

TIP₅₉

Traffic Citations

Traffic Citations are commonly known as traffic tickets or moving violations. They are given by police officers

during traffic stops. You have 30 days from the date of your citation to pre-pay or request a hearing. If you do not do so, your driver's license may be suspended.

Must Appear Citations v. Pre-payable Citations

- Citations will say either "pre-payable" or "must appear when required by the court."
- "Must appear" citations require that you appear at trial. In these cases, if you are convicted, there is a possibility you could be sentenced to time in jail.
- If your citation says, "must appear," consider hiring a lawyer or applying with a court commissioner to qualify for representation by the Office of the Public Defender.

Watch the Video



Your Options for Pre-Payable Citations

Within 30 days of receiving your pre-payable citation you must either **plead guilty and pre-pay the fine**, **request a waiver hearing**, or **request a trial**. These options along with instructions are listed on your citation.

Plead Guilty and Pre-Paying the Fine

If you choose to plead guilty and pay the fine, you are admitting to the violation. There are five ways to pay:

- First, pay online at mdcourts.gov/traffic;
- Second, pay by credit card on the phone at (800) 492-2656;
- Third pay by mail. Send a check or money order to: District Court Traffic Processing Center, P.O. Box 6676, Annapolis, MD 21401. Make sure you write the citation number on the payment;
- Fourth, you may pay in person at most District Courts;
- And finally, you may pay at a kiosk in a Motor Vehicle Administration building.



Maryland Court Help

Free. Online. In Person. By Phone.

For fines that are \$150 or more, you may also request a payment plan. Instructions for how to apply for a payment plan will appear on your citation. If you pay the fine or request a payment plan, you will not need to appear for a hearing.

Waiver Hearings

- This is sometimes called **pleading guilty with an explanation**. Choose this option if you admit to the violation but wish to explain your situation to a judge.
- They may waive or lower the fine. They also may offer you probation instead of a conviction.
- The officer who wrote the citation will not be present at the hearing.
- There is a possibility that your fine could be increased, up to a maximum of \$500 plus court costs.

Trials

- If you request a trial, the officer who issued your ticket will be summoned by the court to appear and testify. You will have an opportunity to cross examine the officer and to present your side of the case. You may have witnesses testify or present other evidence. You are responsible for letting your witnesses know the date, time, and location of your trial.
- You may choose to have a lawyer represent you but are not required to hire one. After hearing all the evidence, a judge will decide whether you are guilty or not guilty.
- If the court finds you guilty, you have the right to an appeal within 30 days of your trial date, unless you are offered a probation before judgment also known as a PBJ. There are non-refundable court costs for filing an appeal.
- When found guilty, you must pay the fine plus court costs. Payment plans may be requested for fines exceeding \$150.