




## **YOU ARE INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY BY THE STATE OR UNTIL ENTERING A GUILTY OR NO CONTEST PLEA**

A plea is the declaration by a defendant in response to a criminal charge, whether he or she is Guilty or Not Guilty.

If you signed a citation in front of an officer, you did not plea guilty, but only signed a promise to appear in Court on or before your appearance date to enter a plea in response to the charge(s) filed. **A PHONE CALL TO THE COURT DOES NOT SATISFY AN APPEARANCE.** Failure to respond to the citation by your appearance date may result in an additional charge of violating your promise to appear. A warrant may be issued for your arrest and you may be denied the renewal of your driver's license and assessed additional court cost.

There are three possible pleas to a complaint:

-  **NOT GUILTY** - A plea of not guilty means you are informing the Court that you deny guilt and that the State must prove its charge against you. If you plead not guilty, you will need to decide whether or not to employ an attorney to represent you at trial. You may defend yourself, but no one else except an attorney may represent you. A jury trial will be set unless you waive your right to a jury trial. If you waive your right to a jury trial, your case will be set for a trial before the Judge (bench trial).
-  **GUILTY** - A plea of guilty means you admit that you committed the act you are charged with and that you have no defense for your act. If you were involved in a traffic accident at the time of the alleged offense, your plea of guilty could be used later in a civil suit for damages as an admission by you that you were at fault or were the party responsible for the accident.
-  **NOLO CONTENDERE (NO CONTEST)** - A plea of nolo contendere simply means that you do not wish to contest the charge filed against you. Judgment will be entered by the Judge and a penalty will be set. A plea of no contest cannot be used against you in a civil suit for damages.

You may use the **PLEA FORM** on the previous page to enter your plea. If you have more than one offense fill out one plea form for each offense.