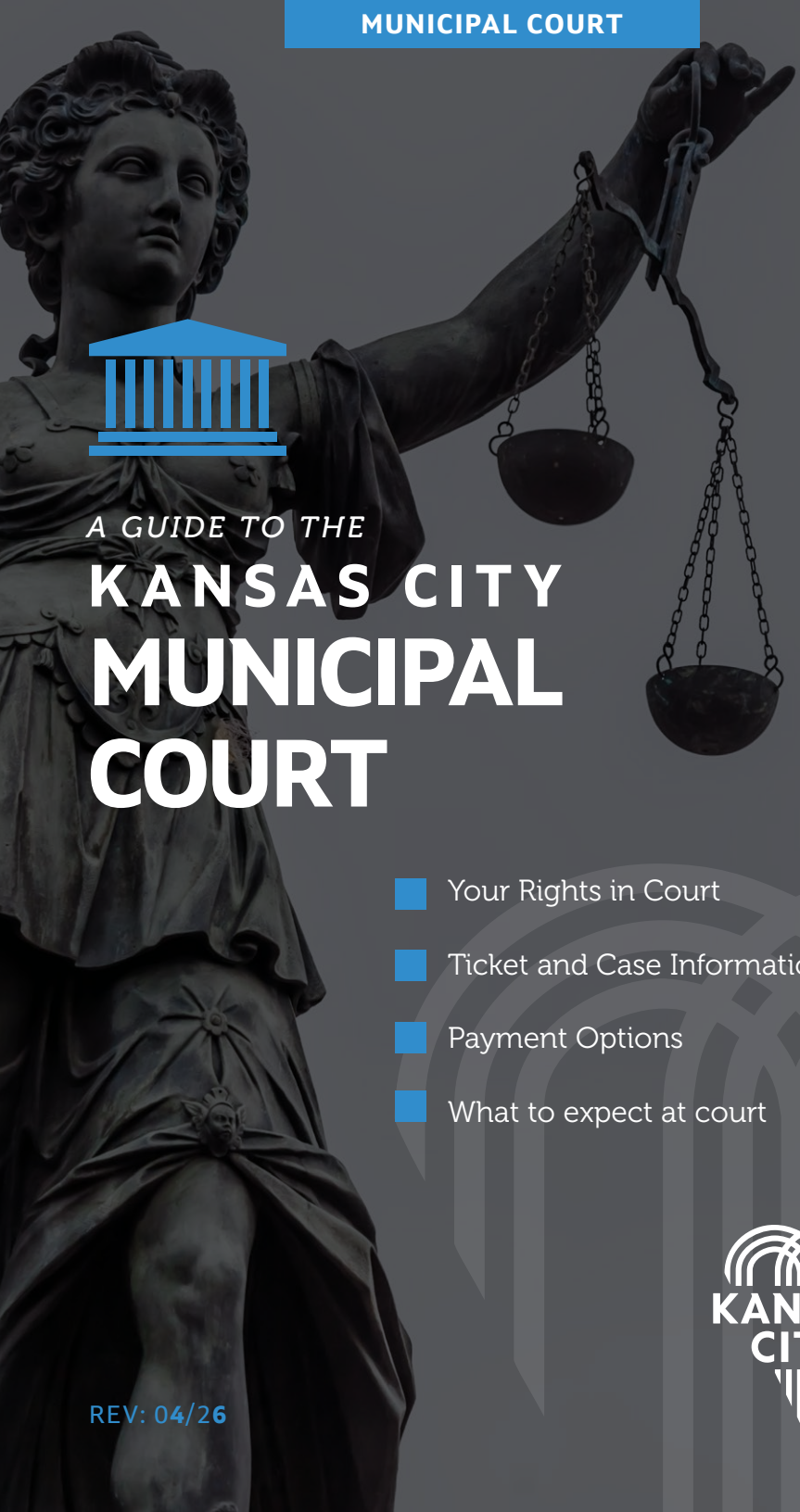

A GUIDE TO THE

KANSAS CITY MUNICIPAL COURT

- Your Rights in Court
- Ticket and Case Information
- Payment Options
- What to expect at court

KANSAS CITY

REV: 04/26

OVERVIEW OF MUNICIPAL COURTS

Municipal courts are authorized by the Missouri Constitution and are part of the circuit courts. The Kansas City Municipal Court is a Division of the 16th Judicial Circuit Court in Jackson County, Missouri and is the independent judicial branch of government for the City of Kansas City. The purpose of these courts is to provide you with a place to obtain a fair and impartial trial on any alleged violation of a city ordinance.

