In the Circuit of Jackson County

Blue Springs Municipal Division 241

What to Expect at Trial

Hire an Attorney or Represent Yourself

At trial, you may have an attorney, or you may speak for yourself. This is your decision.

- If you have an attorney, they can help you with your case.
- If you do not have an attorney, you must follow the same rules that attorneys do.

How a Trial Works

- The Judge will require everyone who will be testifying/telling the Judge what they saw happen to be sworn in, promising that what is said is the truth.
- The City Prosecutor will call their witnesses first.
- The Prosecutor will ask each witness questions.
- After the Prosecutor is done, you may ask that witness questions.
    - **This is not an opportunity to argue with the witness.**
- After the Prosecutor finishes calling witnesses, you may call your own witnesses.

- You will ask your witnesses questions first.
    - **This is not an opportunity to argue with the witness.**
    - **The Judge will give you the opportunity to give your side of the incident at a later point in the trial.**
- Then the Prosecutor may ask your witnesses questions.
- After all witnesses have spoken, you may tell the Judge your side of the story if you choose to do so.
- If you testify, the Prosecutor may ask you questions.
- When everyone has finished, the Prosecutor and then you may make a closing statement.
    - A closing statement is your chance to remind the Judge about the important facts and explain why you believe the Judge should rule in your favor.
- After closing statements, the Judge will decide or let you know if more time is needed.

Taking a Case Under Advisement

Sometimes the Judge needs more time to decide. This is called **taking the case under advisement.**

If this happens:

- The Judge may decide after a short break or within about a week.
- The Court will let you know the Judge's decision.

- This does not mean anything is wrong with your case. It simply means the Judge needs more time to make a careful decision.

If You Are Found Guilty

If the Judge finds you guilty, you have two choices:

Option 1: Accept the Judge's Decision

You must follow the Judge's orders. These may include:

- Paying a fine and court costs.
- Paying restitution if someone or their property was damaged.
- Being placed on probation for up to two years.
- Taking a class ordered by the Judge.
- Serving jail time in some cases.

Option 2: Appeal the Decision

You may ask for a new trial. This is called a **Trial de Novo.**

- Your new trial will be in the Jackson County Circuit Court before a different judge.
- There is a $30 filing fee for each case.
- You must complete forms that are available from the Court Clerk's office.

If You Are Found Not Guilty

If the Judge finds you not guilty, your case will be closed.

Burden of Proof

The City Prosecutor must prove guilt **beyond a reasonable doubt**. If the Prosecutor cannot do that, the Judge must find you **Not Guilty.**

Questions?

For questions, please contact our office Monday – Thursday, 6:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.