

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to appear in court?

NO!! In fact, you CANNOT appear in court on the date/time that is listed on your citation. The court does not hold in-person initial appearances and will not be in session at the date/time listed on your citation. However, you MUST enter a plea to the court prior to the date/time that is listed on your citation.

How do I enter a plea?

There are several convenient ways for you to enter a plea.

- Click here to go to the plea form included on this website (details regarding submitting online, printing, etc.)
- Complete the plea form provided to you by the deputy when you were given your citation and mail or drop it off at the court at 7669 County Highway PD, Verona, WI 53593. The court office is open M-F 8 am- 2 pm. There is also a secure dropbox in the lobby for after hours drop-off available 24 hours/day.
- Email your plea to the court clerk at **clerkwdcjm@town.verona.wi.us**. Be sure to provide your citation number in the email.

If you do not enter a plea by the date on your citation, a default judgment of guilty will be entered against you, and you will automatically be granted 90 days to pay the forfeiture amount on your citation.

What happens if I enter a Not Guilty plea?

Your case will be scheduled for a telephone pretrial conference with the municipal prosecutor. The court will send you a notice of the telephone

pretrial date and time. If you DO NOT call the prosecutor to participate in the pretrial conference, you will be found guilty by default judgment.

What happens at the telephone pretrial conference?

The court does not participate in the pretrial conference. The pretrial is simply a discussion between you and the attorney for the municipality to discuss your case. You will have the opportunity to tell the prosecutor your side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence the prosecutor has learned from reviewing your driving record and reading the deputy's report concerning the incident. Hopefully, you and the prosecutor will reach an agreement to settle your case without a trial. If you and the prosecutor reach a plea agreement, it will be forwarded to the judge to review and approve. Occasionally, but rarely, the judge might reject the agreement and ask you and the prosecutor to continue to negotiate a new settlement.

What is the difference between a "no contest" and a "guilty" plea?

A plea of Guilty is an admission of the charges against you. A plea of No Contest is like a plea of Guilty and will be treated the same as a Guilty plea. However, it is not an admission of guilt so it can't be used to establish your liability in any other lawsuit, such as a personal injury or property damage suit that might arise from the incident.

What happens if I enter a "No Contest" or a "Guilty" plea?

When you enter a Guilty or No Contest plea you should provide any information you think the judge should know about you and the incident. The judge will review the citation, your driving record and any information you provide, just as if you had appeared in person to enter your plea. You may also propose a payment plan for your fine. Upon receiving your plea the judge will enter a judgment of guilt and enter any penalties that are deemed appropriate. This could include a reduction of the charges or the fine, and time to pay. At a minimum, the judge will allow 90 days to pay a fine.

How do I submit my payment?

You may send a check or money order payable to the “Western Dane County Joint Municipal Court”. Deliver it or mail it to the court at 7669 County Highway PD, Verona, WI 53593. The court office is open M-F 8 am - 2 pm. There is also a secure dropbox in the lobby for after hours payment.

Can I get an extension on time to pay?

Yes. In fact, the court will automatically grant you 90 days to pay from the plea date listed on your citation. If you need additional time, you should send an email to the court clerk clerkwdcjmcc@town.verona.wi.us. Provide any information you want the judge to consider, including a suggested payment plan that will work for you.

What happens if I do not pay?

There can be very serious consequences if you do not pay your fine. These may include:

- Suspension of your driver’s license. DOT will require you to pay a \$60 fee to reinstate your license
- A warrant for your arrest and imprisonment for failure to pay
- Garnishment of your wages
- Interception of your tax refund
- Referral to the State Debt Collection (SDC) agency at the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. Pursuant to Sec. 71.93(8). SDC wants you to know in advance:
 - If the debt is not paid in full within 90 days, the amount may be referred to a DOR revenue agent for collection action. A delinquent collection fee of 15% of the unpaid balance or \$35.00, whichever is greater, will be added to your account. Also, interest may accrue until the amount due is paid in full.

Collection action may include one or all of the following, some of which result in additional fees being added to your account:

- Interception of your Wisconsin tax refunds.
- Attachment of wages or other compensation being paid to you.
- Garnishment, seizure or levy against your property, including bank accounts and IRAs. Filing a delinquent tax warrant with the Clerk of Courts in the county in which you reside and/or own property. This warrant will act as judgment and lien on any real and personal property that you own and may affect your credit rating.

The court does not want any of these things to happen to you! If you are unable to pay you should contact the court and explain your circumstances. The judge will work with you to arrange a reasonable payment plan or community service.

What happens at a trial?

If you have plead Not Guilty and are unable to reach an agreement with the prosecutor to settle your case, your case will be scheduled for a trial. At the trial you will be required to appear in person. A notice with the trial date will be sent to you by mail and email. You do not have to have an attorney, but you have the right to hire and pay an attorney if you wish. Because this is not a criminal case, a public defender cannot be appointed to represent you.

The prosecutor must also appear at the trial. The prosecutor has the burden of proof and must prove each element of your charge by clear, satisfactory, and convincing evidence. If each element of the charge is not proven, your charge will be dismissed.

The prosecutor calls witnesses to testify and try to meet this burden of proof. Because the prosecutor has the burden of proof, the prosecution goes first. The prosecutor is allowed to call you as a witness. You will be allowed to cross examine the prosecution witnesses. After the prosecution has presented their case, you will have the opportunity to testify and call any other witnesses. The prosecution will be allowed to cross examine your witnesses. Because the prosecution has the burden of proof, they are allowed to present rebuttal evidence.

After the evidence has been presented, the judge will allow both you and the prosecutor to make a brief argument as to how the judge should rule. The judge will then make a ruling as to whether the prosecution has met the burden of proof as to each of the elements of the charge. If so, you will be found guilty. If not, you will be found not guilty.

I'm worried about the points on my driving record. How do I know if I am in point trouble?

If you are found guilty of a traffic violation, demerit points may be added to your driving record. You can find the number of demerit points in the upper right-hand corner of your ticket.

If you get 12 or more demerit points in a year as measured by the offense dates, your driver's license will be suspended. You will need to pay \$60 to get your license back at the end of the suspension.

If you have a probationary license, there are no extra points on your first ticket. However, the points may be doubled on each ticket after your first one.

If you have any questions about your driving record and driver's license, please visit the [Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles](http://www.wisconsin.gov/dmv) website.

I received a citation for vehicle registration or insurance, what should I do?

The prosecutor and the judge will often agree to significantly reduce or dismiss these violations if you provide proof that the problem has been corrected. Ideally, you can provide this proof when you enter your plea. If you need further time or are unsure how to correct the problem, you should email the court clerk at clerkwdcjm@town.verona.wi.us and explain how much more time you need and why.

I received a citation for Operating After Suspension, what should I do?

The prosecutor and the judge will often agree to significantly reduce or dismiss this violation if you reinstate your license and provide proof your license is now valid. If possible you should provide proof you have obtained a valid license along with your plea form. We realize that this is often easier said than done. You might have questions about what you need to do to reinstate your license. One option is to plead Not Guilty and talk to the prosecutor about this during your telephone pretrial conference. Another option is to plead Guilty or No contest and ask the judge to review your record and provide information on how to reinstate your license.