Things to look for on your ticket:

- Is everything written clearly?
  (Your name, your license number, type of license, any everything else on the ticket should be legible and accurate.)

- Did the officer indicate that he wants to be at the hearing?
  (If the officer has checked this box, it means he/she wants to testify at your hearing. You may have to come back another day for the officer’s testimony.)

- Is the correct regulation marked off?
  (Example: You have been charged under “food vendor” regulations, but you are actually a general vendor.)

- Is the Place of Occurrence correct?
  (The address written on the ticket must be correct.)

- Do the “Details of Violation” match the regulation you are being ticketed for?
  (Read carefully because often there are errors. For example, maybe the ticket says you were “set up” but not that you were “vending.” Or, the ticket might accuse you of vending on a “prohibited street,” which is different from a “restricted street.”)

- Did the officer sign the ticket?
  (If not, the ticket must be dismissed. Ask the officer for his name and badge number for your records.)

If the answer is NO to any of these questions, you MAY be able to have the ticket dismissed. Make sure you tell the judge about it.

Sample E. C. B. Ticket

This is information regarding the most common violations for (white license) general vendors and food vendors. The laws are similar, but more complicated, for artists, book vendors, and disabled veteran vendors. Call us with any questions.

GV = general vendors  FV = food vendors

Distance & Measurement Requirements: If you get a ticket for violating these distance or measurement requirements, tell the judge if the officer did not measure (they usually don’t) and take a photo the same day showing you taking the measurement with a tape measure.

- Crosswalks & Corners:
  You must be at least 10 feet from a crosswalk or corner. General vendors must measure from the corner (the property line extended). Food vendors must measure from the crosswalk. GV 20-465(e), FV 17-315(e).

- Store Entrances:
  Your cart or table must be at least 20 feet from nearest entranceway to any building or store. If the door permanently closed due to renovations, this rule does not apply. The 20 foot requirement is measured diagonally from the center of the entrance to the closest corner of the vending table or cart. GV 20-465(d), FV 17-315(e).

- Curbs:
  You must “abut the curb,” which means your table or cart must be touching it. The ECB has interpreted this to mean that you must be within 18 inches of the curb. GV 20-465(a), FV 17-315(a).

- Fire Hydrants:
  As long as you are not touching the fire hydrant or other street furniture, you are legal. GV 20-465(c), FV 17-315(b). This is a frequent mistake on tickets. Officers confuse this rule with another rule that says you cannot be “in the roadway within 15 feet of a fire hydrant,” but that section applies only to vendors in the road itself, not those on the sidewalk. GV 2-304(c).

- Bus Stops:
  General and food vendors cannot vend “within any bus stop.” FV 17-315(e), GV 20-465(e). The vending laws do not define what a “bus stop” is or how far you must be from a bus stop sign.

- Ventilation Grates:
  General vendors cannot vend on top of a ventilation grate, but food vendors can. GV 20-465(m).

- Subway Entrances:
  You must be at least 10 feet from the entrance. GV 20-465(e), FV 17-315(e).

- Parks:
  Vending is not allowed in areas under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks, which includes the area surrounding the park, unless you have an additional permit for that particular park. GV 20-465(e), FV 17-315(i).

- Sidewalk Width:
  The sidewalk must be 12 feet wide before your cart or table is placed there. This does not require 12 feet between your cart or table and the building, GV 20-465(a), FV 17-315(a).

- Display Size:
  The total vending area you are allowed to use is 8 feet by 3 feet. Any boxes or ice chests must be stored under your table or cart. Although the food vending regulations say that all items must be “kept in or under the vending vehicle or push cart,” ECB usually makes an exception for sodas and water kept on top of the cart. GV 20-465(b), FV 17-315(c).

Street Restrictions:

- Take note of whether the street you were on is restricted or prohibited. These regulations depend on what you are selling and when you are selling it. Check the appropriate list, available at our office or 42 Broadway. If you are not sure, give us a call.

- Special note for artists and book vendors: if a Disabled Veteran Vendor is vending on a restricted street, you may sell there also. (continued on back panel)
Am I being targeted?

Police officers can give you tickets, but they cannot speak to you in a disrespectful manner, use bad language, or threaten to take your merchandise. If you experience police harassment, call the Civilian Complaint Review Board at 1-800-341-2272, or call the Street Vendor Project and we will help you file a complaint.

Additionally, store owners do not have the right to make you leave a public sidewalk or threaten you if you do not. If a store owner is harassing you, call the Street Vendor Project for advice and help.

What if my merchandise is taken?

Some violations allow the police to take your property, and sometimes the police will take your property even though it is illegal for them to do so. If your property is taken, you should:

1) ask the judge for a same-day judgment, called an “expedited decision”
2) wait for a copy of the judgment and, if you are found guilty pay the fine (keep the receipt)
3) take the judgment papers to 100 Church Street (NYC Law Dept.) to get a release
4) bring the release to the precinct that took your property

Some violations allow the police to take your property, and sometimes the police will take your property even though it is illegal for them to do so. If your property is taken, you should:

- ask the judge for a same-day judgment, called an “expedited decision”
- wait for a copy of the judgment and, if you are found guilty pay the fine (keep the receipt)
- take the judgment papers to 100 Church Street (NYC Law Dept.) to get a release
- bring the release to the precinct that took your property

Selling without a license or permit and selling on a prohibited street can result in having your merchandise or pushcart taken away for good. Be very careful when answering this type of ticket, or call us for help.

See FV 17-321( c) and 17-322, GV 20-468 and GV 20-469.

Warning: Forfeitable Offenses

Selling without a license or permit and selling on a prohibited street can result in having your merchandise or pushcart taken away for good. Be very careful when answering this type of ticket, or call us for help.

See FV 17-321( c) and 17-322, GV 20-468 and GV 20-469.

Important Notice

This brochure was written and published by the Urban Justice Center Street Vendor Project and is meant to be used as an informational guide for answering your ticket. It is most definitely not a publication of the City of New York. Regulations sometimes change, so call us for the latest information.

Street Vendor Project

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The Street Vendor Project of the Urban Justice Center was founded in October 2001 to provide legal representation, advocacy and grassroots organizing support to street vendors of all kinds in New York City.

individual rights • social change