



Options for Resolving Your Case in Municipal Court

This brochure briefly explains the main options for resolving your case in the City of Amarillo Municipal Court. If you have questions about these options, you should ask the Judge. The Judge cannot give you legal advice or tell you which option to choose. You are entitled to be represented by an attorney on your case, but the Judge cannot appoint an attorney for you on cases filed in this court. If you want legal advice, you should contact a private attorney.

The Judge is responsible for conducting a fair, impartial, and public trial. The case against you is brought by the State of Texas through the prosecutor, not the court. Therefore, the Judge may not dismiss a case without the prosecutor having the right to try the case. There are some exceptions to this rule, including driving safety courses and compliance dismissals.

Pay the fine

The simplest method of resolving your case is to pay the fine and court costs. To use this option, you must enter a plea of guilty or no contest and waive your right to a trial. Payment may be made in person or by mail, and most cases may be paid online. Methods of payment include cash, cashier's check, personal check, money order, credit card or debit card. A check or money order should be made payable to "City of Amarillo Municipal Court." A personal check will not be accepted if your case is at warrant.

If you pay the fine, a judgment of conviction will be entered. This may affect your driving record or criminal record, and may cause additional consequences as well, depending on the offense. If you have any questions about this, ask the Judge.

**For Information about Surcharges:
Texas Department of Public Safety**

www.txdps.state.tx.us or
www.txsurchargeonline.com

**English: 512-424-2600
Spanish: 512-424-7181**

Driving Safety Course (DSC)

This option is available for traffic offenses that are classified as "moving violations." You must hold a valid Texas driver's license (not a commercial license) and have valid insurance, both at the time of the violation and at the time you apply for DSC. After paying the DSC fee and court costs, you would be allowed 90 days in which to finish the driving safety course and obtain a certified copy of your driving record from the Texas

Department of Public Safety. If both the course certificate and driving record are turned in to the Court within 90 days, the citation would be dismissed. You are not eligible for DSC if you have completed a driving safety course within the 12 months prior to the current offense. In addition, certain traffic offenses cannot be dismissed by DSC, such as passing a school bus, leaving the scene of an accident, and traffic offenses committed in a construction zone with workers present.

Deferred Disposition

Deferred disposition is a very simple form of probation, available for both traffic and criminal violations. The Judge will decide whether to allow deferred disposition if you request it. After you pay the deferred fee, the finding of guilt is suspended for a period between 30 and 180 days, depending on the offense. During the probation period, you must not receive any new citations or charges, and may be required to complete other requirements set by the Court, such as community service hours or a driving safety course. If you complete all the requirements, the citation would be dismissed. You are not eligible for deferred disposition for a traffic offense if you hold a commercial driver's license or held one at the time of the offense, or for a traffic offense committed in a construction zone with workers present.

Teen Court

Teen Court is a program for young offenders between the ages of 10 and 18 who are currently enrolled in school. The Judge will decide whether to allow Teen Court if you request it. You must enter a plea of guilty or no contest, and then the facts of your case are presented to a jury of your peers made up of returning youth who were previous defendants at Teen Court. The jury members will assess a sentence of community service plus jury service following guidelines that distinguish between traffic and criminal offenses.

Teen Court is on Monday evenings from 5 to 7 pm. The cost is \$20. If you complete the sentence then the case will be dismissed and no conviction will appear on your record. You are not eligible for Teen Court if you are or have been on juvenile or adult probation, have a criminal case pending in another court, or have had too many other violations in the Municipal Court. You may not have more than one case dismissed by Teen Court.

Trial

You have the right to a trial by a Judge or a Jury. Prior to the day of trial, you must attend a docket call. At this docket, you will have the opportunity to speak with a prosecutor and receive a plea offer. If the case is not resolved at the docket, it will be set for trial and the Court will give you a separate informational brochure about trials.

If you are found "not guilty" at trial, you will owe no money. If you are found guilty, the Jury or Judge will set the amount of the fine, and court costs will be added as required by state law. You will have 10 days in which to pay the total or you may ask the Court about payment arrangements. You may also appeal a finding of guilt; the Court will give you instructions about the right to appeal and the procedures for appeal.