



United States District Court  
Southern District of New York

# Frequently Asked Questions: COMMUNICATION WITH THE COURT & COURT SERVICES

These questions are intended to address common questions that arise regarding communication with the Court. The statements in this guide do not constitute legal advice and may not be cited as legal authority. This document does not take the place of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, this court's Local Civil Rules, or the individual rules of practice and orders of the judges of this court. Parties consulting this document remain responsible for complying with all applicable rules of procedure.

## **Once a judge is assigned to my case, how can I get information about the presiding judge's preferences?**

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All judges have Individual Rules and Practices that apply to cases before them. Once your case is assigned to a district court judge, you will receive those rules in an Information Package. The Rules are also available on the Southern District of New York website. To find them, please see the list of district court judges and magistrate judges on the Southern District of New York website and click on the presiding judges' names.

## **Can I speak to the judge about my case?**

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Generally, all substantive communication with the court about your case must be in writing and entered on the docket for all parties to see. Communications must be sent to the Pro Se Intake Unit, which is the office within the courthouse that can answer basic procedural questions (see additional information below). To ensure your submission is docketed, you may communicate with the Pro Se Intake Unit by phone (212-805-0175), email ([prose@nysd.uscourts.gov](mailto:prose@nysd.uscourts.gov)), or mail:

Daniel Patrick Moynihan Courthouse  
Pro Se Intake Unit  
500 Pearl Street, Room 205

500 PEARL STREET | NEW YORK, NY 10007  
300 QUARROPAS STREET | WHITE PLAINS, NY 10601

PRO SE INTAKE UNIT: 212-805-0175



New York, NY 10007

Charles L. Brieant, Jr. Courthouse

Clerk's Office, Room 147

300 Quarropas Street

White Plains, NY 10601

## **Will the judge answer my letter?**

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Generally, the assigned judge will respond to procedural requests, such as extensions of time, that are made in the form of a letter. However, the decision to respond to a letter is up to the judge.

## **What does the Pro Se Intake Unit do?**

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The Pro Se Intake Unit is a department within the Clerk's Office and has two primary functions:

- to accept papers submitted by pro se litigants beginning with the filing of a complaint to start an action and ending with the filing of a notice of appeal;
- to provide information about court procedures and provide procedural assistance to pro se litigants appearing in the Southern District of New York.

All papers submitted by pro se litigants must be submitted to the Pro Se Intake Unit, in Manhattan or White Plains. All questions from pro se litigants regarding the Court's procedures must be directed to the Pro Se Intake Unit.

## **Can the Pro Se Intake Unit give legal advice?**

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No. Legal advice can be given only by lawyers to their clients; the staff of the Pro Se Intake Unit are not lawyers. Another reason they cannot give legal advice is that all court employees, whether they are lawyers, judges, or Clerk's Office staff, are prohibited by law from giving legal advice. If you need legal advice, consider making an appointment with the [City Bar Justice Center](#), a free legal clinic with an office at the courthouse.



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## **Can I make an appointment to speak with someone in the Pro Se Intake Unit?**

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No, but staff is available during court hours to take questions by phone ((212) 805-0175) or in person.

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## **Will my letters be filed and placed in the court's official file?**

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Yes. Except in rare circumstances, anything that is mailed to the courthouse will be kept in hard copy in the court's record room.

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## **My papers are due today, but I cannot get to the courthouse until after 5:00pm, what can I do?**

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Both courthouses (Manhattan and White Plains) are accessible 24 hours a day. If you cannot submit your papers during the Court's normal business hours, you may place them in the District Court's Night Deposit Box located near Security in the lobbies of each Courthouse (Manhattan and White Plains). You must have the papers date and time stamped at the machine near Security. So long as the papers are stamped on or before 11:59pm, they will be deemed submitted on that date. If the papers are stamped at 12:00am (midnight) or later, they will be deemed submitted the next day.

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## **How can I review the docket in my case?**

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If you do not have electronic filing privileges, you may still access the docket: (1) you may call a toll-free hotline number and hear a readout of your docket in English or Spanish: **(866) 222-8029**; (2) There are computers on the 3rd floor of 500 Pearl Street and parties may use them to review their docket sheet; or (3) You may write a letter to the Records Unit asking for a printout of the docket sheet.



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## **I am hearing-disabled, will the court provide an American Sign Language (ASL) signer for me?**

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Yes, according to judiciary policy, sign-language or other accommodations for people who are hearing impaired or have other communication disabilities are provided and paid for by the court in all court proceedings.

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## **Does the court provide other language interpreters?**

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The court does not provide an interpreter service in *civil* matters. If you are a pro se litigant in need of an interpreter, you may bring a friend or family member for conferences. However, if you are proceeding to trial, you will need to hire an official court interpreter.