

**FRESNO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT • STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

# **PLAINTIFF'S PACKET**

## **SMALL CLAIMS DEPARTMENT**

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**Civil Division – Fresno**  
1130 "O" Street  
Fresno, CA 93724-0002  
(559) 457-1900

## FILING A SMALL CLAIMS ACTION

### **Filing the Plaintiff's Claim**

If the damages claimed are \$1,500 or less the filing fee is \$30. If the damages claimed are more than \$1,500 but less than or equal to \$5,000 the filing fee is \$50. If the damages claimed are more than \$5,000 but less than or equal to \$10,000 the filing fee is \$75. **If you have filed more than 12 claims during the past 12 months, the filing fee is \$100.00.**

#### **You need to:**

- File the original claim and one copy with the Clerk's Office. Check Local Rule 2.8.6 for the proper venue. \*Claim is a five-page document.
- Make two copies of your claim for each named defendant.
- Make one copy to keep for yourself.

### **Serving the Plaintiff's Claim**

You must serve every defendant you sue by one of the following methods:

- Certified mail by the court.
- Personal service using Sheriff's Department representatives.
- Using private process servers.
- Having a disinterested party serve the claim. (A disinterested party is anyone over the age of 18 years who is not a party to the claim.)

If you want the court to serve the defendant(s) by certified mail, you will be charged \$15.00 for each defendant to be served. You must contact the court two weeks prior to the hearing date to find out if the service was successful.

If you are unable to serve the defendant(s), you must reschedule the hearing date and attempt to have the defendant(s) served in one of the other ways listed above.

**If you choose to have the defendant(s) personally served, you must file a properly completed Proof of Service form with the court at least 5 days before the hearing date.**

### **After Judgment**

Suggested number of forms to copy:

- Writ(s): Original plus 4 copies
- Order of Examination: Original plus 3 copies
- Abstract: Original plus 1 copy

***Note: Verify that all pages of forms are copied.***

### **Settling the Case**

If your claim is settled before trial, please complete a Request for Dismissal form and file it with the court.

# Filing a Lawsuit?

No-Cost Services Are Available Before or After You File

## BBB Mediation Services

### Who Are We?

The *BBB Mediation Services* can help you resolve your dispute before it goes to court by arranging a meeting where you can work out your own settlement with the help of a skilled mediator. The mediator will not take sides or tell you what to do. Instead, the mediator will guide you through a proven process for reaching a settlement that meets the needs of everyone involved.

### Why Try Mediation?

- ***It's Free.*** No cost to residents or businesses in Fresno County or for cases filed in Fresno County Courts.
- ***It's Fast.*** When the parties agree, mediation can often be scheduled within a few days.
- ***It's Private.*** Everything said or done in mediation is confidential unless the parties agree otherwise.
- ***It's Fair.*** The mediator does not take sides or tell you what to do. If you think a settlement offer is unfair, just say "no."
- ***It's Smart.*** When mediation works, it saves time and money, and it is usually a lot less stressful. If mediation doesn't end in agreement, you can still take the case to small claims court for a judge to decide.



### Contact the BBB Mediation Services

**Phone.** 559-256-6300 **Fax.** 559-228-6518

**Website.** [www.bbbmediation.org](http://www.bbbmediation.org)

**E-mail.** [info@bbbmediation.org](mailto:info@bbbmediation.org)

**Location.** 4201 W. Shaw Ave., #107, Fresno

The BBB Mediation Services is a project of the Better Business Bureau® of Central California Foundation, Inc.

## Small Claims Advisor

### What Do We Do?

The *Fresno County Small Claims Advisor (SCA)* provides advice on small claims court procedures and common small claims issues, such as:

- Landlord/Tenant Disputes
- Bad Checks
- Consumer/Merchant Conflicts

### Whom Can We Help?

The *SCA* can assist any person with a dispute that has been or could be brought in small claims court in Fresno County.

### We Cannot Assist...

- People who want to sue, or have been sued, in a court other than small claims court.
- People with a dispute involving more than \$5,000.00, unless the amount over \$7,500.00 is waived (\$5,000.00 for businesses).
- People who want a court order against another person (i.e. order to remove a tree, order to remove a fence).
- People dealing with criminal charges.

### Contact the Small Claims Advisor

**Phone.** 559-457-2174

**Location.** B.F. Sisk Courthouse, 1130 'O' St., Fresno

**Hours.** Monday–Friday: 8:00 AM– 4:00 PM

**Website.** [www.fresnosmallclaimsadvisor.org](http://www.fresnosmallclaimsadvisor.org)

Appointments are encouraged for those seeking assistance in Spanish or in Hmong.

# ¿Va Archivar Una Demanda?

Servicios Sin Cobro Alguno Están Disponibles Antes o Después De Que Archive

## BBB Servicios de Mediación

### ¿Quiénes Somos Nosotros?

El *BBB Servicios de Mediación* le puede ayudar a resolver conflictos con la asistencia de un mediador antes de llevar su caso a la corte. El mediador cita a las personas para que puedan hablar de sus conflictos y llegar a un acuerdo. El mediador no decide, no toma lados, y no les dice que hacer. En cambio, el mediador guía el proceso para que lleguen a un acuerdo que sea satisfeco para ambos partidos.

### ¿Para Que Usar El Proceso De Mediación?

- ***Es Gratis.*** No hay cobro para los residentes o comerciantes del condado de Fresno o para casos que están archivados en la corte.
- ***Es Rápido.*** Cuando ambos partidos están de acuerdo a utilizar mediación, se puede hacer una cita entre unos días.
- ***Es Privado.*** Todo dicho o hecho el la mediación es confidencial al menos que los partidos convengan de otra manera.
- ***Es Justo.*** El mediador no toma lados, es neutral y no hace decisiones por usted. Si usted cree que el acuerdo es injusto, nomás diga “no.”
- ***Es Conveniente.*** Cuando la mediación funciona, le ahorrar tiempo y dinero, y usualmente es menos estresante. Si durante la mediación no hay algún acuerdo, todavía pueden llevar la demanda a corte para que el juez decida.



### Comuníquese con el BBB Servicios de Mediación

**Teléfono.** 559-256-6300 **Fax.** 559-228-6518

**Página Web.** [www.bbbmediation.org](http://www.bbbmediation.org)

**E-mail.** [info@bbbmediation.org](mailto:info@bbbmediation.org)

**Lugar.** 4201 W. Shaw Ave., #107, Fresno

## Asesor Legal de Reclamos Menores

### ¿Que Hacemos Nosotros?

El *Asesor Legal de Reclamos Menores* da consejos legales en casos de demandas pequeñas y consejos en casos como:

- Propietario/inquilinos
- Cheques cancelados por no tener fondos
- Consumidor/comerciante

### ¿A Quien Ayudamos?

El consejero del condado de Fresno puede asistir a cualquier persona con una demanda que ha sido archivada o se puede llevar a la corte de demandas menores.

### No Podemos Asistir en Casos de...

- Personas que quieren demandar o han sido demandas en otra corte que no sea la corte de demandas pequeñas.
- Personas que tienen demandas de más de \$5,000.00, al menos que la cantidad sobre \$5,000.00 sea renunciada (\$5,000.00 para negocios).
- Personas que quieren una orden contra otra persona (por ejemplo una orden de remover una cerca, orden civil, una orden para remover un árbol).
- Personas con casos criminales.

