

Options for Resolving Your Case in Municipal Court

This page briefly explains the main options for resolving your case in the City of Amarillo Municipal Court. If you have questions about these options, you should ask the Judge. The Judge cannot give you legal advice or tell you which option to choose. You are entitled to be represented by an attorney on your case, but the Judge cannot appoint an attorney for you on cases filed in this court. If you want legal advice, you should contact a private attorney. The Judge is responsible for conducting a fair, impartial, and public trial. The case against you is brought by the State of Texas through the prosecutor, not the court. Therefore, the Judge may not dismiss a case without the prosecutor having the right to try the case. There are some exceptions to this rule, including driving safety courses and compliance dismissals. If you would like to discuss the facts of your case, you may contact the City Prosecutor's office.

If your offense is a Mandatory Appearance offense or if you are younger than 17 years of age, you must appear before the Judge to enter a plea. For a list of Mandatory Appearance offenses please refer to the Court's website or call the Municipal Clerk's Office with questions at the following number (806) 378-3082.

Enter a Plea

When you get a citation, you must enter a plea. You must make your plea on or before 12 straight days from the date shown on the citation. Remember only the person who received the citation can sign the plea form or enter a plea.

Definition of plea choices:

- No Contest (Nolo Contendere)
 - A plea of nolo contendere means that you do not contest the charges against you. A plea of nolo contendere cannot be used against you in the event of a subsequent civil suit for damages (i.e., traffic accident for which you are subsequently sued). When you enter a "No Contest" plea, you must pay the fine specified for the violation. Either bring or mail the fine payment to the Court.
- Guilty
 - By entering a plea of guilty you admit that the act is prohibited by law, that you committed the act charged, and that you have no defense. When you plead guilty to a violation, you must pay the fine ordered by the court. You can pay the fine
- Before entering your plea of guilty, however, you should understand the following:
 - The State has the burden of proving you violated the law
 - You have the right to hear the State's evidence and require the State to prove you violated the law
 - A plea of guilty may be used against you in a civil suit if there was a traffic accident.
 - You have a right to have an attorney.
- Not Guilty
 - A plea of not guilty means that you are informing the Court that you deny guilt or that you have a good defense for your case. When you enter a plea of Not Guilty to a charge, you will receive a date to appear in court.

Driving Safety Course (DSC)

This option is available for traffic offenses that are classified as “moving violations.” You must hold a valid Texas driver’s license (not a commercial license) and have valid insurance, both at the time of the violation and at the time you apply for DSC. After paying the DSC fee and court costs, you must finish the driving safety course and obtain a certified copy of your Texas driving record from the Texas Department of Public Safety within 90 days. The Court cannot extend your time to complete DSC. If you meet all of the qualifications and both the course certificate and driving record are turned in to the Court within 90 days, the citation will be dismissed.

You are not eligible for mandatory DSC if you have completed a driving safety course within the 12 months prior to the current offense. In addition, certain traffic offenses cannot be dismissed by DSC, such as passing a school bus, leaving the scene of an accident, and traffic offenses committed in a construction zone with workers present. Please refer to the Court’s [website](#) or contact the Court if you have additional questions regarding eligibility.

Deferred Disposition

Deferred disposition is a very simple form of probation, available for both traffic and criminal violations. Deferred disposition is discretionary with the Court. The Judge will decide whether to allow deferred disposition if you request it. After you pay the special expense fee, the finding of guilt is suspended for a period between 30 and 180 days, depending on the offense. During the probation period, you must not receive any new citations or charges, and may be required to complete other requirements set by the Court or required by state law, such as community service hours or a driving safety course. If you complete all the requirements, the citation will be dismissed. Your deferred disposition requirements will be listed in the deferred disposition agreement. Please read the agreement carefully before signing it. You are not eligible for deferred disposition for a traffic offense if you hold a commercial driver’s license or held one at the time of the offense, or for a traffic offense committed in a construction zone with workers present.

Juvenile Defendants (You must appear in Person with your Guardian)

If you received a ticket and you are currently under the age of 17, the State of Texas requires that you must make your initial court appearance in person, accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Please have your parent or legal guardian bring a photo ID. The Court will go over the options that you may have regarding resolving your ticket. If you have a driver’s license and insurance, always bring it to Court with you.

Trial

You have the right to a trial by a Judge or a Jury. Prior to the day of trial, you must attend a docket call. This docket call may be scheduled virtually or you may appear in person. At this docket, you will have the opportunity to speak with a prosecutor and receive a plea offer. The plea offer from the prosecutor may include DSC, Deferred Disposition, Reduction in the fines or Dismissal. All plea offers from the prosecutor are subject to the approval of the Court. If the case is not resolved at the docket, it will be set for trial and the Court will give you a separate informational brochure about trials. If you are found “not guilty” at trial, you will owe no money. If you are found guilty, the Jury or Judge will set the amount of the fine, and court costs will be added as required by state law. You will have 10 days in which to pay the total or you may ask the Court about payment arrangements. You may also appeal a finding of guilt; the Court will give you instructions about the right to appeal and the procedures for appeal.

