

## COMMITTEE FOR COOPERATION WITH THE COURTS



# Things to Know When You Represent Yourself in New Hampshire Courts *(Provided for informational purposes only)*

## Key Things to Keep in Mind

- There are laws that apply to every kind of Court case. Know the law that applies to your case. It will show you what you need to prove in your case.
- If you need special accommodations due to a disability or require an interpreter, please contact the Clerk's office at least a few days in advance of your hearing.
- Your case may take months and multiple Court appearances to resolve.
- You must keep your mailing and email address current with the Court and check your mail/email on a daily basis.

## Preparing for a Hearing or Trial

- Comply with all deadlines prior to the hearing or trial.
- Before the hearing begins, be sure to complete all required forms. Build enough time into your schedule to learn which form(s) to use and how to complete them. If you have questions about forms, ask at the Clerk's office.
- Understand that Court staff and Judges cannot provide legal advice. The Clerk's office can provide forms, as well as guidance on what form may be appropriate to address a particular issue.
- Everything you file with the Court must be signed, and a copy must be mailed to each opposing party.
- Prior to your hearing or trial, work cooperatively in exchanging information with each opposing party.
- If you need to postpone any Court hearing scheduled in your case, you must make your request in writing to the Court and send a copy to each opposing party. You cannot assume any hearing in your case is postponed merely by filing the motion, even if the other parties agree. Unless the Court has granted your request for a new date, you will have to be at the Courthouse on the original date and time.
- Watching a similar type hearing, before your hearing, will let you see what happens in the Courtroom.

## The Hearing or Trial

- Arrive at the Court before your hearing, leaving yourself enough time to go through security, find your Courtroom, and check in with the Court Clerk in your Courtroom before your hearing is scheduled to start.
- Speak directly to the Judge and not the opposing party.
- Stay calm and make your strongest points first. Be sure to tell the Judge what you want the Judge to do.
- All sides will have a fair opportunity to be heard by the Judge. Wait your turn. Taking notes can be helpful if you want to respond to something said by an opposing party.
- You are responsible for presenting information to the Judge, including all documents and/or witnesses. If you want the Judge to look at photographs, emails, texts sent to your phone, Facebook posts or other social media posts, please bring copies with you that you can leave with the Court and with each opposing party. In electronically filed cases, be sure to check the rules for filing of exhibits.
- You cannot submit any documents to the Court unless you show them to each opposing party first. This is best done before the hearing or trial starts. Ordinarily, you should make copies for each opposing party in advance of the hearing or trial.

## Court Rules and Information

- Know the Court Rules that apply to everyone who appears in Court. You may find the following link(s) helpful:
  - NH Laws & Court Rules for all levels of NH Courts: <https://www.nh.gov/glance/laws-rules.htm>
  - Informational Videos for Circuit Court cases: <https://www.courts.state.nh.us/videos/index.htm>
- Information for various legal advice call centers and other organizations:
  - <https://www.nhbar.org/legal-services-programs>

## Commonly Used Court Rules

Other rules may also apply to your case. They can be found at: <https://www.courts.state.nh.us/rules/>

### *Rules regarding standing while speaking to the Court*

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – District Division, Rule 1.3(A)

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – Probate Division, Rule 16

Rules of the Superior Court of the State of New Hampshire, Rule 36(a)

New Hampshire Rules of Criminal Procedure, Rule 36(a)

### *Rules regarding providing copies of pleadings and other documents to the opposing party*

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – District Division, Rule 1.3-A(A)

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – Probate Division, Rule 21(A)

Rules of the Superior Court of the State of New Hampshire, Rule 3(a)

### *Rules regarding motions in general*

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – District Division, Rule 1.8-A

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – Probate Division, Rules 46-50

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – Family Division, Rule 1.27

Rules of the Superior Court of the State of New Hampshire, Rule 12(c)

### *Rules regarding motions to continue (to postpone a Court hearing)*

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – District Division, Rule 1.8

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – Probate Division, Rules 57-58

Rules of the Circuit Court of the State of New Hampshire – Family Division, Rules 1.23 and 1.26

New Hampshire Rules of Criminal Procedure, Rule 35

Rules of the Superior Court of the State of New Hampshire, Rules 7 and 11