### Comuníquese con el Asesor Legal de Reclamos Menores

**Teléfono.** 559-457-2174

**Lugar.** B.F. Sisk Courthouse, 1130 'O' St., Fresno

**Horas.** Lunes a Viernes de 8:00 AM a 4:00 PM

**Página Web.** [www.fresnosmallclaimsadvisor.org](http://www.fresnosmallclaimsadvisor.org)

Si necesita asistencia en español se le anima a que haga una cita.

# TIPS FOR SMALL CLAIMS LITIGANTS

## CONDUCT IN THE COURTROOM

- No food, drinks or gum are allowed in the courtroom.
- Be prepared and on time. You must be present when your case is called.
- Do not ask the court staff for legal advice. The staff is not allowed to give legal advice.

## TRIAL PREPARATION

- The scheduled date with which you are provided is the date set for your trial. You must come to court prepared to present your case.
- Bring all the exhibits you might want the court to see and consider, such as written contracts, repair estimates, photos, receipts, etc. You will be required to allow the opposing party to see and read your exhibits before your case is heard. If you have exhibits that will take time to read, you should make copies and give them to the opposing party either before the trial date or on the trial date, as soon as both parties have arrived in court.
- If you have any witnesses whose testimony you need to prove your case, they should come to court on your trial date. You are solely responsible for arranging the appearance of any witnesses at your trial. Remember that this is your case, and you must present the evidence for the court to consider.
- As the plaintiff in the case, you are the one requesting judgment. Be ready to answer questions the judge may ask, such as: How did you arrive at the amount of the claim?
- The court may keep the exhibits you present. If you need copies of your records to retain, you should make those copies before you come to court.
- You must provide your own interpreter if one is needed. For interpreter assistance, call the Interpreter's Office at (559) 457-4910.

## DAY OF TRIAL

- If your name is on the calendar, when the courtroom is unlocked please take a seat in the courtroom and remain in the courtroom until roll is taken and the oath has been administered.
- When roll is taken, if you are representing someone else, please advise the clerk taking the roll of that fact, and give him or her your name and correct spelling. Be sure to notify the clerk of any change of address.
- If you are assigned to a courtroom where a temporary judge will be sitting, you will be asked to sign a stipulation, which is an agreement, that he or she may decide your case. A temporary judge is an attorney who sits by assignment of the Fresno Superior Court, has been as attorney for at least five years, and has attended a small claims judicial officer training course. Once you sign the stipulation, any judgment issued by the temporary judge is the same as a judgment issued by a judge.
- After roll is taken, if you have not already done so, give the opposing party copies of your exhibits or let the opposing party see the exhibits you plan to present to the court. The opposing party must have a chance to read the exhibits before the judge sees them. You will delay the time of your trial if you do not give these copies to the opposing party ahead of time. Keep your original exhibits until your case is called.

- Cases may not be called in the order listed on the posted calendar.
- Mediation is highly regarded as an excellent alternative to a trial. A Dispute Settlement Center representative (mediator) will be at court on the day and time of your hearing to help you resolve your case.
- The mediator is specially trained and impartial, he or she does not give legal advice or make decisions. The parties involved in the dispute make the decisions and the mediator and the parties work together to identify the issues that are most important for each side and then to find practical resolutions. If a settlement cannot be reached the case goes to trial that same day and a judge will decide the outcome.

### **AFTER TRIAL**

- Once a judgment is rendered, the time to appeal the court's decision extends for thirty (30) days. The judgment will become final after the 30-day appeal period, if an appeal is not filed.
- Original exhibits may be picked up from the Small Claims Department of the Sisk Civil Courthouse at 1130 "O" Street after the judgment becomes final.
- Once a judgment is issued in your case, a notice of that judgment will be mailed to you.
- If your matter was taken under advisement by the temporary judge or judge hearing your case, you will be notified of his or her decision by mail. The court can take up to ninety (90) days to issue a ruling when a case is taken under advisement. Please do not call the court.

**PLEASE KEEP THE COURT ADVISED IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES.**

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

### **Interactive Web Programs**

**EZLegal** [www.ezlegalfile.org](http://www.ezlegalfile.org)

**I-CAN!** [www.icandocs.org](http://www.icandocs.org)

[www.fresnosmallclaimsadvisor.org](http://www.fresnosmallclaimsadvisor.org)

### **Small Claims Advisors**

**1130 O Street Fresno, CA 93724**

**(559) 457-2174**

**Open Mon-Fri 8:00-4:00**

**appointments are encouraged for those seeking assistance in Hmong or Spanish**

### **Dispute Settlement Center**

**2519 W. Shaw Ave., Ste. 106**

**Fresno, CA 93711**

**559-256-6300 phone**

**559-228-6518, fax**

### **Attorney Referral & Info Service**

**Fresno County Bar Association**

**1221 Van Ness Ave.**

**Fresno, CA (559) 264-0137**

**Referrals: 8:30 to noon, 1 to 4 pm**

**Video: Resolving Your Small Claims Case in the California Courts located at [www.courts.ca.gov/10962.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/10962.htm)**

## INFORMATION FOR THE SMALL CLAIMS PLAINTIFF

This information sheet is written for the person who sues in the small claims court. It explains some of the rules of and some general information about the small claims court. It may also be helpful for the person who is sued.

### WHAT IS SMALL CLAIMS COURT?

Small claims court is a special court where disputes are resolved quickly and inexpensively. The rules are simple and informal. The person who sues is the **plaintiff**. The person who is sued is the **defendant**. In small claims court, you may ask a lawyer for advice before you go to court, but you cannot have a lawyer in court. Your claim cannot be for more than \$5,000 if you are a business or public entity or for more than \$10,000 if you are a natural person (including a sole proprietor). (\*See below for references to exceptions.) If you have a claim for more than this amount, you may sue in the civil division of the trial court or you may sue in the small claims court and give up your right to the amount over the limit. You cannot, however, file more than two cases in small claims court for more than \$2,500 each during a calendar year.

### WHO CAN FILE A CLAIM?

1. You must be at least *18 years old* to file a claim. If you are not yet 18, tell the clerk. You may ask the court to appoint a **guardian ad litem**. This is a person who will act for you in the case. The guardian ad litem is usually a parent, a relative, or an adult friend.
  2. A person who sues in small claims court must first make a **demand**, if possible. This means that you have asked the defendant to pay, and the defendant has refused. If your claim is for possession of property, you must ask the defendant to give you the property.
  3. Unless you fall within two technical exceptions, you must be the **original owner** of the claim. This means that if the claim is assigned, the buyer cannot sue in the small claims court.
- You must also appear at the small claims hearing yourself unless you filed the claim for a corporation or other entity that is not a natural person.**
4. If a corporation files a claim, an employee, an officer, or a director must act on its behalf. If the claim is filed on behalf of an association or another entity that is not a natural person, a regularly employed person of the entity must act on its behalf. A person who appears on behalf of a corporation or another entity must not be employed or associated solely for the purpose of representing the corporation or other entity in the small claims court. **You must file a declaration with the court to appear in any of these instances.** (See *Authorization to Appear on Behalf of Party*, form SC-109.)

### WHERE CAN YOU FILE YOUR CLAIM?

You must sue in the right court and location. This rule is called **venue**. Check the court's local rules if there is more than one court location in the county handling small claims cases.

If you file your claim in the wrong court, the court will dismiss the claim unless all defendants personally appear at the hearing and agree that the claim may be heard.

The right location may be any of these:

1. Where the defendant lives or where the business involved is located;
2. Where the damage or accident happened;
3. Where the contract was signed or carried out;
4. If the defendant is a corporation, where the contract was broken;
5. For a retail installment account or sales contract or a motor vehicle finance sale:
  - a. Where the buyer lives;
  - b. Where the buyer lived when the contract was entered into;
  - c. Where the buyer signed the contract; or
  - d. Where the goods or vehicle are permanently kept.

