as if it means one thing. In practice, Virginia law gives the court a few different ways to release an accused person before trial.

A judge may allow release on a written promise to appear. That means the person is released without posting security, but must come back to court and follow any conditions imposed. A judge may also allow an unsecured bond. In that setup, the person promises to pay a set amount if they fail to appear or violate conditions, but they do not have to post that amount up front to walk out. Then there is the secured bond, which is the strictest of the three common forms of pretrial release. A secured bond requires actual security, such as cash or solvent sureties, before the person is released.

For families, this is where the case becomes real in a hurry. A person may technically be “granted bond,” but if the bond is secured and the household cannot meet it, release may still be out of reach that day. That is why the phrase “bond was granted” can sound hopeful, yet still leave everyone scrambling.

Why property felonies often lead to tougher bond conditions

A felony property charge can cover very different allegations. In Virginia, grand larceny is the line many people first encounter. The larceny threshold is \$1,000. Below that amount, larceny is generally petit larceny, a Class 1 misdemeanor. At \$1,000 or more, it becomes grand larceny, which is a felony. Burglary is also a property-related felony under Virginia law, and statutory burglary can carry serious prison exposure.

The charge alone does not automatically answer the bond question. Virginia does allow release in felony cases. But felony accusations tend to bring more caution from the court because the potential penalties are heavier, the incentive to flee may be viewed as greater, and the allegations may involve planning, entry into a building, or repeated conduct. Judges also have authority to impose conditions beyond money, such as restricting travel or ordering supervision.

Still, the most important point is this: some defendants in felony cases do not just face a judge who may prefer a secured bond. Under Virginia law, certain people charged with a felony may be released only on a secure bond.

That is not a matter of courtroom mood or county custom. It is a legal requirement in the situations the statute describes.

The three situations that trigger a secure bond requirement

Virginia law says that if a person is arrested for a felony and falls into one of certain categories, release may be only on a secure bond. Those categories are straightforward, but families often overlook them in the first frantic hours after arrest.

- The person has a prior felony conviction.
- The person is already on bond for another case.
- The person is on probation or parole.

If one of those circumstances applies, the court is dealing with more than the new felony accusation. The court is also looking at a legal history that suggests prior exposure to the criminal system, pending obligations to another court, or supervision status that was already in place. Virginia law responds to that combination by requiring a secure bond as the path to release.

That is a hard moment for families because it can feel unfairly layered. Someone may be facing a new property charge, and the family wants to focus on the facts of that accusation. Instead, the bond question may turn on older events, a current probation status, or the fact that another case is still open. From the court's perspective, those facts go directly to reliability and risk. From the family's perspective, they can feel like hidden traps.

Why prior felony history changes the bond picture

A prior felony conviction does not prove someone will miss court or pick up a new charge. But it does change how Virginia law handles release after a new felony arrest. Once that prior felony conviction is in the picture, a secure bond becomes mandatory if the person is to be released.

There is a practical logic behind that rule. Courts often see prior felony history as evidence that the person has already been through serious criminal proceedings and understands the stakes. If there is another felony arrest now, the law treats the risk profile differently from that of a first-time defendant.

This can produce some outcomes that surprise people. A person accused of a nonviolent property felony may face a secured bond requirement, while another person accused in a different kind of case may initially receive less restrictive release terms. The reason is not always the headline nature of the current charge. Often, it is the combination of felony status and criminal history that drives the result.

In day-to-day terms, this means a grand larceny arrest can become much more difficult for release purposes if the accused already has a prior felony conviction. Families who assume a theft case is "just about property" may not be prepared for that.

Being on bond already is a major red flag for the court

If someone is already on bond for another case and then gets arrested for a felony property offense, Virginia law again requires a secure bond for release.

This rule reflects a concern that judges take seriously: the accused was already trusted to remain in the community under court conditions, and yet another arrest followed before that first case was resolved. Whether the new case is ultimately proven is a separate question. For bond purposes, though, the legal system treats that sequence as a sign that a stronger release mechanism is needed.

