

Your Court Date in Forsyth County

Forsyth County Courthouse · 175 N. Chestnut Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101 · (336) 779-6300

DO NOT BRING YOUR PHONE

Since November 10, 2025, the public may not bring phones, smart watches, smart glasses, tablets, laptops or cameras into the courthouse. There are no lockers.

Leave it locked in your car, or leave it at home.

Before you leave the house

- Check your paperwork for your court date, time and courtroom number. Sessions usually start at 8:30 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. — but go by your paperwork.
- Plan to arrive 45 minutes early. Parking, the security line, and finding your courtroom take longer than you think.
- Bring a photo ID and your paperwork in a folder. Leave backpacks and large bags at home.
- Arrange childcare if you possibly can.

Parking

- Best option: a parking deck (4th & Church, Cherry/6th/Trade, City Hall North). About \$1/hour, roughly \$9 daily max. You take a paper ticket and pay on the way out — no phone needed.
- On-street is \$1.50/hour through the PayByPhone app. If you use it, buy 5–6 hours while you are still in your car, then lock the phone in your trunk.
- An expired session is a \$30 ticket. Court runs long and you cannot step out to add time.
- Liberty Plaza deck is free for summoned jurors only.

Getting through security

Everyone walks through a metal detector and puts their belongings through an X-ray machine. You do not need a photo ID to enter the state courthouse for a public proceeding — but bring one anyway; you will likely need it at the clerk's office. Empty your pockets before you reach the front of the line. Weapons, knives and recording devices are confiscated. Federal court is a different building with different rules, including a mandatory photo ID — check your paperwork to see which court you are going to.

If you have to bring your children

Find the bailiff the moment you walk in. Give your name and say you have a small child. If your child gets restless you can wait in the hallway — and the bailiff will come get you when your case is close to being called. That thirty-second conversation is what keeps this from becoming a missed court date.

What to wear

Yes

Collared shirt or blouse · dress slacks or khakis · clean dark jeans · knee-length or longer · closed-toe shoes

No

Shorts · leggings · ripped jeans · tank tops · crop tops · flip-flops or slides · hats · sunglasses indoors · graphic tees

A judge can send you out of the courtroom to change — and you may miss your case being called.

Inside the courtroom

- Stand when the judge enters or leaves.
- Stop talking when the judge takes the bench.
- Address the judge as "Your Honor." Sir or ma'am is fine — a first name is not.
- No food, drinks or gum.
- Do not approach the bench unless told to.
- If you must step out, do it quietly — and tell the bailiff first.
- Answer only what you are asked. If you have a lawyer, let your lawyer talk.

Court-Day Checklist

Print this page and go through it the night before.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

- ☐ I know my court date, my start time, and my courtroom number.
- ☐ My clothes are picked out and clean. Nothing on the "no" list.
- ☐ I have a plan for my phone — leaving it home, or leaving it in the car.
- ☐ I know which deck or lot I am parking in.
- ☐ Childcare is arranged, or I know to tell the bailiff on arrival.
- ☐ I know how I am getting there and how long it takes.

THE MORNING OF

- ☐ Leaving early enough to arrive 45 minutes before my time.
- ☐ Photo ID and court paperwork in a folder — no backpack.
- ☐ Phone is out of my pockets and locked in the car (or at home).
- ☐ If parking on the street: PayByPhone session bought for 5–6 hours before I lock the phone away.
- ☐ Pockets emptied before the security line.

If you already missed a court date

The court can issue an order for your arrest, and the clerk can add a \$200 failure-to-appear fee under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7A-304. That fee is not charged if, within 20 days of the missed date, you come to court to answer the charge or otherwise dispose of it — and the court must waive it if you missed because of an error by a court official, prosecutor, or law enforcement. Call a lawyer today. The window to fix this quietly is short.

MY NOTES

Questions before your court date?

At Greenwood Law you work directly with the attorney who stands beside you in court.

336-661-8788