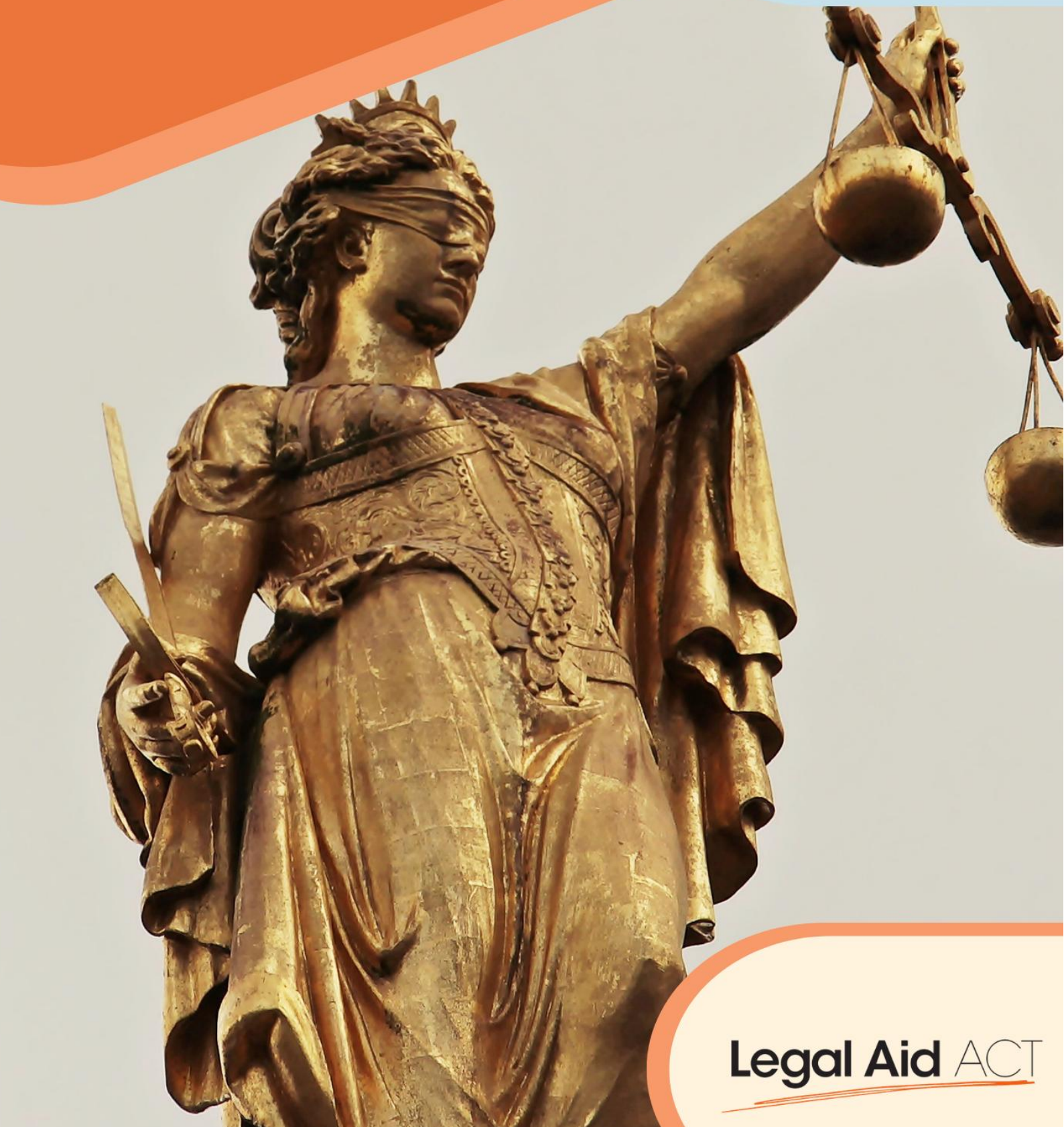
Your Day in Court

A guide for people going to the ACT Magistrate's Court for less serious criminal offences



Legal Aid ACT

Legal Aid ACT

2 Allsop Street

Canberra ACT 2601

Tel: 1300 654 314

www.legalaidact.org.au

Third ACT edition 2025

Acknowledgments: *Your day in court* was originally produced by Victoria Legal Aid and the Victoria Law Foundation. It was developed from other publications produced by Western Suburbs Legal Service, North Melbourne Legal Service, Essendon Community Legal Centre and Victoria Legal Aid. It has been adapted for the Australian Capital Territory by Legal Aid ACT.

© 2025 Legal Aid ACT

Reproduction without express written permission is prohibited. Permission may be granted to community organisations to reproduce, free of any charge, part or all of this publication. Written requests should be directed to the Coordinator, Community Education and Information Services, Legal Aid ACT.

Disclaimer: The material in this publication is intended as a general guide only. Readers should not act on the basis of any material in this publication without getting legal advice about their own particular situations. Legal Aid ACT expressly disclaims any liability howsoever caused to any person in respect of any action taken in reliance on the contents of this publication.

Changes to the law

The law changes all the time. To check for changes you can:

- call Legal Aid ACT's Free Helpline on 1300 654 314
- visit Legal Aid ACT's website at www.legalaidact.org.au
- contact a community legal centre.

Legal Aid ACT

We are a territory-wide organisation that helps people with their legal problems. We focus on helping and protecting the rights of socially and economically disadvantaged people in the ACT.

We have lawyers in our office dealing with Criminal, Family and Civil law issues. We also fund private lawyers to provide legal services to the public. We can help you with your legal problems about criminal matters, family breakdown, family violence, child support, immigration, social security, mental health, debt and driving offences. Call our Free Helpline to find out how we can help you on 1300 654 314.

Contents

Contents 3

About this booklet 4

What do these words mean? 7

Important things to know 11

How does the court process work? 13

Explanation of the flowchart 15

I have to go to court: what should I do first? 17

Delaying your court date 20

Preparing for your appearance 21

Going to court: getting ready and arriving 23

What the courtroom looks like 25

Going to court: what happens when you want to plead guilty 26

Going to court: what happens if you want to plead not guilty 29

What to say in court 33

Being found guilty 36

Being found not guilty 40

Leaving court: what happens now 41

Appeals 42

Example documents 43

Where to get help 45

Legal Aid ACT

Legal Aid ACT is a government-funded agency set up to ensure that people who cannot afford a private lawyer can get help with their legal problems. We provide free information for all Canberrans, family dispute resolution for disadvantaged families, provide lawyers on duty in most courts and tribunals in the ACT, and fund legal representation for people who meet our eligibility criteria. We help Canberran people with legal problems about criminal matters, family breakdown, child protection, family violence, child support, immigration, mental health, discrimination, guardianship and administration, tenancy and debt.

About this booklet

This booklet is a guide for people going to the ACT Magistrates' Court. This booklet can help people charged with minor criminal offences who may be able to represent themselves in the courtroom.

This booklet gives general information, not legal advice. We **strongly** recommend that you get legal advice before you go to court. If you are going to court for serious offences, it is even more important that you see a lawyer. See 'Where to get help' on page 46.

If you have charges for a minor criminal offence and the magistrate finds you guilty, you may get a penalty.

Minor criminal offences could include a **first** offence for the following:

Driving offences

- negligent driving
- driving without a licence
- drug driving
- drink driving
- driving while disqualified or suspended
- burnouts.

Infringements

- matters where you have chosen to challenge the infringement in court.

Offences where the prosecuting agency is not the police

- behaviour of a dangerous dog
- not lodging a tax return
- fishing without a licence.

Other offences

- using or possessing a prohibited substance (small quantity of cannabis)
- being drunk in public
- behaving offensively
- giving false name/address
- minor theft.

If you have been charged with any criminal offence previously, you should probably get a lawyer. Each time you commit an offence, the harsher the punishment tends to be.

This booklet is for people who are charged as adults (18 years or over). If you are charged when you are under 18, your charges will be heard in the Children's Court. While there may be some similarities, this booklet is only about the Magistrates' Court.

Legal words

We have explained some words in the next section 'What do these words mean?' These words are also highlighted in bold the first time they appear in each section.

What do these words mean?

