

HOW TO FILE & SEND A MOTION TO CONTINUE OR EXTEND TIME & NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR MOTION

NOTE: If there are any words or terms used in these instructions that you do not understand, please visit Illinois Legal Aid Online at illinoislegalaid.org/lexicon/glossary. For more information about going to court including how to fill out and file forms, call or text Illinois Court Help at 833-411-1121 or go to courthelp.gov.

Who can use a *Motion to Continue or Extend Time*?

Anyone who needs to ask the court to continue (reschedule) a court date that has already been scheduled, or who needs more time to do something (like file an *Answer* or respond to a *Motion* another party has filed) can file a *Motion to Continue or Extend Time*.

Does the judge have to grant my *Motion to Continue or Extend Time*?

- No. The judge is not required to grant your *Motion*. Usually, the judge will make a decision by looking at the reason why you need a continuance or more time. In some cases, the judge may be required to consider specific factors.

Is there a deadline for filing a *Motion to Continue or Extend Time*?

- No, but if you are asking the court to continue (reschedule) a court date, you must file your *Motion* as far before that court date as possible. If you are asking the court to extend your time to do something, you should file your *Motion* as far before that deadline as possible.
- There may be more specific deadlines depending on the type of court date you are asking the court to reschedule.

What forms do I need to fill out to file a *Motion to Continue or Extend Time*?

- ***Motion to Continue or Extend Time*:** use this form to explain why you need to continue (reschedule) a court date or why you need more time to do something. The email address (if you have one) and mailing address you put on the *Motion to Continue or Extend Time* is where important legal documents will be sent to you. You should use an email account that you do not share with anyone else and that you check every day. If you do not check your email every day, you may miss important information, notice of court dates, or documents from other parties.
- ***Order Granting/Denying Motion to Continue or Extend Time*:** is used by the judge to say if your *Motion to Continue or Extend Time* is granted or denied.

- ***Notice of Court Date for Motion*:** use this form to schedule the court date when you will see the judge. This form also:
 - lists the date, time, and place where you will see the judge;
 - lists the names and addresses of the other parties or the names and addresses of their lawyers; AND
 - lets the other parties in the case know about the hearing date.

Where can I find the forms I need?

You can find the forms at: illinoiscourts.gov/documents-and-forms/approved-forms.

Are there any costs to file a *Motion to Continue or Extend Time*?

- No.
- If you have not yet filed your *Appearance* in the case, there may be a fee for filing your *Appearance*.
- If you cannot afford to pay the filing fee, you can ask the court to file for free. You will have to apply for a fee waiver by filling out the *Application for Waiver of Court Fees*. This is a separate set of forms you can find at: illinoiscourts.gov/documents-and-forms/approved-forms.

What do I do after I fill out my forms?

Step 1- File your *Motion to Continue or Extend Time* with the Circuit Clerk in the county where the court case is filed.

- You must electronically file (e-file) court documents unless (1) you are an inmate in a prison or jail and you do not have a lawyer, (2) you have a disability that keeps you from e-filing, or (3) you qualify for an exemption from e-filing.
 - You will qualify for an exemption if: (1) you do not have internet or computer access at home and it would be difficult for you to travel to a place where you could use a computer; (2) you have trouble reading or speaking in English, or (3) you tried to e-file your documents, but you were unable to complete the process because the equipment or assistance you need is not available.
 - If you qualify for an exemption, fill out a *Certification for Exemption from E-Filing* found here: illinoiscourts.gov/documents-and-forms/approved-forms.

Find Illinois Supreme Court approved forms at: illinoiscourts.gov/documents-and-forms/approved-forms.

- File the original and 1 copy of your *Motion* and the *Certification* with the Circuit Clerk’s office in person or by mail.
- To e-file, create an account with an e-filing service provider.
 - Visit efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm to select a service provider. Some service providers are free while others charge a processing fee. For instructions on how to e-file for free with Odyssey eFileIL, see the self-help user guides here: illinoiscourts.gov/self-help/how-to-e-file/
- If you do not have access to a computer or if you need help e-filing, take your forms to the Circuit Clerk’s office where you can use a public computer terminal to e-file your forms.
 - You can bring your forms on paper or saved on a flash drive.
 - The terminal will have a scanner and computer that you can use to e-file your form.

