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Help and advice if you have received a business rates summons

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If you do not pay or you are unable to keep up to date with your instalments then we may ask Blackpool magistrates court to serve a court summons on you.

When the court serve a summons a cost of £57.50 is added to your Business Rates account. You must pay the full amount shown on your summons, including the costs before the hearing date.

If the full amount remains unpaid on the day of the hearing then we will ask the magistrates to grant a liability order against you. This is a court order which allows us more powers to recover the amount you owe.

If you do not dispute the summons

If you do **not** dispute the summons then you do **not** need to attend the hearing, as a liability order will be granted in your absence. However, you will still need to take some action:

- Pay the outstanding amount on the summons. If you pay the full amount shown on the summons, including costs, then we will withdraw our action with the court. [You can make online payments via BACS, debit or credit card or via PayPal](#)
- Accept the payment [proposal](#) as shown on the front of the summons
- Submit an alternative payment plan to pay the amount you owe over a different timescale or frequency (for example weekly or fortnightly). [You can submit an alternative payment plan online](#)

If you dispute the summons

If you dispute the court summons then you have the right to attend the hearing and offer evidence. However, you should only attend if you have a legal defence to put to the magistrates

If you attend to the hearing the magistrate will ask if you have a valid legal defence to stop the liability order being granted. If you do not have a legal defence then the liability order will be granted.

Invalid defences

The following are **not** valid defences against the issue of a liability order:

- You think you should not have to pay
- You cannot afford to pay
- You have lodged a check or challenge to your rateable value with the Valuation Office Agency
- You have an outstanding appeal to be heard by the valuation tribunal






Attending the hearing

In person hearings at the magistrates court have been suspended indefinitely. This means you can not attend the court in person and all hearings will take place via telephone link. If you dispute the court summons then you will need to complete a pre-hearing assessment with the council.

If, ultimately, despite our best efforts, we are unable to resolve your query and you wish to attend a court hearing then you will be invited to do so. We will pass your details on to the court who will contact you separately to arrange a telephone conference call via

Pre-hearing assessment

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