### SOME RULES ABOUT THE DEFENDANT (including government agencies)

1. You must sue using the defendant's *exact legal name*. If the defendant is a business or a corporation and you do not know the exact legal name, check with the state or local licensing agency, the county clerk's office, or the Office of the Secretary of State, Corporate Status Unit at [www.ss.ca.gov/business](http://www.ss.ca.gov/business). Ask the clerk for help if you do not know how to find this information. If you do not use the defendant's exact legal name, the court may be able to correct the name on your claim at the hearing or after the judgment.
2. If you want to sue a government agency, you must first file a claim with the agency before you can file a lawsuit in court. Strict time limits apply. If you are in a Department of Corrections or Youth Authority facility, you must prove that the agency denied your claim. Please attach a copy of the denial to your claim.

### HOW DOES THE DEFENDANT FIND OUT ABOUT THE CLAIM?

You must make sure the defendant finds out about your lawsuit. This has to be done according to the rules or your case may be dismissed or delayed. The correct way of telling the defendant about the lawsuit is called **service of process**. This means giving the defendant a copy of the claim. **YOU CANNOT DO THIS YOURSELF**. Here are four ways to serve the defendant:

1. **Service by a law officer** — You may ask the marshal or sheriff to serve the defendant. A fee will be charged.
2. **Process server** — You may ask anyone who is *not a party* in your case and who is at least *18 years old* to serve the defendant. The person is called a **process server** and must personally give a copy of your claim to the defendant. The person must also sign a proof of service form showing when the defendant was served. Registered process servers will do this for you for a fee. You may also ask a friend or relative to do it.
3. **Certified mail** — You may ask the clerk of the court to serve the defendant by certified mail. The clerk will charge a fee. You should check back with the court prior to the hearing to see if the receipt for certified mail was returned to the court. **Service by certified mail must be done by the clerk's office except in motor vehicle accident cases involving out-of-state defendants.**
4. **Substituted service** — This method lets you serve another person instead of the defendant. You must follow the procedures carefully. You may also wish to use the marshal or sheriff or a registered process server.

\*Exceptions: Different limits apply in an action against a defendant who is a guarantor. (See Code Civ. Proc., § 116.220(c).) In an action brought by a natural person for damages for bodily injuries resulting from an automobile accident, a \$7,500 limit applies if a defendant is covered by an automobile insurance policy that includes a duty to defend. (See Code Civ. Proc., § 116.221.)

#### 4. **Substituted service** (*continued*)

A copy of your claim must be left

— at the defendant's business with the person in charge;

**OR**

— at the defendant's home with a competent person who is at least 18 years old. The person who receives the claim must be told about its contents. Another copy must be mailed, first class postage prepaid, to the defendant at the address where the paper was left. The service is not complete until *10 days* after the copy is mailed.

No matter which method of service you choose, the defendant must be served by a certain date or the trial will be postponed. If the defendant lives in the county, service must be completed at least *15 days* before the trial date. This period is at least *20 days* if the defendant lives outside the county.

The person who serves the defendant must sign a court paper showing when the defendant was served. This paper is called a *Proof of Service* (form SC-104). It must be signed and returned to the court clerk as soon as the defendant has been served.

### **WHAT IF THE DEFENDANT ALSO HAS A CLAIM?**

Sometimes the person who was sued (the **defendant**) will also have a claim against the person who filed the lawsuit (the **plaintiff**). This claim is called the *Defendant's Claim*. The defendant may file this claim in the same lawsuit. This helps to resolve all of the disagreements between the parties at the same time.

If the defendant decides to file the claim in the small claims court, the claim may not be for more than \$5,000 or \$10,000 if the defendant is a natural person (*\*see exceptions on page 1*). If the value of the claim is more than this amount, the defendant may either give up the amount over \$5,000 or \$10,000 and sue in the small claims court or file a motion to transfer the case to the appropriate court for the full value of the claim.

The defendant's claim must be served on the plaintiff at least *5 days* before the trial. If the defendant received the plaintiff's claim *10 days* or less before the trial, then the claim must be served at least *1 day* before the trial. Both claims will be heard by the court at the same time.

### **WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TRIAL?**

Be sure you are on time for the trial. The small claims trial is informal. You must bring with you all witnesses, books, receipts, and other papers or things to prove your case. You may ask the witnesses to come to court voluntarily. You may also ask the clerk of the court to issue a **subpoena**. A subpoena is a court order that *requires* the witness to go to trial. The witness has a right to charge a fee for going to the trial. If you do not have the records or papers to prove your case, you may also get a court order prior to the trial date requiring the papers to be brought to the trial. This order is called a *Small Claims Subpoena and Declaration* (form SC-107).

If you settle the case before the trial, you must file a **dismissal** form with the clerk.

The court's decision is usually mailed to you after the trial. It may also be hand delivered to you when the trial is over and after the judge has made a decision. The decision appears on a form called the *Notice of Entry of Judgment* (form SC-130 or SC-200).

### **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER JUDGMENT?**

The court may have ordered one party to pay money to the other party. The party who wins the case and collects the money is called the **judgment creditor**. The party who loses the case and owes the money is called the **judgment debtor**. Enforcement of the judgment is **postponed** until the time for appeal ends or until the appeal is decided. This means that the judgment creditor cannot collect any money or take any action until this period is over. Generally both parties may be represented by lawyers after judgment. More information about your rights after judgment is available on the back of the *Notice of Entry of Judgment* form. The clerk may also have this information on a separate sheet.

### **HOW TO GET HELP WITH YOUR CASE**

1. **Lawyers** — Both parties may ask a lawyer about the case, but a lawyer may not represent either party in court at the small claims trial. Generally, after judgment and on appeal, both parties may be represented by lawyers.
2. **Interpreters** — If you do not speak English well, bring an adult who is not a witness to interpret for you, or ask the court clerk for an interpreter at least five days before your court date. A court-provided interpreter may not be available or there may be a fee for using a court interpreter unless you qualify for a fee waiver. You may ask the court for a list of interpreters and also the *Application for Waiver of Court Fees and Costs* (form FW-001).
3. **Waiver of fees** — The court charges fees for some of its procedures. Fees are also charged for serving the defendant with the claim. The court may excuse you from paying these fees if you cannot afford them. Ask the clerk for the *Information Sheet on Waiver of Court Fees and Costs* (form FW-001-INFO) to find out if you meet the requirements so that you do not have to pay the fees.
4. **Night and Saturday court** — If you cannot go to court during working hours, ask the clerk if the court has trials at **night** or on **Saturdays**.
5. **Parties who are in jail** — If you are in jail, the court may excuse you from going to the trial. Instead, you may ask another person who is not an attorney to go to the trial for you. You may mail written declarations to the court to support your case.
6. **Accommodations** — If you have a disability and need assistance, immediately ask the court to help accommodate your needs. If you are hearing impaired and need assistance, notify the court immediately.
7. **Forms** — You can get small claims forms and more information at the California Courts Self-Help Center Web site ([www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims](http://www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims)), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you.
8. **Small claims advisors** — The law requires each county to provide assistance in small claims cases free of charge. (*Small claims advisor information*):

Clerk stamps date here when form is filed.

