

Court Service Center

New Hampshire Circuit Court

MOTOR VEHICLE PLEA BY MAIL PROCESS

General information:

- If you are given a motor vehicle ticket with a preset fine, you only come to court if you enter a plea of not guilty and send it in to the DMV. If you enter a plea of guilty or nolo (no contest), payment is made directly to DMV within 30 days of the issuance of the ticket and the court will have no record of the ticket. Payment instructions for the DMV in person, by mail, phone, or via the internet can be found on the back of the ticket.
- It can take several months from the time you receive the ticket until your court date. If your address changes at any point, be sure to notify the court in writing so the notice of hearing will get to you. You may want to call the court first to see if the ticket has been assigned a case number yet so your letter can reference that number and can be more easily matched to the file.
- If you want to change your plea and pay the ticket after you sent it to DMV, you will pay the court. This can be done in person, by mail, or by phone, but you should contact the court first to verify the ticket has been sent from DMV.

How much will this cost?

- If you are found guilty or change your plea, payment is expected the day of court. The fine amount can be found in the bottom right hand corner of the ticket. If you work out a plea with the prosecutor, he or she will tell you what the new amount will be.
- If you cannot pay the fine in full the day of court, you must let the prosecutor know before entering the change of plea at the clerk's window. You may be required to fill out a financial affidavit to determine when your payment will be due.

What happens next?

- Your case will be scheduled for a pre-trial conference. You will receive notification of the date by mail. This is your opportunity to meet with the prosecutor and attempt to resolve the matter without having to go to trial. This may mean you change your plea or the prosecutor amends the ticket or chooses not to prosecute. This all depends on the particular circumstances of your case and court staff cannot tell you what will happen that day.
- If you fail to appear for your pre-trial conference you will be found guilty administratively and mailed a notice of fine due for the full amount indicated on the ticket.
- If you appear at your pre-trial conference but are unable to reach a satisfactory arrangement with the prosecutor, your case will be scheduled for trial in front of a judge on another day. You will receive a notice of hearing in the mail with that date.
- On the day of the trial you will present any evidence and witnesses and so will the prosecutor. The judge will then determine the outcome of the case. If you are found guilty, payment is expected to be made that day. If you cannot pay in full, you must address this issue with the judge before going to the clerk's window.
- If you do not appear for the trial, you will be found guilty administratively and mailed a notice of fine due for the full amount indicated on the ticket.
- If you fail to make payment on the fine as ordered, you will be defaulted at the court and with DMV, resulting in the suspension of your license and other fees.
- If you cannot appear the day of the pre-trial conference or trial, you must file a written motion to continue with the court. This should be done as soon as you are aware of the conflict.

Forms and Instructions are available at any NH District Court

Additional information can be found at:

www.courts.state.nh.us/district/