I have seen families become frustrated here because they think the court is punishing the person before trial. From the family's point of view, the person has not been convicted of the new offense. That is true. But pretrial

release decisions are about risk management, not final guilt. When a person is already on bond, the court may see an unsecured promise as inadequate.

This is one reason timing matters. If a person has multiple pending matters in different courts, even a property felony that might otherwise have drawn a manageable bond can become much harder to address.

Probation or parole status often makes release more complicated

Probation and parole carry their own expectations. A person under supervision is already under legal obligations. A new felony arrest, especially for a property crime such as grand larceny or burglary, raises immediate concerns about compliance with those obligations.

Virginia law addresses that concern directly by requiring a secure bond if the person arrested on the felony is on probation or parole. That does not guarantee detention without release. It means that if release is allowed, it must be on secured terms.

This is often one of the most painful categories for families because the person may have been working, living at home, and trying to stabilize. A new allegation can then trigger not only the fresh criminal case but also concern from the supervising authority. Even before anyone reaches the merits of the property charge, the release question has become more severe.

What “secured” really means in Virginia

A secured bond is not just a promise. Virginia law allows it to be satisfied with cash or solvent sureties. In plain language, the court requires actual financial backing before release occurs.

That can take more than one form. Sometimes families post cash. Sometimes they rely on sureties. In practical community terms, this is where people may turn to a bail bondsman Danville provider or another surety arrangement to help satisfy the bond requirement, depending on what is available and appropriate in the case. The important legal point is that the security must be real enough to support the bond the court has ordered.

A lot of stress comes from the misunderstanding that all bonds function the same way. They do not. An unsecured bond may let someone walk out with paperwork and obligations. A secured bond requires a financial stake to be posted before release. That distinction can mean the difference between getting home the same day and remaining in custody while family members try to gather resources.

Property charges that commonly raise these issues

Not every property offense in Virginia is a felony, and that matters. Petit larceny is a misdemeanor. Grand larceny is a felony once the alleged value reaches \$1,000 or more. Burglary is a felony offense under Virginia law, and because it often involves alleged entry with intent to commit larceny or another felony, courts take it seriously from the beginning.

This is where family members can get tripped up by everyday language. Someone may say, “It was just shoplifting,” but if the alleged amount reaches the felony threshold, the legal category changes. What sounds minor in conversation can become a felony property case in court.

Burglary creates another kind of confusion. Some people think of burglary only as a violent break-in. Virginia law treats statutory burglary as a felony, and the possible punishment can be severe. When a charge carries potential state-prison time, judges tend to examine release conditions carefully. Add a prior felony, current bond status, or probation/parole status, and the secure bond requirement becomes a major issue fast.

A secured bond is not the only condition the court can impose

Money is only one piece of pretrial release. Virginia courts can add supervision, travel restrictions, and no-contact rules. Those conditions can be imposed alongside a secured bond.

That matters because some families focus only on the amount and miss the rest. A person released on a secured bond may still be required to check in, stay within a certain area, avoid certain people, or comply with other limits. If those conditions are violated, the court has authority to impose sanctions, including stricter terms, contempt, or revocation of release.

Revocation is the part people underestimate. Once a person is out, there is often a burst of relief and a desire to get back to normal. But the release order is not a suggestion. It is a set of court-imposed conditions that can tighten quickly if ignored.

Why missing court can make everything worse

A secured bond creates a financial stake, but the legal risk of failing to appear goes beyond money. If a person willfully fails to appear as required, Virginia law allows forfeiture of the security posted for release unless good cause is shown. The court may consider issues such as illness, transportation trouble, dependent-care problems, and the person's efforts to address the missed appearance.

That last part is important. Courts do recognize that real-life emergencies happen. But people should never assume that a missed date will simply be excused later. A failure to appear can also lead to a *capias*, which is essentially an order for the person to be taken into custody and brought before the court.