**Notice to the person being sued:**

- You are the Defendant if your name is listed in ② on page 2 of this form. The person suing you is the Plaintiff, listed in ① on page 2.
- You and the Plaintiff must go to court on the trial date listed below. If you do not go to court, you may lose the case.
- If you lose, the court can order that your wages, money, or property be taken to pay this claim.
- Bring witnesses, receipts, and any evidence you need to prove your case.
- Read this form and all pages attached to understand the claim against you and to protect your rights.

**Aviso al Demandado:**

- Usted es el Demandado si su nombre figura en ② de la página 2 de este formulario. La persona que lo demanda es el Demandante, la que figura en ① de la página 2.
- Usted y el Demandante tienen que presentarse en la corte en la fecha del juicio indicada a continuación. Si no se presenta, puede perder el caso.
- Si pierde el caso la corte podría ordenar que le quiten de su sueldo, dinero u otros bienes para pagar este reclamo.
- Lleve testigos, recibos y cualquier otra prueba que necesite para probar su caso.
- Lea este formulario y todas las páginas adjuntas para entender la demanda en su contra y para proteger sus derechos.

Fill in court name and street address:

**Superior Court of California, County of**

Clerk fills in case number and case name:

**Case Number:****Case Name:****Order to Go to Court****The people in ① and ② must go to court:** (Clerk fills out section below.)

<b>Trial Date</b>	Date	Time	Department	Name and address of court if different from above
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk, by \_\_\_\_\_, Deputy

**Instructions for the person suing:**

- You are the Plaintiff. The person you are suing is the Defendant.
- *Before* you fill out this form, read Form SC-100-INFO, *Information for the Plaintiff*, to know your rights. Get SC-100-INFO at any courthouse or county law library, or go to: [www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/forms](http://www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/forms).
- Fill out pages 2 and 3 of this form. Then make copies of **all** pages of this form. (Make 1 copy for each party named in this case and an extra copy for yourself.) Take or mail the original and these copies to the court clerk's office and pay the filing fee. The clerk will write the date of your trial in the box above.
- You must have someone at least 18—not you or anyone else listed in this case—give each Defendant a court-stamped copy of all 5 pages of this form and any pages this form tells you to attach. There are special rules for “serving,” or delivering, this form to public entities, associations, and some businesses. See Forms SC-104, SC-104B, and SC-104C.
- **Go to court on your trial date listed above.** Bring witnesses, receipts, and any evidence you need to prove your case.

Plaintiff (list names): \_\_\_\_\_

**1 The Plaintiff (the person, business, or public entity that is suing) is:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Mailing address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

**If more than one Plaintiff, list next Plaintiff here:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Mailing address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Check here if more than 2 Plaintiffs and attach Form SC-100A.

Check here if either Plaintiff listed above is doing business under a fictitious name. If so, attach Form SC-103.

**2 The Defendant (the person, business, or public entity being sued) is:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Mailing address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

**If more than one Defendant, list next Defendant here:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Mailing address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Check here if more than 2 Defendants and attach Form SC-100A.

Check here if any Defendant is on active military duty, and write his or her name here: \_\_\_\_\_

**3 The Plaintiff claims the Defendant owes \$ \_\_\_\_\_ . (Explain below):**

a. Why does the Defendant owe the Plaintiff money? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

b. When did this happen? (Date): \_\_\_\_\_  
 If no specific date, give the time period: Date started: \_\_\_\_\_ Through: \_\_\_\_\_

c. How did you calculate the money owed to you? (Do not include court costs or fees for service.) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you need more space. Attach one sheet of paper or Form MC-031 and write "SC-100, Item 3" at the top.



Plaintiff (list names): \_\_\_\_\_

4 You must ask the Defendant (in person, in writing, or by phone) to pay you before you sue. Have you done this?  Yes  No

If no, explain why not: \_\_\_\_\_

5 Why are you filing your claim at this courthouse?

This courthouse covers the area (check the one that applies):

- a.  (1) Where the Defendant lives or does business.      (4) Where a contract (written or spoken) was made, signed, performed, or broken by the Defendant or where the Defendant lived or did business when the Defendant made the contract.
- (2) Where the Plaintiff's property was damaged.
- (3) Where the Plaintiff was injured.
- b.  Where the buyer or lessee signed the contract, lives now, or lived when the contract was made, if this claim is about an offer or contract for personal, family, or household goods, services, or loans. (Code Civ. Proc., § 395(b).)
- c.  Where the buyer signed the contract, lives now, or lived when the contract was made, if this claim is about a retail installment contract (like a credit card). (Civil Code, § 1812.10.)
- d.  Where the buyer signed the contract, lives now, or lived when the contract was made, or where the vehicle is permanently garaged, if this claim is about a vehicle finance sale. (Civil Code, § 2984.4.)
- e.  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

6 List the zip code of the place checked in 5 above (if you know): \_\_\_\_\_

7 Is your claim about an attorney-client fee dispute?  Yes  No

If yes, and if you have had arbitration, fill out Form SC-101, attach it to this form, and check here:

8 Are you suing a public entity?  Yes  No

If yes, you must file a written claim with the entity first.  A claim was filed on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

If the public entity denies your claim or does not answer within the time allowed by law, you can file this form.

9 Have you filed more than 12 other small claims within the last 12 months in California?

Yes  No If yes, the filing fee for this case will be higher.

10 I understand that by filing a claim in small claims court, I have no right to appeal this claim.

11 I have not filed, and understand that I cannot file, more than two small claims cases for more than \$2,500 in California during this calendar year.

I declare, under penalty of perjury under California State law, that the information above and on any attachments to this form is true and correct.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ *Plaintiff types or prints name here*      *Plaintiff signs here*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ *Second Plaintiff types or prints name here*      *Second Plaintiff signs here*



**Requests for Accommodations**

Assistive listening systems, computer-assisted, real-time captioning, or sign language interpreter services are available if you ask at least 5 days before the trial. Contact the clerk's office for Form MC-410, Request for Accommodations by Persons With Disabilities and Response. (Civil Code, § 54.8.)



“**Small claims court**” is a special court where claims for \$5,000 or less are decided. A “natural person” (not a business or public entity) may generally claim up to \$10,000, including a sole proprietor. (\*See below for exceptions.) The process is quick and cheap. The rules are simple and informal.

You are the Defendant—the person being sued. The person who is suing you is the Plaintiff.

### Do I need a lawyer?

You may talk to a lawyer before or after the case. But you *may not* have a lawyer represent you in court (unless this is an appeal from a small claims case).

### How do I get ready for court?

You don’t have to file any papers before your trial, unless you think this is the wrong court for your case. But bring to your trial any witnesses, receipts, and evidence that supports your case. And read “Be Prepared for Your Trial” at [www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/prepare](http://www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/prepare).

### What if I need an accommodation?

If you have a disability or are hearing impaired, fill out Form MC-410, *Request for Accommodations*. Give the form to your court clerk or the ADA/Access Coordinator.

### What if I don’t speak English well?

Bring an adult who is not a witness to interpret for you, or ask the court clerk for an interpreter at least five days before your court date. A court-provided interpreter may not be available or there may be a fee for using a court interpreter unless you qualify for a fee waiver. You may ask the court for a list of interpreters and also the *Application for Waiver of Court Fees and Costs* (form FW-001).

### Where can I get the court forms I need?

Go to any courthouse or your county law library, or print forms at: [www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/forms](http://www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/forms).

### What happens at the trial?

The judge will listen to both sides. The judge may make a decision at your trial or mail the decision to you later.

### What if I lose the case?

If you lose, you can appeal. You’ll have to pay a fee. (Plaintiffs cannot appeal their own claims.)

