

Character references

How they can help you if you are going to court

Written references about your good character can help your case in court.

It is a good idea to obtain one or more references from people who “are of good reputation”. This means they do not have a criminal record or a bad reputation. These people may be neighbours, family friends, workmates, members of clubs or organisations you belong to (eg. community, sporting, religious, political or other groups).

Each reference should be addressed either “To the Presiding Magistrate” or “To the Presiding Judge”. It should be:

- Neatly written or typed
- Signed with the name of the person printed underneath with their address and occupation
- Dated

Each reference should include the following:

- A statement from the person writing the reference that s/he is aware of the charges before the court
- How long the person has known you
- How the person knows you (eg. as an employer, workmate, priest, teacher, team member, family friend, flatmate, etc.)
- The person’s opinion of your character
- Anything which might help the court concerning your charges (eg. your general honesty, if it is a stealing charge; your general driving ability, if it is a drink driving charge.)

It will help your solicitor if you can provide the original reference to the court and a copy to your solicitor. If you are representing yourself, keep one and hand one up to the court.

This brochure is available in Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese.

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