

INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS

You have been charged with a criminal offense and if you are found guilty, you are facing serious consequences which may include payment of a fine, loss of your driver's license, and the possibility of a jail sentence. In addition, you may face increased penalties for later convictions, the loss of your right to possess firearms and/or ammunition, and your immigration status will be affected. You have important constitutional rights, including the right to representation by a lawyer, but you may lose these rights or waive them if you do not act to protect these rights.

You have the right to hire a lawyer to represent you in every case. If you cannot afford a lawyer, you may be eligible for a free lawyer. If you want a determination made as to whether you are qualified for a free lawyer, then it is your obligation to contact the court and ask for the procedure to be screened for appointment of counsel. If you do not hire a lawyer or go to be screened, then you may be found to have waived your right to a lawyer at your trial.

You also have the right to represent yourself. However, you should be aware that self-representation can be dangerous. For example, there may be certain factual or legal defenses to your charge that you are not aware of or legal issues related to the conduct of your trial or guilty plea that a lawyer would know how to preserve for an appeal. If you exercise your right to proceed without a lawyer, then you are responsible for complying with all applicable rules of court, including rules of evidence, procedural rules, and proper behavior before the Judge and/or Jury.

If convicted on the charge(s) filed against you and sentenced to a fine, you may request a reasonable scheduled payment plan to pay the fine.

It is your obligation to keep up with your trial date and to obtain a lawyer, either by hiring one or by being screened and found eligible for a court-appointed lawyer prior to your trial date. If you do not appear at your trial with your attorney, you may be deemed to have waived your right to have an attorney represent you.

You are required to keep the court notified of any change of address until the completion of the case.