PRO SE LITIGANTS

The following checklist, although not exclusive, represents the Court's general requirements for pro se litigants:

1. We encourage you to hire a lawyer because the legal system is complicated and can be confusing.

2. You can represent yourself, but you must follow the same rules of evidence and procedure as if you are a lawyer.

3. You can request that court fees be waived if you are too poor to pay them. This is up to the Judge. Instructions and forms can be found on line at www.chattahoocheefamilylawcenter.org

4. The Judge cannot discuss your case; therefore, only call the Judge's office to schedule a hearing.

5. The Judge and the Clerk of Court cannot give you legal advice. If you have questions, you should talk to a lawyer.

6. You have to make sure the Clerk's office has your current mailing address and daytime telephone number at all times or you may lose your case.

7. You have to make sure the defendant is served as required by law. For further information on service, see www.chattahoocheefamilylawcenter.org.

8. You must prepare and file all paperwork for your case, if you choose to represent yourself. The court staff, law librarians, and the clerk's office do not prepare this paperwork. It's up to you to make sure your paperwork is correctly done and filed. Chewing gum, food, and drink are not allowed in court.

9. Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in the courtroom. If your cell phone rings in court you will be removed from the courtroom and may lose your case. Some judges may also put you in jail or fine you.

10. Dress appropriately for court. You will not be admitted if you are wearing shorts, hats or caps, flip-flops, halter-tops, tank tops, cropped shirts, or any other clothes inconsistent with serious legal proceedings.

11. You must keep up with all court dates and everything about your case. The Judge and Clerk do not send out reminders about court.

12. Be on time for court. If you are not there when your case is called you may lose your case and have to pay attorney's fees for the other side.

13. Causes of action under the Family Violence Act cases (known as TPO's) are battery, assault, stalking, criminal damage to property, unlawful restraint, or criminal trespass. Family violence does not include "bad-mouthing" or arguing. If you are filing a petition for a Temporary Protective Order under O.C.G.A. §19-13-1, both sides must be related in one of the following ways:

1. Present or past spouses
2. Parents of the same child/ren
3. Parent and child/ren
4. Persons who used to live in the same household
5. Persons who currently live in the same household
6. Foster parent and foster child
7. Stepparent and stepchild

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Pro Se Litigant Date:

I acknowledge that I have received and read this document prior to filing my case.