

Ticket Debt in Chicago's 6th Ward

Contesting Your Parking Ticket

Step 1: Preparing your appeal.

After being ticketed, you have **7 days** to announce your decision to contest the ticket through mailing in a letter of appeal. To prepare for writing this statement, first find the area on your ticket that indicates the reason for violation, and look up the laws regarding this violation online. Become an expert on these details so you can write and deliver a convincing appeal! Also, if photographic evidence will support your appeal, be sure to take photos at the scene of the violation and include them with your written statement before mailing.

Step 2: Writing your statement.

There are a few important things to keep in mind when writing your appeal. The rhetoric of your writing plays a huge part in whether the person reviewing your appeal will dismiss the case! You have a better chance of being dismissed if you follow these guidelines in your letter:

- **Be polite and respectful.** Angry or accusatory language can get you turned down fast.
- **Be brief.** Only say what is necessary, otherwise you might lose your reader's attention.
- **Know your material.** Double check the specifics of your violation so you don't misquote.
- **Validate your defense.** Make sure one of the defenses on our website applies to you!
- **Back up your claim.** If possible, include photos or witness accounts as evidence.
- **Declare your innocence.** Reassure your reader that you had no desire to break the law.
- **Ask forgiveness.** Express that you'll learn from this and avoid the violation in the future.

The example letter on the next page functions as a template on how to structure your letter and incorporate the above recommendations. Note the tone in which the letter is written: John is direct yet respectful, brief, and clearly outlines everything the reader should know about the violation. Replace the highlighted information with what is applicable in your situation. Proofread your writing and then send it along with any evidence you can spare!

Step 3: Presenting your appeal in court.

You may be asked to defend your case before a judge. In this case, stay calm and be confident—it can be nerve-wracking to fight your ticket in front of such authority, but **stay confident!** Dress professionally and comfortably, and follow the same guidelines as in your written appeal.

Remember, 65% of 6th ward residents who contest their ticket win!

Fight your ticket today!

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Example Letter

John Doe
123 Melody Lane
Chicago, IL 60616

May 10th, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Ticket Number: 123456
Vehicle Registration Number: ABC987

I am writing to appeal against a parking ticket I received on May 1st, 2021. I believe the ticket was issued in error, and would like to present my argument for its dismissal.

The ticket was given to me because I was parked in a no parking area. I was unaware of this, however, because the sign prohibiting parking I later found to be hidden behind nearby tree branches. I have included photographic evidence of this particular sign with this letter of appeal. As a consequence of limited visibility, there was no way for me to know the area was restricted, and had I known, I would have abided by the regulation and found a new area to park. In the future, I will no longer park in this specific area, but I would advise that measures be taken to increase the visibility of the sign.

Due to these circumstances, I respectfully request that you will dismiss this parking ticket. You may reach me at 111-222-3333 if you believe there are any details to be further discussed. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Doe