In every section of this booklet we highlight legal words in bold when they first appear. The definitions for these words are below. We have also included other legal words that you might hear used.

adjourn/adjournment – where the court puts your court case off until a later date. If the court allows this, it is called an adjournment.

allege/alleged – to formally accuse another person of having done something.

arrest – when the police hold you in custody because they think you have committed an offence.

bail – A formal promise to the court that has legal consequences. Bail is a promise that you will go to court to face charges on a certain date. You may also have to agree to conditions like reporting to the police or living at a certain place while you are on bail.

beyond reasonable doubt – Beyond reasonable doubt is the 'standard of proof' in criminal proceedings. For you to be found guilty of a criminal offence, your guilt must be proved beyond reasonable doubt. Essentially, that means that the prosecution must prove that it is not reasonably possible for you to be innocent.

breach/breaching – to break a law or court order. This is the same thing as contravention .

brief of evidence – the evidence that makes up the police's case against you. This can include the charge sheet, the informant's statement, your criminal record, witness statements and other documents or things the police have.

case – your legal matter.

charge – the offence that the police or prosecuting agency allege you have committed.

charge sheet – a document that lists all the offences the police or the prosecuting agency have charged you with. The charge sheet can have more than one offence if the police or prosecuting agency think that you have broken more than one law.

conviction – if the magistrate finds you guilty, they can give you a penalty with or without a conviction. ~~A~~ conviction shows that your offending was particularly bad or your crime was more serious. Criminal convictions can have serious consequences for travel, renting, and employment.

court list – a list at court that shows the cases to be dealt with that day and which courtroom they will be heard in.

court order – where the court tells you to do something. For example, you may have to come to court again or write an apology to someone. A court order

can also be an order for you to carry out a penalty such as paying a fine or doing community work. If you do not obey a court order, you can get into serious trouble.

criminal record – a list that shows findings of guilt and convictions against you for previous offences that have come before a court, as well as the penalties you received.

custody – when you have been arrested and the police hold you in the Watchhouse or in prison.

defence – a legal reason for why you are not guilty of the offence to which you have been charged. Technically, you can be found not guilty of a crime even if there is no 'defence'. This might be where the prosecution hasn't brought enough evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that you are guilty.

defendant – a person charged with committing an offence.

element (of an offence) – the "elements" of an offence are the ingredients that make up the offence. In the same way that you need eggs and flour and sugar to make a cake, each criminal offence has its own set of elements. You can only be guilty of a criminal offence if you agree that each element of that offence is true, or if each element has been proven beyond reasonable doubt.

evidence – information (documents or material) used in court to prove something. Evidence can include what is said by a witness in the witness box, but can also include CCTV footage, DNA records, expert reports, etc. When items are accepted as evidence, they become "exhibits".

finding of guilt – when a magistrate decides there is enough evidence before the court to prove beyond reasonable doubt that you committed the offence with which you have been charged.

indictable offence – an indictable offence means an offence that is not a summary offence. A summary offence is any offence where the maximum penalty is less that 12 months imprisonment. Many indictable offences can be heard in the Magistrates' Court, but some offences can only be heard in the Supreme Court.

informant – the police officer or government official who charged you. They also give evidence to be used in the case against you. The prosecutor presents the case in the courtroom, not the informant.

Magistrate – a judicial officer who hears cases in the Magistrates Court or the Childrens Court. In the Supreme Court, they are called judges. They can make decisions about whether you are guilty or not. They can give sentences and make other legal decisions about the case.

Magistrates Court – the court that hears criminal matters that are not heard by the Supreme Court or the Childrens Court. If you are under 18, or were under 18 when you allegedly committed the offence, your matter will be in the Childrens Court. The Supreme Court only hears very serious allegations. If your case is in

the Supreme Court, stop reading this factsheet and speak to a lawyer immediately.

mention date – the date given on your charge sheet for when you need to go to court and any court dates after that until you enter a plea of guilty or not guilty.

offence – when you are alleged to have broken the law, you are said to have committed an offence. See also 'charge'.

penalty – a punishment for breaking the law. See "sentence".

plea/pleading – a plea is your response in the courtroom to the charge. You can plead guilty or not guilty. Pleading guilty means you accept that each element of the offence is true. Pleading not guilty means that you believe at least one of the elements of the charges against you are not true. You should always seek legal advice before pleading guilty or not guilty.

"plea in mitigation" – This is "lawyer language" for what you say to the court at your sentencing proceeding. When you are sentenced, you or your lawyer will explain your particular circumstances to the court to try and convince the magistrate to reduce your penalty. It can be spoken or written as a letter or statement and can include age, domestic arrangements, work/financial status, circumstances of the offence, attitude to the offence, history of appropriate behaviour etc.

police case – what the police say about what happened and why they charged you. This is based on the brief of evidence.

prosecution, prosecutor – the prosecutor presents the informant's case against you in the courtroom. Most of the time, the prosecutor will be someone from the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Sometimes, the prosecutor can also be a government official (for example, a Corrective Servies worker) or someone working for an agency that issued you with an infringement notice.

registrar – a judicial officer who deals with administrative matters at court.

registry – the court's front counter.

sentence – if the magistrate finds you guilty, they will sentence you. This means the magistrate gives you a penalty and, if your offence was serious, the Magistrate may give you a criminal conviction. If you are at all concerned about what sentence you could get, you should speak with a criminal lawyer as early as possible.

serve – formal delivery of a document to someone.

statement of facts – a brief summary of the alleged facts and surrounding circumstances of the offence. The statement of facts is not necessarily what actually happened, it is a summary of what police say happened.

summary offence – an offence punishable by a maximum penalty of less than 12 months imprisonment. Summary offences are heard in the Magistrates' Court or the Children's Court without a jury.

summons – a court document that tells you when and where you must go to court

triable "summarily" – when an indictable offence can be dealt with by a magistrate in the Magistrates' Court

undertaking – a promise to the court to do or not to do certain things

warrant – an order by the court for your arrest

witness – a person who gives evidence in writing or in person at the court

Important things to know

The court is adversarial

This means that the **prosecution** is on one side and the defence is on the other side. The prosecution could be the DPP or a government department. The defence is you and your lawyer, if you have one. Each side is arguing against each other.

The police are not on your side in a criminal proceeding and can use anything you say to them against you.

You are innocent until proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt

If you fight the charges against you, the prosecution must prove to the magistrate that you are guilty of the **offence(s)** 'beyond reasonable doubt'. This means that they must prove that it is not reasonably possible for you to be innocent.

You are innocent until the magistrate believes that you are guilty beyond reasonable doubt. If there is a reasonable doubt in the magistrate's mind, they must find you not guilty.

You must go to your court appearance

If you have been **served** with a **summons**, you must go to court. If you do not turn up, the magistrate may issue a warrant for your arrest. Going to court gives you the chance to tell the magistrate about how your life will be affected by getting a **penalty**. For example, losing your driver's licence could mean you are not able to help a sick relative. The magistrate may take this into account if you are sentenced.

You must go to court if you are on **bail**. If you do not go, the magistrate may revoke your bail. This means that you would be detained in **custody** until your criminal proceedings finalise, which could take weeks or months.

Do not be late

Your **bail undertaking** or **summons** will give you the time to be at court. The time you are given indicates whether your matter is in the morning or afternoon list. It is not a specific time slot for your case. For example, if you are told to attend court at 9:30am, that means that your matter is in the morning list. It also means that every other matter in the morning list will also be listed for 9:30am, and the judicial officer will try to hear all of those matters before the lunchtime adjournment at around 1pm.

Even though your matter may not be heard at the exact time on your bail undertaking or summons, it is important that you remember your date and be on time. You should get to the court 30 minutes before the time stated. The magistrate can issue a warrant for your arrest if your matter is called and you are not there.

If you need to have your matter heard quickly, you should approach a duty lawyer or the Associate to let them know.

