

# How to Write a Letter to Contest a Parking Ticket

If you receive a traffic ticket, you can appeal the ticket by writing a letter. You may also be able to appeal by phone or email, but a written appeal can be as long as you want it to be and affords you the opportunity to attach supporting...

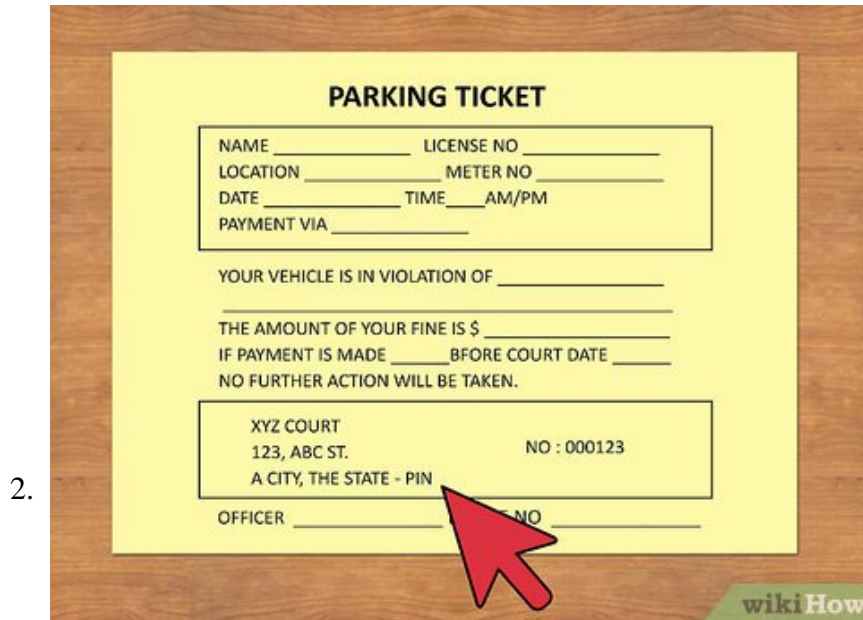
Part 1 of 3:

## Preparing to Write Your Letter

1.



**Take photographs of the scene.** When you receive a parking ticket that you suspect is unwarranted, take photographs of the scene to use as evidence in your appeal letter. Take pictures of your car parked in the location where you received the ticket. Also take pictures of any relevant signs, markings on the road or curb, or parking meter. You will attach these photos to your letter.<sup>[3]</sup>



**Locate the address.** On the ticket you received, you may find instructions on how to appeal the ticket. This address will most likely be the court clerk's office or the agency that issued the ticket. The address may be a specialized department for appeals or correspondence.

1. If there is no address on your ticket, contact the court clerk in your county and ask where to direct your appeal letter.



**Review the law.** Your ticket will state what vehicle code section or sections you have been charged with violating. Search online for your state's vehicle code and look up the specific violation sections relevant to your case. From the text, you should be able to determine whether you violated the law, or whether the citing officer misinterpreted the law or the facts of the situation.

## Writing Your Letter

**State the facts**

On November 11, 2015, at 5:50pm, I parked in a metered space in front of the grocery store at the intersection of 12th and G street. I paid for fifteen minutes before going into the grocery store. At 6:00pm, I returned to my vehicle. Although there should have been 5 minutes left on the meter, the meter read zero, and an officer was writing me a ticket. I tried to explain to the officer that the meter was incorrect, but he ignored me.

1.

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**State the facts.** Begin the body of your letter by briefly and clearly recounting the facts of the incident. To make your letter easy for the reader to understand, keep your facts in chronological order. Include details about when you arrived, where and how you parked your vehicle, and when you returned.

1. Mind your tone as you write. Although you may be feeling angry or frustrated, keep those emotions out of your letter. You may be tempted to use sarcasm or emotional language, but you should endeavor to sound logical and clearheaded. Do not give the reader a reason to assume that your emotions have clouded your recollection of the facts.
2. For example: 'On November 11, 2015, at 5:50pm, I parked in a metered space in front of the grocery store at the intersection of 12th and G street. I paid for fifteen minutes before going into the grocery store. At 6:00pm, I returned to my vehicle. Although there should have been 5 minutes left on the meter, the meter read zero, and an officer was writing me a ticket. I tried to explain to the officer that the meter was incorrect, but he ignored me.'

