

Small Claims Filing Information

Please read **ALL** of the information carefully **BEFORE** filling out the Notice of Small Claim. Please note that both the top AND bottom portions of the form need to be completed, and you need to sign and date the form for it to be valid. The Court will fill in the trial date and will assign a Small Claim Number. If you have any questions not answered in the information provided, call the court at 206-205-9200 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, Monday through Friday. A clerk will be happy to answer your **non-legal** questions.

The original of the completed Notice of Small Claim should be returned to the court with a check or money order in the amount of \$25.00 payable to King County District Court and a large (9" x 12"), self-addressed, stamped envelope with 60 cents postage (or 2 stamps). Please make sure the form is legible and all necessary information has been completed.

Upon receipt of the form and check, the Court will assign a case number and trial date, and will use the envelope you provide to send you two copies of the Notice of Small Claims (with case number and trial date added – one copy for the defendant and one copy for you). It is your responsibility to have the defendant's copy of the Claim (with attachments) served upon the other party.

Due to the large volume of Small Claims cases, we cannot accommodate any requests for specific trial dates. Please note that Small Claims is people's court and our clerks are unable to answer any legal questions – it is your responsibility to read the provided material and follow the instructions for filing your Claim.

Dispute Resolution Center
PO Box 21148
Seattle, WA 98111
Fax: 206-443-9737
Phone: 206-443-9603

Are you interested in resolving your dispute outside of court

The Dispute Resolution Center offers a free alternative for resolving small claims and anti-harassment cases – mediation. Mediation occurs in a private, confidential setting. Meetings are scheduled at the convenience of all parties. Evening and weekend appointments are available. The Center has a very high success rate in helping people resolve disputes to the satisfaction of everyone involved. Disputants do not give up any of their legal rights by trying to resolve their dispute through the Dispute Resolution Center.

What is the Dispute Resolution Center?

The Center is an independent community program specifically designed to help people settle disputes without having to hire an attorney and go to court. The Center is **not** a government agency or a part of the court system. We utilize trained and experienced individuals who act as neutral third-parties to help people involved in a dispute reach a settlement that is fair to everyone. Our staff will not advocate for any party in a dispute nor impose a settlement. We do not give legal advice or counsel people regarding their personal or family problems.

How can I get access to Center services?

Just call 206-443-9603, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Those living in the far eastern or southern communities of King County can dial 888-803-4696 toll free. An experienced conciliator will listen to your problem and help you assess the best way to resolve your dispute. Our services are available before you file suit and while you are awaiting your hearing date.

The Center also has staff in all divisions of the District Court to help at the time of your hearing.

What kinds of services does the Dispute Resolution Center provide?

- Center staff offer advice on the best way to resolve a dispute yourself.
- The Center offers conciliation services. A conciliator assigned to your case will help you and the other person in your dispute find a mutually acceptable solution to the problem. This is generally accomplished over the telephone.

- The Center offers mediation services. A mediator will meet privately with you and the other party to the dispute and assist both of you to reach a written agreement which settles your disagreement.

What are the advantages of using the Dispute Resolution Center?

- You and the other party in the dispute maintain control over how your dispute is settled. Consequently, it is very likely you will be more satisfied with the result.
- It is often faster to work through the Center than through the court system. The Center can usually initiate negotiations within a few days of your first telephone call. A mediation session can normally be held within two weeks.
- The Dispute Resolution Center helps to resolve the majority of the cases it handles. Even if you have tried to negotiate a settlement and been unsuccessful, it is likely we will be able to help you and the other party.
- Center services are confidential as provided by state law.
- Center services are free of charge, except for mediation of divorces and mobile home park disputes.

What are the Center's limitations?

The Center does not provide legal advice or assistance nor counseling for personal or family problems. The Center does not advocate on the behalf of any party in a dispute or impose settlements. The Center is **not** a complaint bureau. Cases which involve drug or alcohol abuse, violence, where one party is unwilling to negotiate in good faith, or where someone is unable to negotiate on his or her own behalf are not handled by the Center but are referred to other community resources.

Small Claims Instructions to Defendants

When you have been served with Notice of Small Claim in an action filed against you in the small claims court or this judicial district, you may, if you do not wish to contest the plaintiff's claims:

- a. Make an out-of-court settlement with the plaintiff before the date set. The plaintiff must then notify the court in writing that this case has been settled.
- b. Make no appearance on the date set, in which case the plaintiff may be given a judgment by default for the amount claimed, plus costs.

You are entitled to be served with this "Notice and Claim" at least 10 days before the hearing date. If you are served within the county less than 10 days before the hearing you may:

- a. Appear in court and request a continuance.
- b. Appear in court, waive your statutory rights to such service and proceed with the hearing.

If you have a claim against the plaintiff, you may assert a cross-complaint or counterclaim against him/her. This must be done in writing, filed with the clerk of the court and served on the plaintiff. The cost of the counterclaim is \$25.00.

If the plaintiff recovers a judgment against you, they are entitled to immediate payment of the full amount of the judgment, plus court costs, or payment upon such terms as the judge may prescribe. Payments should be made directly to the plaintiff unless otherwise ordered. When judgment has been paid in full, the plaintiff shall sign a Satisfaction of Judgment and the defendant shall file the Satisfaction of Judgment with the clerk. If the losing party fails to pay the judgment within thirty (30) days, the judgment shall be increased by an amount amount sufficient to cover costs of certification of the judgment.

When inquiring about this case, refer to the Case Number of the Notice of Small Claim.