

November 4, 2024

INDIVIDUAL RULES AND PRACTICES IN CIVIL PRO SE CASES

**JENNIFER L. ROCHON
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

Pro Se Office

United States District Court
Southern District of New York
500 Pearl Street
New York, NY 10007
(212) 805-0175

Unless otherwise ordered, these Individual Practices apply to all civil *pro se* cases. *Pro se* parties must also comply with the applicable Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, and the SDNY Local Rules (available at <http://nysd.uscourts.gov/courtrules.php>). The Court's website also contains useful information regarding the litigation process for parties who are proceeding *pro se*. The Court recommends that *pro se* litigants take advantage of that resource, which is available at https://nysd.uscourts.gov/forms?field_form_category_target_id=22&title=&sort_b%E2%80%A6.

Parties who are not represented by an attorney and are not currently incarcerated may choose to receive documents in their cases electronically (by email) instead of by regular mail. Receiving documents by regular mail is still an option, but if you would rather receive them only electronically, visit the following link for instructions on how to do so <https://nysd.uscourts.gov/forms/consent-electronic-service-pro-se-cases>.

1. Communications with Chambers

- A. By a *Pro Se* Party.** All communications with the Court by a *pro se* party should be delivered in person or by mail. If delivered in person, the litigant should go to the *Pro Se* Intake Unit, United States Courthouse, 40 Foley Square, Room 105, New York, NY 10007. For delivery by mail, the envelope should be addressed to the *Pro Se* Intake Unit, United States Courthouse, 500 Pearl Street, New York, NY 10007. No documents or court filings may be sent directly to Chambers. *Pro se* parties should not call or email Chambers and should communicate directly with the *Pro Se* Intake Unit. Unless the Court orders otherwise, all communications with the Court will be docketed upon receipt; such docketing shall constitute service on any user of the Electronic Case Filing system ("ECF"). If any other party is not a user of ECF (e.g., if there is another *pro se* party in the

case), a *pro se* party must send copies of any filing to that party and include an Affidavit of Service or other statement affirming that it has done so. Copies of correspondence between a *pro se* party and opposing parties shall not be sent to the Court.

B. By Parties Represented by Counsel. Except as otherwise provided below, communications with the Court by a represented party shall be governed by Judge Rochon’s Individual Rules and Practices in Civil Cases, available at <https://nysd.uscourts.gov/hon-jennifer-l-rochon>.

C. Requests for Adjournments or Extensions of Time. All requests for adjournments or extensions of time must be made in writing to the *Pro Se* Intake Unit, 500 Pearl Street New York, NY 10007 and must state: (1) the original date(s); (2) the number of previous requests for adjournment or extension; (3) whether these previous requests were granted or denied; (4) the reasons for the requested extension; (5) whether the adversary consents and, if not, the reasons given by the adversary for refusing to consent; and (6) the date of the parties’ next scheduled appearance before the Court. If the requested adjournment or extension affects any other scheduled dates, a represented party must submit a proposed Revised Scheduling Order in accordance with Judge Rochon’s Individual Rules and Practices in Civil Cases. A *pro se* party may, but is not required to, submit a proposed Revised Scheduling Order. Requests for extensions of deadlines regarding a matter that has been referred to a Magistrate Judge shall be directed to that assigned Magistrate Judge. Absent an emergency, any request for an extension or adjournment shall be made *at least 48 hours* prior to the deadline or scheduled appearance.

2. Filing of Papers and Service

A. Papers Filed by a *Pro Se* Party. All papers to be filed with the Court by a *pro se* party, along with one courtesy copy of those papers, shall be delivered in person or by mail to the *Pro Se* Intake Unit, 500 Pearl Street, New York, NY 10007. Any *pro se* party that wishes to participate in electronic case filing (“e-filing”) on ECF must file a Motion for Permission for Electronic Case Filing (available at <https://nysd.uscourts.gov/forms/motion-permission-electronic-case-filing-pro-se-cases> and in the *Pro Se* Intake Unit). If the Court grants a motion to participate in “e-filing,” that party *will not* receive hardcopies of any document filed electronically via ECF.