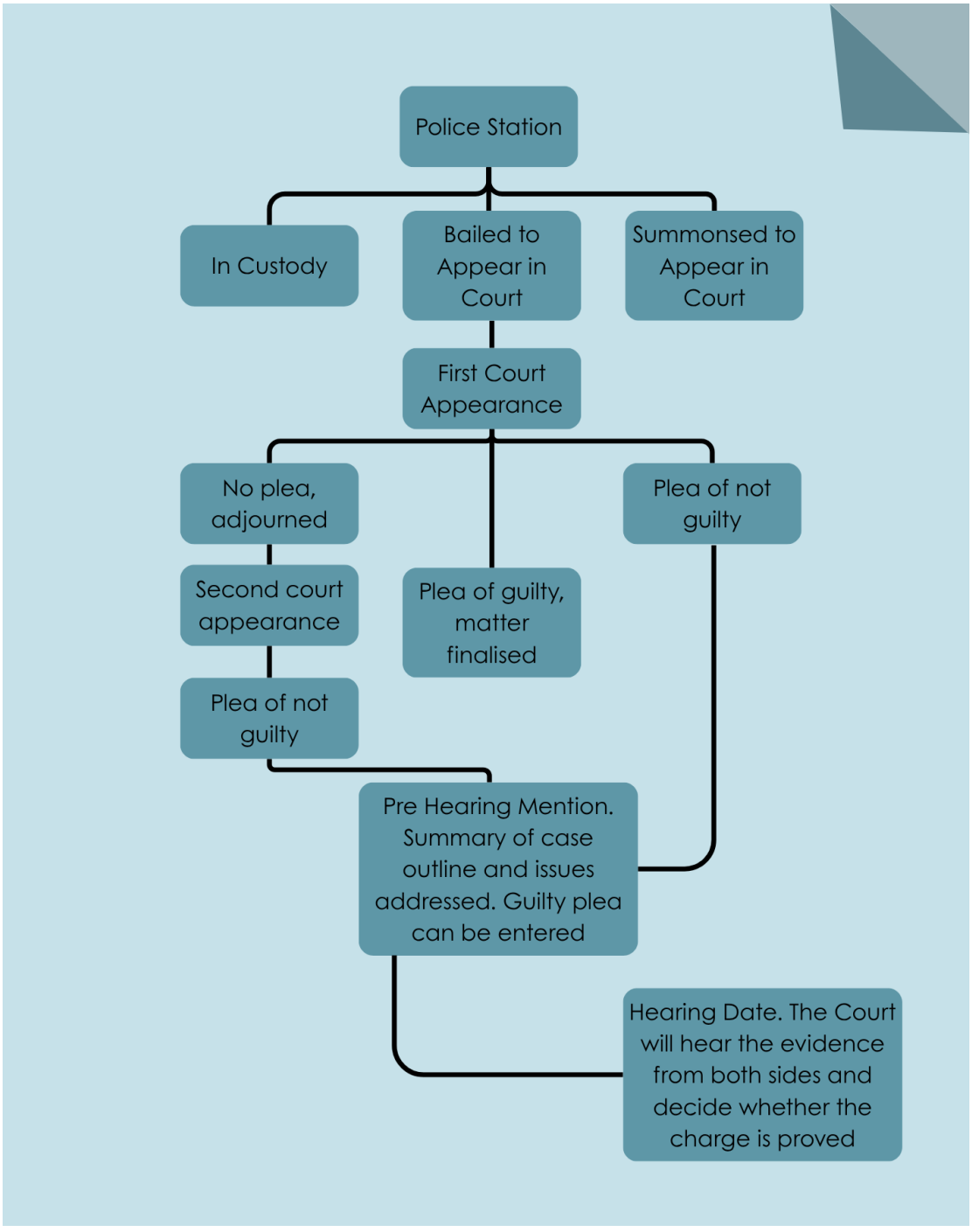
If you need an interpreter, get one before you go to court

Ring the court where your matter is listed to arrange this. Do this at least five days before going to court. The Department of Public Prosecutions ("DPP") or the police will pay for the interpreter. Only qualified interpreters work at court.

How does the court process work?

1. **When you have been charged with an offence.** If the Police have charged you with an offence, they may choose to proceed in one of three ways:
    a. You are arrested and taken into custody (Go to 2)
    b. You are summonsed to appear in Court. (Go to 3)
    c. You are given bail by the Police (Go to 3)
2. **Bail application.** If you are arrested and taken into custody, the Police must bring you before the Court as soon as possible to allow you to make an application for bail. A magistrate will then either grant or refuse your bail.
    a. If you are granted bail, you will be allowed to remain in the community until your next court date (Go to 3)
    b. If your bail is refused, you will be held in custody until your next court date (Go to 3)
3. **First Mention**. At the first mention of your matter, you have three options:
    a. You may apply for an adjournment (Go to 4)
    b. You may enter a plea of not guilty (Go to 6)
    c. You may enter a plea of guilty (Go to 8)
4. **Second Mention**. If you are granted an adjournment at your first mention, your matter will be brought back before the court for a second mention in 3-5 weeks. You have the same three options as at your first mention:
    a. You may apply for an adjournment (Go to 5)
    b. You may enter a plea of not guilty (Go to 6)
    c. You may enter a plea of guilty (Go to 8)
5. **Third Mention.** At your third mention, the court will expect you to enter a plea. You will only be granted a further adjournment if you have a very good reason why you are not able to enter a plea. The court may also decide to enter a plea of not guilty on your behalf. Unless you have a very good reason why you need a further adjournment, you may either:
    a. Enter a plea of not guilty (Go to 6)
    b. Enter a plea of guilty (Go to 8)
6. **Pre-Hearing Mention.** If you plead not guilty to the charge(s) against you, your matter will be listed for pre-hearing mention. A pre-hearing mention is an opportunity to deal with administrative or procedural aspects of your case. For example, you may wish to discuss whether the prosecution has given you all of the evidence that they intend to bring against you, or how many witnesses will be needed at the hearing. You may require more than one pre-hearing mention before your matter is ready for hearing. (Go to 7)

7. **Hearing.** A hearing is a contested appearance where the prosecution and the defence put evidence before the court and the magistrate makes a decision to find you guilty or not guilty.
    a. If you are found not guilty, you are free to go.
    b. If you are found guilty, you will be listed for sentence (go to 8)
8. **Sentence.** A sentence is a court appearance that comes after you have either pled or been found guilty. It is when you come before the court for the magistrate to decide what penalty they will give you.



Explanation of the flowchart

The prosecuting agency detects the offence

For example, an Authorised Officer from the Department of Transport saw you committing an offence or police equipment recorded you running a red light.

The prosecuting agency will give you a charge and summons

In this situation, the prosecuting agency files a **charge sheet** with the court and **serves** a summons on you. A summons is a document that tells you to go to court on a certain date. It includes the **charges**. See an example on page 43. A summons could be issued weeks or even months after the date the offence is said to have been committed. They usually do this in person.

…or release you on bail

In this situation, the police have **arrested** you and interviewed you at a police station. If you are given **bail**, you can leave the police station. You will need to sign an **undertaking** promising you will go to court on a certain date to **plead** guilty or not guilty to the charges against you.

…or take you into custody

In this situation, the police have **arrested** you and decided not to give you bail. You must be brought before the court as soon as practicable to make an application for bail before a magistrate. You will need to sign an **undertaking** at court promising you will go to court on a certain date to **plead** guilty or not guilty to the charges against you. You may also have to agree to certain condition that you will comply with while you are in the community.

Your first court appearance will be a Mention

The first time you come before the court (not including a bail application) will be a mention. At the mention, you can:

- Ask for an adjournment
- Plead not guilty
- Plead guilty

You are entitled to an adjournment of up to five weeks at your first mention to get legal advice.

You may have a Pre-Hearing Mention

If you plead not guilty to the offence, your case may be listed for a pre-hearing mention (PHM).

At the pre-hearing mention, the magistrate may want to know:

- the main issues you and the prosecution disagree over (you do not need to tell them this if you don't want to)
- the number of witnesses that will be called at the hearing
- how long your hearing might take.

You can choose to plead guilty at any stage of the criminal process. If you are charged with more than one offence, the prosecution may drop some charges if you plead guilty to others.

Hearing

The hearing takes place where you maintain that you are not guilty. It can include:

- **witnesses** giving **evidence**
- you giving evidence as one of your own witnesses (although you do not have to do so)
- submissions and arguments on points of law
- the magistrate deciding on whether you are guilty or not guilty
- the magistrate deciding on penalties, if they have found you guilty.

If you change your mind and decide to plead guilty, your case can still go ahead on that day. You should tell the court and prosecution as soon as you can if you decide to plead guilty. This way the prosecution does not get witnesses to come to court.

I have to go to court: what should I do first?

Understand what the charge is

What offence has the informant charged me with?

This is on the **charge sheet or summons**. Look at the 'Offence' section. You can see what the **informant** wrote about your **offence**. The magistrate refers to this in the courtroom.

The **statement of facts** can also give you more information about the offence.

Summary or indictable offence?

