

IMPORTANT NOTICE- READ THE ENTIRE NOTICE AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE IT

In order to provide a safe place to hold court proceedings, the Philadelphia Municipal Court requires you to take the following actions for your safety and the safety of court personnel:

- 1. ARRIVE TO COURT ON TIME** – The time that you are required to appear in court is set forth on the continuance notice, complaint, or statement of claim that is in the same envelope as this notice. You will need to allow substantial extra time to travel to court, use the elevators to get to the sixth floor, pass through security, and wash your hands before proceeding to the courtroom. Arrive at the courthouse at least fifteen minutes before the time you need to be in the courtroom. It is estimated that you will be in court for an hour.
- 2. WEAR A MASK** – You will not be admitted into the building in which the court is located unless you are wearing a mask. The mask does not need to be a surgical mask or N-95 respirator. Rather, it should be a non-surgical mask (a procedure mask) or a cloth face covering fashioned from household items. There are many instructional sites available to show you how to make such a mask.
- 3. YOU RISK HAVING A DEFAULT JUDGMENT BEING ENTERED AGAINST YOU IF YOU ARRIVE LATE FOR A HEARING. AGAIN, REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE AT RISK OF HAVING A DEFAULT JUDGMENT ENTERED AGAINST YOU IF YOU DO NOT APPEAR FOR A HEARING BECAUSE YOU WERE NOT WEARING A MASK.**
- 4. BE PREPARED TO PROCEED TO TRIAL** – Bring copies of all documents or photographs that you want to use during mediation, negotiation and trial with you to the courtroom. **The court, mediators and others will not look at any documents or photographs on your phone.** Bring at least three separate sets of printed documents or photographs for yourself, the court, and for the opposing party.
- 5. SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL BE ENFORCED** – While in court you are expected to maintain a distance of at least six feet from other people.
- 6. AS BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, THE COURT DOES NOT HAVE SEPARATE PLAY SPACES FOR CHILDREN. IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN AND OTHERS IN COURT, PLEASE DO NOT BRING THEM TO COURT IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. PLEASE TRY TO ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO WATCH YOUR CHILDREN WHILE YOU ARE AT COURT.**
- 7. RIGHT TO A LAWYER** – The Philadelphia Municipal Court was established to provide an expeditious procedure in which it is not necessary for the litigants to obtain a lawyer. Although not required, you may be represented by a lawyer. If you are a tenant, you may be eligible to have a lawyer represent you free of charge. See paragraph 8 below. If you are represented by a lawyer, the lawyer should be with you when you come to court. **Do not assume that the case will be continued for you to retain a lawyer.**
- 8. LEGAL ASSISTANCE AND REPRESENTATION FOR TENANTS** – You may be entitled to free legal assistance and representation through the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Program by calling 267-443-2500. You should call as soon as possible so that you are able to meet with your lawyer and prepare your case as soon as possible before trial. The following agencies may also be of assistance to you:
 - Tenant Legal Aid Referral Line – (267) 443-2500
 - Community Legal Services – (215) 227-2400
 - SeniorLaw Center – (215) 988-1242
 - Tenant Union Representative Network (TURN) – (215) 940-3900
 - AIDS Law Project – (215) 587-9377
 - Legal Clinic for the Disabled – (215) 587-3350
 - Philadelphia Bar Association Lawyer Referral and Information Service – (215) 238-6333
- 9. PHA TENANTS** – At least one week before your trial, please contact your property manager or supervisor to determine (1) if your case can be resolved without the need for you to come to court and (2) if you are eligible for a rent adjustment because you have had a change in income.
- 10. If you have any questions for the court, please call (215) 686-2910.**