Pay the fine in FULL

Adults (defendants 17 years of age or older) not charged with a Mandatory Appearance

Amarillo Municipal Court
PO Box 1366
Amarillo, TX 79105-1366
806-378-3072
citycourt@amarillo.gov

Offense may pay [online](#)

One method of resolving your case is to pay the fine and court costs in full. To use this option, you must enter a plea of guilty or no contest and waive your right to a trial. Payment may be made in person or by mail, and most cases may be paid [online](#). You can review fines/court costs for city violations [here](#). If you are not sure of the violation charged or the fine due, please come to [the Court](#) or contact the Court's information line at (806) 378-3072. Please wait at least 3 days after the date on the citation before calling the Court. This will allow us to receive the citation and input it into our system.

There are four ways to pay your total amount due:

- [Pay online](#)
- Bring your payment in person to the Court located at 201 S.E. 4th Avenue (corner of 4th Avenue and Taylor).
- Place your payment in the drop-box located in front of the double doors of the Court's building. The drop box is secure and accessible 24 hours per day 365 days a year.
- Mail your payment to: Amarillo Municipal Court, P.O. Box 1366, Amarillo TX 79105-1366.

Please include full name and date of birth and/or citation number when you put it in the drop box or mail.

Payments can be made by cash, check (except cases on warrants), money order, or by credit card (Visa, MasterCard). Make your check or money order payable to the City of Amarillo Municipal Court. Write your citation number on the memo line of the check.

A check or money order should be made payable to "City of Amarillo Municipal Court." A personal check will not be accepted if your case is at warrant. Please bring a photo ID when making your payment. An additional \$15.00 time-payment fee will be added to each case which remains unpaid on the 31st day after judgment, pursuant to Texas Local Government Code Section 133.103.

If you pay the fine, a judgment of conviction will be entered. This may affect your driving record or criminal record, and may cause additional consequences as well, depending on the offense. If you have questions about your Texas driving record, you may contact the Texas Department of Public Safety. You may also want to consult a private attorney.

Request a Payment Plan

Upon the Judge's order to set a standard payment plan, the Collections Clerk will use the guidelines in the Court's Standing Order to determine the length of the payment plan. If you are not currently employed, the Court may allow you time to complete a Job Search before requiring payments to begin. The Job Search requirements will be explained by the Collections Clerk. If you believe that you lack the ability to pay as directed, you may request a hearing for the Court to determine if you qualify for Community Service. Payment ability information will be required and a two-page payment ability form will be given to you to complete. Community Service must be completed at an approved non-profit community service agency. Please ask the Community Service Coordinator if you have questions regarding the approved agencies.

Partial and Late Payments:

- If you do not plead on all charges/violations shown on the citation by the appearance date, late fees will be added.
- Failure to appear could result in a warrant being issued for your arrest and will require, upon your conviction, additional fees to be charged for the issue of a warrant.
- Payments received will be accepted and posted.
- Partial paid warrants will not be accepted.
- You will be notified by mail at the address shown on your citation if additional fines apply.

- Please verify your address is correct on the citation. If your address is incorrect please notify [the Court](#).

Payment Extension:

- If you need an extension of time to pay your fine, longer than 30 days, you may schedule a virtual court hearing to speak with the Judge or send a request in writing via [mail/email](#).
- If you would like to speak with the Judge via an virtual court hearing. Please follow the [virtual court instructions](#)

Address Changes While Your Case is Pending

Notices will be mailed to you throughout your case. It is your obligation to notify the Court of any change in your mailing address while your case is pending in person or by first class mail address to: Amarillo Municipal Court, P.O. Box 1366, Amarillo, Texas 79105.

This pamphlet is not a comprehensive list for resolving your case. It is only guide for you to review. Should you have any additional questions, you may contact the Amarillo Municipal Court.

What Happens If I Do Not Make a Plea or Ignore My Citation?

If you fail to make a plea for each violation shown on your citation, a warrant could be issued for your arrest. For more information on warrants and how to resolve them, see our [warrants page](#).

Parking Citations

You must pay your parking citation within 12 days of the violation date shown on the ticket. When you mail your ticket to the Court the postmark date on the envelope is used to determine whether your payment was made on time or is delinquent.

Vehicles with six or more outstanding parking citations are subject to being impounded and towed at the owner's expense. The vehicle does not have to be in violation at the time that it is seized. To get an impounded vehicle released, you must come to the Court and pay all fees due and pay the towing company a towing fee.