



HOW BAIL BONDS WORK FOR ATTORNEYS

The Ultimate Guide

_____ *by* _____

JESSE KLEIS


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As a criminal defense attorney or public defender, your number one goal is to get your client out of jail and help them avoid as much jail time as possible. One of the most important parts of the process is learning how the bail industry and bail system actually work. Without the help of a bail bondsman, your client will likely stay in jail until their trial date, especially if they cannot afford to post bail on their own.

Unfortunately, the bail industry and bail system are not regularly covered topics in law school. It's typically just a one-time mention in regards to constitutional rights, specifically **the Eighth Amendment**, which states, "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." However, simply understanding the Eighth Amendment isn't enough when it comes to bail bonds. You need to understand how bail works and what resources are available to you as an attorney to make your and your clients' lives easier.

This is where our Ultimate eBook on Bail Bonds for Attorneys comes in, which covers everything you need to know about the bail industry, the bail system, and how to work with bail bond companies. Keep in mind that the bail industry, along with its rules and regulations, will vary from state to state. In fact, some states don't even have a commercial bail industry, including **Massachusetts**, **Maine**, **Oregon**, **Illinois**, **Kentucky**, **Nebraska**, **Wisconsin**, and **Washington, D.C.** We'll

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be diving into California's bail system specifically, as it's one of the most populous states in the country and has a largest commercial bail industry.

In this eBook, expect to learn:

- How Bail Bonds Work
- What Is A Bail Agent
- How To Find Bail Information
- How To Get Your Clients The Best Price On Bail Bonds
- What To Look Out For On Bail Contracts
- Red Flags When Choosing A Bail Agent
- Free Resources From Bail Bond Companies Available To Attorneys

Let's begin!



WHAT IS A BAIL BOND?

Starting with the basics, a bail bond is defined as a written undertaking entered into by the defendant or surety for the purpose of securing the release of the defendant from custody pending trial. A bail bond is essentially a contract between the court, the bail bond company, and the cosigner(s).

The bail bond company is typically a for-profit business that is licensed by the state in order to post bail on behalf of criminal defendants. The company will then charge a fee, normally 10% of the total bail amount, in order to post bail for the defendant.

The cosigner(s) also referred to as indemnitor(s) is typically a family member or friend of the defendant who agrees to be financially responsible for the entire bail amount if the defendant fails to appear in court. The cosigner will also be required to pay the bail bond company's fee.

Once the bail bond is posted, the defendant will be released from jail and is then required to appear for all of their scheduled court dates. If the defendant fails to appear in court, a warrant will be issued for their arrest, and they will be taken back into custody.

If the bail bond company fails to return the defendant to the court or jail after failing to appear, they will then be required to pay the full bail amount to the

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court. The cosigner will also be responsible for paying any additional fees incurred by the bail bond company, such as attorney's fees, investigation fees, and bounty hunter fees. It is important to note that in California we have 180 days to find and return the defendant before the money is due to the court. This is called the forfeiture period.



WHAT IS A BAIL AGENT?

A bail agent is defined as any person, firm, association, or corporation who engages in the business of bail. In order to become a bail agent, one must be at least 18 years old and have a valid surety agent's license.

A bail agent typically works for a bail bond company and is responsible for posting bail on behalf of criminal defendants. They will answer questions, walk clients through the approval process, and ensure that all paperwork is properly completed. Once contracts are signed and the bail bond is approved, the bail agent will be the one to head to the jail to post bail and get the defendant released.



HOW DO I FIND BAIL INFORMATION?

If your client is currently in custody and you need to find bail information, the best place to start is the jail's website. Every jail is required to have an online database that lists all inmates currently in custody, as well as their bail amount and next scheduled court date. We have curated a full [free list of bail and inmate information](#) based on the county. Simply click on the area, click on the county, and you will be taken to the jail's website.

For example, let's say your client is in custody in Los Angeles County. To find their bail information, you would go to our website and click on "Los Angeles County." This would take you directly to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Inmate Information Center. From here, you would enter your client's name, date of birth, and gender, and their information should populate.

If you are having trouble finding bail information or if the website is down, you can always call the jail directly and ask for bail information or speak with one of our agents who can assist in getting bail information for you. Keep in mind that many

counties such as Los Angeles have special phone numbers just for bail agents and attorneys to call for information. The general phone numbers published on the jail websites are often not staffed and will keep you on hold for hours.



