

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHAPTER 13 CLIENTS AND ATTORNEYS

It is important for clients who file a bankruptcy case under Chapter 13 to understand their rights and responsibilities. It is also important that the clients know what their attorney's responsibilities are, and understand the importance of communicating with their attorney to make the case successful. Clients should also know that they may expect certain services to be performed by their attorney. The below guidelines provided by the Court are hereby agreed to by the clients and their attorneys.

CLIENT

The attorney and client acknowledge that they have discussed the obligation of the client to:

Before the case is filed:

1. Provide the attorney with complete and accurate financial information, including all debts owed, all property owned, an accurate, current and projected budget, copies of all required tax returns or transcripts from the IRS, and 6 months of pay stubs.
2. Inform the attorney of any prior bankruptcies and the outcome of those proceedings.
3. Discuss with the attorney the client's reasons and objectives for filing the case.
4. Review the complete bankruptcy petition (including all schedules and statements) upon its receipt and promptly advise the attorney of any errors, omissions, or changes which need to be made.

After the case is filed:

1. Pay the Trustee within 30 days of filing.
2. Keep the trustee and attorney informed of the client's address, telephone number and employment.
3. Inform the attorney of any wage garnishment or attachment of assets which occurs or continues after the case is filed.
4. Review the Confirmation Order when received, and advise the attorney if the client has questions about which creditors are being paid and how much or if the client has questions about anything the debtor must do.
5. Review the Trustee's Notice of Intent to Pay Claims when received, and advise the attorney of any filed claim that appears to be improper or excessive, or any creditor who has not filed a proof of claim but the client wants to make sure is paid.
6. Insure all property of the estate, including maintaining liability, collision, and comprehensive insurance on vehicles securing loans or leases.
7. Contact the attorney promptly if the client loses his/her job, becomes ill, experiences a budget change, or is otherwise unable to make plan payments.

8. Inform the attorney if any tax refunds the client is entitled to are seized or not returned to the client by the IRS.
9. Provide the documentation/information requested by attorney for the attorney to file necessary post-petition motions (tax returns, pay stubs, amended budget).
10. Contact the attorney before buying, refinancing, or selling real property or a motor vehicle or before entering into any loan agreements to find out what approvals are required, including retaining a real estate agent or listing property for sale.
11. Contact the attorney if the debtor receives an inheritance.
12. Contact the attorney if the client is sued during the case.
13. Contact the attorney if the client has any potential lawsuits against another person or company after the bankruptcy is filed.
14. Attend a financial management workshop no later than the due date of the last scheduled plan payment.
15. Open and read all mail from the attorney, Trustee, or Bankruptcy Court.

ATTORNEY

The attorney has agreed to accept a flat fee of \$_____ for all aspects of the bankruptcy case except for services excluded from the flat fee (described below). For some of the excluded services, the attorney has agreed to limit the fees to amounts set by the Bankruptcy Court for the specific services. For the remaining excluded services, the attorney may request additional fees on an hourly basis in accordance with the agreement between the attorney and the client.

Fees shall be paid by the Trustee through the plan unless otherwise ordered. The attorney may not receive fees directly from the client other than the initial retainer, unless paid by a third party, in which event such payment must be fully disclosed to the Bankruptcy Court. Any fee must be agreed upon by the client and the attorney, and approved by the court.

Services included in the flat fee. The services the attorney agrees to provide for the flat fee include:

1. Meet with the client to review the client's debts, assets, liabilities, income, and expenses. Request appropriate financial information, including credit reports and information on any mortgage debt or support obligation.
2. Conduct necessary due diligence regarding any prior bankruptcies involving the client.
3. Counsel the client regarding the advisability of filing a bankruptcy and whether filing either a Chapter 7 or Chapter 13 case would assist in meeting the client's objectives; discuss procedures in both Chapter 7 and Chapter 13 with the client, and answer the client's questions.

4. Explain what payments will be made directly by the client and what payments will be made through the client's Chapter 13 plan.
5. Explain to the client how, when, and where to make the Chapter 13 plan payments, including advising the client that the first plan payment must be made to the Trustee no later than 30 days after the case is filed.
6. Explain to the client how the attorney's fees and trustee's fees are paid, providing a signed copy of the contract between the client and the attorney and a copy of this Rights and Responsibilities to the debtor.
7. Advise the client of the requirement to attend the 341 Meeting of Creditors, arriving early, and instruct the client as to the date, time, and place of the meeting. Advise the client to bring a copy of the petition and the schedules and statements to the Meeting.
8. Advise the client of the necessity of maintaining liability, collision, and comprehensive insurance on vehicles securing loans or leases and advise the client of the duty to insure all property of the estate.
9. Timely prepare and file the client's petition, plan, statements, and schedules.
10. Ensure that if the plan includes a motion to void liens, that the collateral is identified and an exemption is claimed.
11. Ensure proper notice and service of the plan.
12. Appear at the 341 Meeting of Creditors with the client.
13. Review all documents filed in the case and all communications concerning the case.
14. Respond to objections to plan confirmation and, where necessary, prepare an amended plan, and appear at the confirmation hearing.
15. Explain that a plan may be modified after confirmation and, where needed, prepare, file, and serve necessary modifications to the plan which may include suspending, lowering, or increasing plan payments.
16. Prepare, file, and serve necessary amended statements and schedules in accordance with information provided by the client.
17. Review the confirmation order and the Trustee's notice of intent to pay claims.
18. If necessary, object to improper or invalid claims based upon information provided by the client.
19. File claims for creditors when the client's goals and interests are served by such filing.
20. Respond to client communications, advising the client of the best and most efficient means of communications.
21. File notice of change of employment/change of address.

22. Represent the client in connection with all motions filed in the bankruptcy case, other than those listed in the excluded services below.
23. Where appropriate, prepare, file, and serve necessary motions to avoid liens on real or personal property.

Additional services requiring additional limited fees. The following services are not included in the flat fee, but the attorney has agreed to provide these services, when necessary and appropriate for the case, for additional compensation based on a fee schedule approved by the Court. The maximum additional fee for work performed in connection with obtaining the necessary Court approval for certain activities is indicated below:

1. Mortgage loan modification of the claim secured by the debtor's principal residence – up to \$500
2. Substitution of collateral – up to \$400.
3. Retention of a realtor, auctioneer or other professional relating to the sale of property or representing the interests of the estate – up to \$200
4. Sale of property and disposition of the proceeds, resulting in the closing of such sale and the filing of any necessary report of the sale – up to \$300.
5. Retention of special counsel relating to collecting or pursuing a cause of action in a different judicial forum and that results in the filing of a motion and order authorizing the approval of a settlement of such litigation – up to \$300.

Additional services on an hourly basis. The following services are not included in the flat fee and are not covered by any specific cap on fee, but the attorney has agreed to provide these services, when necessary and appropriate for the case, but may charge an hourly rate for the work performed – subject to Court approval:

1. Motions for sanctions or contempt.
2. Representation at a Rule 2004 examination.

Services the attorney has not agreed to provide. The attorney has not agreed to represent the client in any adversary proceeding or certain contested matters placed on an “adversary track” by order of the Court, unless the details of such separate litigation representation are spelled out in an addendum to this agreement or in a separate supplemental contract. The client will be fully apprised of any such anticipated litigation that would not be covered by this agreement.

Effective Date: _____

DEBTOR LAW FIRM NAME

CLIENT

By: _____

CLIENT (*if joint*)

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| The best way to reach the attorney is: | The best way to reach the client(s) is: |
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| The best time to call the attorney is: | The best time to call the client(s) is: |
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