- If you were at the trial, file Form SC-140, *Notice of Appeal*. You must file within 30 days after the judge’s decision.
- If you were *not* at the trial, fill out and file Form SC-135, *Notice of Motion to Vacate Judgment and Declaration*, to ask the judge to cancel the judgment (decision). If the judge does not give you a new trial, you have 10 days to appeal the decision. File Form SC-140.

For more information on appeals, see: [www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/appeals](http://www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/appeals).

### Do I have options?

Yes. If you are being sued, you can:

- **Settle your case before the trial.** If you and the Plaintiff agree on how to settle the case, both of you must notify the court. Ask the Small Claims Advisor for help.
- **Prove this is the wrong court.** Send a letter to the court *before* your trial, explaining why you think this is the wrong court. Ask the court to dismiss the claim. You must serve (give) a copy of your letter (by mail or in person) to all parties. (Your letter to the court must say you have done this.)
- **Go to the trial and try to win your case.** Bring witnesses, receipts, and any evidence you need to prove your case. To make sure the witnesses go to the trial, fill out Form SC-107, and the clerk will subpoena (order) them to go.
- **Sue the person who is suing you.** File Form SC-120, *Defendant’s Claim*. There are strict filing deadlines you must follow.
- **Agree with the Plaintiff’s claim and pay the money.** Or, if you can’t pay the money now, go to your trial and say you want to make payments.
- **Let the case “default.”** If you don’t settle and do not go to the trial (default), the judge may give the Plaintiff what he or she is asking for plus court costs. If this happens, the Plaintiff can legally take your money, wages, and property to pay the judgment.

### What if I need more time?

You can change the trial date if:

- You cannot go to court on the scheduled date (you will have to pay a fee to postpone the trial) *or*
- You did not get served (receive this order to go to court) at least 15 days before the trial (or 20 days if you live outside the county) *or*
- You need more time to get an interpreter. One postponement is allowed, and you will not have to pay a fee to delay the trial.

Ask the Small Claims Clerk about the rules and fees for postponing a trial. Or fill out Form SC-150 (or write a letter) and mail it to the court *and* to all other people listed on your court papers before the deadline. Enclose a check for your court fees, unless a fee waiver was granted.



### Need help?

Your county’s Small Claims Advisor can help for free.

Or go to [www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/advisor](http://www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/advisor).

\*Exceptions: Different limits apply in an action against a defendant who is a guarantor. (See Code Civ. Proc. § 116.220(c).) In an action brought by a natural person for damages for bodily injuries resulting from an automobile accident, a \$7,500 limit applies if a defendant is covered by an automobile insurance policy that includes a duty to defend. (See Code Civ. Proc. § 116.221.)



La “Corte de reclamos menores” es una corte especial donde se deciden casos por \$5,000 ó menos. Una “persona natural” (que no sea un negocio ni una entidad pública) puede reclamar hasta \$10,000. Una “persona natural” (que no sea un negocio ni una entidad pública), que incluye un dueño único, generalmente puede reclamar hasta \$10,000. (\* Vea abajo para las excepciones.) El proceso es rápido y barato. Las reglas son sencillas e informales.

Usted es el Demandado — la persona que se está demandando. La persona que lo está demandando es el Demandante.

### ¿Necesito un abogado?

Puede hablar con un abogado antes o después del caso.

Pero *no puede* tener a un abogado que lo represente ante la corte (a menos que se trate de una apelación de un caso de reclamos menores).

### ¿Cómo me preparo para ir a la corte?

No tiene que presentar ningunos papeles antes del juicio, a menos que piense que ésta es la corte equivocada para su caso. Pero lleve al juicio cualquier testigos, recibos, y cualquier pruebas que apoyan su caso. Y lea “Esté preparado para su juicio” en:

[www.courts.ca.gov/reclamosmenores/preparesse](http://www.courts.ca.gov/reclamosmenores/preparesse).

### ¿Qué hago si necesito una adaptación?

Si tiene una discapacidad o tiene impedimentos de audición, llene el formulario MC-410, *Request for Accommodations*. Entregue el formulario al secretario de la corte o al Coordinador de Acceso/ADA de su corte.

### ¿Qué pasa si no hablo inglés bien?

Traiga a un adulto que no sea testigo para que le sirva de intérprete. O pida al secretario de la corte que le asigne uno. Si quiere que la corte le asigne un intérprete, lo tiene que pedir como mínimo menos cinco días antes de la fecha en que tenga que ir a la corte. Es posible que no haya disponible un intérprete proporcionado por la corte o que tenga que pagar una cuota por emplear un intérprete de la corte, a menos que tenga una exención de cuotas. Puede pedir a la corte una lista de intérpretes y la Solicitud de exención de cuotas y costos de la corte (formulario FW-001).

### ¿Dónde puedo obtener los formularios de la corte que necesito?

Vaya a cualquier edificio de la corte, la biblioteca legal de su condado, o imprima los formularios en: [www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/forms](http://www.courts.ca.gov/smallclaims/forms) (página está en inglés).

### ¿Qué pasa en el juicio?

El juez escuchará a ambas partes. El juez puede tomar su decisión durante la audiencia o enviársela por correo después.

### ¿Qué pasa si pierdo el caso?

Si pierde, puede apelar. Tendrá que pagar una cuota. (El Demandante no puede apelar su propio reclamo.)

- Si estuvo presente en el juicio, llene el formulario SC-140, *Aviso de apelación*. Tiene que presentarlo dentro de 30 días después de la decisión del juez.
- Si *no* estuvo en el juicio, llene y presente el formulario SC-135, *Aviso de petición para anular el fallo y Declaración* para pedirle al juez que anule el fallo (decisión). Si la corte no le otorga un nuevo juicio, tiene 10 días para apelar la decisión. Presente el formulario SC-140.

Para obtener más información sobre las apelaciones, vea: [www.courts.ca.gov/reclamosmenores/apelaciones](http://www.courts.ca.gov/reclamosmenores/apelaciones).

### ¿Tengo otras opciones?

Sí. Si lo están demandando, puede:

- **Resolver su caso antes del juicio.** Si usted y el Demandante se ponen de acuerdo en resolver el caso, ambos tienen que notificar a la corte. Pídale al Asesor de Reclamos Menores que lo ayude.
- **Probar que es la corte equivocada.** Envíe una carta a la corte *antes* del juicio explicando por qué cree que es la corte equivocada. Pídale a la corte que despida el reclamo. Tiene que entregar (dar) una copia de su carta (por correo o en persona) a todas las partes. (Su carta a la corte tiene que decir que hizo la entrega.)
- **Ir al juicio y tratar de ganar el caso.** Lleve testigos, recibos y cualquier prueba que necesite para probar su caso. Para asegurarse que los testigos vayan al juicio, llene el formulario SC-107, y el secretario emitirá una orden de comparecencia ordenándoles que se presenten.
- **Demandar a la persona que lo demandó.** Presente el formulario SC-120, *Reclamo del demandado*. Hay fechas límite estrictas que debe seguir.
- **Aceptar el reclamo del Demandante y pagar el dinero.** O, si no puede pagar en ese momento, vaya al juicio y diga que quiere hacer los pagos.
- **No ir al juicio y aceptar el fallo por falta de comparecencia.** Si no llega a un acuerdo con el Demandante y no va al juicio (fallo por falta de comparecencia), el juez le puede otorgar al Demandante lo que está reclamando más los costos de la corte. En ese caso, el Demandante legalmente puede tomar su dinero, su sueldo o sus bienes para cobrar el fallo.