HOW TO GET YOUR CLIENTS THE BEST PRICE ON BAIL BONDS

Getting your clients out of jail so they can resume everyday life and work on their upcoming court cases is the first priority. However, to do so, the client must be able to pay for their bail or the premium for the bail bond. Ensuring that your clients are receiving the best price possible on their bail bonds is the only way to be sure they will be able to meet this expense. In this section, we'll cover the steps you can take to secure the best rates.

■ LOCATE A REPUTABLE BAIL BOND AGENT

The first step is to locate a reputable bail bond agent. This can be done by asking other attorneys for referrals, searching online, or calling around to different bail bond companies. Once you have found a few options, be sure to do your research on each company to make sure they are licensed and have a good reputation before recommending them to a client.

You can check the company's licensing status by visiting the California Department of Insurance's website and searching for the company's name, individual's name

or license number. You can also check online reviews to get an idea of what others have thought of their experience with the company.

■ **CREATE SOLID WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

Once you've chosen a bail bond company, it's important to create a solid working relationship with them. This means being honest and upfront about your clients' cases and any information that may be relevant to their bail bond. Typically, bail company owners will offer a lower rate to you and your clients, whether that's a bail premium or a lower percentage of the bail rate, as long as you refer "good clients" their way. So, what exactly is a good client?

A good client is simply someone who pays the bail bond companies fees, attends all court dates, and doesn't create problems or issues for the bail agent. While this might seem obvious, there are many times that attorneys will refer their clients to bail bond companies without ensuring that the client is actually a good candidate for a bail bond. For example, I've had some attorneys send clients that refuse to fill out our paperwork, promise to pay but don't, provide fake information such as addresses or phone numbers, and even have clients who skipped out on court altogether.

While seasoned bail agents will welcome attorney referrals, you might start having your calls sent to voicemail if your clients burn them, which means also burning a solid relationship you've built. Remember, referrals work both ways, and while California prohibits the practice of bail agents referring clients to attorneys, this practice is still common. As an attorney, you'll want to keep this in mind, especially since many law practices are built on strong referral networks.

UNDERSTAND PRICING AND WORK OUT SPECIAL DISCOUNTS WITH BAIL BOND COMPANIES

Many bail bond companies are willing to work out special deals with companies who they have a solid relationship with. However, it's important to know what standard pricing looks like so you can ensure you're truly getting the best rate for your clients. In California, prices for bail bonds are typically set at 10%. However, clients with retained attorneys will typically have that price dropped down to 7%.

In addition, you can typically ask bail agents to offer rebates on the bail premium, which helps your clients pay for their legal fees at the end of their case. Bail Agents know that lawyers need to get paid too. With additional discounts already offered through top-tier bail bond companies, such as 0% interest payment plans and flexible payment options, this can make bailing your clients out of jail much more affordable.

When in doubt, call **Mr. Nice Guy Bail Bonds**. Not only are we determined to beat anyone's price, but we also offer a wide variety of discounts that are designed to make bailing your clients out as affordable as possible. We believe that everyone deserves to have access to quality legal representation, which is why we offer a wide variety of payment options and 0% interest payment plans. **Contact us today** to learn more about how we can help you get your clients out of jail quickly and affordably.



WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR ON BAIL CONTRACTS

Even when you've done your research to choose a reputable bail bond company and have negotiated a fair price, there are still some things you need to be aware of before signing any bail contracts or in the case that your client has already signed a bail contract. In this section, we'll cover everything attorneys should be looking out for when it comes to a bail contract.

DOES THE BAIL COMPANY CHARGE AN ANNUAL PREMIUM?

One of the first things you'll want to look for when reviewing a bail contract is whether or not the bail company charges an annual premium. Many bail companies will sneak this little fee into the fine print of the contract. However, California has recently banned this, which means that any bail company charging an annual premium is in violation of the law.

If you come across a bail company that's charging an annual premium, you'll want to contact the company immediately. Not only is this a violation of the law, but it's also a huge red flag that you're dealing with a less than reputable bail company.

DOES THE CLIENT NEED TO KEEP UP WITH ANY CHECK-IN PROCEDURES?

Depending on the type of case, your client may be required to “check-in” with the bail company on a regular basis. Some common “check-ins” may include updating their contact information or employment information if it changes, attending a rehab program, mandatory drug testing, monthly payments, GPS monitoring, and more. If your client does not keep up with this agreement, the bail bond company may surrender your client.

