



**SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI
MUNICIPAL COURT
INFORMATION AND RIGHTS**

**625 NORTH BENTON
SPRINGFIELD, MO 65806
417-864-1890**

www.springfieldmo.gov/312/Municipal-Court

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 court adjudicates alleged violations of city ordinances and the city charter. Court personnel are here to assist you, but under no circumstances may they give you legal advice. Concerns should be brought to the attention of the court administrator.

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. 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.

Municipal courts are open to the public. 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. A bailiff is present in the courtroom to ensure that the proceedings run smoothly and safely.

You have the right to see court records for your case. 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 jail is a potential sentence and if you cannot afford an attorney. You may waive your right to an attorney and represent yourself. You also have the right to reasonable terms of release, including reasonable bail.

Your plea

You may plead guilty or not guilty to the charge(s) against you. The court presumes your innocence of the charge(s) 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 proving your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, or you will be found not guilty. If you are found guilty, you are not given a harsher

sentence solely because you went to trial. If you are found not guilty at trial, the case ends. You also have the option of requesting a pre-trial conference to talk to a prosecutor if you plead not guilty.

Change of judge and disqualification procedures are found at Missouri Supreme Court Rule 37.53.

Trial

Trials are held before a judge unless you request a jury trial. If a jury trial is requested, the case is certified to the Circuit Court, 31st Judicial Circuit, for further proceedings. Trials include sworn witness testimony for each side, including cross-examination of opposing witnesses, and other evidence. You are then found either guilty or not guilty.

You have the right to testify at 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.

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; up to \$225.00 (including court costs) for many traffic cases; up to \$450.00 (including court costs) for housing, zoning, or building code violations.
- **Jail Sentence** - up to 180 days in the county jail on some cases
- **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 must 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 in person or by phone 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 lose at trial, you may seek an appeal. This is called a trial *de novo*, and is a new trial in the circuit court. At a trial *de novo*, the prosecutor must again prove your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. A trial *de novo* application is available at clerk stations, and must be filed within 10 days after your sentence is imposed. You may request waiver of the filing fee. If you pay any part of your fines and costs during that 10-day period, the right to trial *de novo* is waived.

If you are a non-U.S. citizen

If you are not a citizen, you are hereby advised that a plea of guilty to, or a conviction for, the offense of which you have been charged may result in deportation, denial of admission to the United States, or denial of naturalization under United States law.

If you need ADA accommodations

You have rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For example, if you are deaf or hearing impaired, you have the right to request assistance, including an interpreter. Please ask either the judge in court or the court administrator. If you need help with other ADA disabilities, please call (573) 751-4377 or send an e-mail to access2justice@courts.mo.gov.