

OFFICE OF THE PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR PROBATE JUDGES

The Connecticut Probate Assembly has adopted, and the Probate Court Administrator has approved, the following statement of Minimum Standards for the Office of Judge of Probate.

1. The Code of Probate Judicial Conduct as adopted by the Probate Assembly and the Probate Court Administrator is binding on all judges. Adherence to the Code is the responsibility of each judge. If a probate judge has any question about the meaning or application of a Canon, the probate judge should request an opinion from the Advance Ruling Committee.
2. The primary responsibility and duty of each individual elected to the office of judge of probate is to the court.
3. The probate judge for each district must be reasonably available at all times. Each judge of probate shall designate two stand-by probate judges who shall be empowered by the Probate Court Administrator to act in the event of the absence of or the inability of the probate judge of said district to act. Notice of such stand-by judges should be filed with one or more of the following: the town's chief executive officer, the town clerk, the police chief and/or the resident state trooper of each town in the probate district. Consideration should be given to notifying any general hospital ordinarily used by residents of the district.
4. Stand-by judges are primarily for emergency situations. Therefore, when any probate judge intends to be absent from the probate district for a period greater than 72 hours and is beyond communication with his/her staff, the Probate Court Administrator should be requested to cite in a substitute judge. The substitute judge may be one of the stand-by judges.
5. In accordance with the Code of Probate Judicial Conduct, each probate judge shall designate reasonable times for probate hearings and render all probate decisions promptly. Promptly is hereby defined to mean no more than sixty days from the close of the final hearing and filing of all appropriate legal documents, unless unusual circumstances require a longer period of time.
6. Each probate judge must avail himself/herself of continuing education in the field of Connecticut probate law. The probate judge must be able to substantiate by conclusive evidence that continued and upgraded educational requirements are met. Attendance at seminars conducted by the Probate Court Administrator and/or the Probate Assembly is evidence of upgrading education.
7. In order to render the proper service to the public, each probate judge shall maintain the necessary court personnel. Careful observance of the Code of Probate Judicial Conduct is required.
8. All appropriate probate documents must be recorded and, unless excluded by statute, available to the public on a reasonable basis. The recording of documents must be maintained in an orderly and timely manner.
9. Each probate judge shall operate the court with uniformity in relation to the probate system of the State of Connecticut and must make every reasonable effort to comply with the rules, regulations and canons. Failure to observe the rules and regulations will be sufficient grounds for the Probate Court Administrator to cite said probate judge before the Council on Probate Judicial Conduct for appropriate action.