



How to Respond to Summonses



The NoHo Business Improvement understands our businesses receive summonses from city agencies. We want to make sure you know that you have the right to challenge your summons with the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) if you believe you were improperly fined.

What is OATH?

The Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) is an independent city agency that hears and decides cases involving summonses from NYC enforcement agencies. OATH is separate from the agencies that

give tickets. OATH is not a criminal court.

What does an OATH hearing look like?

If you receive a summons you believe is unfair, you may contest the charges through an OATH hearing. This hearing is your chance to show your side of the case. You should bring any documents, witnesses, photographs, or other records that prove your case. The hearing is informal. You may use a lawyer at your own expense but do not need to. Some summonses are eligible for remote hearings over the phone, internet, or mail. OATH provides translation into over 250 languages.

What if I missed my hearing or can't make my assigned hearing time?

You are entitled to one reschedule, regardless of reason you missed the hearing.

Can I appeal OATH's decision?

Yes. You have the right to appeal, if you believe that your hearing outcome was incorrect. You must apply for an appeal within 30 days of your hearing decision.

Key OATH facts and figures:

- **47%** of all summonses get dismissed
- **70%** of all sanitation summonses get dismissed
- The average hearing takes just **10** minutes

What if I fixed the problem?

Curing the problem you were fined for is usually not a valid reason for a summons dismissal.

What if I just want to pay my fine?

You can. Simply pay the fine. If you were offered a settlement, take it.

Want to know more?

Please visit www.nyc.gov/oath for more information.

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