



# Understanding Case Numbers and Dockets

A Plain-Language Guide to Tracking a Court Case in Kentucky

**Prepared by:** Legal Ease Info Initiative

**For:** Kentucky residents, families, and incarcerated individuals

**Purpose:** Education & information only — not legal advice

## WHY THIS DOCUMENT EXISTS

Court case numbers and dockets are confusing to most people — even those who have been in court before.

People often:

- Don't know which number matters
- Don't understand what a docket entry means
- Miss important filings because they don't know how to track them

This guide exists to help you:

- Understand what your case number means
- Learn how to read a docket
- Know when something important has happened
- Track your case without guessing or relying on rumors

You do not need legal training to use this document.

## **WHAT IS A CASE NUMBER?**

A case number is a unique identifier assigned by the court to your case.

It is used to:

- Track filings and orders
- Identify your case in court systems
- Communicate with clerks, attorneys, and courts

Every document in your case is connected to this number.

## **WHERE TO FIND YOUR CASE NUMBER**

Your case number is usually found on:

- Court notices
- Citations or summonses
- Orders signed by a judge
- Docket printouts
- Jail paperwork

It may be labeled:

- “Case No.”
- “Case Number”
- “Action No.”

Write it down exactly as shown, including letters, numbers, and dashes.

## **UNDERSTANDING KENTUCKY CASE NUMBERS (GENERAL FORMAT)**

Kentucky case numbers often contain information about:

- The year the case was filed
- The court type
- The case category
- A sequence number

Example (fictional):

**25-CR-00123**

This may indicate:

- Filed in 2025
- Criminal case
- Case number 123 for that year

The exact format can vary by court and county.

## **COMMON KENTUCKY CASE TYPE LETTERS**

You may see letters within the case number that indicate the type of case.

- CR – Criminal
- TR – Traffic
- CI – Civil
- FA – Family
- JU – Juvenile

If you are unsure what a code means, ask the court clerk.

## **WHAT IS A DOCKET?**

A docket is the official list of everything that has happened in a case.

It includes:

- Filings by attorneys or prosecutors
- Orders signed by the judge
- Scheduled court dates
- Motions and responses

Think of the docket as a timeline of your case.

## **WHERE TO VIEW A DOCKET**

Dockets may be available:

- Through the court clerk's office
- Through Kentucky Court of Justice systems (if available)
- As a printed docket sheet provided by the clerk
- Through an attorney on record

Not all information is always available online.

## **HOW TO READ A DOCKET ENTRY**

Each docket entry usually includes:

- A date
- A brief description
- The party who filed it

Example (fictional):

03/12/2025 – Motion to Continue – Filed by Defendant

This means:

- On March 12, 2025
- A request to delay a court date was filed
- It was filed by the defendant or their attorney

## **IMPORTANT DOCKET ENTRIES TO WATCH FOR**

- Orders signed by a judge
- Hearing or trial dates
- Motions to dismiss or suppress
- Bond or release conditions
- Sentencing entries

These often require action or preparation.

## **WHAT A DOCKET ENTRY DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN**

- A filing does not mean it was granted
- A motion does not mean the judge agreed
- Some entries are informational only

Always look for:

- An order
- A court date
- Language requiring compliance

## **HOW OFTEN TO CHECK YOUR DOCKET**

- After every court date
- After submitting or requesting documents
- If you are waiting on a ruling

If incarcerated, ask family or advocates to help monitor the docket.

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE SOMETHING YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND**

- Write down the docket entry date and description
- Contact the court clerk
- Have your case number ready
- Ask what the entry means procedurally

You can say: "I'm calling about a docket entry dated \_\_\_\_\_. Can you explain what it means?"

## **COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID**

- Ignoring the docket
- Assuming nothing is happening
- Relying on hearsay or jail rumors
- Waiting until the last minute to ask questions

The docket is often the best source of truth about your case.

## **IF YOU ARE INCARCERATED**

- Docket updates may not be provided automatically
- Deadlines still apply

Ask family or advocates to:

- Check the docket
- Print important entries
- Notify you of dates and orders

## **FINAL TIPS**

- Keep a record of important docket entries
- Bring docket printouts to court or legal meetings
- Pair this guide with your Document Checklist & Organizer
- When in doubt, ask the clerk

## **IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER**

This document is for educational and informational purposes only.

It does not provide legal advice and does not replace an attorney.

Court procedures may vary by county and case type.