

## **TRAFFIC CITATIONS FAQs**

**If you have been charged with an offense which is within the jurisdiction of the City of Crockett, you must make an appearance in person or by mail on or before your scheduled court appearance date. A telephone call does not constitute a court appearance and will not prevent issuance of a warrant**

**How long do I have to take care of a traffic ticket?** You must enter a plea on each violation of Not Guilty, Guilty, or No Contest on or before your scheduled court appearance date. Your court date is located at the bottom of your citation. If you do not make a plea on each violation, a Warrant will be issued for your arrest.

**What is a No Contest Plea?** Pleas of No Contest mean that you do not contest the charges filed against you, but result in a guilty finding by the Court and a fine.

**If I plead Not Guilty, what do I have to do?** You must plead Not Guilty in person or by mail. When you plead Not Guilty to a charge, you will be provided an appointment to see the City Prosecutor.

**Can I get an extension to take care of my ticket?** You must request an extension in person or by mail. If you do not pay the fine in full within 30 days of making a plea, a \$25 Time Payment Fee will be added to each outstanding violation, as required by State Law.

**Can I get a payment plan for my tickets?** Payments can be made on your tickets in some cases. You must request a Payment Agreement in person or by mail. You will be required to fill out a Payment Extension Application and you must provide the proof requested. If you are granted a Payout Agreement with the Court, and do not have the fines paid in full within 30 days of making a plea, a \$25 Time Payment Fee will be added to each outstanding violation, as required by State Law.

**I was placed on payment plan and for some reason I defaulted on the agreement. How can I reinstate the plan?** Payment Plans and Extensions are administered by the court. You will need to contact the court at (936)544-5156 ext 211 to determine your options.

**Can I take Defensive Driving or get Deferred Disposition for my ticket?** You may qualify to take Defensive Driving for your citation. See the Defensive Driving section for more information. The Judge may grant deferred adjudication in some cases. See the Deferred Disposition section for more information.

**Can the Court or its employees provide me with legal advice on how to handle my citation?** No. Court employees (including the judge) are strictly prohibited by law from providing legal advice to anyone.

**Do I have to employ an attorney to represent me in Municipal Court?** No. You can represent yourself. Municipal Courts are not required by law to appoint you a lawyer, but you may hire one yourself. No one other than a lawyer can represent you in court. This applies to parents of juveniles. If you are not an attorney you cannot represent your child in a trial.

**If there is a mistake on the ticket, does that make it invalid?** Not necessarily. If you plead "guilty" or "no contest," the issue is immaterial. If you plead "not guilty," a complaint is generated. The contents of the complaint are relevant with regard to a trial.

**Can the Judge dismiss my ticket?** No. A judge can only dismiss a citation if he is given the authority by statute or because of a standing agreement with the City Attorney's Office. Please see the "Compliance Dismissal" tab for more information.

**I just want to tell the Judge my story. Will she/he talk to me?** Yes, but only after you enter a plea of "no contest" or "guilty". Upon a plea of "not guilty" the Judge is not allowed to hear any details of the case until the day of trial. This ensures fairness to both the defendant and the state. Also, all conversations with the Judge must be in the courtroom. The Judge is not allowed to discuss the case outside the courtroom. The Judge cannot take phone calls.

**Is this charge going to revoke my probation?** If you are on probation in a court, other than the City of Crockett Municipal Court, you should refer this question to your probation officer.

**Is this ticket going on my driving record?** Generally, all moving violations will appear on your driving record. Some others such as Failure to Maintain Financial Responsibility and No Driver's license will appear as well. If you want to keep an offense off of your record, you should request Defensive Driving or Deferred Disposition.

**Can I reset my court date over the telephone?** No. All requests for reset or continuance must be made in writing. The request must be received 72 hours prior to your court date and must also

list a reason why you need to reset with any proof that you can provide. Filing a request is not an automatic reset. All resets must be approved by the judge.

**What action may be taken if a defendant fails to respond to a summons to come to court?** If a defendant fails to appear in response to a summons to come to court an additional charge of "Failure to Appear" (FTA) will be filed and a warrant shall be issued. The fine for FTA is \$252.

**I have a warrant for my arrest, who do I need to speak with?** You may call and speak to the court clerk concerning your options by calling (936)544-5156 ext 211.

**Can you tell me what time and date is my court setting?** You can obtain this information from the court at (936) 544-5156 ext 211.

**My deadline has passed to complete or return the driving safety certificate an/or my driving record. What do I need to do?** Contact the court at (936)544-5156 ext 211.

**I received a letter from the Department of Public Safety regarding the suspension of my drivers license. How do I get this corrected?** You will need to contact the local DPS office for further information or the person who sent you the letter.

## **COMPLIANCE DISMISSALS**

**EXPIRED DRIVER'S LICENSE** may be dismissed upon proof of renewal presented to the court within 20 working days from the date of the citation and payment of a \$20.00 administrative fee.

**EXPIRED INSPECTION STICKER** that has not been expired over 60 days may be dismissed upon proof of renewal presented to the Court within 20 working days after the citation and payment of a \$20.00 administrative fee.

**EXPIRED REGISTRATION STICKER** may be dismissed upon proof of renewal indicating that the penalty fee was paid to the Tax Office and presented to the Court within 20 working days with a \$20.00 administrative fee paid to the Court.

**FAIL TO REPORT CHANGE OF ADDRESS** or Name may be dismissed upon proof that the address/name was changed and presented within 20 working days to the Court with a payment of a \$10.00 administrative fee.

**DEFECTIVE EQUIPMENT** may be dismissed upon presentation of proof of equipment repair. Presentation must be made before the first court appearance with payment of a \$10.00 administrative fee.

**FAIL TO DISPLAY DRIVER'S LICENSE** may be dismissed upon presenting proof of a valid driver's license at the time of the offense and payment of a \$10.00 administrative fee.

**DISPLAY ALTERED, UNCLEAN OR OBSCURED PLATES** may be dismissed upon proof that the defect was remedied and presented to the Court before the first Court appearance and with payment of a \$10.00 administrative fee.

**FAIL TO PROVIDE PROOF OF INSURANCE**, you must show proof that you had appropriate insurance on the date and time of the violation. Proof must identify either you by name or the vehicle listed on the citation. You can submit proof at any time, even if an arrest warrant has been issued (which will happen if you have not contacted the court by the appearance date on your citation). Please note: Insurance documents will be verified by the court with the insurance company prior to dismissal. There is no court fee for this dismissal.