

FOR RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL VIOLATIONS

MUNICIPAL COURTS – Refer to the front of the summons for contact information.

YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH A CIVIL VIOLATION

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

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

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. Read the summons carefully.
2. Consider your options:

If eligible, you may pay the summons by Internet, by mail, or in person.
(If a Municipal Court summons, contact that court for payment information.)

Or

You may appear in court at a hearing. Corporate defendants see Traffic Trib. R. P. 23(c) regarding court appearances.

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

MANDATORY COURT APPEARANCES

Under G.L. 1956 § 31-41.1-3.1, “any person who receives a third (3rd) summons after two (2) guilty adjudications for traffic offenses within twelve-month (12) 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. All parking ticket summons or adjudications shall be exempt from this section.” If you have had two (2) guilty adjudications (excluding parking tickets) within a twelve (12) month period, you must appear for court and are not eligible to pay the summons by mail.

ADMINISTRATIVE PAYMENTS

If you are eligible to pay this summons without a court appearance all payments must be **received by the court not later than seven (7) days before the court hearing date** or a fine, fees, costs, assessments, and/or 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.**

FIRST APPEARANCE

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

If you admit to the violation, a judgment will enter with a fine, fees, costs, and/or assessments. The judicial officer may also impose additional sanctions as allowed by law, including license or registration suspension or revocation. Full 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 receive a notice with the new court date for your trial.

On the trial date all witnesses should be present. The state or the municipality 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 civil violation. If you are found guilty of the violation, a judgment enters and you will be ordered to pay a fine, fees, costs, and/or 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 first appearance. 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 judicial officer may enter a default judgment for the fine, fees, costs, and/or assessments.
2. The judicial officer may enter additional sanctions in addition to the fine, fees, costs, and assessments, 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 fees, costs, and/or assessments. 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 § 31.41.1-7 or www.courts.ri.gov 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 first appearance.

PAYMENT - FINES, FEES, COSTS, AND/OR ASSESSMENTS

Fines, fees, costs, and/or assessments must be paid immediately following the court hearing. Acceptable forms of payment are as follows: For Traffic Tribunal summonses, credit card paid online on the Rhode Island Judiciary’s website at www.courts.ri.gov or in person; cash paid in person; check, money order, or certified cashier’s check payable to the court listed on summons. **Do not mail cash, include summons, and write your summons number on your check.**

A failure to pay fines, fees, costs, and/or assessments may result in a suspension or revocation of your driver’s license and/or your automobile registration, withholding of state income tax refunds, and/or the publishing of your name and amount due on the Rhode Island Judiciary’s website at www.courts.ri.gov if unpaid for over ninety (90) days.

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 Appeals 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 the Notice of Appeal form. All appeals will follow the rules and procedures provided by law.

The Appeals 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.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT NOTICE

If an accommodation for a disability is necessary, please contact the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal at (401) 275-2700 as soon as possible. TTY users can contact the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal through Rhode Island Relay at 7-1-1 or 1-800-745-5555 (TTY) to voice number. **For Municipal Court cases contact that court.**

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

If you need language assistance, please contact the Office of Court Interpreters at (401) 222-8710 or by email at interpreterfeedback@courts.ri.gov before your court appearance.

CONTACT INFORMATION

RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

670 New London Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920
(401) 275-2700
www.courts.ri.gov

MUNICIPAL COURTS

Refer to the front of the summons for contact information.

Refer to the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal website at www.courts.ri.gov for the most current information.