



Information relating to a Non Domestic Rates Summons

Q. Why have I been sent a Summons?

A. We have previously sent you a reminder that has not been paid on time. You have now lost the right to pay by instalments. If we receive the TOTAL AMOUNT DUE as shown on the summons before the Court hearing date no further action will be taken.

Q. I dispute I owe the Rates or I believe that the amount shown is incorrect. What do I do?

A. Contact the Council's Recovery Officer before the Court Hearing.

Q. Do I have to attend the Magistrates' Court on the date shown?

A. No. You are only required to attend if you wish to dispute the granting of the Liability Order. Please note the Magistrates will not consider any proposals for payment. The purpose of the Hearing is to consider the actual liability for payment of the Rates. The Court cannot consider your financial circumstances, your reasons for not paying or disputes about the Rateable Value of your premises. If you choose not to attend, the hearing will continue in your absence and your case will be dealt with in accordance to law.

Q. What happens if I fully pay the sum before the date I am due to appear in court?

A. The Court proceedings can be stopped by payment in full. Payment must be received by the Council before the Hearing.

Q. What happens if I cannot afford to make payment in full?

A. If you cannot pay the TOTAL AMOUNT DUE before the hearing you should contact us. We may be able to discuss making a short-term arrangement but we may not accept your offer of payment if it will take too long to clear the amount owed. If we agree an arrangement, we will still ask the Court to grant a Liability Order (which will incur additional costs of £175.00). This is done to protect the Council's interests. All Costs incurred will be included in an arrangement to pay.

Q. What is a Liability Order?

A. A Liability Order grants the Council permission to recover the debt by various methods, including placing collection in the hands of the Council's bailiffs. There are additional remedies available to the Council, which include bankruptcy, liquidation proceedings and committal to prison.

Q. Will the Magistrates decide how much I can pay?

A. No. The Magistrates will only decide whether or not to grant a Liability Order.

Q. Will this Court action affect my credit rating?

A. As a Liability Order is issued at a Magistrates Court and not a County Court, your name will not appear on records that will prevent you from getting credit. However the Council can start bankruptcy proceedings and this will affect your credit rating.

Q. Why are there identical summonses for the other liable person(s)?

A. Because you are jointly and severally liable to pay the whole amount outstanding with the other person(s) who has received the Summons. The full amount needs to be paid once.

Q. My debts are getting out of control and I cannot pay them all. What can I do?

A. Many organisations can give you advice about debt and money problems. The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) offers free, impartial and independent information and advice across a broad range of areas including money and debt. You can contact the CAB on 01233 626185 or online at www.adviceguide.org.uk or visit www.ashford.gov.uk/debtadvice to find out more.

Q. I have written to you about my Summons and not had a reply.

A. We make every effort to answer letters before the hearing but this is not always possible. Even if you have written to us about your summons, we will still apply for a Liability Order for any amount left unpaid at the date of the hearing.

Q. What if I have any other queries relating to my Non Domestic rates?

A. Contact a Council Advisor who will be able to help you with any questions you may have

HOW TO PAY AND WHERE:

- Direct debit is recommended, please contact (01233) 331111 for details
- Telephone 01233 330625 using your debit or *credit card (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Pay via the internet at www.ashford.gov.uk using your debit or *credit card
- Send cheques and postal orders to Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL. Post dated cheques are not accepted.
- Pay in person at the Civic Centre, Ashford Gateway Plus or Tenterden Gateway with cash, or debit / *credit card.

*1.5% will be added to the payment if you choose to pay by credit card

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES:

The administration of Business Rates for the borough of Ashford is handled by Canterbury City Council as part of a programme for Kent Councils to work together. Contact the Business Rates Team:

- Telephone: 01227 862316
- Fax: 01227 862020
- Email: Businessrates@canterbury.gov.uk
- Write to the Business Rates Officer, Revenues Service, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, TN23 1PL