UNDERSTAND THE SURRENDERING PROCESS OF BAIL BOND COMPANIES

If your client does not stick to their agreements, there’s a good chance that the bail bond company will surrender your client, as we mentioned above. So, what does that look like, and how does that impact you as an attorney? Typically, it includes sending the client back to jail, which can be done in a few ways, such as:

- **Picking Up The Client In Public Or At Home:** The first way that this can be done is simply by picking up the client from the street, home, work, or any other public place and putting them back in jail until their court date.
- **Surrender The Client In Court:** The other most common way is to surrender the defendant in court, which is the most upsetting for attorneys. This means that they will simply be arrested without warning while you are in court. Bail agents can arrange this before you even show up to court, and while California stipulates that the bail bond company must notify the attorney on record beforehand, it’s easy to miss a call or letter from a bail bond company. Unfortunately, asking for an OR (release on own

recognizance) will typically not work in this case, as most judges will side with the bail agent.

To ensure that your client is not surrendered in court, make sure to advise your clients to never miss a court appearance, to keep up with their check-ins (if any), and to let you know if they are going to be out of town or unable to make a meeting. Plus, as an attorney, you want to ensure you're always returning any phone call or letters you receive from a bail bond agent, especially when it is regarding a mutual client.



RED FLAGS WHEN CHOOSING A BAIL AGENT

When choosing a bail agent, you'll want to be on the lookout for any red flags that could indicate you're working with a less than reputable company. Here are some of the most common red flags we've learned through experience:

■ AVOID BAIL SOLICITORS

Bail solicitors are people who try to get your business by hanging out near jails or court buildings or approach you in the hallway of a courthouse. While they may seem friendly, it's important to avoid them. Many bail solicitors are not licensed bail agents, which is illegal. In addition, they often resell the client's information to licensed bail companies for a referral or commission fee.

Plus, the companies who typically buy these referrals are likely to scam your client, overcharge the bail bond, and surrender them back in jail. As a result, the clients may end up paying more than they need to for bail. So, if you're ever in need of bail services, be sure to find a licensed bail agent directly and avoid solicitors.

■ **AVOID BIG BOX BAIL BOND COMPANIES**

When you are looking for a bail bond company, it is important to avoid the “big box” bail bond companies. These companies often have hidden fees, poor customer service, and annoying terms and conditions of bail, such as frequent in-office check-ins.

Instead, look for a smaller, experienced bail bond company that will provide you with the personalized service you deserve. At Mr. Nice Guy Bail Bonds, we offer 24-hour bail bonds with competitive prices and no hidden fees. We also offer a mobile app for easy check-ins, and we do not require any in-person check-ins or invasive terms and conditions of bail. Simply sign a few forms online and pay using any modern payment to get started.

■ **REQUIRING COLLATERAL**

When you are looking for a bail bond company, it is important to find one that does not require unnecessary collateral for low-risk cases. Some bail bond companies will require car titles or “pink slips” before they even begin the paperwork or sign the contract. Most experienced bail agents will only require collateral on high-risk cases.

■ **UNABLE TO PROVE THAT THEY’RE LICENSED**

A reputable bail bond company will always be able to provide you with proof that they are licensed by the state of California. If a bail bond company is unable or unwilling to do this, it’s likely because they are not licensed.

■ THE PROCESS IS COMPLICATED OR CONFUSING

The process of getting a bail bond should not be complicated or confusing. If you're working with a bail bond company and the process seems complicated or confusing, it's likely because the company is trying to hide something from you. At Mr. Nice Guy Bail Bonds, we make the process simple and straightforward. We'll walk you through every step of the process so that you know exactly what's going on and what to expect. You should leave the process feeling informed and confident, not confused.

■ HIDING FEES IN THE FINE PRINT

When you're looking at the contract for a bail bond, be sure to read the fine print carefully. Some companies will try to hide fees in the fine print, which can end up costing your clients more money than you expected. For example, some companies will charge a "jail fee" or a "court fee" in addition to the bail bond premium. These fees are not required by law and are simply added to the cost of the bail bond in order for the bail bond company to make more money. At Mr. Nice Guy Bail Bonds, we believe in transparency and honesty. We will never try to hide fees in the fine print of our contract. You can be confident that the price you're quoted is the price you'll pay.