A missed date in a felony property case can turn a difficult bond situation into a much worse one. The family may lose posted security, the accused may be arrested again, and future requests for release may meet a colder reception. Judges pay attention to whether someone honored the trust built into the bond decision.

What families should pay attention to right away

The first days after a felony property arrest are confusing. Everyone wants answers, but many of the most important details are procedural rather than dramatic. Families usually help most when they focus on the exact release terms and the person's legal status at the time of arrest.

A few questions matter immediately:

- Is the current charge a felony, such as grand larceny or burglary?
- Does the accused have a prior felony conviction?
- Was the accused already on bond in another case?
- Was the accused on probation or parole at the time of arrest?
- What exact conditions did the court attach to release?

Those questions often tell you more about the bond outcome than rumor, guesswork, or the accused's own prediction from the holding cell.

The role of a surety or bondsman in the real world

People are sometimes embarrassed to ask how secured bonds actually get handled. They should not be. This is a common and practical part of criminal procedure. A secured bond can be posted with cash or solvent sureties. In

some cases, families look for a bail bondsman Danville VA residents know and trust because they do not have immediate access to the full amount in cash.

Even then, the bond process is not just a financial transaction. It is tied to responsibility. A surety is taking on risk based on the accused person's promise to appear and follow conditions. Virginia law even allows a surety or bail bondsman, in some situations, to surrender the principal and seek a *capias*. Once the principal is delivered on that *capias*, the surety is discharged from later liability.

That legal power surprises many defendants. They think once they are bonded out, the matter rests only between them and the court. Not quite. When a surety stands behind the bond, that surety has a strong interest in compliance. If warning signs appear, the surety may act to protect itself.

This is one reason families should not treat release as a finish line. It is the beginning of a period in which every court date, every condition, and every instruction matters.

A common misunderstanding about “nonviolent” charges

One of the most persistent misconceptions is that property charges are automatically easier than assaultive charges. Sometimes they are, and sometimes they are not. Virginia assault law includes both misdemeanor and felony forms, depending on the circumstances. Property crimes also range from misdemeanor petit larceny to felony grand larceny and burglary. The legal category, the person's history, and current supervision status can matter more than the everyday label.

I have heard people say, “Nobody got hurt, so bond should be simple.” That may be emotionally understandable, but it is not how the statute works. If the arrest is for a felony and the accused has a prior felony conviction, is already on bond, or is on probation or parole, release may be only on a secure bond. The law does not carve out an exception just because the new case centers on property rather than personal injury.

Danville cases still follow statewide Virginia law

People sometimes assume each city has its own completely different bond system. There can be differences in scheduling, courtroom practice, and how quickly a matter gets before a judge, but the core rules discussed here come from Virginia law. Danville-specific outcomes generally follow those statewide statutes.

So if a family in Southside Virginia is trying to make sense of a grand larceny or burglary arrest, the central questions remain the same whether they are speaking with counsel, a clerk, or a bail bondsman Danville families commonly call for guidance on the bond process. Is the charge a felony? Is there a prior felony? Is there another active bond? Is the person on probation or parole? Those facts often explain why the court required a secured bond.

The human side of a secured bond

It is easy to discuss secured bonds in dry legal terms. For families, there is nothing dry about it. A secured bond can mean a parent missing work for several days <https://storage.googleapis.com/the-docket/petit-vs-grand-larceny-where-virginia-draws-the-line.html> while arrangements are made. It can mean relatives calling each other late at night to gather money. It can mean a spouse trying to explain to children why someone is not home yet, even though “bond was granted.”

The law is trying to balance liberty, court appearance, and public confidence in the process. But the burden lands on real households. That is why clear information matters so much. If a person falls into one of the categories

The better approach is steady and informed. Learn the charge classification. Confirm whether the accused has any prior felony conviction or pending bonded case. Find out whether probation or parole is involved. Read every condition of release carefully. Then act accordingly, because in Virginia felony property cases, those details often determine whether release is possible, how it must be secured, and what happens next if the court's trust is broken.

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