

TOHONO O'ODHAM RULES OF COURT

Section 4: Rules of Procedure for Civil Offenses

Rule 1. Applicability.

These Rules apply only in cases where a person is charged with a civil offense punishable by a fine. They do not apply to cases with criminal charges.

Rule 2. Commencement; Form of Citations.

(a) **Commencement.** A civil offense is started by a Tohono O'odham law enforcement officer issuing a citation.

(b) Form of Citations, Service, Filing.

(1) *Civil Traffic Violations.*

(A) **Contents of Citation.** A civil traffic citation must have the following information: name, date of birth, and address of the respondent; the driver's license information; origin; the time, date, and place of the alleged violation; reference to the civil traffic offense(s) violated; and the time, date, and place for the respondent to appear. The charging officer must sign the citation. The citation must also have the respondent's signature acknowledging receipt of the citation, or a notation by the officer that the respondent refused to sign.

(B) **Service of Citation.** The citation must be served on the respondent with a form specifying the total fine for each offense and the process for paying the fine or contesting the citation.

(C) **Filing of Citation.** The citation must be filed within 10 business days of the date the citation was issued. The court clerk will not accept a citation after 10 business days of the date it was issued.

(2) *Civil Offense Violations.*

(A) **Contents of Citation.** A civil offense citation must have the following information: name, date of birth, and address of the respondent; origin; the time, date, and place of the alleged violation; reference to the civil offense(s) violated; and the time, date, and place for the respondent to appear. The charging officer must sign the citation. The citation must also have the respondent's signature acknowledging receipt of the citation, or a notation by the officer that the respondent refused to sign.

(B) **Service of Citation.** The citation must be served on the respondent with a

form specifying the process for contesting the citation.

(C) **Filing of Citation.** The citation must be filed under an arraignment schedule adopted by the Chief Judge.

(c) **Hearing Date.** The hearing date listed on the citation will be set under an arraignment schedule adopted by the Chief Judge.

Rule 3. Amendment of the Civil Citation.

(a) A citation may be amended at any time if no additional or greater violation is charged and the substantial rights of the respondent are not violated.

(b) The Court will amend the citation to conform to the evidence offered at the hearing if no additional or greater violation is charged and if the amendment does not violate the substantial rights of the respondent.

(c) All amendments to a civil citation will relate back to the date of violation.

Rule 4. Counsel.

(a) **Notice of Appearance.** Counsel for a respondent must file a Notice of Appearance before appearing in the action or filing any other document.

(b) **Motion to Withdraw.** Withdrawal from respondent's representation will be granted only upon a written or oral motion to withdraw stating:

- (1) the reason for the withdrawal;
- (2) the consent of the respondent or why such consent is unobtainable; and
- (3) the last known address of the respondent.

Rule 5. Admission of Responsibility and Payment of Fine Without a Hearing.

(a) **Applicable Offenses.** This Rule only applies to civil traffic offenses and other civil offenses with a set fine. This Rule does not apply to civil offenses where the court may set the fine, such as violating a public health measure.

(b) **Purpose.** A respondent cited for a civil offense may plead responsible and submit a fine payment to the Court before the time set for arraignment. A respondent does not have to appear for the arraignment if the fine is paid in full and the respondent has a receipt showing that payment has been made.

(c) **Admission.** The respondent must complete and sign an Admission of Responsibility form, stating that the respondent is pleading responsible to the civil allegation(s). The Admission

of Responsibility form must accompany the payment.

(d) Payment.

- (1) *Method of Payment.* Payment may be made in person at the Tohono O'odham Justice Center, or by mail.
- (2) *Form of Payment.* Payment must be by cash, cashier's check, or money order. Cash will only be accepted if paid in person at the Justice Center. Cashier's checks and money orders must be made out to the Tohono O'odham Nation.
- (3) *Time of Payment.* No payment will be accepted if the payment is received earlier than ten business days following the issuance of the civil citation.
- (4) *Partial Payment.* A payment less than the total due will be credited toward the fine(s) owed. Respondent is responsible for paying the balance due before the hearing.

(e) Receipt. A receipt will be made for a fine payment and provided to the respondent.

(f) Responsibility to Appear at Hearing. A respondent who does not pay the total fine or who does not have a copy of the receipt(s) showing payment in full must appear at the scheduled arraignment.

Rule 5.1. Untimely Payment by Mail; Responsibility to Appear at Arraignment.

- (a) Untimely Payment by Mail.** If the Court receives a fine payment by mail after the time for arraignment has passed, and the respondent fails to appear for the arraignment, the Court will return the payment and set a new arraignment date.
- (b) Responsibility to Appear.** The respondent must appear at the rescheduled arraignment. If the respondent fails to appear, the Court may issue an Order to Show Cause against the respondent for why the respondent should not be held in contempt.
- (c) No Payment Accepted Pending Rescheduled Arraignment Date.** If an arraignment has been rescheduled, the Court will not accept payment towards the fine unless the respondent can show good cause for his or her tardiness. The Court may choose to allow the payment at its sole discretion.

