



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRIALS AND HEARINGS

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**THE NYC OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRIALS AND HEARINGS (“OATH”)
ANNOUNCES TEXT MESSAGE REMINDER OPTION FOR ALL RECIPIENTS OF
CIVIL SUMMONSES THAT HAVE SCHEDULED HEARINGS AT OATH**

OATH’s text message reminders will increase participation in the hearing process and reduce failure to appear rates by helping New Yorkers understand how to respond to their summons and ensuring they are notified about important deadlines and the actions they need to take in order to avoid higher penalties.

New York, NY – The City of New York’s Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) today announced that respondents with any type of summons that is filed at OATH’s Hearings Division will be able to opt-in to get text message reminders about their case. Once a respondent opts-in to receive alerts, they will be prompted to enter their summons number so that OATH can send them case-specific information and reminders related to the real-time status of their case.

“By using modern technology and innovation, OATH aims to demystify the hearing process by providing respondents with precise instructions in plain language so that they understand how to proceed when they receive a summons from a City enforcement agency,” said **Joni Kletter, OATH Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge**. “Every person who receives a summons should know that OATH’s goal is to make it as convenient as possible for them to respond to that summons and direct text messages that explain our hearing process, the consequences for not responding to summonses, and remind people of important deadlines is just one way OATH is doing that.”

“Since day one, the Mayor has focused on promoting transparency throughout New York City. OATH’s text message reminder system is another example of how this Administration’s focus on these matters has never wavered,” said **Counsel to the Mayor, Kapil Longani**. “I have no doubt that this system will provide New Yorkers with even more clarity and convenience in navigating the summons process, while helping them to avoid higher penalties.”

OATH did not close during the COVID-19 outbreak; instead it worked diligently to move all operations to function remotely. OATH has instituted remote capabilities for all its hearings, trials, Help Center sessions for self-represented litigants, appeals, mediations and outreach events. Since going remote in mid-March, OATH has held more than 25,000 telephonic hearings, with evidence submitted via email. Additionally, OATH has issued approximately 3,500 hearing decisions from written defenses submitted to OATH online or by regular mail. In addition, OATH's Help Center has held more than 7,100 remote help sessions with respondents prior to their hearing.

Since OATH is currently not holding hearings in person, the text messages that will be sent to respondents who opt-in for this service will not only act as reminders that there is an upcoming hearing date but will also serve the added benefit of giving respondents specific instructions in plain language letting them know how to properly respond to their summons remotely, which is a convenient and safe process, but a new process that many respondents may not be used to. The text messages will also include URL links to the OATH website to make it as easy as possible for people to actively follow the instructions that they are given in the text message.

Alerts will be sent to respondents seven days before the scheduled hearing, then again three days before the hearing and then finally the respondent will get an alert the day before the scheduled hearing. Respondents will also receive a text message if they miss their hearing that explains what steps they should immediately take so that they do not miss any legal deadlines associated with requesting a new hearing after failing to appear.

New Yorkers who have received summonses from City enforcement agencies that want to opt-in for text message reminders can text *OATHreminder* to 474747 and follow the prompts to enter their summons number. Respondents with multiple summonses should opt-in the same way for each individual summons to ensure that the information they receive is case-specific and accurate. Over time, the City's enforcement agencies will add the instructions for opting-in to receive text message reminders to the summons form itself.

Studies have shown that text message reminders increase participation in the hearing process and reduce the rate of people who fail to appear or default.

OATH hopes that its text messaging system builds trust with the general public by demonstrating that it is a modern administrative law court that is accessible and a place that is easy for the public to navigate and where people feel the goal is for justice to be served.

About OATH

OATH is the independent administrative law court where nearly all City enforcement agencies file their summonses for hearings. The agencies that file summonses at OATH for hearings include the Departments of Sanitation, Buildings, Health, Parks, Environmental Protection, Consumer and Worker Protection, the Taxi and Limousine Commission, Fire Department and New York Police Department, among others. OATH, however, does not conduct parking ticket hearings or hearings on alleged red light or speed camera violations.

In Fiscal Year 2019, OATH received more than 837,000 summonses from the City's various enforcement agencies. During that time, 47% of summonses that were fought at OATH hearings were dismissed by OATH Hearing Officers.



NEVER MISS A HEARING AGAIN!

Opt-in for text message reminders by
texting "OATHReminder" to 474747

You will then be prompted to enter the summons
number for the summons that you want reminders for.