The Magistrates' Court deals with both **summary** and **indictable offences**. More than 90% of cases in the justice system are in the Magistrates Court.

The Supreme Court only deals with strictly-indictable offences (i.e., offences that have a maximum penalty of greater than 10 years imprisonment). Cases in the Supreme Court have a judge and jury. Cases in the Magistrates Court have a magistrate and no jury.

Most indictable offences, however, are **triable summarily**. This means you can ask to have your case heard by a magistrate in the Magistrates' Court instead of by a judge and jury. People often choose the Magistrates' Court because costs are lower, **penalties** may be less severe and cases are dealt with quicker. Get advice from a lawyer about this.

Do I agree with the charge?

It is not as simple as asking yourself 'Did I do it?' You may have done what the informant says but you may have a **defence**. For example, you may agree that you assaulted someone, but say that you did it because you were defending yourself or someone else. Get advice from a lawyer about this.

Do I agree with every charge?

The informant may have charged you with more than one offence. You may agree with some of the charges and disagree with other charges. You must enter a plea for each individual offence you have been charged with. This may mean that you wish to enter some pleas of guilty and some pleas of not guilty.

The **prosecution** may drop some of the charges against you, especially if you want to **plead** guilty to the rest of the charges. Your lawyer, if you have one, can speak with the prosecution about this.

Get legal advice

When should I get legal advice?

Do this as soon as you can – even if the police or court staff have said that you do not need a lawyer. No matter how small the charge may seem, treat it seriously. If the magistrate finds you guilty, you may get a **criminal record**.

Getting legal advice early can help you decide if you need a lawyer to speak for you in court. You will be able to work out if you can represent yourself.

What should I ask the lawyer?

Ask them questions such as:

- Should I plead guilty or not guilty?
- What sort of penalty might I get?
- Will I go to prison?
- Would having a lawyer in court make a difference to the penalty?
- If I get a lawyer to represent me, how much will it cost? (weigh up this cost against the likely penalty and if you plan to plead guilty or not guilty)
- What do I need to take to court?
- What will happen in court?

Where do I find a lawyer?

See 'Where to get help' on page 46. You may have to pay for a lawyer.

Deciding to plead guilty or not guilty

This is up to you. To help you decide, think about:

- the legal advice you got from your lawyer
- your defence and the strength of the prosecution's case against you
- your chances of being found not guilty.

You may need to think about the penalties for the offence. For some offences the only way to avoid a penalty is to plead not guilty and be found not guilty. This can be hard. If you plead guilty, the court must take this into consideration, and you will get a lighter penalty than if you had been found guilty.

You may feel pressured to plead guilty. Do not do it just to get the case over and done with. Criminal punishments can have serious consequences for your life, including potentially going to jail.

Remember you can change your pleas to guilty up to, and on the day of your hearing.

I want to plead guilty. Can I get help from Legal Aid ACT?

It is best to get advice before going to court. Call our Free Legal Aid Helpline. See 'Where to get help' on page 46. On the day you go to court, the duty lawyer service at court can give you information and advice or represent you in the courtroom, depending on your circumstances. The duty lawyer service is free. For more information about duty lawyers, see page 24 or visit www.legalaidact.org.au/what-we-do/lawyers-at-court.

We can give you information and help you understand the charge sheet. We may be able to tell you if one of our lawyers can give you advice and representation for your whole case. This depends on things like your income and circumstances. More information is on our website http://www.legalaidact.org.au/what-we-do/legal-representation.

Some private lawyers can also apply to Legal Aid ACT to get a grant to fund your case.

Delaying your court date

Can I ask to delay the date?

You are entitled to a five-week **adjournment** at your first court appearance.

You may be able to adjourn your case if:

- you need more time to prepare
- you need more time to get legal advice and/or get a lawyer.

The magistrate may want to know whether you will **plead** guilty or not guilty. You are expected to enter a plea at your third mention/court appearance. If you are asked to enter a plea before your third mention, you are entitled to ask for more time to consider.

The magistrate will only adjourn a case if they believe there is a very good reason.

How do I delay the date?

If you have a good reason for an adjournment, you can speak to your lawyer or the court staff about how to adjourn your matter. You can do this when you get to court on the day of your listing.

If your matter is adjourned, you will need to turn up to all future court dates. If you want to adjourn your matter again, you will have to go to court on the day of your listing and ask the magistrate for this.

What if I am on bail?

You must turn up on the day of your listing. You are entitled to a five-week adjournment at your first court appearance. You can ask the magistrate to continue your bail for five weeks.

What if I am sick on the day or there is an emergency?

Ring the court. Ask them to put off your case to another day. Tell them what has happened. Make a note of the time of your call and the name of the person you spoke with.

Get a doctor's certificate, especially if you are on **bail** or charged with an **indictable offence**.

The doctor's certificate must specify that you are unfit to attend court. It is not enough that it says you are unfit to go to work. Get someone to take it in or fax it to the court as soon as possible. The court must know why you are not there.

Remember: if you cannot get to court, let the court know.

Preparing for your appearance

Checklist for pleading guilty

☐ It is important that you get legal advice before entering a plea. See 'I have to go to court: what should I do first?' on page 17.

☐ Find out about the police case. It is important that you understand exactly what you are being charged with and the police version of events. Details of the informant's station should be on the **charge sheet**.

☐ Think about what you want to say in court. See page 33. Write down what you want to say and practise it and take it with you to Court. If you prefer, the duty lawyer may be able to speak for you depending on your charge.

☐ Get an interpreter if you need one. Ask the court to arrange this for you. Do this at least five days before your case. You will not need to pay for the interpreter. Only qualified interpreters work at court.

☐ Organise your paperwork. This includes character references and any paperwork about your finances like your weekly wage and financial commitments. The magistrate may need to know about your weekly wage and things you have to pay for. For an example of a character reference see page 44.

☐ Arrange counselling or training that may show the magistrate you are serious about not breaking the law again. For example, you may want to do a drink driving course.

☐ Visit the court beforehand so you know what to expect. You can find out more about the Magistrates' Court on their website:
http://www.courts.act.gov.au/magistrates/

If you are ready to go ahead with your case on the day, the court will try to deal with your case on that day. Remember, it is important that you get legal advice. See 'I have to go to court: what should I do first?' on page 17.

Checklist for pleading not guilty

☐ It is important that you get legal advice. See 'I have to go to court: what should I do first?' on page 17. Representing yourself when you plead not guilty can be very hard. It is better to get a lawyer to speak for you in court if you can.

☐ Find out the police case. Get the full brief of evidence. The prosecutor must provide you with a full brief of evidence within 8 weeks of the date you enter your plea of not guilty.

☐ Carefully read the brief of evidence. Note the **evidence** the police have. Use the brief of evidence to get your **defence** ready. Think about whether you have **witnesses** who can give evidence that can help your case. For example, were you with someone at the time and in a different location from where the **offence** is said to have occurred? Can this person confirm you were elsewhere?

☐ Write down your version of events and what you want to say to the magistrate. It can help to practice in front of family or friends.

☐ Get an interpreter if you or your witnesses need one. Ask the court to arrange this for you. Do this at least five days before your case. If the court arranges the interpreter for you it will be free. Only qualified interpreters work at court.

☐ Organise your witnesses. Tell them when they have to come to court. You might need to get a subpoena if your witness refuses to come or if their employer wants proof that they need to be in court. A subpoena is a court document telling witnesses they must go to court. Ask a lawyer or the court registry staff about how to fill this out.

☐ Decide if you want to give evidence. You do not have to give evidence. Seek legal advice to help you make a decision about this.

☐ Think about what you want to say to the magistrate in case they find you guilty. See page xx.

☐ Organise your character references and any paperwork to do with your finances. The magistrate may need to know about your weekly wage and things you have to pay for. For an example of a character reference see page 44.

☐ Visit the court beforehand so you know what to expect.

Criminal hearings can be very complex. While you have the right to represent yourself, you generally should not; especially if your charges are serious. If you do not have a lawyer, you risk being found guilty when you might otherwise have been found not guilty. Always seek legal advice and representation if you are charged with a criminal offence.

Going to court: getting ready and arriving

Before you arrive

Here are some things to think about two weeks or so before your hearing:

- time off work – you may need to get the whole morning or afternoon off
- childcare – you may need to organise someone to look after your children
- bringing a friend – organise for a friend to come with you. You may need someone to drive you home if you are at court for a driving offence and you end up losing your licence.