Step 2: Ask for a court date.

- Ask the Circuit Clerk if you have to schedule a court date or if one will be scheduled.
- If you need to schedule the court date, ask the Circuit Clerk how to do so. The Circuit Clerk may schedule the court date or you may have to speak with other court staff.
- When you get your court date, ask if the court will send notice of the court date to the other party or if you need to.
- If you need to send notice, complete the *Notice of Court Date for Motion* found at: illinoiscourts.gov/documents-and-forms/approved-forms.

Step 3: Send a copy of your *Motion to Continue or Extend Time to the other party.*

- You must send your *Motion* to the other parties in the case. If a party has a lawyer, send the forms to the lawyer.
- If you and the person you’re sending the *Motion* to have an email address, you must send it by email or by notification through the e-filing system. If you or the person you’re sending the *Motion* to does not have an email address, you may give it to the other parties by personal hand delivery, mail, or third-party commercial carrier (for example, FedEx or UPS).

Make sure you know how you are to attend your court date.

Your court date could be in person, by phone or by video. If it is by phone or video it is called a “Remote Appearance.” Call the Circuit Clerk or visit their website for more information. To find the phone number for your Circuit Clerk, visit illinoiscourts.gov/courts/circuit-court/circuit-court-clerks/.

Step 4: Get ready for your court date.

- Decide and write down:
 - What you want to ask the judge to do for you; AND
 - What you will say to the judge if asked to tell why you need more time.

Step 5: Go to your court date.

- If your court date is by phone or video:
 - Make sure to have the call-in or login information for your court date and make sure your technology is working.
 - Follow the instructions on the court notice you received. Call the Circuit Clerk or Circuit Court or visit their websites for specific technology instructions.
 - Follow these recommendations to appear by phone or video: illinoiscourts.gov/self-help/court-by-phone-or-video

- Bring these items with you to court:
 - Photo I.D.;
 - Copies of all the documents you filed with the Circuit Clerk;
 - Copy of your *Order*; and
 - Other papers or proof related to your *Motion*.
- Get to the courthouse at least 30 minutes early. Go to the courtroom number listed on your court form. If

your forms do not have a courtroom number, look for a list of cases at the courthouse or ask the Circuit Clerk.

- Check in with the courtroom staff and wait for your name and case number to be called.
- When your case is called, walk to the judge and introduce yourself.

How do I present my *Motion* to the judge and what happens after?

Step 1: Tell the judge why you need more time and answer questions.

- Show evidence including documents and photos that show why you need more time.
 - Give a copy to the judge and a copy to the other party. Be prepared to explain why the document or photo is important.
- The judge decides whether the documents, photos, or witness testimony can be considered in making a decision about your motion.

Step 2: The other party presents their position on your *Motion*.

- The other party will also get to present their position on your *Motion* by testifying, giving the judge evidence, and questioning witnesses.
- You will get to see any documents and photos the other party brings to court. If you do not think the judge should consider them in making a decision about your *Motion*, tell the judge why.
- You may ask questions of the other party's witnesses. Write down your questions while they are speaking to the other party or judge.

Step 3: The judge makes a decision after both sides present their positions.

- The judge has to make a decision. The decision is called a court *Order*.
- If the judge needs more information to make a decision, the judge may set up another court date. Make sure you understand what information is needed and get it before the new court date.
- If the judge needs to think about it more, the judge may let you know the decision later by mailing a court *Order* or at another court date.
- If the judge has enough information, the judge may decide right then and fill out a court *Order*.
 - Get a file-stamped copy of the *Order*.

If the other party was not in court to get a copy, you must send them a copy by 5:00 p.m. on the date you get the *Order*. Fill out and file a *Proof of Delivery* court form with the Circuit Clerk to show that you sent the copy. You may find the *Proof of Delivery* at:

illinoiscourts.gov/documents-and-forms/approved-forms.