

# Connecticut Judicial Branch Self-Represented Parties Information Series

## Filling Out and Filing an Appearance Form

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#### **Welcome to the Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Libraries Self-Represented Parties Information Series.**

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#### **Filling out and filing an Appearance Form.**

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In this overview, we will show you the correct way to fill out and file an Appearance in a lawsuit. An Appearance form (JD-CL-12) is the official court form filed with the Court Clerk that places your name and address on file with the Court. It also tells the court that you know about the case and that you are going to represent yourself in the case. Putting your name and address on file allows the Court to mail notices of court dates and court rulings to you at the address on file. It also gives other parties and attorneys an address to send paperwork to you. Court rules state that defendants should file an appearance within 2 days after the Return date.

When you file an Appearance, you are agreeing that the Court has authority over you and you are expected to follow the rules and decisions of the Court. You may say that the Court does not have any authority over you, but to do so you must file a separate paper, called a motion, with the Court after you file your Appearance. After you file your Appearance and you follow the rules, if you do not agree with the decisions of the Court, you can usually file an appeal later and the decisions will be looked at by another court.

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#### **How this demonstration works.**

How this demonstration works. In this demonstration, the video in the top screen will show you what to do to fill out the Appearance form. A blank Appearance form is in the bottom screen. You may fill out the form in the bottom screen as we go through this demonstration.

If you are the Plaintiff in the case and representing yourself, it is not necessary to file a separate Appearance form. Your signature on the Complaint is considered to be your Appearance. If you are the Defendant in a case, you should have the papers you got telling you about the lawsuit nearby. You will need to get some of the information from the Summons to fill out the Appearance form.

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#### **Some words to know.**

Some words to know. In this overview, the word Plaintiff is the person who is doing the suing. The word Defendant is the person who is being sued. Party is anyone who is involved in a lawsuit as either a Defendant or Plaintiff.

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**Some more words to know.**

Some more words to know. Serve is the formal delivery of legal papers, such as a Summons and Complaint, to another party. A Return Date is the date that begins the countdown for things, such as deadlines, taking place in the case. The Court rules tell what must be done to move a case through the Court. If you do not follow the Court rules you may hurt, or even lose, your case.

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**Connecticut Practice Book.**

Connecticut Practice Book. You must follow the Court rules when filing your Appearance. The Court rules are found in the Connecticut Practice Book, which is available in any Judicial Branch Law Library and on the Judicial Branch website. Connecticut Practice Book sections 3-1 to 3-21 talk about Appearances. The Appearance Form lists Connecticut Practice Book sections 3-1 to 3-6, 3-8, 10-13, and 25A-2. You will want to look at these Court rules to make sure that you understand the Appearance form and file it correctly.

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**Connecticut Practice Book.**

From the Judicial Branch home page, click on the Public tab. Click on the link for Court Rules. Click on the link for the current year Connecticut Practice Book.

The Connecticut Practice Book is in PDF format with a linked table of contents on the left hand side. Under Superior Court – General Provisions, click on Chapter 3, Appearances.

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If you already have filed an Appearance and are letting the Court know that your mailing address has changed, at the top of the form, in the area labeled “Notice to Self-Represented Parties,” check the box near the top left of the form before the words “I am filing this appearance to let the court and all attorneys and self-represented parties of record know that I have changed my address.” Only check this box if you are telling the Court about a change of address.

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If this is the first time you are filing an Appearance in this case, start at the top right hand corner of the form. Type the return date which is found on the Summons you received telling you about the case. The return date, which is found in the top, right of the Summons, is the date that starts the countdown for things taking place in the case.

In the box below, type the docket number if you know it. The docket number is the number used by the Court to identify your case. If you do not know the docket number, or it is not on the papers you received notifying you of the case, leave the box blank.

The docket number will usually begin with 3 letters, such as HHD, followed by a dash. These letters identify the Court where the case is filed. Next there will be 2 letters and 2 numbers. For example, CV12, followed by another dash. The letters are the type of case, CV means civil, and the numbers are the year the case was filed, in this case 2012. Next there will be a 7 digit number, for example 6001001, followed by a dash. This number is the number that shows when this case was filed compared to the other cases in the Court. The docket number will usually end with the letter S.

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Type the name of your case in the box labeled "Name of case." You can find the case name on the papers you received telling you about the case. Be sure to enter the case name just as it appears on these papers.

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Check the correct box to indicate if the case is filed in a Judicial District Court, a Housing Session Court, a Small Claims Court, or a Geographical Area Court. If it is a Geographical Area Court, type the Geographical Area Court number on the line provided. This information should appear in the papers you were served when notified of the lawsuit.

In the box to the right, type the address of the Court that is on the papers you received. Include the street address, town or city, and zip code of the Court. Skip the box below labeled "Scheduled Court date."