If you are young, ask your parents to come along. This can make a good impression. Even for adults, magistrates like to see people with you. This shows that you are treating the matter seriously. It shows that you have support. The magistrate may let these people speak in favour of your case.

Here are things to think about in the morning:

- clothing – dress to impress, look clean and neat
- paperwork – remember to bring your papers with you.

Arriving – reporting to the Court

Arrive early at the Magistrates Court and look at the court list inside the front entrance. The court list will show you if your matter is listed, and which court room to go to. If you can't find your name on the court list, ask someone at the registry counter for help.

Go to the court room before the court starts. Let the Court Officer or Magistrate's Associate know you have arrived. If you do not have the charge sheet(s), statement of facts, or your criminal history (if applicable), ask the Prosecutor for copies. The prosecutor is usually at the table in the centre of the court room. Read the statement of facts and check if you disagree with any details. Make a note of any disagreements so you can tell the court later.

You may need to wait for a while before your matter goes before the Court. While you are waiting for your name to be called, stay near the court room. If you need to leave the area just outside the court room, let the Court Officer or Magistrate's Associate know.

Waiting

Once you have spoken with the Magistrate's Associate, stay close by and wait for your name to be called. This may take a while. Make sure you bow to the magistrate as you go into the courtroom.

If you wait in the courtroom, you can watch how other matters are heard.

Be patient - you might not be first. Your **charge sheet** may say that your case is on at 9:00am or 9:30am if a family violence matter. This just means that the court starts hearing cases at 9:00am/9:30am. If you are self-represented, you will often have to

wait until all the lawyers have had their turn first. It is not uncommon for people to need to wait for hours, only to spend five minutes actually in court. Unfortunately, this is simply how it is. If you have an urgent reason why you need to be heard quickly, or why you need to leave the court, let the Court Officer or Magistrate's Associate know. They may be able to help you have your matter heard sooner.

In the courtroom do not:

- talk (unless it is your case) or whisper
- smoke, eat or chew gum
- listen to music, even if you have earphones
- have your mobile phone switched on
- answer your phone. If you do, the magistrate may take it from you
- wear your sunglasses on the top of your head
- wear a hat.

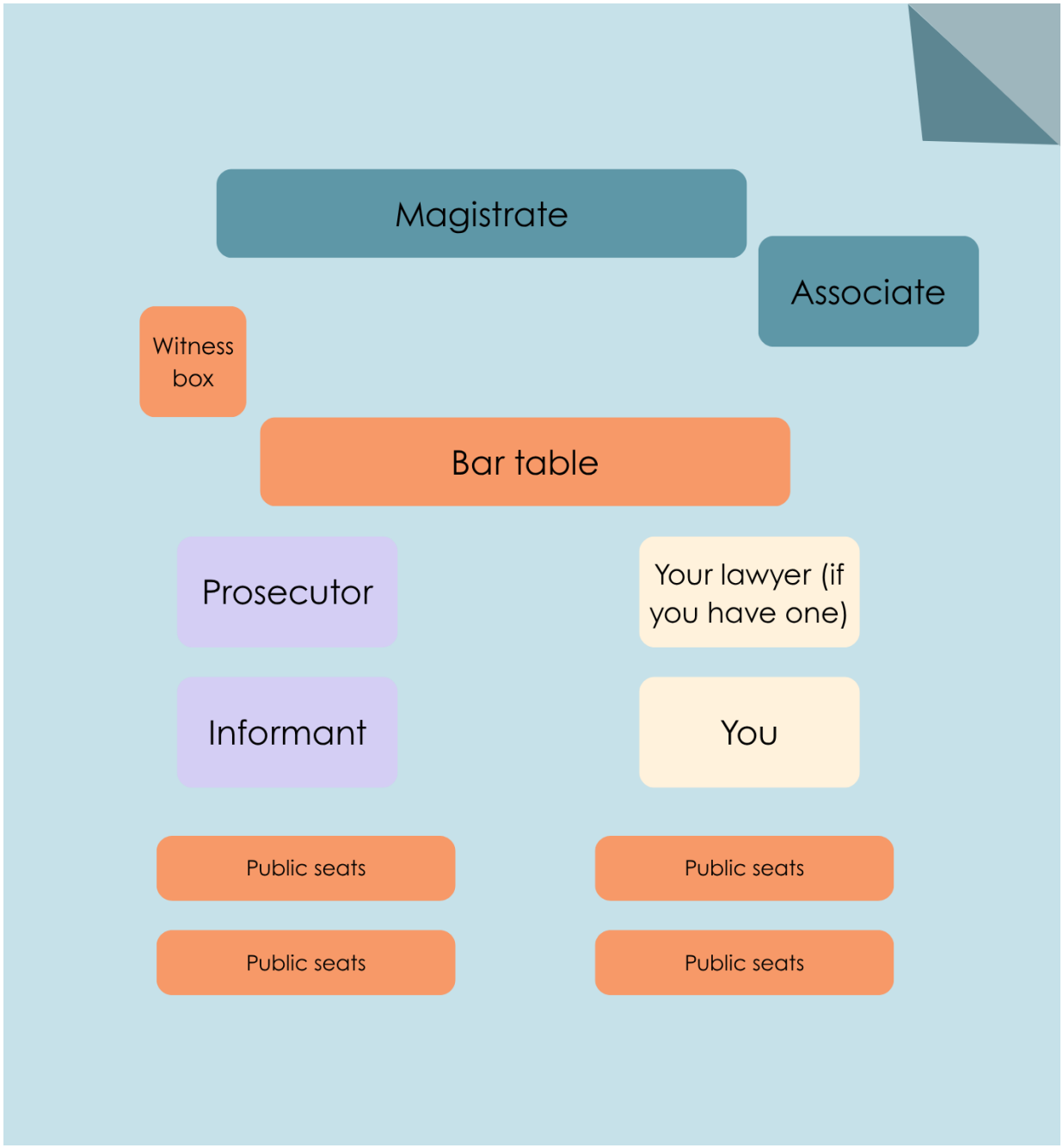
Seeing a duty lawyer

We have a duty lawyer who can help you. The duty lawyer may be able to help with:

- information – if we cannot meet with you to give you advice, we will give you detailed fact sheets about the **offence** and about what happens in the courtroom
- advice – if we can meet with you, we will tell you about the law, what your options are and what happens in the courtroom. We may talk to the prosecution on your behalf
- representation in court – if we can give you more help, we may appear for you in the courtroom.

There may be a lot of people wanting to see the duty lawyer. Again, be patient. You may have to queue up. If you matter is called in court while you are still waiting to speak with the duty lawyer, you can ask the magistrate to stand your matter down until you are able to speak with the duty lawyer. Being stood down means your case is put on hold briefly and called back on that same day for completion. Do not leave the Court.

What the courtroom looks like



Going to court: what happens when you want to plead guilty

The hearing begins

Stand when the associate says "all rise" when the magistrate enters or leaves the courtroom.

Bow your head to acknowledge the magistrate when you enter or leave the courtroom.

When your name is called, go to the bar table. Stand at the opposite end of the table from the **prosecutor**. Stand when you are being spoken to and address the magistrate as "Your Honour". Call the prosecutor the "prosecutor".

Speak clearly and follow the magistrate's instructions. You can read from your notes.

The charge is read and you make your plea

The Magistrate reads out the **charge**. Then they ask you if you are **pleading** guilty or not guilty. This is when you say you are pleading guilty.

If the prosecution has charged you with an **indictable offence** that is **triable summarily**, the magistrate then asks you if you want your case heard in the Magistrates' Court or the Supreme Court. Only the Magistrates' Court will be able to hear your case that day. If you choose to have your case heard in the Supreme Court, it will be scheduled for another day.

The prosecutor hands up the statement of facts

The prosecutor will hand up a copy of the statement of alleged facts to the magistrate. You should have already received a copy and read it carefully before you decide to enter a plea. This will probably be the first time the magistrate has seen the facts that are alleged by the prosecution. The magistrate may ask you if you object to the statement of facts being handed up to them. If you agree with the statement of facts, you should say that you do not wish to make an objection. If you agree with the statement of facts, the magistrate will say 'I find the charge proved'.

If you do not agree with something major in the statement of facts, tell the magistrate and ask for your case to be stood down so you can see the duty lawyer. Entering a plea of guilty means that you accept the version that the Police have put in the statement of facts, so read the document carefully before you say anything in court.

