



City of Ottawa's Collection Process and Use of Private Debt Collection Agencies FAQ

Has the City sold its debt to collection agencies?

No, the City refers the debt to collection agencies for recovery.

Does any of the money from the tickets and late fines return to the City and where does it go?

The majority of the paid debt is sent back to the City.

Collection agencies generally work on a commission basis and therefore retain a percentage. Any City revenue surpluses or deficits are reported through the annual disposition report tabled at Committee and Council in April of each year.

Why is the City collecting from people back to 2003?

The City has been referring debt to private debt collections agencies for over 20 years. Fines are referred to collection agencies 5-6 months after the City has made all efforts to collect the outstanding balance. Therefore, many attempts to recover longstanding debts have been made through multiple collections agencies over the years. A conviction for a set fine under the POA Act has no statute of limitations, as such the City continues its efforts to collect on these outstanding fines.

Which types of tickets are the focus of this collection effort?

All fines issued under the Provincial Offences Act can be referred to a collection agency. Referral to collection agencies is part of the normal collections process the City has been following for over 20 years.

How are people being notified of the collections?

Please refer to the memorandum which outlines the process. It is the responsibility of the public to resolve their tickets or bill promptly and update their contact information with the Provincial Offences Courts if they have outstanding convictions and the City.

What happens if someone is now living outside of Ottawa - how would the money be reclaimed?

It is the responsibility of the public to update their contact information with the City and the Provincial Court. There are many ways to pay, individuals can contact [Financial Debt Recovery](#) or make the payment online through [PayTickets.ca](#).

What is the total outstanding balance owed to the City since 2003?

There is approximately \$85M in outstanding balances and \$50M in POA parking offences convicted by the courts owed to the City.

Are other cities doing similar collections?

Ontario municipalities have the authority under the Provincial Offences Act and Municipal Act to refer debt to private debt collection agencies.

Do debts ever become not legally standing?

There is no statute of limitations for a conviction of a set fine.

After paying old debt/fines will credit scores still be impacted.

When all debts are collected by a private collection agency, the agency will report the item as paid through their regular reporting cycle and remove it from the credit report.

Who is providing personal contact information to the collection's agency?

It is the responsibility of the public to update their contact information with the Provincial Courts and the City of Ottawa. Individuals can do so by calling 3-1-1.

Can residents call 311 for more information?

311 is receiving the most current information available from Revenue Services. Those who have received a collection notice or have had an item placed on their credit report by the third-party collection agency for outstanding arrears with the City can call Financial Debt Recovery at 1-877-300-9585 to request more information or make payment arrangements.

Is it accurate that if a ticket is older than 7 years, the recipient can contest the ticket and fine with credit report companies and request removal from their credit report?

Tickets can only be contested with the Provincial Offences Court. Some credit reporting bureaus have a dispute process however it is important to note that process is strictly to dispute the item being placed on the credit report and not to contest the conviction.

Depending on the nature of the ticket, are certain fines linked to a person's licence?

Yes, certain Provincial Offences Act fines such as parking tickets, and automated camera infractions are issued to the licence plate owner. In all cases, the vehicle owner is deemed responsible for the offence. There are other types of Provincial Offences Act fines that are linked to an individual's driver license.

Does the city ever write off old debt?

Yes, if it has been deemed truly uncollectible due to issues such as death, dissolution, lack of documentation, etc. It is important to note that Provincial Offences Act fines cannot be written off, they remain perpetually owing.

Is old debt still valid and can it be reported to a credit bureau?

Under the Provincial Offences Act, once a conviction is issued to an offender to pay a set fine the debt remains permanently owing in perpetuity before the courts until it is paid. There is no statute of limitations on tickets.

Credit bureau reporting is a legal method and is widely used as a tool by financial institutions, lenders, and creditors to collect unpaid dues. This can be an effective method when contact information hasn't been updated.

How many residents are impacted?

This is difficult to determine as individuals may have multiple tickets. Financial Debt Recovery has reported 103,000 unpaid Provincial Offences Act fines and 3,000 unpaid water bills to the credit bureau.

Why were so many reports to the credit bureau filed at once?

The City has been referring debt to private debt collections agencies for over 20 years. Fines are referred to collection agencies 5-6 months after the City has made all efforts to collect the outstanding balance. Therefore, many attempts to recover longstanding debts have been made through multiple collections agencies over the years. Every five years, the City undergoes a competitive process to contract new private debt collection agencies. The collection agencies have their own means to retrieve and update contact information and determine the mechanisms used to collect debt. The most recent competitive process was completed in January, and one of the successful bids was Financial Debt Recovery (FDR). FDR has chosen credit bureau reporting as a collection method. Credit bureau reporting is a legal method and is widely used as a tool by financial institutions, lenders, and creditors to collect unpaid amounts. This can be an effective method when agencies are unable to contact the individual responsible for the debt. It is the responsibility of the public to update their address and contact information with the Provincial Offences Courts if they have outstanding offenses and the City.

If those who are impacted want to contest these tickets and request proof, can they do just that?

Those who have received a collection notice or have had an item placed on their credit report by the third-party collection agency for outstanding arrears with the City can call Financial Debt Recovery at 1-877-300-9585 to make payment arrangements.

What should residents do if they've received a notification?

Those who have received a collection notice or have had an item placed on their credit report by the third-party collection agency for outstanding arrears with the City can call Financial Debt Recovery at 1-877-300-9585 to make payment arrangements.