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Under the words "Please Enter the Appearance of," enter your full legal name in the box labeled "Name of self-represented party." Be sure to use your full name, not a nickname. For example, if your name is "William," write "William," not "Bill." Skip the box labeled "Juris number of attorney or firm."

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In the box labeled "Mailing address," type your mailing address; number, street and, if needed, apartment number. If your mailing address is a post office box, type the box number in the box labeled "Post office box." Otherwise, leave this box blank.

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Type your telephone number in the last box on the line labeled "Telephone number." Be sure to include the area code.

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On the next line, type the city or town of your mailing address in the box labeled "City/Town." Type the state abbreviation, such as CT, in the box labeled "State." In the next box, labeled "Zip code," type your zip code. The zip code can be either 5 or 9 numbers long.

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If you have a personal fax machine, type that number, including the area code, in the next box labeled "Fax number." If you do not have a fax machine, leave this box blank. Since the Court or other parties may fax confidential or personal information to the fax number given, you may not want to give a public fax number or the number of a work fax machine.

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In the last box on this line, labeled "E-mail address," type your personal email address. Once again, you may not want to give an email address that is not private.

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The next section of the form is labeled "in the case named above for:" Check the box before "The Defendant" if you are the only Defendant in the case. If there is more than one Defendant, check the box before "The following Defendant(s) only:," and type your name. The other choices are for attorneys who are representing parties. Please remember that you may not represent anyone else unless you are an attorney licensed in Connecticut.

If you are representing yourself in a family matter that is in the Family Division of the Superior Court, check the box before "matters in the Family Division." If your case is a Title-IV Child Support matter, check the box before "Title-IV Child Support."

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If you are a self-represented party who is replacing an attorney that was representing you, check the box following number 1 and before the words “This appearance is in place of the appearance of the following attorney....” and fill in the name and juris number of that attorney on the line provided.

The last line of this section, asks if you will accept delivery of papers filed in this case electronically, in computer format, instead of being delivered to you on paper. You will need to check either the box before “Yes,” if you will accept electronic delivery, or in front of “No,” if you will not. Remember, these papers can have confidential or personal information in them so, if you agree to accept delivery electronically, make sure that the email account you have indicated above on the form is private. Connecticut Practice Book section 10-13 talks about Service, or delivery, of papers.

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Check that you have filled in all the necessary information in the form to this point and make sure that it is correct. If not, make any changes or begin again with a new form. If the information is correct, skip the box labeled “signed.” In the next box, labeled “Name of person signing at left,” type your full legal name. In the last box on this line labeled “date signed,” type the date that you are completing the form.

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The Certification section has to be filled out. Connecticut Practice Book sections 3-4 and 3-5 talk about the filing and delivery, or service, of the Appearance form to other parties. In the first sentence beginning “I certify that a copy of this document was mailed or delivered...,” on the line after the word “(date),” type in the date that you will be sending, either in paper through the mail or electronically through email, a copy of the document to all other parties in the case.

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In the box labeled “Name and address of each party...,” type the names and addresses of the parties that you will mail or email copies to. If you need more space attach another sheet of paper with the names and addresses of other parties that you will mail or email a copy of the completed Appearance form after you fill it out.

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Check that you have filled in all the necessary information in the Certification area and make sure that it is correct. If it is not, make any changes or begin again with a new form. If the information is correct, skip the box labeled “Signed.” In the next box, labeled “Print or type name of person signing,” type your name. In the box labeled “date signed,” type the date that you are completing the form. In the last box on this line labeled “Telephone number,” type your telephone number.

Do not enter anything in the box on the right labeled “For Court Use Only.”

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Make sure that all the required information for the form is filled out and spelled correctly. Once you have done this, you can print the completed form by pressing the “Print Form” button at the bottom of the form. Once you have printed the form, sign the form in the box labeled “Signed” in the “Please Enter the Appearance of” section and sign the form again in the “Signed” box in the Certification section.

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**Make copies and file the original Appearance form with the clerk’s Office.**

Make a copy of the signed form for your own records and file the original with the Clerk’s Office in the court where the case is filed. Make copies to send to the other parties in the case.

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**Responsive Pleadings: Motions, Requests and Answer.**

Responsive pleadings: motions, requests and answer. After completing and filing your Appearance form, you will want to read the Court rules to decide which responsive pleading or pleadings you will file in response to the Complaint. Connecticut Practice Book sections 10-6 to 10-7 talk about the pleadings and their order. You may also want to view our video “Connecticut Civil Lawsuit: First Steps as a Defendant” for more information on pleadings.

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**More Help.**

More Help. If you need procedural help or further assistance with filling out the Appearance form or any court form, please visit a Court Service Center. If you need further information on handling your case, please visit a Judicial Branch Law Library.

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This is the end of our demonstration. For more information please visit a [Judicial Branch Law Library](#), a [Court Service Center](#), or the [Judicial Branch website](#).