The prosecutor hands up your prior history

The magistrate will ask the prosecutor if you are 'recorded'. They are asking if the prosecutor knows of any previous times you went to court (your **prior convictions**). If they do, the prosecutor will normally 'hand up' a document that lists appearances you have had at court.

If you are guilty of similar **offences**, and if the magistrate finds you guilty this time, they will probably give you a harsher sentence.

You will be shown your criminal history before it is handed up. You can get a copy of it from the prosecutor.

If there is anything you do not agree with, tell the magistrate. If you disagree with or do not remember one of the entries on your record, usually your case would need to be stood down. This will give you the chance to sort things out with the prosecutor.

The prosecutor may comment on your priors. They may also tell the magistrate what they think your **sentence** should be.

You get a chance to speak

The magistrate will ask if you want to say anything. Although you may accept that what you did was against the law, this is a chance to give your side of the story. This can be important in helping the magistrate decide what penalty they give you. For what to say to the magistrate, see 'What to say in court' on page 33. You can explain why you committed the offence and give any information about how or why you committed the offence.

Give the Associate any supporting information such as your character references or letters from your employer or doctor.

You can disagree with things the prosecution say happened. However, you cannot plead guilty if you say that you did not break the law.

Remember to call the magistrate 'Your Honour'.

Say sorry for what you have done if you really mean it – for example, you might say, "I realise I have acted stupidly and apologise to Your Honour".

Speak clearly and loudly enough for the magistrate to hear you. Look at them when you speak. However, it is okay to look down and read from your notes.

The magistrate will ask you questions if they need more information.

The magistrate announces the penalty

After listening to you, the magistrate will announce your sentence. See 'Being found guilty' on page 36 for an idea of what **penalties** may be imposed. For some offences, the magistrate must give you mandatory penalties, which means they do not have any choice but to give you those penalties. This is the case with many driving offences.

Going to court: what happens if you want to plead not guilty

The hearing begins

Stand when the associate says "all rise" when the magistrate enters or leaves the courtroom.

Bow your head to acknowledge the magistrate when you enter or leave the courtroom.

When your name is called, go to the bar table. Stand at the opposite end of the table from the **prosecutor**. Stand when you are being spoken to and address the magistrate as "Your Honour". Call the prosecutor the "prosecutor".

Speak clearly and follow the magistrate's instructions. You can read from your notes.

The charge is read

The Registrar or Magistrate will read out the **charge**. Then they will ask if you are **pleading** guilty or not guilty. This is when you say you are pleading not guilty.

If the prosecution has charged you with an **indictable offence** that is **triable summarily**, the magistrate then asks you if you want your case heard in the Magistrates' Court or the Supreme Court.

Your matter may be adjourned for pre-hearing mention, approximately six weeks later, at which time it will then be listed for a hearing. If the court considers that your case will not be very complicated, your matter may be listed for hearing straight away.

What will happen at your Hearing

The courtroom is cleared

If there is more than one **witness**, they should not hear each other's **evidence**. At this point the Magistrate will order all witnesses to leave the court. The magistrate will call them back when it is their turn to speak. The **informant**, who is a witness, can stay.

The prosecution's witnesses will speak

The prosecutor will question their witnesses first. One of these will be the informant. Take notes of what the witnesses say. This will help you to get your questions ready.

The prosecution has to prove their case beyond reasonable doubt.

You can cross-examine the police witnesses

After each of the prosecution's witnesses has given evidence, you can question them. This is called cross-examination. Your main aim is to ask questions that put doubt on the prosecution's witnesses' evidence. This can be hard to do. Witnesses may have different versions of the same event. Remember, the prosecution have to prove their case 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

Try to:

- challenge witnesses on things you disagree with
- show up any contradictions
- show up things that do not make sense
- show up things that they have left out.

Always be polite. Ask short and clear questions related to your case.

The prosecution can re-examine their witnesses

The prosecutor can ask their witnesses more questions to clear up anything you have asked when you did your cross-examination. If the prosecution asks a new question that is unrelated to anything raised at the start of the hearing or in cross-examination, you can object. The magistrate will then decide if the prosecutor can ask that question.

You can give evidence

You can give evidence once the prosecution has finished questioning their witnesses. You will go into the witness box and swear an oath or make an affirmation that you will tell the truth.

Look at the magistrate and explain what you saw, heard or did. Keep to the facts. Remember to call the magistrate 'Your Honour'. The magistrate may ask you questions.

You do not have to give evidence. If you do, the prosecutor may cross-examine you. Being cross-examined can be a very difficult experience. Talk to a lawyer about this before you go to court.

If you decide to give evidence, it is important to make sure what you say is relevant and to the point. Explain what you saw, heard or did and stick to the facts – do not give opinions.

The prosecution may cross-examine you

The prosecutor can ask questions of you while you are in the witness box.

The magistrate may also ask you questions. The magistrate is not trying to help the prosecution. If a magistrate asks you questions, these will usually be to clarify the information.

You can re-examine what you said

You get another chance to speak about anything the prosecutor has asked you in cross-examination.

You question your witnesses

You can also call your own witnesses to give evidence that is different to what the prosecution is saying. Ask your witnesses about what they saw or heard. Let them say it in their own words.

The prosecution may cross-examine your witness

The prosecutor can ask questions of your witnesses, after they give evidence.

The magistrate may also ask them questions. If a magistrate asks them questions, these will usually be to clarify the information.

You can re-examine your witnesses

You get another chance to speak to your witnesses about things that came up in cross-examination.

You sum up your case

Once you and the police prosecutor have closed your cases, you each sum up your case to the magistrate. This is called making a closing submission. The aim is to highlight the parts of the evidence you believe support your case and why the magistrate should find you not guilty.

The prosecutor will highlight the parts of the evidence supporting their case and why the magistrate should find you guilty.

The magistrate announces a decision

After the magistrate has heard all the evidence, they will announce their decision.

They could find you not guilty. If so, they will dismiss the case and you are free to go. You can ask to be paid back for your costs and any witnesses' costs. This could include wages you lost because you had to be at court.

The magistrate could find you guilty. If so, the magistrate will ask the prosecutor if there is anything 'recorded''. That is, if the prosecutor wants to say anything about your **criminal record**. See 'The prosecution hands up your prior history' on page 27.

The magistrate will then ask if there is anything you want to say. Think about the things happening in your life right now. Think about how your life could be affected by getting a **conviction**. Be ready for this. See 'What to say in court' on page 36.

The magistrate gives you a sentence if you are found guilty

The magistrate then decides on a **sentence**. See 'Being found guilty' on page 36 for an idea of what penalties may be imposed.

What to say in court

Fill in this checklist to help you reply to the magistrate. Write notes in the spaces below.

You can read from these notes in court but make sure you look at the magistrate too.

Support people

Who is at court supporting you? The magistrate may ask these people questions.

_____

_____

_____

About the offence

How and why did the offence happen? For example, why were you driving?

_____

_____

_____

What have you done to make up for it?

For example, you paid for the damage caused, you were co-operative with police, you have apologised to the victim, you have done a course.

_____

_____

_____

What have you learned and how do you feel about what you did?

For example, you may have completed a drink driving course and have a better understanding of the risks associated with driving after you have been drinking.

_____

_____

_____

What are you doing to stop the behaviour happening again?

For example, sorting out any drug or alcohol problems, seeing a counsellor or social worker, selling your car.

_____

_____

_____

Are there any personal problems that may explain your situation? For example, do you have a disability?

_____

_____

_____

Personal details

Age: ____

Relationship status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ De facto

Any children? Write their ages too: _____

Are you working, on a Centrelink benefit or studying? _____

_____

What is your income each week? What are the main things you pay for every week?

Income $____

Loan or debt repayments $____

Rent/mortgage $____

Fixed expenses (for example, medication) $____

Losing your licence

If the matter is about a driving offence and you may lose your licence, explain why you need to keep your licence. For example, for work or to pick up children.

_____

_____

_____

Conviction

Explain why you do not want a conviction. For example, it might be harder to stay in your job or get a new job, or it might be harder for you to travel overseas.

_____

_____

_____

Being found guilty

What happens if I am found guilty?

You should prepare for a possible guilty finding before you go to court. Even if you plead not guilty, it is possible that the magistrate might find you guilty after hearing all the evidence.

