

## The Trial

Under Texas law, you can be brought to trial only after a sworn complaint is filed against you. The complaint is a document that alleges what you are accused of and that your actions are unlawful.

- You have the right to inspect the complaint before trial and to have it read to you at trial.
- You have the right to have your case tried before a jury if you desire.
- You are entitled to hear all testimony introduced against you.
- You have the right to testify in your own behalf. You also have a constitutional right not to testify. If you choose not to testify, your refusal cannot and will not be used against you in determining your guilt or innocence. However, if you do choose to testify, the prosecutor will have the right to cross-examine you.
- You may call witnesses to testify on your behalf. You also have the right to have the court subpoena witnesses to ensure their appearance at trial. However, you must furnish, in writing, the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of these witnesses to the Court as soon as possible so that the witnesses may be located and subpoenas served.

A trial in Municipal Court is a fair, impartial and public trial as in any other court. A complaint is a document that alleges the act you are accused of committing and that the act is unlawful. You may be tried only for what is alleged in the complaint.

If the judge tries the case, the judge's decision is called a judgment. If a jury tries the case, the jury's decision is called a verdict.

In determining the defendant's guilt or innocence, the judge or jury may consider only the testimony of witnesses and any evidence admitted during the trial.

If you choose to have the case tried before a jury, you have the right to question jurors about their qualifications to hear your case. If you think that a juror will not be fair, impartial or unbiased, you may ask the judge to excuse the juror. The judge will decide whether or not to grant your request. In each jury trial, you are also permitted to strike three members of the jury panel for any reason you choose, except an illegal reason (such as a strike based solely upon a person's race or gender).

If you are found guilty by either the judge or jury, the penalty will be announced at that time. Unless you plan to appeal your case, you should be prepared to pay the fine at this time.