■ RESOURCES FROM BAIL BOND COMPANIES AVAILABLE TO ATTORNEYS

Most reputable bail bond companies offer resources to attorneys that you should know about and take advantage of since they can be helpful in various situations and make your job easier. Some of the resources that bail bond companies offer to attorneys include:

■ FREE WARRANT SEARCHES

As an attorney, you understand how important it is to stay on top of your clients' warrants. Not only can an outstanding warrant lead to arrest, but it can also negatively impact your case. Fortunately, bail bond companies offer free warrant searches for attorneys. This service can save you a considerable amount of time, as you won't need to track down the relevant information yourself. Additionally, bail agents are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so even if your client calls you on a Sunday morning, you can refer them to a bail agent who can help them resolve the issue. Best of all, this service is provided free of charge. So if you're looking for a way to streamline your warrant search process, consider partnering with a bail bond company.

■ FREE INMATE LOCATOR SERVICES

Many bail bond companies offer free inmate locator services for attorneys. This can be a valuable service for attorneys who have clients who have been arrested, as it can save them time and effort in finding the bail information, court information, and charges for their clients. In some cases, this information is available online, but in other cases, it is not, and attorneys would need to call the jail to get this information.

Having a bail agent handle this for them can be a huge time saver for attorneys. In addition, in some cases, bail agents can provide this service on weekends or holidays when attorneys may not be able to get this information themselves. This can be a valuable service for attorneys who want to make sure they have the latest information on their client's cases.

■ BAIL MOTIONS

If you're dealing with a client that has a PC 1275 hold, bail bond companies can take care of that for you at no additional cost (typically, this is with the agreement that the bail agent who is completing the paperwork will get the bond if the court approves it). The bail agent will work directly with the defendant and their family to gather all of the necessary documentation and deliver it to the court. If the motion is granted, the bail bond will be posted.

This service is also available if a client is asking for a bail reduction or if you need a bail agent to conduct jail visits (bail interviews). Our agents can accept collect calls from jail, are available 24/7, and will make every effort to ensure that your client's bail motions are taken care of in a timely and efficient manner.

■ NOTARY SERVICES

Bail bond companies often offer notary services to attorneys, which is a convenient way to get documents notarized at any time of the day or night. This can be especially helpful if you need to get documents notarized late at night or on weekends when regular offices may be closed. Bail agents will go where others won't, including going to jails in person.

■ PROPERTY BOND PAPERWORK

Some defendants may choose to post a property bond instead of using a bail bond company. In order to do so, the defendant must first draft a deed of trust or mortgage agreement and provide it to the court. The court will then place a lien on the property, and if the defendant fails to appear for their court date, they will forfeit the property.

While posting a property bond may seem like a simpler process, it often includes a ton of paperwork and specific information in order to get approved. Most attorneys are unfamiliar with property bonds or don't want to have to spend the time organizing the requirements needed for approval. For example, in most counties, a property bond will require title insurance through a title company, independent home appraisal with a licensed and insurance appraiser, recent tax records from the county, signed and notarized deed of trust.

Thankfully, bail bond companies can often help with this process as well for a flat fee saving you time, money, and hassle.

■ IMMIGRATION BONDS

If you need help with an immigration case, you're not alone. Unless you specialize in this area of law, the immigration bond process is less common and often more complex. Referring the client's loved ones to a bail agent can alleviate your time being tied up going over the process. We can also provide the family with options and additional information that is often not publicly available online.

When it comes to an immigration bond, the bail agent's experience will be an invaluable asset for your case. We understand the process and what needs to be done in order for the accused to be released from custody. In some instances, we may be able to get the bond reduced, which will save your client money. We know how to navigate the system and will work diligently to get your client or their loved one released as quickly as possible.

■ FEDERAL BONDS

Bail bond companies can help attorneys in many ways, especially when it comes to posting bail for federal cases. Bail bond agents have experience with the federal

court system and know how to fill out the necessary paperwork correctly. In addition, bail bond agents can help to secure the federal bond packet paperwork needed, which may be difficult for some families to come up with on their own. Bail bond companies typically charge a small flat fee for their services, making them an affordable option for many attorneys. By working with a bail bond company, attorneys can provide their clients with the best chance of being released from jail while awaiting trial.

