

How should I plea?



How Should I Plea? What Are My Options?

The purpose of your first appearance ("arraignment") in court is to tell the judge or court clerk how you wish to proceed with your case. There are three options:

1. You can plead NOT GUILTY if you wish to contest the charge against you and go to trial. The trial date is usually set within 4-8 weeks of arraignment and you will receive a written notice at the time you enter your not guilty plea. If you wish to plead "not guilty," you may inform the bailiff or court clerk before court convenes. This will allow you to leave without having to wait in court until the judge calls your case. You may enter a plea of "not guilty" when the judge calls your case in court. You may also come to the court counter during regular business hours and enter your "not guilty" plea.
2. You can plead GUILTY. If you choose this option, you can offer an explanation of the circumstances to the judge. Your fine or other penalty, assessed by the Judge, will depend on your explanation, your driving record, and the seriousness of the offense. A plea of "guilty" will result in a conviction being entered on your driving record.
3. You can plead No CONTEST. A plea of "no contest" under Oregon Law results in a guilty finding by the Court. The benefit to a "no contest" plea is that you do not have to admit guilt in open court. The fine or other penalty, assessed by the Judge, will depend on your explanation, your driving record, and the seriousness of the offense. A plea of "no contest" or "guilty" will result in a conviction being entered on your driving record.

Please be aware that if you fail to obey an order of the Court, including an order to pay a fine, your driver's license will be suspended and you may be subject to further legal action and costs.

Please direct any questions you may have to the judge. Under Oregon law, court clerks cannot give legal advice. Additional information, including many provisions of the City's Municipal Code and the State of Oregon's Vehicle Code, is available online.

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