

TRAFFIC COURT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG TO GET A COURT DATE?

The Court of Common Pleas handles many thousands of traffic cases every year and makes every effort to dispose of them as quickly as possible. However, because the Court only has the capacity to schedule a certain number of cases for each event, and because of the caseload volume, it may take several months to schedule your matter.

WHERE DO I GO WHEN I COME TO THE COURTHOUSE?

Once you enter the courthouse, please take the elevator to the 5th floor where a Bailiff will direct you as to what to do.

WHERE CAN I PARK?

There is ample parking in the Colonial Parking Lot attached to the courthouse. **The facility accepts cash and credit cards for payments.**

NO CELL PHONES IN THE COURTHOUSE

Cell phones are not permitted in the courthouse. Cell phone lockers are available in the parking garage for your convenience. This is a free public telephone available in the courthouse lobby for your use.

DO I NEED TO HAVE A LAWYER OR CAN I REPRESENT MYSELF?

If you choose to have a lawyer represent you at Traffic Court you may do so. If you do not want a lawyer to represent you, you can choose to represent yourself. **(Please note that not all traffic offenses are eligible for Public Defender representation).**

HOW DO I GET AN ATTORNEY?

If you wish to be represented by a private attorney, you should contact and hire a private attorney prior to your appearance date. If you cannot afford an attorney you can interview with the Public Defender to see if you are eligible. You must schedule an interview with the Public Defender's Office at least five working days prior to the date of your appearance to ensure that you can be represented. If the Public Defender does represent you, there is a \$50.00 fee for their service.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME?

Please bring all documentation with you, e.g., your notice to appear in court, insurance card, vehicle registration card, driver's license, etc.

WITNESS APPEARANCE

If you go to trial and have witnesses you wish to testify on your behalf, please advise them to appear at 1:15 p.m. If you decide to plead to the charge or the charge is dropped, you should have sufficient time to contact them. If you think your witness(es) will not appear on their own, you may subpoena them through a written request to the Clerks Office at least ten (10) days prior to your trial date.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN COURT?

Please plan to spend most of the day at the courthouse. If you take a plea in the morning, it is likely that your case will be resolved before the 1:30 p.m. trial calendar. However, after speaking with the Deputy Attorney General in the morning, if you decide to request a trial, please make sure you are present along with your witnesses at 1:30 p.m. for the trial.

WILL I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT A PLEA?

There will be representatives from the Attorney General's Office available to speak with you in the morning about taking a plea.

DO I HAVE TO HAVE A TRIAL?

If you choose not to take the plea offered by the Attorney General's Office at the morning arraignment calendar, your case will proceed to the 1:30 p.m. trial calendar. Police officers **and other witnesses** are scheduled to be present at that time, but are not required to come to court in the morning.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE WITNESS/POLICE OFFICER DOES NOT APPEAR?

Witnesses/Police Officers and/or other witnesses for the State are scheduled to appear for the 1:30 p.m. trial calendar only. If the officer does not appear for the trial calendar it may be possible for you to request that your case be dismissed. The judge will make that determination based on information from both sides.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET FINED AND DON'T HAVE THE MONEY WITH ME TO PAY?

You will be able to set up a payment agreement with the court. Please be aware that in addition to the fine, there are other fees and costs that will be assessed at the time you enter your plea.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I NEED THE ASSISTANCE OF AN INTERPRETER?

There are Spanish Interpreters present at the time of the Traffic Calendar. If you need an interpreter for another language, please contact the court at least seven (7) working days prior to the calendar date so that arrangements can be made.

CAN I BRING MY CHILD WITH ME?

No small children are permitted in the courtroom. Please make arrangements for child care prior to coming to court as there are no child care facilities in the courthouse.