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YOUR RIGHTS IN COURT

Right to know when the court is open and attend court

The Kansas City Missouri Municipal Court is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, with extended hours on Wednesday Evening until 6:30 p.m. Court dockets are 9, 10, and 11 a.m. and 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. with late 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. dockets on Wednesday the first week of the month. All dockets are open to the public of all ages.

Right to release pending hearing

If you are in jail pending a hearing in court, you have the right to be released on your promise to appear unless the court determines that, 1) your promise alone is not sufficient to ensure your appearance, or 2) your release poses a danger to the community. If a judge makes either determination, the court shall order other appropriate conditions for your release including the posting of bond, limiting contact with the victims and witnesses, operating a motor vehicle, and/or any other condition to secure your appearance in court or protect the safety of the community.

Right to access court records

If you have a case in municipal 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 for your case. Much of that information is available at **kcmo.gov/court**. If you need further information, you can ask a customer service representative at the Violation Bureau on the 1st floor of the Court.

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 or continue 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. If you need help finding an attorney to represent you, go to the free Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association Lawyer Finder at **www.kclawyerfinder.com**

Right to a court-appointed attorney

If you show you cannot afford an attorney, and the city is seeking to put you on probation, or in jail, the court will provide an attorney to represent you. You will be required to fill out paper work about your finances as a part of this process.

Right to sentencing alternatives

Before or after any judgment involving an order to pay money, you may request the judge consider other alternatives such as community service due to your inability to pay money. You may be required to fill out paper work regarding your finances as part of this process.

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.

Right to request a different judge

A change of judge shall be ordered if you file a written request for a change of judge no later than 10 days after the initial plea is entered. No reason for this request is required. You are allowed no more than one change of judge without cause shown. However you have the right to change judge for cause shown at any time. When a judge cannot be impartial or has a conflict of interest, the judge shall transfer the case to another judge.

Right to trial

If you plead not guilty, the Court may hold a trial that day or continue it to a later date. The prosecutor must prove your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. When your case is scheduled for trial, it will be in the same municipal court in which you appear.

TICKET AND CASE INFORMATION

Punishments and Fines

If you plead guilty or are found guilty, you may face the following punishments or fines:

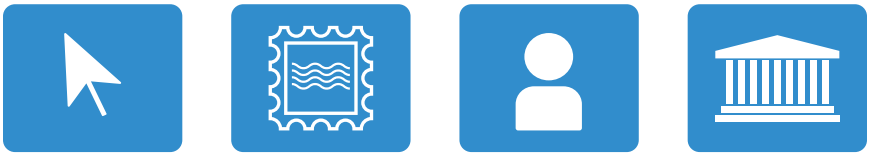
- Minor traffic violations—up to $225 total fine and costs.
- Property nuisance, zoning, and housing and building code violations—up to $200 total fine and costs for the first violation within 12 months; $275 for the second violation within 12 months; $350 for the third violation within 12 months' and $450 for the fourth and any subsequent violation within 12 months.
- Most other municipal code violations are punishable by up to a $500 fine plus costs. Some violations are punishable by up to a $1,000 fine plus costs.
- In addition to these fines and costs, certain violations may result in jail time. Such violations include any violation involving alcohol or drugs, violations endangering the health or welfare of others, or giving false information to a police officer. You may face up to 180 days in jail for each charge.

In lieu of jail, the judge may place you on probation. Conditions of probation will be imposed and can include community service, classes, drug and alcohol restrictions and testing, movement restrictions, an order to pay restitution to the victim or a third party and others.

Do I have to go to court to handle my ticket?

Some violations require mandatory court appearances and will state this on the summons that is mailed to you. Others may be paid without going to court and the fine amount will be in a summons that is mailed to you. Fine amounts and other case information are available within 48 hours online at **kcmo.gov/court**, or **kcmo.gov/pay**, or or by calling **816-513-2700**.

