

Bail Checklist

01 / Before you call

Start with official contacts. Mark a box only after you have an answer.

Options and rules vary by jurisdiction. Ask which apply to this case.

Court / facility: _____ **Date:** _____

Official phone / website: _____

CONFIRM THE ROUTE FIRST

☐ **Ask which release options the court allows.**

Who can explain the order, any payment needed, and the next step?

☐ **Confirm the official payment process with the court or jail.**

Who accepts payment, by what method, and how is a receipt provided?

☐ **Ask whether anything else must be resolved before release.**

Who can confirm outstanding requirements and the current status?

☐ **Get the court's written instructions and next appearance details.**

Confirm date, time, location, reporting requirements, and the contact for questions.

☐ **If considering a company, check its identity and license.**

Use the relevant state regulator's official lookup, where commercial bail is available.

Who I spoke with / when:

Next appearance / instructions to confirm:

Need help understanding an order or agreement? Ask a qualified attorney.

Use page 2 before paying or signing; keep the source links on page 3.

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02 / Before you pay or sign

Ask for written answers. Leave anything unresolved unchecked.

☐ **What is the total cost, including every fee?**

Ask for an itemized quote that separates the premium from collateral.

☐ **What is refundable, and under what conditions?**

Ask what happens if release does not occur or charges are dropped.

☐ **What collateral is required, and what puts it at risk?**

Ask how it is held, what triggers return, and the timing and paperwork needed.

☐ **What responsibilities would a co-signer take on?**

Ask what may be owed if obligations are not met, including payment-plan terms.

☐ **Do I have the complete written agreement before signing?**

Read all terms; ask about restrictions and when the company could end the bond.

☐ **Will I receive copies and itemized receipts?**

Keep the signed agreement, payment records, and collateral documentation together.

PAUSE AND VERIFY PAYMENT REQUESTS

For an unexpected government payment request, end the contact and call back using an independently verified official number. Do not trust caller ID alone.

Do not pay a supposed government caller by gift card, crypto, wire, or payment app.

Questions still unanswered / documents I need:

Keep court requirements separate from the company's contract terms.

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03 / Company comparison & notes

If comparing companies, record written terms. Blank does not mean confirmed.

WHAT TO COMPARE	COMPANY A	COMPANY B
Company / contact		
License checked / date		
Total fees / premium		
Refund terms		
Collateral / return terms		
Co-signer obligations		
Payment-plan terms		
Written agreement received		

My next step / notes:

OFFICIAL REFERENCES / CHECKED SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

These sources inform the questions, not a nationwide rulebook.

Confirm local rules with the court and regulator; state and federal rules differ.

U.S. Courts / Pretrial Services (federal context)

<https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/probation-and-pretrial-services/pretrial-services>

NY DFS / Bail Bond Statement of Rights (New York example)

https://www.dfs.ny.gov/apps_and_licensing/bail_bond_agents/consumer_Statementofrights

FTC / How To Avoid a Government Impersonation Scam

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-avoid-government-impersonation-scam>