

Court Advocacy Tip Sheet #4

Common Courtroom Phrases and Acronyms

18-B Attorney	An attorney assigned by the court to represent a low income person. Sometimes this may be a Public Defender or a Conflict Defender. Any of these may be called “Assigned Counsel.”
Attorney -Client Privilege	Communications between lawyers and their clients cannot be used as evidence in court, nor can lawyers be forced to testify about what their client says. Only the <i>client</i> can waive the privilege.
Docket	The court’s schedule of cases to be heard.
Ex Parte	Latin, “for one party.” <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A judge’s decision based on hearing only one side of the case. Temporary orders of protection are often issued <i>ex parte</i>.2. Improper communication with one party without notice to the other.
I and R	Investigation and Report - also called a “forensic,” “home study,” or “custody evaluation.” Court-ordered evaluation of litigants by agencies or professionals. (More often used in NYC courts.)
OP	Order of Protection, which may be temporary (TOP) or final (OP). OPs are also classified as full (stay-away or no-contact) or limited (refrain-from), depending on what the abuser is ordered to do or not do. An OP does not place any legal obligation on the victim.
PO	Probation officer or parole officer. Sometimes police officer.
Pro Bono	Short for Latin “ <i>pro bono publico</i> ” – for the public good. An attorney who will represent a party free of charge.
Pro Se	Latin, “for oneself.” A person who represents themselves in court, without a lawyer.

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FAMILY COURT – INCLUDING IDV COURT

- ADR** Alternative Dispute Resolution – usually refers to mediation.
- ALJ** Administrative Law Judge – often handles child support or spousal support issues, on referral from Family Court.
- Attorney for the Child (AFC)** Formerly called a Law Guardian. A court-appointed attorney who represents the interests of a child in a divorce or Family Court case.
- TPR** Termination of parental rights.

CRIMINAL COURT – INCLUDING DV AND IDV COURT

- ACD** Adjournment in Contemplation of Dismissal. If the defendant stays out of trouble for a given period of time, the charges are dismissed.
- ADA** Assistant District Attorney – the prosecutor.
- DIR** Domestic Incident Report – completed by police responding to a domestic incident.
- PD** Public defender. Represents defendants who cannot afford to pay a lawyer, in criminal court.
- PSI** Pre-sentence Investigation – an investigation into the history of a person convicted of a crime, to determine whether there are factors that should increase, or decrease, the sentence. Usually handled by Probation.
- ROR** Released on Own Recognizance – released from custody after arrest, without having to post bail.