

Know Your Legal Rights!

FINES AND FEES IN MUNICIPAL COURT



DO YOU OWE FINES AND FEES?

If you are charged with a disorderly persons offense, petty disorderly persons offense, violation of a municipal ordinance, or a violation of any other New Jersey law for which a penalty (i.e., fine, statutory assessment, surcharge, or other financial penalty imposed by a municipal court, except restitution or MVC surcharge) may be imposed, AND you fail to appear at any scheduled court proceeding after written notice, OR fail to pay a fine or meet other sentenced obligations, the Municipal Court may:

- Issue additional monetary penalties;
- Order the suspension of your driver's license or vehicle registration;
- Issue a bench warrant and order your incarceration, participation in a labor assistance program or enforced community service—if it finds you “willfully” violated a court-ordered payment; and
- Subject you to other sanctions as authorized by law.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you owe fines and fees in the Municipal Court and you do not have the ability to pay, tell the court immediately, as the court may:

- Require you to perform community service in lieu of the penalty; or
- Order the payment of the penalty in installments for a period of time determined by the court.

If you default on any such payment and the Municipal Court finds that you do not have the ability to pay, it may:

- Reduce the penalty, suspend the penalty, or modify the installment plan;
- Provide jail time credit for each day of confinement, if you served jail time for the default;
- Revoke any unpaid portion of the penalty, if the court finds the circumstances that warranted the imposition have changed or that it would be unjust to require payment;
- Order you to perform community service in lieu of payment of the penalty; or
- Impose any other alternative permitted by law in lieu of the payment of the penalty.

If you have any questions about your legal rights, call LSNJLAWSM, Legal Services of New Jersey's statewide, toll-free legal hotline, at:

1-888-LSNJ-LAW

(1-888-576-5529)

Or apply for help online at <http://lsnjlawhotline.org>. You may also visit us at www.LSNJLAW.org for more assistance and information regarding your civil legal rights.

Sources: New Jersey Court Rule 7:2-2, 7:8-9; N.J.S.A. 2B:12-23; N.J.S.A. 2B:12-23.1; N.J.S.A. 2B:12-31; N.J.S.A. 2C:46-2; Grant A., Glenn, J.A.D., *Implementation of L. 2009, c. 317, Authorizing Municipal Courts to Provide Payment Alternatives*, Administrative Office of the Courts (March 2, 2010).