

# North Carolina Court Forms: Opportunities for Improvement

Stakeholders participating in the North Carolina Court Appearance Project recommended simplifying state forms to make them more accessible, practical, and easy to read. Here are some suggestions on how to do that for the state's summons & citation forms.

## Criminal Summons Form

**A**

File No.	Law Enforcement Case No.	LID No.
<b>CRIMINAL SUMMONS</b>		
THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA VS.		
Name And Address Of Defendant		
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA In The General Court Of Justice County District Court Division		
OFFENSE(S) (see AOC-CR-113 Continuation(s) for charging text)		
Count No.	Offense	Offense In Violation Of G.S.
		Offense Code
Race	Sex	Date Of Birth
		Age
Name Of Defendant's Employer		
Date Of Offense		
<input type="checkbox"/> Misdemeanor Offense Which Requires Fingerprinting Per Fingerprint Plan		
Complainant Name (and address, if Complainant is an officer)		
Witness Information		

**B**

TO THE DEFENDANT:  
I, the undersigned, find that there is probable cause to believe that on or about the date of offense shown and in the county named above you unlawfully, willfully, and feloniously did commit the offense(s) set forth above and on the attached AOC-CR-113 Continuation(s), which is (are) incorporated by reference. This act(s) was in violation of the law referred to in this Criminal Summons. This Criminal Summons is issued upon information furnished under oath by the complainant listed. You are ORDERED to appear before the Court at the location, date and time indicated below to answer to the charge(s). If you fail to appear, an order for your arrest may be issued and/or you may be held in CONTEMPT OF COURT. Arrest and/or contempt for failure to appear is in addition to any sentence or penalty which may be imposed for the offense(s) charged.  
 The undersigned finds the following cause to set a court date more than one month from the issue of this summons:

**C**

Date Issued	Name Of Issuing Official	Signature	<input type="checkbox"/> Magistrate <input type="checkbox"/> Deputy CSC <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant CSC <input type="checkbox"/> Clerk Of Superior Court
			<input type="checkbox"/> District Court Judge <input type="checkbox"/> Superior Court Judge
Location Of Court	Court Date	Court Time	<input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM
<b>WAIVER OF PROBABLE CAUSE HEARING</b>			
The undersigned defendant, with the consent of his/her attorney, waives the right to a probable cause hearing.			
Date Waived	Signature Of Defendant	Name Of Attorney	Signature Of Attorney

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### A. Make Forms Shorter

This is only the first page; the full form is 10 pages long. Consider ways to make forms shorter.

### B. Make Consequences Clear

Consequences for missing court are at the end of this paragraph, in small print, using legal terms. Including an eye-catching section that clearly explains consequences for missing court can help people understand their obligations.

### C. Highlight Court Appearance Information

Moving court appearance information to the top of the form can help make sure people don't miss it.

### D. Put All Appearance Information in One Section

While court appearance information is at the top of this form, it's separated from the section about consequences. Putting all appearance-related information in one section, and using a different color or header to highlight it, can be helpful.

## Criminal Citation Form

**D**

NORTH CAROLINA UNIFORM CITATION - DEFENDANT'S COPY - Side One

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA County District Court Citation No. \_\_\_\_\_

TO THE DEFENDANT NAMED BELOW: You have been charged with the misdemeanor(s) or infraction(s) specified below. Read this Citation carefully.

<b>YOUR COURT DATE AND LOCATION</b>						
Court Day Of Week	Date	Appear In Court	Court Location	Courtroom	Interpreter	

THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA VS.

Name Of Defendant	Address	City	State	Zip
Drivers License No.	State	Source	CDL	Class
Race	Sex	Date Of Birth	Age	Social Security No.

WHAT YOU ARE CHARGED WITH

See Side Two for the charge(s) against you in this Citation.

<b>YOUR VEHICLE</b>						
Vehicle License No.	State	Trailer Type	CMV	Vehicle Type	Make	Year
Haz. Mat.						

<b>OTHER INFORMATION</b>						
Area	Weather	Visibility	Traffic	Accident	Speed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Injury or Serious Injury	SHP Code	On Highway No./Street				
<input type="checkbox"/> Passenger(s) Under 18						
In Vicinity/City Of		At/Near Intersection				

<b>CHARGING OFFICER INFORMATION</b>						
Date	Signature Of Officer	No.	Law Enforcement Agency	Troop/Squad	District/Zone	

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

You must appear in District Court on the court date, time, and location shown above. If this is a speeding offense, you may be able to dispose of it online without appearing in court at [OnlineServices.NCCourts.org](https://www.nccourts.org), but if you do not dispose of the offense online prior to your court date, you must appear in court.

- If you fail to appear and you did not post a cash bond, criminal process may be issued against you and you may be arrested for your failure to appear, your drivers license may be revoked, and certain fees may be assessed along with all other costs.
- If you fail to appear and you did post a cash bond, criminal process may be issued against you and you may be arrested for your failure to appear, certain fees may be assessed along with all other costs, the cash bond will be forfeited and your failure to appear will be treated as a conviction resulting in points against your driving and insurance records or possible license revocation, and the forfeiture of your cash bond will not dispose of the charge(s) against you in court.
- If you have any questions regarding your legal rights and obligations, consult a licensed attorney.

## Want An Example of Redesigned Forms?

ideas42 helped stakeholders redesign forms to make court appearance information more accessible. See their redesigned forms for Harris County, TX, [here](#) and for New York City [here](#).