

Before visiting the Magistrate, be sure to review the following:

1. Have name, address, and date of birth of the suspect/defendant.
2. Have a police report. Some Magistrates will require one.
3. Have witnesses and evidence with you.
4. If under 18, have a parent, legal guardian (with court papers), or an officer.
5. If handicapped or you need assistance, have an officer, family member, or friend to fill out paperwork.
6. If seeking unauthorized use of motor vehicle charge, wait 24 hours from filing police report.
7. If you have a protective order, bring a copy for the Magistrate.
8. If you have bloody injuries, seek medical attention first and have it bandaged.
9. The Magistrates' Office generally issues misdemeanor charges for citizens. Generally, felony charges are presented by sworn law enforcement officers.
10. If probable cause is found, the Magistrate will issue either a summons, warrant for arrest, or a referral to dispute settlement.
11. If the Magistrate decides nothing will be issued, there is no appeal procedure.
12. Please be patient and prepared.

See the reverse side for additional details.



Citizens should consider the following and/or have the following information readily available when seeking criminal process in Mecklenburg County:

1. **The Magistrate will need the name, address, date of birth or approximate age of the suspect/defendant.** If the suspect/defendant is a teenager, the Magistrate will require the actual date of birth.
2. **Most Magistrates will require that a police report has been filed and that the citizen have a copy of the police report.** At the very least, the citizen should provide the police report number. The officer will have given the citizen a card that includes the report number, the division, and the officer's name.
3. **Bring any witnesses or other evidence with you.** It is helpful if the witnesses' statement is also attached to the police report. The additional evidence often includes writings, text messages, voicemails, torn clothing, video, etc. It helps if the additional evidence was listed in the report. Sometimes the officer will have retained this additional evidence.
4. **If the citizen/victim is a minor (under 18), bring parent, legal guardian (with court documentation), or an officer to seek charges on his/her behalf.** Without at least one of these individuals, Magistrates will be unable to hear a case that has a minor as a victim.
5. **If the citizen is handicapped or needs assistance with filling out paperwork, please be advised the Magistrate, as a judicial official, is unable to assist.** Please ask a law enforcement officer to follow up and/or seek the charge(s) on your behalf. Alternatively, you may bring someone with you to assist with filling out the paperwork. However, you will need to sign the documents yourself.
6. **If seeking an unauthorized use of motor vehicle charge, wait 24 hours from the filing of the police report to seek charges.** If the car has not been returned, bring the police report and any other information or documentation with you to the Magistrates' Office.
7. **If domestic violence charges are sought and there is a valid protective order, bring a copy of the signed protective order.** It should have the judge's signature and the Clerk's seal. If it has been altered in anyway, the Magistrate will not accept the copy.
8. **If the citizen/victim has any bloody injuries, these must be completely dressed and bandaged before appearing at the Magistrates' Office.** Uncovered wounds are a public safety hazard and the Magistrate reserves the right to refuse service to any such individuals.
9. **The Magistrates' Office generally issues misdemeanor charges for citizens. Generally, felony charges are presented by sworn law enforcement officers.** When a police report is filed, the report will show if it is a misdemeanor or felony.
10. **If probable cause is found, there are several options available to the Magistrate.** They are: dispute settlement, summons, or warrant for arrest.
11. **If there is a finding of "no probable cause", then the case has ended.** There is no appeal procedure. Returning before another Magistrate is not encouraged.
12. **The Mecklenburg County Magistrates' Office serves all of Mecklenburg County and encourages all who appear at the Public Window to be patient and prepared.**

For more information, please visit the Criminal Justice Services website at:
www.charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/CriminalJusticeServices/Pages/CRC.aspx

