

**CITY OF CLAYTON MUNICIPAL COURT
10 S. BRENTWOOD
CLAYTON, MISSOURI 63105
(314) 290-8441**

COURT PROCEDURES AND YOUR RIGHTS

COURT RULES

Please sign in at the table outside the courtroom. After you have signed in, you should take a seat in the courtroom. Turn off all cell phones or any other devices you may have which might make noise while court is in session. If a cell phone or other device interrupts Court proceedings, it will be confiscated until the end of court. No electronic audio or video recording devices are permitted in court. If use of an audio or video recording device is discovered, the device will be confiscated. During court there is no talking other than a respectful whisper.

Any person who becomes disruptive in any manner shall be first cautioned by Court personnel, and if the offensive conduct is not immediately corrected, they will be removed from the courtroom.

Proper attire is required in Municipal Court and a Dress Code is in place and detailed at the end of this document. If the bailiffs or court personnel determine that your attire is not appropriate pursuant to the dress code, you will be asked to leave the Court and change into appropriate attire. Your case may be continued to a future court date due to violating the dress code.

Your presence in Municipal Court today is perhaps your first experience in any court. This information has been prepared to help you understand the court proceedings and to inform you of your rights and duties. Every person should leave this court feeling that he or she has had a fair and impartial trial or hearing.

Municipal Court is the judicial branch of city government and is part of the state judicial system. The court is operated under the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri and Rules established by the Supreme Court and Circuit Court of St. Louis County.

You are appearing in court because you have been charged with an ordinance violation by the City of Clayton. This does not mean you are guilty of any offense.

If you signed a citation in front of an officer, you did not plead guilty, but only signed a promise to appear in court on your appearance date.

Your decision on what pleas to enter is the most important decision you will have to make. Be sure to read this completely before entering your plea. If you decide that you would like to seek the services of an attorney, please inform the Judge and you will be given time to do so.

When your name is called, follow the bailiff's instructions. Your name will be called a second time by the Judge. You should then step up to the bench before the Judge. The charges will be read to you one at a time.

**YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS
IN THIS COURT**

1. You have the right to be informed as to the nature of the charge against you and the minimum and maximum punishment for the charge;
2. You have the right to be represented by an attorney and an attorney may be appointed for you if you are indigent (unable to afford an attorney) **AND** it appears that there would possibly be a jail sentence upon conviction;
3. You have a right to have a trial, including a trial by jury;
4. At trial you have the right to question any witness who may testify against you;
5. You have the right to subpoena persons to testify on your behalf at your trial (a subpoena is an order from the court to a witness that they must appear at the trial);
6. You have the right to testify at your trial but neither the City nor anyone else can force you to testify; and
7. If you had a trial and were found guilty, you have a right to appeal that decision to another court.

ENTERING A PLEA

You must first enter a plea. You may plead **not guilty, guilty, or guilty with an explanation.**

NOT GUILTY PLEA

If you enter a plea of **not guilty**, your case will be set for trial. You must appear on the date and at the time the trial is scheduled or a **WARRANT WILL BE ISSUED FOR YOUR ARREST**. At your trial, you should be prepared to present any evidence you believe will help you in your defense. You may subpoena witnesses to testify on your behalf. The Court Administrator will provide you the proper subpoena forms, but you must serve the subpoena personally upon the witness. You should also bring with you any documents or other evidence you wish to present to the Court. The rules of evidence apply at your trial, which may prevent some evidence you may want to present from being admitted before the Judge. Both the City and you, the defendant, must comply with these rules during the trial.

GUILTY PLEA

By pleading guilty, you admit that you committed the act charged, that the law prohibits the act, and that you have no defense for your act. This also relieves the City of its burden of proving its case against you.

You are **URGED** not to plead guilty if you do not feel that you are guilty.

IF YOU PLEAD GUILTY, YOU GIVE UP ALL THE RIGHTS LISTED ABOVE

PLEA OF GUILTY WITH AN EXPLANATION

This plea has the same effect as a plea of guilty, but says that you would like to explain to the Judge mitigating circumstances with respect to the punishment only.

An example for this type of plea is if you are charged with "Failure to Show Proof of Financial Responsibility" (no insurance). If you failed to show the police officer insurance at the time of the stop, but had insurance coverage at the time, you should present the proof of insurance to the Judge. If you have obtained insurance since you were stopped you should show that to the Judge. Failure to show insurance is four points on your driving record. If you actually had insurance, the case will be dismissed.

In both cases of a plea of guilty or a finding of guilty, a fine most likely will be assessed. The mitigating circumstances explained to the Judge may or may not have an effect on the amount of the fine assessed. **Payment of fines and court costs will be expected tonight.**

In some cases, you may avoid points on your driving record by attending defensive driving school. The cost is approximately \$55.00 and the program will take 8 hours.

PUNISHMENT

After a plea of guilty or a finding of guilty, the court has the authority to assess fines up to \$1,000 and/or a jail sentence not to exceed 90 days.

FINES

The amount of the fine assessed by the court is affected by the facts and the circumstances of the case. Mitigating circumstances may lower the fine. However, aggravating circumstances may increase the fine. In **NO** case may the fine exceed \$1,000. It is expected that fines and costs be paid on your court date.

COURT COSTS

Court costs of \$26.50 per case are added to any fine assessed. Court costs are required by state law and the ordinances of the City of Clayton.

MUNICIPAL COURT DRESS CODE

You will NOT be allowed to enter the Courtroom wearing the following inappropriate clothing:

- Any headwear with the exception of religious headwear
- Halter, tube or strapless tops or dresses
- Tank tops or muscle shirts
- See-through clothing
- Clothing that exposes your midriff, underwear or undergarments
- Ripped or torn jeans
- Clothing that depicts or promotes violence, illegal or inappropriate activity, sex acts, illegal drug use or profanity
- Shorts that fall above mid-thigh
- Sunglasses