■ **OUT-OF-STATE BOND ASSISTANCE**

If one of your clients has been arrested outside of the state of California, you might be wondering what options are available to them. Thankfully, there are bail bond companies like ours that specialize in out-of-state bonds, which can make the process much easier for both you and your client.

Bail bond agents that work with out-of-state bonds have experience with the different laws and requirements in each state. They will be able to call the arresting agency, find the charges, court info, release info, and bail amount, and relay that information back to the attorney or family requesting that information.

Plus, we can accept calls from jail, making it easy for defendants to call us from anywhere or in any state. So, if you're representing a client that has been arrested outside of California, don't hesitate to give us a call. We can help you navigate the process and get your client released as quickly.

■ **LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE**

Bail bond companies can be a valuable resource for attorneys who need language assistance. Our bail agents are available 24/7 and can speak English and Spanish. We also have access to live translator services for other languages. This can be

a valuable resource for attorneys who need to communicate with their clients but may not be able to speak the same language. By working with a bail bond company, attorneys can ensure that they are able to communicate effectively with their clients and provide them with the best possible legal representation.

■ **INFORMATION ABOUT CALIFORNIA BAIL LAWS**

Bail bond companies understand the bail process and how to work within the system to help your client. In some cases, they may be able to secure a lower bail amount than what the court initially set. They also know how to post bail quickly so your client can be released from jail as soon as possible. Bail bond companies can also provide you with information about California bail laws and how they might affect your client's case.

For example, they can explain the process of securing a bail bond increase or help you navigate a bail hold. In addition, they can provide you with information about OR release conditions and how to ensure your client complies with them. By working with a bail bond company, you can be confident that you have the information you need to make the best decisions for your client's case.

■ **GPS MONITORING SERVICES**

Bail bond companies can help attorneys with GPS monitoring services in a few ways:

- First, we can write letters to the courts certifying that we work with licensed and bonded GPS monitoring service providers. This can help you, and your clients satisfy the courts and obtain release on OR (own recognizance) or home detention.

- Second, we offer this letter writing service free of charge to you.
- Third, we have reduced cost contracts for GPS monitoring services because we utilize them on a large scale. This can save your clients money if they require GPS monitoring.
- Fourth, we can save your clients time by shopping around for the best price on GPS monitoring services since we have multiple contracts with different service providers.

In short, working with a bail bond company can save you and your clients time and money. We are here to help you in any way we can so that you can provide the best possible legal representation for your clients.



IS A BAIL BOND COMPANY WORTH IT?

The short answer is “yes”! With so much experience, resources, and information at our disposal, bail bond companies can be valuable assets to any attorney. We are here to help you in any way we can so that you can provide the best possible legal representation for your clients.

The more attorneys we can help, the better we can make the bail system. We believe that everyone deserves access to quality legal representation, and we are committed to helping attorneys provide the best possible service to their clients.



WRAPPING IT UP

So, the next time you find yourself in need of a bail agent for a client, remember that they can be a great asset to your law practice. Not only are they knowledgeable about the bail process and how to get your clients out of jail as quickly as possible, but many bail agents are also happy to provide resources and services to make your life easier. In short, when it comes to getting your clients out of jail fast, think of your bail agent as an extension of your practice, here to help in a number of ways.

For more information about bail bond companies and the services available to you and your clients, please [contact us today](#).

ABOUT JESSE KLEIS



Jesse Kleis has always been a natural-born entrepreneur and risk taker. So when he saw an opportunity to serve the community as a bail bond agent, he jumped on it – and his formal education in sociology gave him a distinctive edge to stand above the competition in the bail bond industry.

In 2015, Jesse founded Mr. Nice Guy Bail Bonds, which has quickly become one of the country's most successful bail bond businesses. He attributes this success to the company's adaptability, hard work, grit – and most importantly, its dedication to putting people first. Plus, with the knowledge and know-how of cutting-edge SEO principles, he's been able to ensure that Mr. Nice Guy Bail Bonds is consistently popping up first when people search for bail bonds in their area.

Jesse is a firm believer in giving back, and he regularly donates his time and resources to helping others, which has significantly contributed to his success. Alongside his role in the bail bonds industry, he continues to hold a formal role in professional education as a college-level instructor. With a dedication to growth and helping others, he invites all opportunities and fully intends to continue on his entrepreneurial journey. For more information, please [visit Mr. Nice Guy Bail Bonds](#) or [contact us today](#) with any questions.

