

## **Santa Clara County program offers chance to avoid jail during the holidays**

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Every law enforcement agency in Santa Clara County is offering an annual gift to offer people who might otherwise spend time behind bars.

Anyone with a nonviolent misdemeanor warrant or traffic warrant can walk into any law enforcement agency in Santa Clara County and receive a citation with a new court date and avoid being booked into county jail during the holidays.

The program "Operation Second Chance 2011" is directed toward all misdemeanor warrants, no matter the bail amount, including those warrants stamped "No Cite and Release," "No Walk-Over," and "No Bail," according to the sheriff's office. It is not a get-out-of-jail free program. Rather, those who are eligible will get a "promise to appear" notice to show up in court -- after New Year's.

Felony warrants and any warrant involving violence do not qualify for the program, which starts Thursday and runs through Dec. 31.

It's an understatement to say how popular this program is. In the past six years, more than 2,100 people have taken advantage of the program and avoided spending the holidays in jail by self-surrendering, according to the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office. Anyone with a misdemeanor warrant should go to the police agency that issued to the arrest to surrender and be released on the spot.

Any questions should be answered by calling the Sheriff's Office Records at 408-808-4717.