Rule 5.2. Procedure for Payment Errors.

- (a) Early Payment.** Payments may not be accepted if made within 10 business days of the date of the citation. The respondent may resubmit the payment before the time set for arraignment, or appear at the arraignment.
- (b) Payment Greater Than Total Fine.** A respondent may file a written motion for refund

within 90 days of the payment if the respondent believes the payment exceeded the total fine. The respondent must set forth the amount that should be refunded, and why the respondent believes the amount paid was in error.

Rule 6. Appearance; Entry of Plea.

(a) Appearance.

- (1) *Appearance.* The respondent may admit or deny the allegations of the citation by appearing in person at the arraignment.
- (2) *Nonappearance.* If the respondent fails to appear at the arraignment without good cause, the Court may issue an Order to Show Cause against the respondent for why the respondent should not be held in contempt for failing to appear.

(b) Pleas.

- (1) *Plea of Responsible.* Upon an admission of responsibility to the allegation(s), the Court will order the fine for the matter admitted to be paid or converted into community service as stated in these Rules.
- (2) *Plea of Not Responsible.* Upon a denial of one or all of the allegation(s), the Court will set a civil offense hearing for the denied allegation(s). The civil offense hearing will be set as closely as possible to 30 days following the arraignment. The hearing will be heard without a jury.

Rule 7. Discovery.

- (a) No prehearing discovery is required.
- (b) Immediately before the civil offense hearing, both parties must produce any exhibits, written statements, or recorded statements of any witness which may be offered as evidence at the hearing. If the parties do not follow this rule, the Court may choose to grant a recess or reschedule the hearing. The Court may also choose to exclude the evidence that could not be timely produced.
- (c) Either party may subpoena witnesses.

Rule 8. Continuances and Rescheduling.

The Court may, upon motion or on its own motion, and for good cause, reschedule the civil offense hearing for a period not exceeding 60 days.

Rule 9. Civil Offense Hearing.

- (a) **Oath.** All testimony must be given under oath or affirmation.

(b) Rules of Evidence. The Arizona Rules of Evidence, as permitted by Rule 1(c) of the Tohono O’odham General Rules of Practice, will not apply in civil offense proceedings. Subject to a determination by a judge, evidence that is relevant, material, and tends to prove a fact at issue is admissible. Nothing in this Rule is to be construed as overriding any Tohono O’odham Code provision relating to privileged communications.

(c) Questioning of Witnesses. The Court may, at its own discretion, call and examine witnesses present at the hearing, including the respondent. No person may be examined or cross-examined at a hearing except by the Court, Counsel for a party, the Nation, or the respondent.

(d) Order of Proceedings. The order of proceedings is:

- (1) Testimony of the Nation’s witnesses.
- (2) Testimony of defense witnesses.
- (3) Testimony of the Nation’s rebuttal witnesses, if any.
- (4) Testimony of defense surrebuttal witnesses, if any.
- (5) Argument of the parties or their counsel if permitted by the Court.
- (6) Ruling by the Court.

(e) Failure of the Nation to Appear. If no witnesses for the Tohono O’odham Nation appear at the hearing, the Court will dismiss the matter unless the Court, for good cause shown, chooses to reschedule the hearing to another date.

Rule 10. Findings and Judgment.

(a) Finding of Responsibility. If the Court finds for the Tohono O’odham Nation, the Court will find the respondent responsible, enter judgment for the Nation, and impose a fine.

(b) Finding of Not Responsible. If the Court finds for the respondent, the Court will enter a finding of not responsible and dismiss the case.

Rule 11. Appeal.

Any party may appeal from a final order or judgment under the Tohono O’odham Rules of Appellate Procedure. A respondent who admits responsibility waives the right to an appeal.

Rule 12. Community Service.

(a) Procedure. A civil offense fine may be converted into community service provided:

- (1) The respondent appears at the arraignment and, if applicable, the civil offense hearing.
 - (2) The respondent pleads responsible to the civil offense(s) charged or is found responsible at civil offense hearing.
 - (3) The respondent requests that the Court convert the fine into community service.
- (b) Applicable Minimum Wage.** All community service imposed in lieu of a fine will be calculated using the applicable federal minimum wage in effect when the community service is ordered.

Section History

This Court adopted the Tohono O’odham Rules of Civil Traffic Procedure by Administrative Order 2016-04 on November 2, 2016. Administrative Order 2020-02, adopted December 15, 2020, renamed the Section to Rules of Procedure for Civil Offenses, and amended the Section to include other civil offenses punishable by a set fine. Amended by the 2024 Tohono O’odham Rules of Court. Updated August 5, 2025 by Administrative Order 2025-05. Updated to incorporate changes made by 2024 Administrative Orders and conform formatting, October 21, 2025.