The magistrate will **sentence** you. This may include a **conviction** and will include a **penalty**. The sentence will depend on:

- how serious the **offence** is
- if you have been found guilty of similar offences before
- what else is going on in your life.

What sort of penalty will I get?

You may get one or more of the following:

No penalty

The magistrate can find the matter proven but dismiss it without giving you a penalty. This means the magistrate has found you guilty of the offence but has not given you a penalty because the offence was so minor. Or there are things going on in your life that mean the magistrate does not think it is useful to punish you with a penalty.

Good Behaviour Order

The magistrate can order you be placed on a good behaviour order for a period of time. A good behaviour order is a written promise you make to stay out of trouble for a period of time. If you commit a criminal offence during that time, you may have to come back to court to be re-sentenced for the offence that you got the good behaviour order for, as well as for the new offence. Other conditions may be ordered by the court. These may include conditions to attend rehabilitation programs or other programs as directed.

Fines and other payments

The magistrate can order you to pay a fine by a certain date. If you refuse to pay the fine, the following enforcement actions can apply:

1. Your driver licence could be suspended.
2. A warrant could be issued for your arrest and imprisonment.

Community Service Order

Community service is the work the court orders you to do under the direction of a community corrections officer. You do not get paid for the work.

Before giving you community service, the magistrate will refer you to the Court Intake Officer so that your suitability for community service can be assessed. The magistrate will also ask the community corrections officer if they are willing to accept you into a community service program. The community corrections officer may not accept you if you are on a disability pension or on workers compensation.

The magistrate will tell you how many hours of community service you need to do. You will need to report to the Community Services Unit by a certain date. They will then work out when and where you will do the work.

If you do not complete the number of work hours ordered by the magistrate, you can be charged with breach of community service. This means you will have to go back to court and be resentenced on the original charge. If you get a job and can't finish the community service, you must apply to the court to have the order changed.

Supervision/probation

If you get probation, you have to stay out of trouble for a set period of time. You will have to report to the Corrective Services Court Intake Officer - usually immediately. You will also have to meet any other conditions on your probation order, like paying restitution/reparations.

You can be charged with breaching your probation if you do not attend regularly and complete the conditions of probation. This means you will have to go back to court and be resentenced on the original charge.

Periodic Detention Order

Periodic detention means that you are sentenced to weekend imprisonment. This requires you to report to the Symonston Periodic Detention Centre, Mugga Lane, Red Hill ACT at 7pm on Friday.

Imprisonment

In some cases, especially if it is not your first offence and the offending is serious, the magistrate may sentence you to prison.

If the court is considering imprisoning you, it will order that you attend an appointment for a pre-sentence report to be prepared. You should get legal advice before attending this appointment.

What penalties might I also get for driving offences?

Licence loss

The magistrate may:

- suspend your licence or permit. This means you cannot drive for a certain period of time
- cancel or disqualify your licence or permit. This means that your licence no longer exists and you are disqualified from driving for a period of time. When the disqualification ends, you can apply to the RTA to get your licence back. This is called a licence restoration.

For many drink driving and speeding offences, the magistrate must disqualify your licence.

Demerit points

You will get demerit points if the magistrate finds you guilty of a driving offence that attracts demerit points. The magistrate has no power to do anything about demerit points. They apply automatically.

You might lose your licence if you get too many points:

- 12 or more points (fully licensed driver)
- five or more points (probationary driver).

For more information on demerit points, see the ACT Road User Services website http://www.rego.act.gov.au/infringements/infringedemerit.htm

What else might happen if I am found guilty?

Reparation/Compensation

The magistrate may order you to pay a victim for damages your offence caused.

Criminal record

What happens in court goes on your criminal record. This includes:

- the finding of guilt
- a conviction, if there is one
- the penalties you got.

The court and the police can see your criminal record. Sometimes they can let other people know what is in your criminal record. For example, a criminal record, especially with convictions, may make it harder for you to get some jobs or get visas to some countries.

The police have a policy for when they will give out information about your criminal record. Look for the Police Release Information Policy on their website http://www.police.act.gov.au/ for more information.

What if I am unhappy with the court result?

You may want to make an appeal or have a re-hearing. See page 42.

Being found not guilty

What happens if I am found not guilty?

If you are found not guilty you are free to go.

Can I ask for my court expenses to be paid?

You can ask for your solicitor's costs to be paid along with your witnesses' expenses.

To do this, you should ask the magistrate by saying, "Your Honour, I would like to apply for an order that the prosecution pay my expenses for defending this matter".

If the magistrate awards you costs, the prosecution will write you a letter asking that you provide a written assessment of your costs.

If you cannot agree with the prosecution within 14 days about an assessment of your costs, the Registrar of the Court will decide how much you should receive.

Leaving court: what happens now

What if I got a penalty?

You need to understand what the **penalty** means and what you have to do next. If you are at all unsure, ask the Magistrate before you leave the court room. You may have to sign something before you leave court (such as an **undertaking**).

If you have trouble keeping to your **sentence** and obeying **court orders**, get legal advice as soon as you can.

How do I pay a fine?

You can pay the fine at the Magistrates' Court. Go to the **registry** and ask the staff for help.

Let the Magistrate know if you might have trouble paying the fine. There are options. You can ask the court to:

- pay by instalments
- give you extra time to pay it off

If you cannot pay all of it, pay what you can – it shows the court you are trying. Do not leave it until it is too late or you could end up back at court. If you do not pay, you might have to pay more money, or the court can issue a **warrant** for your **arrest**.

What happens if I have lost my licence?

You should not drive at all during this time. There are no exceptions. For example, you cannot drive to work or to pick up your children. You may be eligible for a restricted licence. There are very serious penalties for driving when you are not supposed to.

What happens if I have to do a drink driving course?

Get in touch with a driver education agency as soon as you lose your licence. The agency will tell you what you have to do and what the costs are. They will write a report about your drinking or drug use which you can take. The magistrate will consider this report when sentencing you.

For information about your closest driver education agency, see 'Where to get help' on page 49.

What if I do not understand the sentence?

Ask the magistrate before you leave the court room. You can also ring the court later.

Appeals

An appeal allows you to challenge a decision made by a court. If you disagree with the magistrate's decision, you can appeal to the Supreme Court.

You can appeal to the Supreme Court against the:

- **conviction** – the magistrate's decision to find you guilty
- **sentence** – the **penalty** or other **sentencing** order the magistrate gave you.

The appeal involves:

- filling out court forms
- going to the Supreme Court for an appeal hearing.

Get legal advice before lodging an appeal. A lawyer can advise you on whether your sentence was appropriate. The decision might feel really unfair, but this does not mean that you will get a better result if you appeal.

It is very important to keep in mind that a judge hearing your appeal can give you an even harsher sentence than what the magistrate gave you.

You have 28 days from the day of your conviction/sentence to lodge an appeal. It may take several months after that before the judge hears your appeal.

