Bail Bonds by Beth Sutton

What a bond is:

A bail bond is the means for an arrested individual to get out of jail while waiting for their court date. Any defendant that cannot afford bail, must wait in jail until they go to court. When someone is bonded out by a bail bond company, the defendant, or their representative (family, friend, coworker, neighbor, etc…) pays a percentage of the total bond – usually 10%. Some companies take payments, so the initial money down maybe less than 10% with an arrangement of a payment plan. The bond companies are responsible to the court that the defendant will appear at all court dates. Failure on this leads to the bond company paying the FULL amount of the bond to the court, and/or the defendant being brought back to jail.

EVERY bond company must be financially backed by another company or individual that can guarantee payment to the court of EVERY single bond their company has written, in full. Meaning not just the 10%, but the total amount of every bond.

Our process at 2nd Chance Bail Bonds:

Someone calls our office – the defendant from jail, or their representative. We look up the defendant on Sedgwick County Inmate Search to verify the defendant, amount of the bond and charges. (Yes, you can look up people if you know their first and last names – but only those currently in jail. Type Sedgwick County Inmate Search into your search bar.) We arrange time for the representative to come to our office to pay the agreed upon amount and fill out paperwork.

Paperwork consists of personal information of the representative, which we now call a co-signer, as they have co-signed for financial responsibility to the bond as well as making sure the defendant makes it to court dates. Personal information includes address, phone number, social security #, work information, spouse/family information, and three personal references that know either the co-signer and/or the defendant. If the agreed upon amount is less than 10% a payment plan will also be filled out.

When both pay and paperwork are finished, a bondsman will go to the jail and sign the bond. The defendant is required to go immediately to our office to fill out their portion of the paperwork – which is the same as the co-signer. All defendants are required to check in at our office at least every two weeks, and let us know new court dates. Some maybe required to check in daily depending on charges, and court filings. A defendant will remain on bond with us until their court process is finished – dismissal or sentencing.

We require all this information to make it easier to find the defendants that jump bail. Every co-signer “swears” their defendant will make it to court because “they will beat their a$$” if not! Well, we wouldn’t need our bounty hunting team if that were true! Bounty Hunting Team is just like it sounds – however not nearly as dramatic as *Dog the Bounty Hunter*. Our team takes copies of the paperwork and does all the legwork, stakeouts, and contacting to find bail jumpers and return them to jail before any payments to the court have to be made. In most cases we are allowed 30-60 days before payment, after a court forfeiture. Yes, they wear tactical gear. They can and do carry weapons.

Bonding varies from state to state. Some states are “no cash bail” states, meaning if someone gets put in jail, they will stay only until they go in front of a judge. There a defendant will receive instructions and parameters as well as notice of their first court appearance. State law, and a judge’s discretion is part of what factors in to whether someone will be released.

States with no cash bail:

District of Columbia, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York. California has more variables trying to balance between no cash bail and the traditional bail system. (All of the no cash bail information could be a whole different presentation!)

Our process at 2nd Chance is specific to Kansas and even more specific to our company. As of last week, a House Bill passed requiring at least 5% of the bond to be taken for payment. This goes into effect July 1.

If you write about bail bond, you definitely want to research your state and its laws. I would even recommend calling a bond company and ask their process.