



**SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI
MUNICIPAL COURT
INFORMATION**

**625 NORTH BENTON
SPRINGFIELD, MO 65806
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SPRINGFIELD MUNICIPAL COURT

What we are

The Springfield Municipal Court is a division of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Greene County. Municipal Court judges are attorneys and are appointed by the Springfield City Council.

The Springfield Municipal Court adjudicates violations under the ordinances and charter of the City of Springfield. We are committed to providing a forum for the fair and impartial consideration of those accused of violating Springfield ordinances. Everyone is entitled to reasonable bail, and if convicted of violating an ordinance, may be fined, jailed, or both fined and jailed.

Court Proceedings Generally

If you are given a date and time to appear in court, you must appear and be in the courtroom when your case is called. Continuances are granted only in extreme cases. All cases involving a traffic accident require an appearance in court before the judge. If you are in the courtroom and your case is not called, check with court personnel for assistance.

While you are in the courtroom, you are expected to do nothing that would disrupt the court proceedings. In the courtroom there is no smoking, eating, drinking, or talking. If possible, please do not bring small children to court as the wait is usually difficult for them. The bailiff is present in the courtroom to ensure that the proceedings run smoothly and safely.

You have a right (at your own expense) to employ an attorney to represent you at any time during the court proceedings. The court may appoint an attorney for you if it is likely you would be jailed if found guilty and if you cannot afford an attorney. You may waive your right to an attorney and represent yourself.

Your plea

The court presumes your innocence of the charge or charges against you. The prosecuting attorney must convince the judge of your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. You may plead guilty or not guilty to the charge or charges against you.

If you plead guilty and the judge accepts your plea, the prosecutor is not required to prove your guilt, and the judge then sentences you. The judge will listen to you, the prosecutor, and any others that have relevant information as to an appropriate sentence.

If you plead not guilty and have a trial, the prosecutor must present evidence at a later trial establishing your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, or you will be found not guilty. If you are found guilty by the judge or jury after a trial, you are not given a harsher sentence solely because you went to trial. If you are found not guilty at trial, the case ends. If you plead not guilty, you may also choose to have a pre-trial conference to talk to a prosecutor.

Trial

Trials are held before a judge, although, if requested, trial is held before a jury. If a jury trial is requested, the case is certified to the Circuit Court, 31st Judicial Circuit for further proceedings. Cases heard before a judge in municipal court are not “on the record” meaning that testimony is not kept by tape or stenographic record.

You have a right to testify in your trial, but are not required to do so. If you do not testify, your silence is not considered an admission of guilt. If you testify, the prosecutor may question you, and the judge or jury may consider any statement you make.

You have the right to have witnesses testify for you, and subpoenas will be issued on your behalf, if you request them. You also have the right to question all witnesses presented on behalf of the City.

Sentencing

If the Court finds you guilty at trial, or if you plead guilty, any or all of the following may be imposed :

- **Fine**—up to \$1000.00
- **Jail Sentence** - up to 180 days in the county jail
- **Court Costs**
- **Probation Programs**

If the judge orders you to pay a fine and/or court costs, you are expected to pay those costs at the time you appear in court. If you have a hardship paying the fine assessed, the judge may allow an extension to pay. You will be asked to sign an agreement stating you understand the conditions by which the judge is allowing you extended time to pay your fine. If you cannot pay by the due date and fail to appear on or before your due date to show cause why you cannot pay, a warrant for your arrest may be issued.

Fines and court costs may be paid by check, cashiers check, cash, money order, Discover, Visa or Mastercard. Fines may be paid Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. After hours, you may drop your payment (**BUT NO CASH**) in the drop box at the court.

Appeal

If you do not agree with the court's decision, you may seek an appeal which is a new trial heard in the circuit court. This is called a trial *de novo*. At a trial *de novo*, the prosecutor must again prove your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The filing for a trial *de novo* must be made within 10 days of your sentence in the municipal court. If you pay any part of your fines and costs during that 10-day period, the right to trial *de novo* is waived.

Court personnel are here to assist you, but under no circumstances can they give you legal advice. Complaints or concerns should be brought to the attention of the Court Administrator.