If the case is payable and you wish to plead guilty, you may:



- **Pay online** at **kcmo.gov/pay** with a credit or debit card.
- **Mail a check or money order** for the amount payable to "Municipal Court". Write ticket number(s) in memo field. Send to Kansas City Municipal Court, 511 E. 11th Street, Kansas City, MO 64106.
- **Pay in person at the Violations Bureau** on the first floor of the Kansas City Municipal Court, 511 E. 11th Street, between 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.
- **You also may choose to go to court** rather than pay the fine ahead of time.

When is my fine due?

Payable ticket fines are due by the scheduled court date. Fines ordered during court are due within 60 days unless otherwise ordered by the judge.

What if I need more time to pay?

- For Payment Plans contact the Violations Bureau on the first floor in person
- Or email to **mcpayment@kcmo.org**. Please include your full name, date of birth, phone number, the amount you can afford to pay monthly, and ticket numbers (if available). All of the required documents must be completed and returned to the court for your payment plan to be valid.

If you want to do community service in place of the fine, you may ask the judge at your court date or at a **warrant and case review** docket or contact the Violations Bureau.

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.

Unpaid balances will be sent to collections. If you also are on probation, missing a payment is a probation violation and your case will be scheduled for a probation violation hearing. A summons will be mailed to the address we have on file for you.

Send payment questions to: mcpayment@kcmo.org.

COURT ETIQUETTE & PROHIBITED ITEMS

ARRIVE EARLY

Arrive 30 to 45 minutes before your scheduled hearing to allow time to go through security.

Defendants are responsible for being on time and present in court when their cases are called. Those who are not could have a warrant issued for failing to appear for the hearing.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Please remove hats before entering any courtroom.

Note: The individual judge sets the dress code for their respective Division.

STAY SEATED

Stay seated until your case is ready to be heard by the judge.

FOOD/ SMOKING

Do not smoke or consume food or drink.

ELECTRONICS

Silence phones or electronic devices, and remain quiet. Taking pictures, making recordings and videotaping are prohibited.

DISRUPTIONS

Do not sleep or disrupt the court proceedings.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

All weapons, tools, and aerosol sprays are strictly prohibited from the building.*

Alcohol is not allowed on the premises.

**All prohibited items will be confiscated and the violator may be appropriately charged. The court will not store prohibited items for pickup. Leave these items at home or in your vehicle.*

WHAT TO EXPECT AT COURT

If your case goes to court:

The hearing time, date and courtroom are at the top of the ticket and on the summons you will receive by mail.

Can I continue or postpone my hearing?

You may obtain one first-time continuance (postponement) on some violations: see **www.kcmo.gov/court**, call 816-513-2700 or visit the Violations Bureau for details. Your request must be made three days before the first court date.

What will happen when I get to court?

- When your name is called, walk up to the judge.
- When the judge asks you a question answer only the question asked; and answer it as directly as possible.
- You may plead Guilty, Not Guilty or request a Continuance.
- If a continuance is granted, write down your next court date.

If you plead guilty:

The judge decides the penalty.

If you plead not guilty:

The court may hold trial that day or continue it to a later date. All rights under the Right to Trial section will apply.

Trial Process

- The case is ready to be heard by the judge.
- Each witness shall swear, affirm or declare an obligation to tell the truth.
- The City's witnesses explain their version of what happened.
- You or your attorney can ask questions of the City's witnesses.
- You may testify and call witnesses to explain your version of what happened.
- The City prosecutor may question you and your witnesses, if you and your witnesses testify.
- The judge makes findings of guilty or not guilty.

At trial you have the right to:

- Testify or remain silent. If you remain silent, it is not considered an admission of guilt. If you testify, the judge may consider any statement you make in deciding your guilt or innocence.
- Ask questions of witnesses testifying against you.
- Require witnesses to come to trial and testify with a subpoena.

Trial outcomes:

- If you are found not guilty, the case ends.
- If you are found guilty, you can accept the decision of the judge or appeal to the circuit court.