B. Service on a *Pro Se* Party. Counsel in *pro se* cases must serve a *pro se* party with a paper copy of any document that is filed electronically and must file with the Court a separate Affidavit of Service. Submissions filed without proof of service that the *pro se* party was served will not be considered.

3. Discovery

All requests for discovery by a *pro se* party should be sent to counsel for the party from whom discovery is sought. Discovery requests should not be sent to the Court.

If there are any discovery disputes, the parties are required to confer with one another in an effort to resolve the dispute without the need for Court intervention. If the parties are unable to resolve their dispute, either party may file a letter-motion, no longer than three pages and in accordance with Section 1 above, explaining the nature of the dispute and requesting an informal conference. If the opposing party wishes to respond to the letter, it must file a responsive letter within five business days, not to exceed three pages.

4. Motions

- A. Filing and Service.** Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, opposing papers must be served and filed within four weeks of service of the motion papers, and reply papers, if any, must be served and filed within two weeks of receipt of opposition papers.
- B. Courtesy Copy.** One courtesy hard copy of all formal motion papers, marked as such, should be submitted to Chambers *by the non-pro se party* at the time the reply is due. Courtesy copies should not be submitted to Chambers at the time of filing. If all the parties are *pro se*, then no courtesy copies of formal motion papers are required.
- C. Pre-Motion Submissions.** Pre-motion submissions are not required from *pro se* parties for any motions.
- D. Oral Argument.** Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, argument will not be heard in *pro se* matters.
- E. Pro Se Notices.** Parties who file a motion to dismiss, a motion for judgment on the pleadings, or a motion for summary judgment must provide the *pro se* party with a copy of the notices required under SDNY Local Civil Rules 12.1 or 56.2.

5. Trial Documents

- A. Pretrial Statement.** Within 30 days of the completion of discovery unless otherwise ordered by the Court, a *pro se* plaintiff shall file a concise, written Pretrial Statement. This Statement need take no particular form, but it must contain the following: 1) a statement of the facts plaintiff hopes to prove at trial; 2) a list of all documents or other physical objects that the plaintiff plans to put into evidence at trial; and 3) a list of the names and addresses of all witnesses plaintiff intends to have testify at trial. The Statement must be sworn by the plaintiff to be true and accurate based on the facts known by the plaintiff. The

pro se plaintiff shall file an original, plus one courtesy copy, of this Statement with the *Pro Se* Intake Unit and serve a copy on all defendants or their counsel if they are represented. The original Statement must include a certificate stating the date a copy was mailed to the attorney for the defendant. Two weeks after service of plaintiff's Statement, the defendant must file and serve a similar Statement of its case containing the same information.

- B. Other Pretrial Filings.** If the case is to be tried before only a Judge without a jury, any parties represented by counsel must also file proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law at the time of filing the Pretrial Statement. If the case is to be tried before a jury, any parties represented by counsel must also file proposed *voir dire* questions, a proposed jury charge, and a proposed verdict form at the time of filing the Pretrial Statement. At the time of filing, a represented party should email these documents to the Court in both .pdf and Microsoft Word formats. The *pro se* party may file such documents, but is not required to do so and need not submit them by email.

6. Other

Pro se parties are advised that there is a *Pro Se* Law Clinic available to assist self-represented parties in civil cases. The Clinic may be able to provide a *pro se* party with advice in connection with their case. The *Pro Se* Law Clinic is run by a private organization called the City Bar Justice Center; it is not part of, or run by, the Court (and, among other things, therefore cannot accept filings on behalf of the Court, which must still be made by any self-represented party through the *Pro Se* Intake Unit). Litigants in need of legal assistance should complete the City Bar Justice Center's intake form to make an appointment. If a litigant has questions about the intake form or needs to highlight an urgent deadline already disclosed in the form, the clinic can be contacted by phone (212-382-4794) or email (fedprosdny@nycbar.org). In-person appointments in the Thurgood Marshall Courthouse in Manhattan and the Charles L. Brieant Jr. Federal Building and Courthouse in White Plains are available Monday through Thursday, 10am to 4pm. Appointments are also available remotely Monday through Friday, 10am to 4pm.