



# YOUR RIGHTS IN MUNICIPAL COURT LAWSON, MISSOURI

## REGULAR COURT BUSINESS HOURS:

Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm, Located in City Hall  
103 S. Pennsylvania Ave Lawson, Missouri

Court starts at 5:30pm in the Community Room at City Hall  
on all regularly scheduled court dates.

## LAWSON MUNICIPAL DIVISION,

Eighth Judicial Circuit of Missouri, is an extension and qualified division of the Circuit Court of Ray County. The Lawson Municipal Division adjudicates traffic and other ordinance violations filed by the Lawson Police Department. The Lawson Municipal Division follows local court rules and has established court operating standards in accordance with state statute.

Municipal Divisions are open to the public of all ages. The purpose of the municipal division is to provide you with a place to obtain a fair and impartial trial on any alleged violation of a city ordinance. While this is a general overview of your rights in the municipal division, each individual court may have local rules that may apply to your case. Municipal courts are part of the judicial branch of government and are authorized by the Missouri Constitution. They are a court of law established to protect the rights of all citizens.

If there is anything that you do not understand, do not hesitate to ask the judge any questions.

*Please review the information and be prepared to enter one of the following pleas:*

### NOT GUILTY PLEA

A plea of NOT GUILTY means that you deny guilt and the City must prove the charge(s) against you. If you plead not guilty, your case will be scheduled for trial

### GUILTY

A plea of GUILTY means that you admit that you committed the act as charged, that the act is prohibited by law and that you have no defense of your act.

### DRESS CODE

Prohibited attire includes, but is not limited to:

- Low-cut blouses
- Bathing suits
- Too short skirts and shorts or high slits
- Clothing with any obscene words or images
- Excessively baggy pants

### COURTROOM RULES

- Stay seated until your name is called
- No weapons
- No food or drinks
- Remove sunglasses and hats unless religious
- Silence phones and other electronic devices
- No sleeping or disrupting court proceedings
- No chewing, smoking or vaping
- No talking while court is in session

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS IN MUNICIPAL COURT

- Right to know when court is open
- Right to attend court
- Right to release pending hearing
- Right to an attorney
- Right to a court appointed attorney
- Right to request a different judge
- Right to a trial
- Right to appeal
- Right to access court records
- Right to have a judge decide if you can afford an attorney or afford to pay

**Your presence in municipal court today is perhaps your first experience in any court. This information has been prepared to help you understand the court proceedings and to inform you of your rights and duties.**

## **RIGHT TO ATTEND COURT**

Courts in Missouri are open to all ages.

## **RIGHT TO RELEASE PENDING HEARING**

If you are in jail for a municipal charge, you have the right to be released unless the court decides you need to be in jail for the protection of the community or because you may not appear in court. If the court orders your release from jail, there may be conditions on your release, including bail.

## **RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY**

You have the right to be represented by an attorney and may hire one at any time. When you first appear in court you can ask to postpone the hearing one time so you can hire an attorney. However, you are not required to have an attorney represent you. You may represent yourself.

## **RIGHT TO A COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEY**

If you show you cannot afford an attorney and the city is requesting jail, the court will provide an attorney to represent you.

## **RIGHT TO REQUEST A DIFFERENT JUDGE**

You may request a change of judge for any reason within ten (10) days after your initial plea. If it is past the ten (10) days, then you must show cause why the judge should be changed. In addition, a judge may decide he or she cannot hear the case if they have a conflict of interest in the case or if the judge will appear as the prosecuting attorney in a neighboring county where the prosecuting attorney will serve as judge.

## **RIGHT TO TRIAL**

If you plead NOT GUILTY your case will be scheduled for trial. For more information on the trial process, please visit our website.

## **RIGHT TO APPEAL**

If you are found guilty after a trial, you can accept the decision of appeal to the circuit court. The request for appeal must be made in writing within ten (10) days of the court's decision and cannot be extended for any reason. Complete details of the appeal procedure can be found on our website.

## **RIGHT TO ACCESS COURT RECORDS**

If you have a case in a municipal division court, you have the right to see the court records for your case. This includes records that show charges, court rulings, fines and other information.

## **RIGHT TO HAVE A JUDGE DECIDE IF YOU CAN AFFORD AN ATTORNEY OR PAY FINES**

If you wish to have an attorney but cannot afford one, you can ask that the judge decide if you qualify for a court appointed attorney. You may be required to fill out paperwork about your finances and/or provide financial documents as part of the process. You may also request the judge decide if you are able to pay court fines or be granted an alternative sentence such as community service. You may not be put in jail for failure to pay fines or costs unless the judge finds you have the ability to pay but are unwilling to pay or when alternative sanctions to jail are not sufficient.

## **NON U.S. CITIZENS**

If you do not have proper documentation to be in the United States, you should know that a conviction may result in your deportation, denial of admission to the United States or you may be denied naturalization under United States law.



## **PAYMENT OPTIONS**

Pay online at  
<https://www.courts.mo.gov/ticket>  
Over the phone at 816-580-3217

Pay in person Monday – Friday  
between 9-5pm

*Certain violations are payable without having to appear in court. For a list of payable violations, please contact the Court Administrator or visit our website.*