

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH A CIVIL TRAFFIC VIOLATION

Your civil traffic violation will be heard in either the Traffic Tribunal or a Municipal Court.

The ticket is a legal document charging you with a violation and a legal summons for your appearance for the hearing. It states the offense, the time, and place when you should appear.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. Read the ticket carefully
2. Consider your options:
If eligible, you may pay the ticket by mail, by Internet, or in person. **(If a Municipal Court ticket, contact that court for payment information.)**

Or

You may appear in court at a hearing.

You may wish to consult with an attorney of your choice at your own cost.

MANDATORY COURT APPEARANCES

Under G.L. 1956 (2010 Reenactment) § 31-41.1-3.1, "any person who receives a third (3rd) summons within a twelve month period of time **cannot** plea or dispose of the charge by mail, but must appear in person before a judge at the traffic tribunal or municipal court." If this is your third or subsequent summons in the preceding twelve (12) month period you must appear for your court hearing and are not eligible to pay the summons by mail.

PAY BY MAIL

If you are eligible to pay this summons without a court appearance all payments must be postmarked within twenty (20) days of issuance or fines, costs and other sanctions may be assessed. If a hearing is required or you wish to contest this violation, appear in court on the date cited. **Include a copy of your summons and write the complete summons number on your check and all correspondence.**

ARRAIGNMENT

If a hearing is required or you wish to appear for a hearing there will be an arraignment. At arraignment, you may admit the charge(s) or request a full hearing where evidence will be presented.

If you admit to the violation you can explain if you wish. A judgment will enter with a fine and/or costs. The Judge/Magistrate may also impose additional sanctions as allowed by law, including license or registration suspension or revocation. Payment will be required at that time.

If you plead not guilty to the violation the matter will be continued to a date certain for trial. You will sign a notice with the new court date for your trial, with a copy retained by you.

There is a no continuance policy in effect. On the trial date all witnesses should be present. The State has the burden of proving the offense by clear and convincing evidence. If, after trial you are found not to have violated the law, the matter will be dismissed; no money will be paid and you will have no record of a traffic violation.

If you are found guilty of the violation, a judgment enters and you will be ordered to pay fines, costs, and assessments and to comply with any additional sanctions imposed, which may include license or registration suspension or revocation.

OUT-OF-STATE MOTORISTS

If you are an out-of-state motorist, you must bring a certified copy of your driving record to your arraignment. It should be requested from your state's registry at least thirty (30) days before your court date.

IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR IN COURT

1. A default judgment may enter for the fine and costs.
2. The Judge\Magistrate may enter additional sanctions in addition to the fine amount and costs, as applicable.
3. Your license may be suspended or revoked.
4. Your registration may be suspended or revoked.

GOOD DRIVING RECORD

If you have a good driving record you may request that your summons be dismissed upon payment of costs by pleading guilty with a good driving record. You must appear in court to request this procedure. "Good driving record" means no moving violations within the three (3)* years prior to the current violation. (*Certain restrictions apply. Refer to G.L. 1956 (2010 Reenactment) § 31.41.1-7 or this website for complete details. Commercial driver's license (CDL) holders cannot seek dismissal under this statute.)

If you are an out-of-state motorist, you must bring a certified copy of your driving record to your arraignment.

PAYMENT OF FINES, COSTS, AND ASSESSMENTS

Fines, costs, and assessments must be paid immediately following the court hearing.

A failure to pay fines and costs may result in a suspension or revocation of your driver's license and/or your automobile registration and withholding of state income tax refunds.

You may pay **TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL** summonses in person or via the Internet with a credit card.

If you have a credit card you may pay by the Internet. There may be a convenience fee. Contact (401) 275-2700 or refer to this website for payment information.

Credit card payments are also accepted in person at the Traffic Tribunal. **If you are mailing in your payment, include a copy of your summons and write the complete summons number on your check and all correspondence.**

If this is a **MUNICIPAL COURT** summons contact that court for their payment policy.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

You have a right to appeal any judgment of the Traffic Tribunal or Municipal Court to the Appellate Panel of the Traffic Tribunal. You must file a Notice of Appeal within ten (10) days of the imposition of sentence or judgment. The most current fee information is on this website. All appeals will follow the rules and procedures provided by law.

The Appellate Panel will review the record to determine if the judgment which entered is in accordance with law. There will not be a new trial or evidentiary hearing unless remanded back to the trial court for further hearing.

DISABILITY NOTICE

For handicap assistance at the Traffic Tribunal call (401) 275-2700.

For Municipal Court cases contact that court.

CONTACT INFORMATION

RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

670 New London Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920
(401) 275-2700

MUNICIPAL COURTS

Refer to the front of the summons for contact information.