### ¿Qué hago si necesito más tiempo?

Puede cambiar la fecha del juicio si:

- No puede ir a la corte en la fecha programada (tendrá que pagar una cuota para aplazar el juicio) o
- No le entregaron los documentos legalmente (no recibió la orden para ir a la corte) por lo menos 15 días antes del juicio (ó 20 días si vive fuera del condado) o
- Necesita más tiempo para conseguir intérprete. (Se permite un solo aplazamiento sin tener que pagar cuota para aplazar el juicio).

Pregúntele al secretario de reclamos menores sobre las reglas y las cuotas para aplazar un juicio. O llene el formulario SC-150 (o escriba una carta) y envíelo antes del plazo a la corte y a todas las otras personas que figuran en sus papeles de la corte. Adjunte un cheque para pagar los costos de la corte, a menos que le hayan dado una exención.



**¿Necesita ayuda?** El Asesor de Reclamos Menores de su condado le puede ayudar sin cargo.

O vea “Información por condado” en:

[www.courts.ca.gov/reclamosmenores/asesores](http://www.courts.ca.gov/reclamosmenores/asesores).

**\*Excepciones:** Existen diferentes límites en un reclamo contra un garante. (Vea el Código de Procedimiento Civil, sección 116.220 (c).) En un caso presentado por una persona natural por daños debido a lesiones físicas en un accidente automovilístico, existe un límite de \$7,500 si el demandado tiene cobertura bajo una póliza de seguro de vehículo que incluye la obligación de defender. (Vea el Código de Procedimiento Civil, sección 116.221.)



ATTORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY (Name, State Bar number, and address):  TELEPHONE NO.: _____ FAX NO. (Optional): _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS (Optional): _____ ATTORNEY FOR (Name): _____	FOR COURT USE ONLY
<b>SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF</b> STREET ADDRESS: MAILING ADDRESS: CITY AND ZIP CODE: BRANCH NAME:	
PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER: DEFENDANT/RESPONDENT:	
<b>REQUEST FOR DISMISSAL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Injury, Property Damage, or Wrongful Death <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Family Law <input type="checkbox"/> Eminent Domain <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) : _____	CASE NUMBER: _____
<b>- A conformed copy will not be returned by the clerk unless a method of return is provided with the document. -</b>	

1. TO THE CLERK: Please **dismiss** this action as follows:

- a. (1)  With prejudice   (2)  Without prejudice
- b. (1)  Complaint       (2)  Petition
- (3)  Cross-complaint filed by (name): \_\_\_\_\_ on (date): \_\_\_\_\_
- (4)  Cross-complaint filed by (name): \_\_\_\_\_ on (date): \_\_\_\_\_
- (5)  Entire action of all parties and all causes of action
- (6)  Other (specify):\*

2. (Complete in all cases except family law cases.)

Court fees and costs were waived for a party in this case. (This information may be obtained from the clerk. If this box is checked, the declaration on the back of this form must be completed).

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
(TYPE OR PRINT NAME OF  ATTORNEY  PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY)

(SIGNATURE)

\*If dismissal requested is of specified parties only of specified causes of action only, or of specified cross-complaints only, so state and identify the parties, causes of action, or cross-complaints to be dismissed.

Attorney or party without attorney for:

- Plaintiff/Petitioner    Defendant/Respondent
- Cross-Complainant

3. TO THE CLERK: Consent to the above dismissal is hereby given.\*\*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
(TYPE OR PRINT NAME OF  ATTORNEY  PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY)

(SIGNATURE)

\*\* If a cross-complaint – or Response (Family Law) seeking affirmative relief – is on file, the attorney for cross-complainant (respondent) must sign this consent if required by Code of Civil Procedure section 581 (i) or (j).

Attorney or party without attorney for:

- Plaintiff/Petitioner    Defendant/Respondent
- Cross-Complainant

(To be completed by clerk)

- 4.  Dismissal entered as requested on (date): \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.  Dismissal entered on (date): \_\_\_\_\_ as to only (name): \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.  Dismissal **not entered** as requested for the following reasons (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. a.  Attorney or party without attorney notified on (date): \_\_\_\_\_
- b.  Attorney or party without attorney not notified. Filing party failed to provide  
        a copy to be conformed    means to return conformed copy

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk, by \_\_\_\_\_, Deputy

PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER: DEFENDANT/RESPONDENT:	CASE NUMBER:
--	--------------

**Declaration Concerning Waived Court Fees**

The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any recovery of \$10,000 or more in value by settlement, compromise, arbitration award, mediation settlement, or other recovery. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

1. The court waived fees and costs in this action for *(name)*:
2. The person in item 1 *(check one)*:
  - a.  is not recovering anything of value by this action.
  - b.  is recovering less than \$10,000 in value by this action.
  - c.  is recovering \$10,000 or more in value by this action. *(If item 2c is checked, item 3 must be completed.)*
3.  All court fees and costs that were waived in this action have been paid to the court *(check one)*:  Yes  No

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the information above is true and correct.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (TYPE OR PRINT NAME OF  ATTORNEY  PARTY MAKING DECLARATION)



\_\_\_\_\_  
 (SIGNATURE)

This form is attached to:  Form SC-100 **OR**  Form SC-120

- 1** If you want to file a small claim and you are doing business under a fictitious name (“doing business as,” or “dba”) give the following information. (*Nonprofits and exempt real estate investment trusts do not have to file this form.*)

Business name of the person suing: \_\_\_\_\_

Business address (*not a U.S. Postal Service P.O. Box*): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address (*if different*): \_\_\_\_\_

- 2** The business listed in **1** does business as (*check ONLY one*):

an individual

a corporation

an association

a limited liability company

a partnership

other (*specify*): \_\_\_\_\_

*You must follow the laws for fictitious business names. If you have not followed these laws, including filing a fictitious business name statement in your county and publishing this information in a local newspaper, the court can dismiss your case.*

- 3** Name of county where you filed your Fictitious Business Name Statement (dba): \_\_\_\_\_

- 4** Your Fictitious Business Name Statement number: \_\_\_\_\_

- 5** Date your Fictitious Business Name Statement expires: \_\_\_\_\_

- 6** I declare, under penalty of perjury under California State law, that the information above is true and correct. **Only the owner, president, chief executive officer (CEO), or other qualified officer can sign this form.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Type or print your name and title*



\_\_\_\_\_  
*Sign your name*



**Need help?**

Your county’s Small Claims Advisor can help for free.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Or go to “County-Specific Court Information” at:  
[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/smallclaims](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/smallclaims)

**What is “service”?**

“Service” or “serving” is when someone—*not you or anyone else listed in this case*—gives a copy of your court papers to the person, business, or public entity you are suing. Service lets the other party know:

- What you are asking for
- When and where the trial will be *and*
- What the party can choose to do

There are strict rules for serving court papers. This form explains how to serve these forms:

- Form SC-100, *Plaintiff’s Claim*
- Form SC-120, *Defendant’s Claim*

**How is service done?**

This form tells you how to serve by *personal* service or *substituted* service.

*Personal* service means someone gives the papers directly to the person being sued or to the agent authorized to accept service (business or public entity).

*Substituted* service means someone gives the papers to an adult where the person lives, works, or receives mail (including a private post office box, but not a U.S. Postal Service P.O. Box).

**What if the court papers do not get served?**

The judge cannot hear your case unless the court papers were served correctly.

**Can the court serve the papers for me?**

Yes. You can pay the court to mail your claim to the person you are suing. But if the person you are suing or the person’s agent for service doesn’t sign the U.S. Postal Service mail receipt with his or her complete name, or if someone else signs the receipt, you will have to serve again using personal or substituted service.

