

Constructing your argument

Have you received a ticket? You may have a viable defense to avoid paying fees. This document will guide you in constructing your argument.

How to use this guide:

1. Below there are a number of possible defenses based on your violation
 2. Locate your violation
 3. Examine possible defenses to see if they apply to your situation
 4. Gather any evidence in line with the instructions
 5. Construct your argument
 6. Remember to address the judge as Your Honor
 7. See final section of this document for an example
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Gathering Evidence:

Find any facts below that can establish a defense. Bring any supporting evidence with you to court. Evidence can include, but is not limited to: photographs, affidavits, state vehicle registration, or official police vehicle theft and/or recovery reports

Expired City Sticker or Plate Violations:

- The illegal condition of the vehicle has been fixed prior to the hearing
 - This requires you to replace the expired sticker or plate
 - This defense can only be used once per license plate
 - Applies to any offense between: April 1, 2022 and December 31, 2023

Parking or compliance violations:

- Did you own the vehicle at the time of the violation?
 - If not, this is a valid defense
 - Bring any available evidence of the vehicle's owner to court
- Were your license plates stolen at the time of the violation?
 - Bring any evidence of the theft to court

- At the time of the incident, were there any conditions which could hurt your ability to see the sign?
 - If you can create reasonable doubt through discussing conditions this can be a valid defense
- Was the parking meter inoperable?
 - Consider possible conditions at the time that could have prevented you using the meter
- Some conditions can be corrected prior to the hearing to avoid a penalty
 - This does not include tinted windows, exhaust issues, or missing plates

Speed Camera Violations:

- Did you receive another ticket within 15 minutes and 1/8th of a mile?
 - You cannot be charged twice if this is the case.
 - Bring evidence of the other citation to court.
- Did you find any inconsistencies in the allegations?
 - This could be the case in situation where the ticket does not describe what actually happened
 - Bring any contrary evidence to court
- Were you driving the vehicle?
 - If your plates were stolen, this is a valid defense
 - If you were not the owner of the vehicle at the time this is also valid
 - Bring evidence that shows you were not driving the vehicle

Bus stop or Bike lane violations:

- Was the vehicle or its plates reported stolen at the time?
 - If this was reported to the police, this is a valid defense
 - Bring a record of the police report to court to present to the judge
- Was the vehicle owned by another at the time?
 - Bring any evidence of the ownership of the vehicle to court
- Was the vehicle leased to another?
 - Submit the lease agreement, name, and address of the lessee within 60 days of the offense to avoid the penalty
- Were you stopped to unload passengers?
 - If you were not violating the operation of a bus, this is a valid reason to stop
 - This can be used as evidence of your innocence in court
- Were you making a right hand turn?
 - This is a valid reason for crossing through the bike lane
 - Argue this point to the judge

Example Scenarios:

Expired Sticker Violation

Bella, a 44 year old woman and resident of the 44th ward received a violation for expired stickers. This is an incredibly common scenario, being the most widely issued offense in the 44th ward. She consulted the above guide, finding the appropriate section for expired sticker violations. Bella quickly realized she could avoid a fine by updating the expired stickers prior to her court date. She was the sole owner of the vehicle and had not used this offense before, therefore she was able to use this defense in court. Bella replaced her stickers and brought her case to court. "Your Honor, I have repaired the illegal condition of my vehicle prior to the court date." Due to her argument, Bella was excused from the fee and managed to avoid paying a fine.

Parking Violation

Jack, a 25 year old man and resident of the 44th ward, received a violation for parking illegally. Jack was confused because his car had been stolen, so he did not see how he could receive a violation. He consulted the above guide and found the section pertaining to parking violations. Jack noticed that a stolen vehicle is a valid defense for a parking violation if the vehicle was reported stolen to the police at the time of the violation. Jack gathered his evidence to present before the judge in court. "Your Honor, I received this parking violation, but my vehicle was reported stolen at the time." Jack presented the police report to the judge, showing the car reported stolen. Jack was relieved of all penalties in this case.