

A civil citation separates common youth misbehaviors and mistakes from more serious offenses, such as violent misdemeanors and felonies.

Today, common youth misbehaviors in the 21st Century result in dramatically harsher consequences than previous generations experienced. Getting into a fight where no one is injured or stealing a library book previously resulted in a trip to the principal's office. In the 21st Century, the student often gets arrested and may have a record for life.

Civil Citations offer youth who make a mistake an alternative to arrest that does not leave a juvenile record accessible by the public. The youth must take responsibility for the mistake and admit wrongdoing. The youth is required to complete community service hours, and other sanctions that may include letters of apology, counseling and making restitution to the victim.

**For more information about
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Civil Citation Website

<http://www.djj.state.fl.us/partners/our-approach/florida-civil-citation>

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NO PRINT 4 LIFE
Youth misbehavior shouldn't be a misdemeanor.



What is Civil Citation?

Rather than arresting a youth who is involved in common misbehavior, the Civil Citation offers early intervention, counseling, education and other appropriate community interventions without the harshness, baggage and expense of an arrest. The Civil Citation Initiative seeks to identify and address the underlying cause of misconduct to ensure youth are held accountable for their actions with disciplinary action that is most likely to discourage future offenses.

Civil citations are an alternate to arrest for first-time misdemeanor offenses, which are often common youth misbehavior. Most youth are first-time/one-time offenders who used poor judgment and commit offenses like shoplifting something inexpensive or getting into a shoving match. Civil citations offer swift consequences and accountability for these youth, without fettering them with a record. There are some youth, however, who are at risk to re-offend or even start a life-long pattern of crime. In these instances, youth are provided with various resources such as – mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, anger management and other services – to get them back on the right path.

Who is eligible for a civil citation?

In Florida, each community determines civil citation criteria and eligibility requirements vary from county to county. These are common offenses eligible for civil citation for youth under 18:

- Theft (under \$300)
- Criminal mischief (under \$1,000)
- Trespassing
- Simple assault/battery
- Violation of city/county ordinances
- Disorderly conduct
- Disruption of a school event
- Affray
- Simple possession of alcohol (*youth not intoxicated*)
- Simple possession of marijuana (small amount)

Also, parent or/guardian consent is required for civil citation. In many communities, law enforcement officers have the discretion of issuing a civil citation or arresting the youth.

Who is ineligible for a civil citation?

Youth who commit a serious misdemeanor or a felony or have a prior offenses are not eligible.

What are the requirements for a civil citation?

The youth and parent/guardian must sign the civil citation. The youth must do community service within a short time of agreeing to civil citation. The youth must complete other sanctions which may include restitution or counseling.

What happens if a juvenile does not abide by the rules?

If a youth fails to successfully complete sanctions, the youth will be processed through the formal juvenile justice system. Non-participation could result in the youth being arrested and prosecuted.

What is the impact on the juvenile's record?

The youth that successfully complete sanctions will have no arrest record on a state level.

How long does a youth have to complete the program?

Time frames vary by communities, but a common time frame in Florida is 90 days, excluding any counseling that may continue after the sanctions are completed.

Can a juvenile and parent or guardian refuse to participate in civil citation?

Civil citation is voluntary, and both the youth and parent or guardian must agree to participate and abide by the rules of the civil citation. If a youth will likely be arrested and prosecuted.

Why should a juvenile and parent or guardian choose to participate in civil citation?

Youth who choose not to participate are arrested. If a youth is arrested, his/her record can be accessed by the public and will show an arrest. An arrest record can limit future job options, such as working in the military, as a caretaker, teacher, or nurse, etc.