**Who can serve?**

You can ask a friend, a process server, or the Sheriff. The server must be at least 18 and not listed in the case.

A “process server” is someone you pay to deliver court forms. Look in the Yellow Pages under “Process Serving.” The Sheriff (or Marshal if your county has one) can also deliver court forms. Ask the court clerk how to contact the Sheriff. Or look in the county section of your phone book under “Sheriff.” You must pay the server, unless you qualify for a fee waiver.

**How is *personal* service done?**

Ask someone who is at least 18 and not listed in this case to personally “serve” (give) a copy of your court papers to the person or the agent authorized to accept court papers for the person, business, or public entity listed on Form SC-104.

Give the server a separate *Proof of Service* form for each person, business, or public entity you are suing. And tell the server to:

- Walk up to the person to be served.
- Say, “These are court papers.”
- Give the person copies of all papers checked on Form SC-104, *Proof of Service*. If the person won’t take the papers, just leave them near the person. It doesn’t matter if the person tears them up.
- Fill out and sign page 2 of Form SC-104, *Proof of Service*.

**How is *substituted* service done?**

If you don’t want to use personal service or can’t find the person to be served, ask someone who is at least 18 and not listed in this case to serve the court papers.

Give the server a separate *Proof of Service* form for each person, business, or public entity you are suing. Tell the server to give the papers to:

- A competent adult (at least 18) at the home of and living with the person to be served *or*
- An adult who seems to be in charge where the person to be served usually works *or*
- An adult who seems to be in charge where the person receives mail (including a private mailbox, but **not** a U.S. Postal Service P.O. Box). *Note:* This is only for cases where the physical address of the person to be served is not known.

Then do the following:

- Write down that person’s name and say, “Please give these court papers to [*name of person to be served*].” If the person does not want to give his or her name, describe the person you served.
- Give that person copies of all papers checked on Form SC-104, *Proof of Service*. If the person won’t take the papers, just leave them near the person.
- Mail another copy of the papers (by first-class mail) to the person being sued at the same address where you left the papers.
- Fill out and sign page 2 of Form SC-104, *Proof of Service*.

**What does the server do with the original Proof of Service form?**

If a process server or Sheriff served the papers, he or she can file Form SC-104, *Proof of Service*, with the clerk. If the server used a different *Proof of Service* form, ask him or her to list each paper served on the form. Also make sure that the registered server will file the original directly with the court and will mail you a copy of the filed form. Take it with you when you go to court.

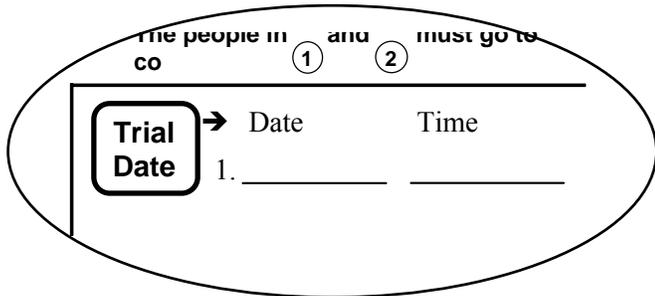
If a friend served the papers, tell him or her to give the completed form back to you. Keep a copy for your records and take the copy with you when you go to court.

You need to file the original completed *Proof of Service* form **5 days before** your trial.

**When do the court forms have to be served?**

- **If you are serving Form SC-100, Plaintiff’s Claim,** look at the trial date on page 1. Then, look at a calendar.

For *personal* service, subtract 15 days from the trial date (or 20 days if the person, business, or public entity is located outside the county). That’s the deadline for serving your small claims forms. But you can serve the forms before the deadline.



For *substituted* service, subtract 25 days from the date the server mailed a copy of the court papers served (or 30 days if the person, business, or public entity is located outside the county). That’s the deadline for serving your small claims forms. But you can serve the forms before the deadline.

If the person, business, or public entity to be served is outside California or if you are serving a different form, ask the Small Claims Advisor for more information.

- **If you are serving Form SC-120, Defendant’s Claim,** look at the trial date on page 1. Then look at a calendar.

For *personal* or *substituted* service, subtract 5 days from the trial date. That’s the deadline for serving your small claims forms if you were served at least 11 days before the trial. If you were served 10 days or less before the trial date, you must serve at least 1 day before the trial. But you can serve the forms before the deadline.

**What if I can’t get the court papers served before the trial?**

If you were not able to serve your claim (Form SC-100 or SC-120) before the deadline for service, talk to your Small Claims Clerk. Each county has its own rules.

If you already served your claim on some parties but not everyone you are suing, you may need to fill out and file Form SC-150, *Request to Postpone Trial*, at least 10 days before the trial date (or explain why you couldn’t meet the 10-day deadline). Then give or mail a copy of this form to all other Plaintiffs and Defendants listed on your court papers.

The court may postpone your trial for 15 days or more.

**Who do I have to serve?**

If you are suing a person (or people)—not a business or public entity—serve each person you are suing. For example, if you were in a car accident and you are suing the owner and the driver of the car, you must list the names of the owner *and* the driver on your claim and serve both people.

Examples:

If the owner and driver are the same person:  
*Lee Smith, owner and driver*

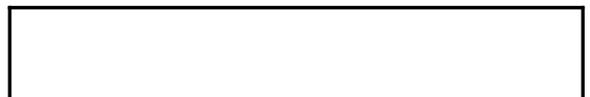
If the owner and driver are not the same person:  
*Lee Smith, owner and driver*  
*Bob Smith, owner*

If you are suing a business, an association, or a public entity, read Form SC-104C, *How to Serve a Business*.



**Need help?**

Your county’s Small Claims Advisor can help for free.



Or go to “County-Specific Court Information” at: [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/smallclaims](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/smallclaims)

# SC-104C How to Serve a Business or Public Entity (Small Claims)

You must serve the *right* person and write the *exact* name of the business and the person to be served. Use this form to make sure you serve correctly, and follow the instructions on *Proof of Service*, Form SC-104.

Business Type:	Sole Proprietorship (Only 1 owner)	Partnership	Landlord	Corporation, Association	Limited Liability Company (LLC), Limited Liability Partnership (LLP), Limited Partnership (LP)	Unknown Business Type
<b>Serve:</b>	The owner	If you are suing a <b>partnership</b> , serve one of the partners.  If you are suing a <b>partnership and</b> the partners, serve each partner.	The property owner or manager <i>(Read Civil Code sections 1962–1962.7.)</i>	Agent for service listed with Secretary of State or any corporate officer (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer), chief executive officer (CEO), controller, chief financial officer, or general manager	Agent for service listed with Secretary of State  To serve a limited partnership, you can also serve the general partner.	Someone who seems to be in charge of the business during normal business hours
<b>Write on your Proof of Service form:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business name</li> <li>Owner's name and job title</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership name</li> <li>Name of partner, general manager, or agent for service and job title</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business name (if there is one)</li> <li>Owner's name and job title</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporation name</li> <li>Name of corporate officer or agent for service and job title</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company or partnership name</li> <li>Name of agent or partner for service and job title</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business name, form unknown</li> <li>Owner's name and job title <i>(if you know it)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Check that you have the exact names of the owner and business with:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Clerk–Recorder's or County Tax Assessor's Office (Ask to see the fictitious business name statement.) Your county's Web site may have this information. Check: <a href="http://www.csac.counties.org">www.csac.counties.org</a>.</li> <li>City Clerk's Office (Ask to see the business license.) Your city's Web site may have this information.</li> </ul>	County Tax Collector	Search under Corporation, LP and LLC at the California Secretary of State Web site: <a href="http://www.ss.ca.gov/business">www.ss.ca.gov/business</a>  Or call: <b>1-916-657-5448</b>  <b>OR</b>  County Clerk–Recorder's Office: (Ask to see the fictitious business name statement.) Your county's Web site may have this information.  <b>OR</b>  City Clerk's Office: (Ask to see the business license.) Your city's Web site may have this information.	Try the other resources listed on this page to see if they know more about the business's organization type, like corporation or sole proprietorship.		