### Explain why you should not have received the ticket

I should not have received a ticket because I paid for fifteen minutes of parking time and returned to my vehicle after only ten minutes had passed. The meter must have malfunctioned, because it failed to accurately monitor my parking time.

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**Explain why you should not have received the ticket.** The second portion of your letter should explain why you did not deserve the ticket you received. This is the place to explain how the officer misinterpreted the law or the circumstances of the incident, or if you believe you had a valid excuse for violating the law, such as breaking down in a loading zone and being unable to move your vehicle.

1. Again, keep your tone professional as you make your explanation. Even if the ticketing officer was mistaken in writing your ticket, do not insult the officer in your letter.
2. For example: 'I should not have received a ticket because I paid for fifteen minutes of parking time and returned to my vehicle after only ten minutes had passed. The meter must have malfunctioned, because it failed to accurately monitor my parking time.'

### Make a request

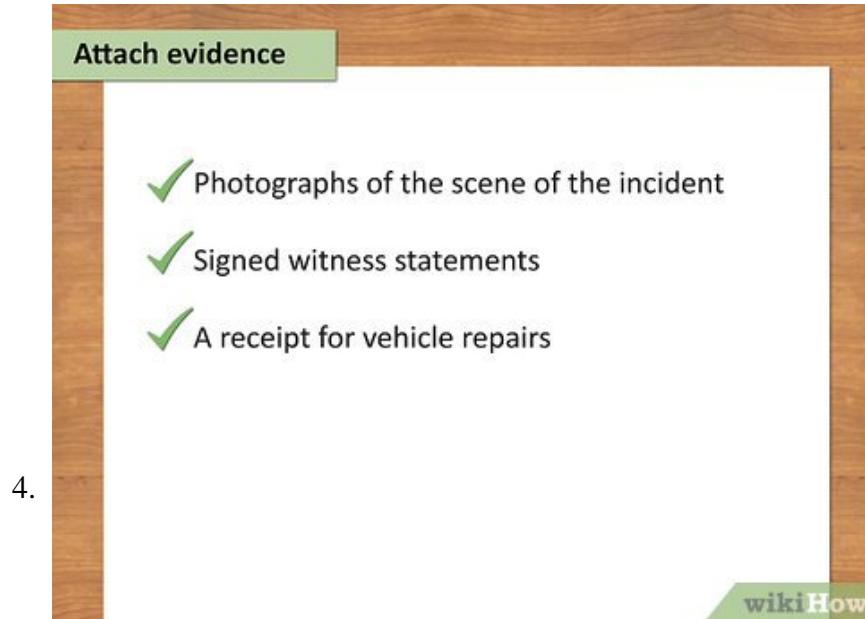
As a responsible citizen who has always ensured that no traffic rules and regulations are broken, I feel that the parking ticket issued to me was a mistake. I would truly appreciate it if the ticket is repealed and the fine waived.

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**Make a request.** Conclude your letter by telling the reader what you would like him or her to do. In this case, you should ask the reader to repeal the ticket and waive the fine.<sup>[4]</sup>

1. If you have not yet paid the fine, also ask the reader to extend the due date of your fine until after your appeal has been addressed.<sup>[5]</sup>



**Attach evidence.** Include any evidence that might help prove your claim that the ticket is invalid. Your evidence can be any of the following:

1. Photographs of the scene of the incident;
2. Signed witness statements from anyone who confirm what you have written (such as a passenger who can verify that you did not park illegally); or
3. A receipt for vehicle repairs (if you received a ticket as a result of your vehicle being disabled and you not being able to remove it).<sup>[6]</sup>

Part 3 of 3:

## Submitting Your Letter

1.



**Send your letter via certified mail.** Send your appeal letter via certified mail and request a return receipt. This way, you can verify that your letter was actually delivered, and you will receive a return receipt proving that you sent the letter prior to any deadline to submit an appeal.

2.



**Call the clerk to confirm.** If you do not get a response from the clerk or citing agency within a few days, call the office to confirm that they received your letter. If the office did not receive your letter, mention that you have a return receipt that states when your letter was delivered. Ask the office when you can expect a response.



3.

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**Attend a hearing if necessary.** The clerk or agency may schedule a hearing to resolve your case.<sup>[7]</sup> On the date of the hearing, arrive early, dress professionally, and wait for your case to be called. Be prepared to state the facts as clearly and concisely as you did in your letter, and bring copies of any evidence you submitted. The judge will ask you to clarify any details about your position before making a decision.

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