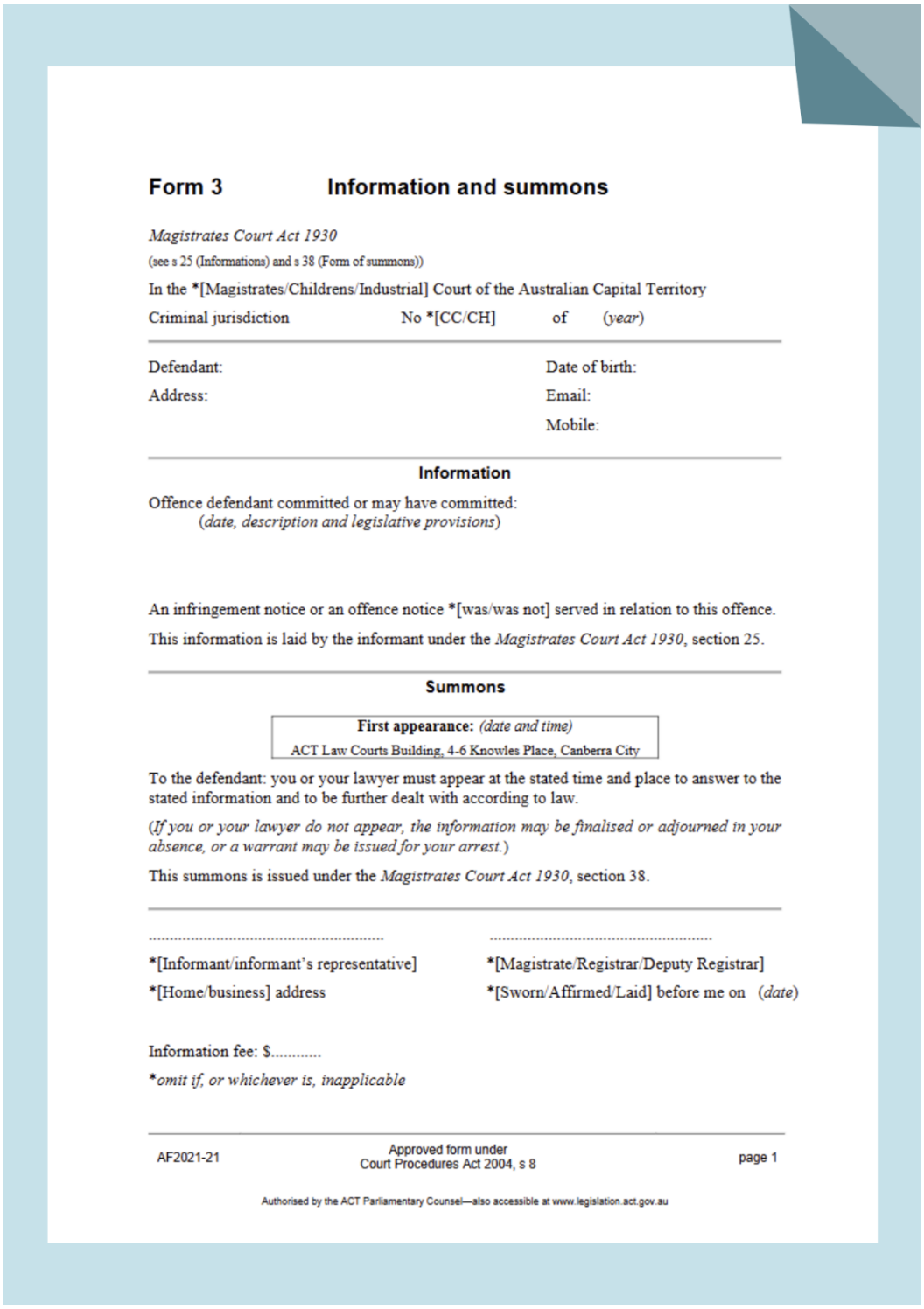
If you did not go to court for your hearing and an order was made against you, you may apply to the Court to get the order set aside. You will need to show the court that:

- you did not know of the hearing date, or
- that you did not understand that the court could make an order against you if you did not attend the hearing, or
- you had a reasonable excuse for not attending your hearing.

Get legal advice if you are thinking about these options. See 'Where to get help' on page 46.

Example documents

Summons to appear



Form 3 **Information and summons**

Magistrates Court Act 1930

(see s 25 (Informations) and s 38 (Form of summons))

In the *[Magistrates/Childrens/Industrial] Court of the Australian Capital Territory

Criminal jurisdiction No *[CC/CH] of (*year*)

Defendant: Date of birth:

Address: Email:

Mobile:

Information

Offence defendant committed or may have committed:
(*date, description and legislative provisions*)

An infringement notice or an offence notice *[was/was not] served in relation to this offence.

This information is laid by the informant under the *Magistrates Court Act 1930*, section 25.

Summons

First appearance: *(date and time)*
ACT Law Courts Building, 4-6 Knowles Place, Canberra City

To the defendant: you or your lawyer must appear at the stated time and place to answer to the stated information and to be further dealt with according to law.

(*If you or your lawyer do not appear, the information may be finalised or adjourned in your absence, or a warrant may be issued for your arrest.*)

This summons is issued under the *Magistrates Court Act 1930*, section 38.

....

*[Informant/informant's representative] *[Magistrate/Registrar/Deputy Registrar]

*[Home/business] address *[Sworn/Affirmed/Laid] before me on (*date*)

Information fee: $.....

**omit if, or whichever is, inapplicable*

AF2021-21 Approved form under Court Procedures Act 2004, s 8 page 1

Authorised by the ACT Parliamentary Counsel—also accessible at www.legislation.act.gov.au

Character reference

The character reference is written by someone who knows you, for example, a friend. The letter needs to cover the issues related to the charge, for example, dishonesty, violence or drug use.

[Address to the magistrate]
To: The Presiding Magistrate
Magistrates Court

[Date]
01/01/2001

Your Honour,

[Referee's details]
My name is Jane Lee of 3 Canberra Street, Canberra. I am a professional engineer.

[How the referee knows you]
I have known Sam White of 6 City Road, Canberra for three years. I understand he works as a waiter. We met when he used to babysit

[What the employer knows about the court case and their reason for writing a reference]
I understand that Sam White has to attend court for a theft charge. Due to other commitments, I am unable to attend court to give character evidence on his behalf.

[What the referee knows about your character]
However, I can say that in all the time I have known him, Sam has been a decent, hard working and trustworthy person. I believe any behaviour he displayed that caused himto be charged with theft was a one-off event.

[What the referee knows about the circumstances of the offence]
He has been under stress due to his mother's difficult battle with cancer. Even though he has been charged with theft I would continue to trust Sam with my money and belonings.
Yours faithfully,

[Referee's signature]
Jane Lee
[Referee's printed name and phone number]
JANE LEE 0423 456 789

Letter from employer

Your employer can use this letter as a guide to write their own letter about the effect of licence cancellation or suspension on your employment.

[Address to the magistrate]
The Presiding Magistrate
Magistrates Court

[Date]
01/01/2001

Your Honour,

[Employer's details]
My name is John Stevens. I am the manager at City Plumbing at 1 City Avenue, Canberra.

[How the employer knows you]
Sarah Yu has worked under my supervision as a junior plumber for three years. In that time I have found her to be a good worker and from my experience of her driving, a safe driver. She has a bright future at this company and as a plumber.

[What the employer knows about the court case and their reason for writing a reference]
I understand that Sally has to attend court for a drink driving charge. Due to other commitments, I am unable to attend court to give character evidence on her behalf.

[How penalties might affect the accused]
Sally's job involves some driving and a licence is important so she can properly perform her work. Therefore, I can say that if the court cancels or suspends her license, Sally will have difficulty performing her job. Her future prospects may be affected and he may be laid off.

Yours faithfully,

[Employer's signature]
John Stevens

[Employer's printed name and phone number]
JOHN STEVENS (02) 1234 5678

Where to get help

Legal Aid ACT

Legal Aid Helpline: 1300 654 314

Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 5.00 pm

Main office

2 Allsop Street

Canberra City

ACT 2601

http://www.legalaidact.org.au/

If you need an interpreter:

Call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) for an interpreter to help you speak to any of the agencies in this section. Ask the interpreter to put you through to the agency you need. This is usually free. Tel: 131 450

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment:

Use the National Relay Service to phone any of the agencies in this section. This is free. For more information about the NRS visit www.relayservice.com.au

TTY users: Call 133 677 and then ask for the phone number you need. Include the area code.

Speak and Listen users: Call 1300 555 727 and then ask for the phone number you need. Include the area code.

Internet relay users: See www.relayservice.com.au and click 'Make an internet relay call'.

Other Legal Services

Aboriginal Legal Service ACT

Tel: (02) 6249 8488

http://www.alsnswact.org.au/offices/act

ACT Law Society's Legal Advice Bureau

15 minute lunchtime consultations by members of the ACT Law Society.

Tel: (02) 6247 5700

http://www.actlawsociety.asn.au/community-services/legal-advice-bureau.html

Magistrates' Court

To find out the address and contact details of the court in the ACT, more information about the services at the court and any other information about the court. http://www.courts.act.gov.au/magistrates/

Other Services

Salvation Army

For personal support and referral to other services at court.

Tel: (02) 6273 2211

Road Ready Centre North

Tel: (02) 6162 5152 Road Ready Centre South: Tel: - (02) 6282 8990

http://www.getroadready.com.au/Course-Information/Alcohol-Awareness-Course.aspx

Rego ACT

For questions about drivers licences.

Tel: 13 22 81

http://www.rego.act.gov.au/

Reversed

www.karralika.org.au

Tel: (02) 6163 0200

Your Day in Court

Legal Aid ACT

For free information about the law and how we can help you, visit our website www.legalaidACT.org.au

For help with legal problems call our helpline on 1300 654 314

For questions or feedback about this resource, email community.education@legalaidact.org.au

Legal Aid ACT