### Need help?

For free help, contact your county's Small Claims Advisor:

[\[space for local info here\]](#)

Or, go to "County-Specific Court Information" at: [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/smallclaims](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/smallclaims)



# SC-104C

## How to Serve a Business or Public Entity (Small Claims)

You must serve the *right* person and write the *exact* name of the public agency and the person to be served. Use this form to make sure you serve correctly, and follow the instructions on *Proof of Service*, Form SC-104.

	City, County, or Public Entity	State of California, State Agency	Federal Agency
<b>Serve:</b>	City or county clerk, chief officer or director of public agency, or agent authorized to accept service	Use this general address for service: Office of the Attorney General 1300 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814  <i>Exception:</i> if your claim involves California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), serve it at: California Department of Transportation 1120 N Street Sacramento, CA 95814	<i>You cannot sue a <b>federal</b> agency in small claims court.</i>
	<b>Important!</b> <i>Before you sue, you must <b>first</b> file a claim with the public entity. Contact it and ask for the claim procedures.</i>	<i>Note:</i> <i>Before you sue, you must first file a claim with the state or the state agency. To file a claim, see:</i> <b><a href="http://www.boc.ca.gov/govclms.htm">www.boc.ca.gov/govclms.htm</a></b> <i>Or call: 1-800-955-0045</i>	
<b>Write on your Proof of Service form:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of city, county, or public entity</li> <li>Name of city clerk, county clerk, chief officer, or agent for service and job title</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of the agency you are suing</li> <li>Name of agent for service</li> </ul>	
<b>Check that you have the exact names of the agency and agent for service with:</b>	Call the city or county clerk. See the government pages of your phone book.  Or search under the California Roster at the California Secretary of State Web site: <b><a href="http://www.ss.ca.gov/executive">www.ss.ca.gov/executive</a></b>	Call the agency to confirm the name and address for service. Use the State Directory: <b>1-800-807-6755</b> Or search: <b><a href="http://www.cold.ca.gov">www.cold.ca.gov</a></b> under "agency information"	



### Need help?

For free help, contact your county's Small Claims Advisor:

[\[space for local info here\]](#)

Or, go to "County-Specific Court Information" at: [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/smallclaims](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/smallclaims)

Use this form to serve a **person**, a **business**, or a **public entity**. To learn more about proof of service, read *What Is "Proof of Service"?*, Form SC-104B. To learn more about how to serve a business or entity, read *How to Serve a Business or Public Entity*, Form SC-104C.

To serve a **business**, you must serve **one** of the following people:

- Owner (for a sole proprietorship)
- Partner (for a partnership) or general partner (for a limited partnership)
- Any officer or general manager (corporation or association)
- Any person authorized for service by the business (corporation, association, general partnership, limited partnership)
- Any person authorized for service with the Secretary of State (corporation, association, limited liability company [LLC], limited liability partnership [LLP], limited partnership)

To serve a **public entity**, you must first file a claim with that entity, then serve **one** of the following people:

- Clerk (of a city or county)
- Chief officer or director (of a public agency)
- Any person authorized for service by the entity

① a. If you are serving a **person**, write the person's name below:

\_\_\_\_\_

b. If you are serving a **business** or **entity**, write the name of the business or entity, the person authorized for service, and that person's job title:

\_\_\_\_\_

Business or Agency Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Person Authorized for Service

Job Title

② **Instructions to Server:**

You must be at least 18 years old and **not be named in this case**. Follow these steps:

- Give a copy of all the documents checked in ③ to the person in ①, *or*
  - Give a copy of all the documents checked in ③ to one of the following people:
    - a. A competent adult (at least 18) living with, and at the home of the person in ①, *or*
    - b. An adult (at least 18) who seems to be in charge at the usual workplace of the person in ①, *or*
    - c. An adult (at least 18) who seems to be in charge where the person in ① usually receives mail (but not a U.S. Post Office box), if there is no known physical address for the person in ①.
- and* mail a copy of the documents left with one of the adults in a, b, or c above to the person in ①.

THEN

- Complete and sign this form, and
- Give or mail your completed form to the person who asked you to serve these court papers, ***in time for the form to be filed with the court at least 5 days before the hearing.***

③ **I served the person in ① a copy of the documents checked below:**

- a.  SC-100, *Plaintiff's Claim and ORDER to Go to Small Claims Court*
- b.  SC-120, *Defendant's Claim and ORDER to Go to Small Claims Court*
- c.  Order for examination (*This form must be personally served. Check the form that was served*):

**Note:** The court can issue a civil arrest warrant if the served party does not come to court **only** if the order for examination was personally served by a registered process server, sheriff, marshal, or someone appointed by the court.

(1)  SC-134, *Application and Order to Produce Statement of Assets and to Appear for Examination*

(2)  AT-138/EJ-125, *Application and Order for Appearance and Examination*

d.  Other (*specify*): \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk stamps date here when form is filed.

Fill in court name and street address:  
**Superior Court of California, County of**

Fill in case number, case name, hearing date, day, time, and department below:

<b>Case Number:</b>	
<b>Case Name:</b>	
<b>Hearing Date:</b>	
<b>Time:</b>	<b>Dept.:</b>



Case name: \_\_\_\_\_

**4 Fill out "a" or "b" below:**

- a.
- 
- Personal Service:**
- I personally gave copies of the documents checked in ③ to the person in ①:

On (date): \_\_\_\_\_ At (time): \_\_\_\_\_  a.m.  p.m.

At this address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

- b.
- 
- Substituted Service:**
- I personally gave copies of the documents checked in ③ (a, b, or d) to (check one):

 A competent adult (at least 18) at the **home** of, and living with the person in ①, or An adult who seems to be in charge where the person in ① usually **works**, or An adult who seems to be in charge where the person in ① usually **receives mail**, or has a private post office box (not a U.S. Post Office box), if there is no known physical address for the person in ①.

I told that adult, "Please give these court papers to (name of person in ①)."

I did this on (date): \_\_\_\_\_ At (time): \_\_\_\_\_  a.m.  p.m.

At this address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Name or description of the person I gave the papers to: \_\_\_\_\_

After serving the court papers, I put copies of the documents listed in ③ in an envelope, sealed the envelope, and put first-class prepaid postage on it. I addressed the envelope to the person in ① at the address where I left the copies.

I mailed the envelope on (date): \_\_\_\_\_ from (city, state): \_\_\_\_\_  
by leaving it (check one):

a.  At a U.S. Postal Service mail drop, orb.  At an office or business mail drop where I know the mail is picked up every day and deposited with the U.S. Postal Service, orc.  With someone else I asked to mail the documents to the person in ①, and I have attached that person's completed Form SC-104A.**5 Server's Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Fee for service: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*If you are a registered process server:*

County of registration: \_\_\_\_\_ Registration number: \_\_\_\_\_

- 6**
- I declare under penalty of perjury under California state law that I am at least 18 years old and not named in this case and that the information above is true and correct.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type or print server's name\_\_\_\_\_  
Server signs here after serving