

## Fines and Domestic Violence

Your Rights and Responsibilities

### What's in this Factsheet

- I have lots of fines, I can't pay them and feed me and the kids - what can I do?
- I have lost my licence because of my fines- can I get it back?
- Is there anyone who can help me sort out my fines?

To contact the Fines Enforcement Registry (FER) call:  
1300 650 325 or [www.courts.dotag.wa.gov.au/P/pay\\_fines\\_infringements.aspx](http://www.courts.dotag.wa.gov.au/P/pay_fines_infringements.aspx)

Penalty notices, infringements and Court fines are all referred to the FER. If you receive an infringement notice (such as a parking ticket) and have not paid it, this is referred to FER and becomes a court order with further fees added to the original amount.

You have 28 days to pay a fine (any type) before it becomes enforceable and starts incurring late fees. If fines are unpaid: this can result in having to serve time in prison to pay them off or having a bailiff attend at your property to take your things to cover the cost of your fines.

### I have lots of fines, I can't pay them and feed me and the kids - what can I do?

- The first thing to do is to find out how many unpaid fines you have.
- To check what unpaid fines you have:
  - contact the FER; and
  - if you have court fines, contact the Court Registry of your local court.
- The next thing to do is to look at your budget - can you manage to pay the fines?
- If you can pay off the fines - contact the FER or the Court Registry and make arrangements to pay off the fines.
- If you can't pay off the fines - you are struggling to meet your living costs such as housing, food, medicines and clothing, there are ways to deal with the fines:
  - you can arrange to pay by instalments by contacting the FER or the Court Registry;
  - if you don't have the capacity to pay and/or do not have any assets (goods or property) to be seized and sold, you will be served with an order to attend for a Work and Development Order (community service) for default on a court fine. You can also request to convert your court fines to community work through the FER. Each \$300 that is unpaid will be converted to 6 hours of community service.

### I have lost my licence because of my fines - can I get my licence back?

- Firstly, you cannot drive any vehicle while your licence is suspended; it is a serious offence which will incur further penalties and could also mean that in the case of an accident, you may not be covered by insurance.
- Restrictions can be lifted immediately if you pay all the enforcement orders in full.
- But if you don't have the money to do this, you should enter a "time to pay plan" with the FER
  - you need to contact the office on 1300 650 325

- If you enter a “time to pay plan”, your suspension will be lifted once an initial deposit has been paid.

But sometimes you need the restrictions on your licence lifted much quicker because of special circumstances such as work, family or medical commitments. You can make an application to the Fines Enforcement Registry to not impose (if your driver’s license is due to be suspended), or to lift a licence suspension order. Generally for the restrictions to be lifted you will need to enter into a strict “time to pay plan” and evidence showing why you need your licence back urgently e.g. doctor’s reports, a letter from your employer to the FER.

Remember there are serious penalties, including going to jail if you drive your car while your licence is suspended.

#### Is there anyone who can help me sort out my fines?

- Often you are very stressed and find it difficult to let government agencies, such as the FER, know what is happening.
- Financial Counsellors offer a free service - they can help you plan your finances. In relation to your fine/s they can negotiate with the FER or they can help you arrange with Centrepay\* for payments to be made from your pension or benefit.
- To contact Financial Counsellors call 1800 007 007 for information and referral.
- You may also want to talk your support worker, Legal Aid or someone at your local community legal centre for advice, or to see if they can contact the FER for you.
- If you need the contact details for your local community legal centre or legal aid office, contact:

For community legal centres (08) 9221 9322 or go to [www.communitylaw.net](http://www.communitylaw.net)  
For Legal Aid call 1300 650 579 or go to [www.legalaid.wa.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.wa.gov.au)

- Centrepay is a free direct bill-paying service offered to customers receiving payments from Centrelink.

Always remember there are charities and organisations in your area that offer emergency relief. For example, you can get vouchers to help with electricity bills, gas bills, phone bills and buying food. Talk to your support worker or your local council for the names of these organisations.