



ILLINOIS JUDICIAL BRANCH

Bench Card: Limited Scope Representation

Illinois Supreme Court Rules allow lawyers to provide **limited scope representation**. For example, a lawyer may coach a self-represented litigant outside of court, prepare pleadings for a self-represented litigant, or enter a Limited Scope Appearance to represent a party in only a discrete portion of a civil proceeding in a trial court.

General Authority for Limited Scope Representation

Ethics of Limited Scope

Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct [1.2\(c\)](#)

“A lawyer may limit the scope of the representation if the limitation is reasonable under the circumstances and the client gives informed consent.”

Document Preparation Assistance

Illinois Supreme Court Rule [137\(e\)](#)

A lawyer may draft or review documents on behalf of a self-represented litigant.

- The lawyer is not required to file an appearance (general or limited scope).
- The pleading, motion or other paper is to be signed by the party, not the lawyer providing assistance.
- The lawyer’s involvement in preparing a document does not have to be disclosed.

Limited Scope Appearances in Court

Illinois Supreme Court Rule [13\(c\)](#)

- **Filing a Limited Scope Appearance.** SCR 13(c)(6) allows a lawyer to enter a limited scope appearance to represent a client in just a portion of a civil proceeding in a trial court.
 - There must be a written representation agreement between the client and lawyer.
 - The lawyer must file a statewide standardized [Notice of Limited Scope Appearance](#) form with the court.
 - The Notice must specify the aspects of the proceeding the appearance covers.
 - A lawyer may enter more than one Limited Scope Appearance during the course of a proceeding.
- **Ending a Limited Scope Appearance.** Upon completion of a limited scope appearance, a lawyer may withdraw in one of two ways under SCR 13(c)(7):
 - a. **In court** (in-person or virtually), by presenting a statewide form [Notice of Completion of Limited Scope Appearance](#) without prior notice if the client is present in court. In the absence of an objection by the client, the appearance automatically terminates; or
 - b. **Outside of court**, by filing a Notice of Completion of Limited Scope Appearance form and serving it, along with the statewide [Objection to Completion of Limited Scope Appearance](#) form, on the client, the court, and other parties.
 - In the absence of a timely objection (filed within 21 days of service), the appearance automatically terminates without a court order.
- **Objecting to Completion of a Limited Scope Appearance.** SCR 13(c)(7) allows a client to object to withdrawal of a limited scope appearance only on the basis that the lawyer has not actually completed the representation specified in the Notice of Limited Scope Appearance.
 - If the client objects, SCR 13(c)(7) requires an evidentiary hearing on the issue of whether the specified representation has been completed.
 - Following the hearing, SCR 13(c)(7) requires the court to allow the lawyer to withdraw unless it finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that the lawyer has not completed the limited scope representation.

Service Requirements

Illinois Supreme Court Rule [11\(f\)](#)

SCR 11(f) requires that documents be served on both a lawyer who has filed a Notice of Limited Scope Appearance and the party represented pursuant to the appearance until the appearance is withdrawn or terminates pursuant to SCR 13(c).

Managing Limited Scope in the Courtroom

The **Comments to SCR 13** address several practical issues related to limited scope appearances:

- There is no limit on the number of Limited Scope Appearances a lawyer can file in a given matter.
- There is no restriction on the purpose of a Limited Scope Appearance.
- Upon completion, lawyers are encouraged to seek withdrawal in court (with the client present) to ensure the withdrawal is timely and that the court is aware of it.
- The rule does not restrict the court's ability to manage cases or respond to abuses of limited scope representation.
- The comments caution against refusing to permit a lawyer's withdrawal or encouraging a lawyer to remain in a case. Such practices may discourage a lawyer from undertaking limited scope representation in the future.

Standardized Forms

The Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice has produced three statewide forms that must be used in connection with limited scope appearances: Notice of Limited Scope Appearance, Notice of Completion of Limited Scope Appearance, and Objection to Completion of Limited Scope Appearance. All three are available from the Illinois Courts website through this link: ilcourts.info/forms.

Limited Scope Appearance Form

The Notice of Limited Scope Appearance should reflect the limitations agreed to by the lawyer and the client and must be signed by both.

- The lawyer must file a new Notice of Limited Scope Appearance if the lawyer seeks to expand the scope specified in the original Notice.
- The limitations specified in the Notice should be consistent with the scope of representation described in the representation agreement required under SCR 13(c).
- The key issue in hearing an objection to a lawyer's Notice of Completion is whether the lawyer has completed the representation specified in section 3 of the Notice of Limited Scope Appearance (see below).

3. The Lawyer appears pursuant to Supreme Court [Rule 13\(c\)\(6\)](#). This appearance is **limited in scope to the following way(s)** in which the Lawyer will represent the Client (*check and complete all that apply*):

☐ in the court proceeding (*describe the proceeding*):

☐ on the following date:

Month, Day, Year

☐ and in any continuance of that proceeding.

☐ at the following deposition(s):

☐ Other (*specify the scope and limits of representation*):