Trial De Novo (Appeal):

- If you appeal your case, you will be granted a trial de novo (new trial) before a different judge. The request for appeal must be made within 10 (ten) days of the court's decision and cannot be extended for any reason. You can appeal even if you are not able to pay.
- If you pay any portion of the fine that was ordered you will lose your right to the trial de novo appeal.

Municipal Court Probation:

The Municipal Court probation office governs City ordinance violators who are found guilty and ordered by the court to complete probation. A term of probation in Municipal Court can last up to two years. To contact Municipal Court probation, call 816-513-2700 or send email to **probation@kcmo.org**.

If you are a non-U. S. citizen

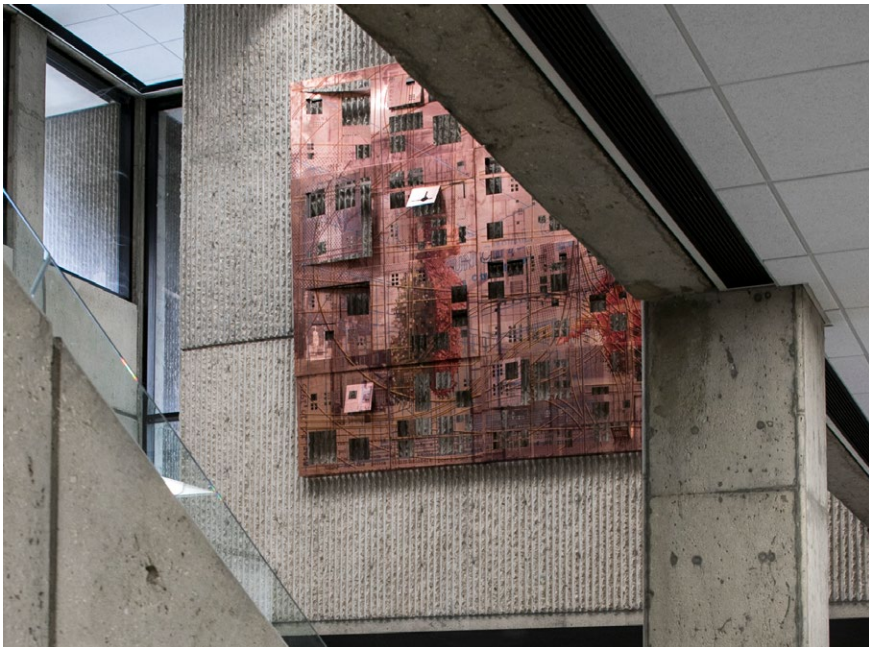
If you are not a citizen of the United States, or do not have the proper documentation to be in the United States, you should know that a guilty plea or conviction may result in your deportation, denial of admission to the United States, or you may be denied naturalization under United States law. You may wish to speak with an attorney, especially before entering a guilty plea to any charges.

If you need ADA accommodations

You have rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For example, if you or a witness is deaf or hearing impaired, you have the right to request assistance, including an interpreter. Request help at least three (3) days before your court date, by calling **816-513-2700** or emailing **court@kcmo.org**. If you have an ADA concern or complaint pertaining to a City service, program, or facility, contact the City's ADA Program Office. To contact the Missouri Office of State Court Administration regarding ADA matters, call **573-751-4377** or send an email to **access2justice@courts.mo.gov**.

If you need language interpreter

If you are defendant or witness in a case and will need the court to provide a language interpreter during your hearing or trial, call 816-513-2700. An interpreter will be provided at no cost to you.



OTHER CONTACTS

Legal Aid of Western Missouri
816-474-6750

Kansas City Police Department
816-234-5100
Online accident reports:
www.kcmo.gov/police

Missouri Department of Revenue
573-526-0939
Fax: 573-526-2511*or* 573-526-7366

Neighborhood Preservation Division
816-513-9010

Building Permits
816-513-1500

Circuit Court of Missouri
Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court
Kansas City Municipal Division
511 E. 11th Street
Kansas City, Missouri, 64106
Phone: 816-513-2700
Fax: 816-513-6782
E-mail: court@kcmo.org

Find your court date or fine amount online at **kcmo.gov/court** or **kcmo.gov/pay**, or call 816-513-2700. Ticket payments cannot be made by phone.

Like us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/kcmoMuniCourt