

Important Reminders for Pro Se Litigants

- Include your case number, the case name, and the name of the district judge and magistrate judge on everything that you file with the court.
- You must immediately notify the court of any change in your mailing address. Failure to do so may result in the involuntary dismissal of your case for failure to prosecute.
- If your opposing party files a motion and you do not file a response in opposition, the court may find that you consent to, agree with, or do not oppose the motion and may grant the relief your opposing party requested. This may include dismissing your case. You must consult the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the court's Local Rules to find out the time in which your response in opposition must be filed.
- Read everything you receive from the court and other parties in your case immediately. If you receive certified mail from the court, do not refuse it or fail to pick it up.
- Always keep all of your paperwork. Be sure you keep a copy of everything that you file with the court and everything you receive from the court or from an opposing party.
- Meet every deadline set by the court or the rules. If you cannot meet a deadline, you must file a motion for an extension of time before the deadline passes. If you fail to meet a deadline, you may risk losing your case.
- Use your own words and try to be as clear as possible in everything that you file. You do not need to "sound like a lawyer." It is better to be clear, straightforward, and specific about your claims.
- If possible, have someone else read your papers before you file them. Make sure the other person understands what you are saying in your papers. Often, cases are decided only on the papers that are filed, without the parties appearing in court. You want to be sure you make your best case in everything that you file.
- Do not include personal identifying information like Social Security Numbers, taxpayer identification numbers, financial account numbers, full birth dates, or the names of minor children in any filing.