

MICHELLE R. MILLER CLERK & COMPTROLLER ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

SELF-SERVICE CENTER

Department: Small Claims

Packet #SC1-10: Statement of Claim

The Self Service Center Packet ("Packet") you are purchasing is hereby deemed a license for the purchaser. Any reproduction or redistribution of the Packet not in accordance with the terms delineated herein is expressly prohibited.



SMALL CLAIMS INFORMATION

The Small Claims Court hears all cases at law in which the amount claimed does not exceed \$8,000.00, exclusive of costs, interest and attorney's fees. The St. Lucie County Small Claims Court uses a two hearing procedure, a pretrial conference (with mediation) and a final hearing (if settlement cannot be reached at the pretrial conference).

VENUE

Actions must be filed in the proper venue. A proper venue or location may be one of the following:

- 1) Where any one or more of the Defendants sued resides;
- 2) Where the event giving rise to the suit occurred;
- 3) Where the property in litigation is located;
- 4) If suit is on an unsecured promissory note, where the note is signed or where the maker resides;
- 5) Where the contract was entered into;
- 6) Any location agreed to in a contract.

If your case is not filed in the correct venue, the Defendant has the right to request that the case be moved to a proper location or venue. If the case is transferred because it was not filed in the proper venue, you must repay the filing fees at the new location. Your filing fees are not refundable.

SERVICE OF PROCESS

Each Defendant named as a party to the suit must be served. Service may be made by either sheriff's service, private process server, or if the Defendant resides in the State of Florida, by certified mail. If the certified letter is not claimed by the Defendant, it will be returned to the Clerk's Office and you will be notified. If the certified letter is returned unclaimed, the fee for sheriff service will then be required to continue pursuing your case.

If the Defendant resides outside the State of Florida, you must determine the county and state the Defendant's address is located in, the sheriff's fee to serve the summons and the sheriff's address. You also need to inquire whether the sheriff has any other special instructions. All of this information must be given to the Clerk at the time of filing.

FILING

- a. When filing a claim based upon a written document or contract, a copy must be furnished for the file and one for each Defendant at the time of filing.
- b. A copy of any paper that is filed at any time by the Plaintiff or Defendant other than the Statement of Claim, to the Clerk or to the Judge, MUST be sent by you to each party or their attorney, if any. You must set forth the date and to whom you sent the copy (or copies) of the papers filed which should be followed by your signature.

Example:	I certify a copy of	the foregoing has been	furnished to (name or	f all parties
	or attorneys with th	neir address) by (mail)	or (hand delivered) thi	is day
	of	, 20_		

- c. If at any time during the proceedings a settlement is reached between the parties, you should notify the Clerk's Office immediately.
- d. You must advise the Clerk, in writing, of any change in your mailing address.

PRETRIAL CONFERENCE

On the day of pretrial conference, both the Plaintiff and Defendant must appear. You do not need to bring your witnesses to the pretrial conference. If the Plaintiff does not appear, the case may be dismissed. If the Defendant does not appear (after being properly served) a default will be entered. If both parties appear and the case cannot be resolved through mediation or at the pretrial conference, your case will be scheduled for trial. It is important to appear early for your hearing. Court begins promptly at the time assigned to your case.

MEDIATION

Mediation is an informal process whereby a neutral third party acts to encourage and assist in resolving a dispute, without prescribing what it should be; with the objective of helping the parties reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

TRIAL

If the case is set for trial, you must appear on the date and time specified with your evidence, witnesses and whatever you feel is necessary to prove your claim. Affidavits from witnesses cannot be accepted. At the hearing, the Judge will listen to both sides, review the evidence and proof provided to make a decision. If the Judge has to research a point of law, the decision may be delayed. However, the parties will receive a copy of the written decision when it is final.

REHEARINGS AND APPEALS

Any unsuccessful party has no later than 10 days from the date the judgment or decision is entered to move for a new trial. Parties have the right to appeal the judgment entered and must do so no later than 30 days from the date the judgment or decision is entered. An attorney should be consulted if an appeal is contemplated.

NOTE: IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING PROCEDURES, THE CLERK'S OFFICE WILL ASSIST YOU. THEY CANNOT FURNISH YOU LEGAL ADVICE. PLEASE CONSULT AN ATTORNEY FOR LEGAL ADVICE.

FILING AND SERVICE FEES

Filing Fees:

Claims less than \$100	\$55.00*
Claims \$100 thru \$500	\$80.00*
Claims \$500 thru \$2500	\$175.00*
Claims \$2500 thru \$8000	\$300.00*

^{*}PLUS \$10.00 PER DEFENDANT / PER SUMMONS (ISSUANCE FEE)

Service Fees:

Sheriff service, per summons/ per defendant	\$40.00 for service in the State of Florida
---	---

Certified mail, per defendant \$13.51 Insurance Commissioner \$15.00 (772) 785-5880

REFERENCE GUIDE TO COMPLETING STATEMENT OF CLAIM

- STATEMENT OF CLAIM the form should be typed or legibly printed.
 - o Fill in your name, mailing address and telephone number. Make sure to include a telephone number which the Clerk's Office may reach you at.
 - o Fill in the defendant(s) name, address for service and phone number (must have street address for sheriff's service-no post office boxes)
 - o Fill in the amount you are filing for excluding court costs and service fees
 - o Write a brief explanation of the reason you are filing
 - o Sign at the bottom and have your signature notarized

• DEFENDANT INFORMATION

- Make sure you sue in the correct name and make sure you sue the proper party. If you receive a judgment against a party that does not exist (improper spelling or incorrect/incomplete name), your judgment may be worthless.
- <u>COMPANY</u>: If you are suing a company, you need the full name of the owner and the company (owner d/b/a company).
- OCORPORATION: If you are suing a corporation, include the full legal name of the corporation and list the registered agent's name and address for service. Corporate information is available through the Secretary of State, Division of Corporations, Tallahassee, Florida 800-755-5111. Or you may research the information via internet at www.sunbiz.org.
 - Go to www.sunbiz.org
 - Under "Our Site Index" click on "Corporations, Trademarks and Limited Partnerships
 - Click on the Name List
 - Enter the corporations full legal name
 - Click submit
 - Scroll down to retrieve the registered agent's name and service address
 - If no registered agent's name is listed, proceed to use an officer or director of the corporation
 - If no corporation name is listed, it is your responsibility to decide how to pursue the lawsuit
- INSURANCE COMPANY: The <u>EXACT</u> name of the insurance company is needed. Claims against an insurance company must be served through the Insurance Commissioner's Office. The fee is \$15.00.

EXHIBITS

- o If the lawsuit is on a contract or promissory note, a copy must be included
- o If the lawsuit is about an accident, written estimates should be included
- o Attach any supporting documentation to the Statement of Claim

FILING

- You may file your complaint at either of the Small Claims locations
- o All hearings are held at the South County Courthouse Annex
- o All court files are kept at the South County Courthouse Annex



INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING A SMALL CLAIMS CASE

STEP 1

The following paperwork and fees are required to process your Small Claims case:

PAPERWORK:

- o Original Statement of Claim
- Copy of exhibit
- One (1) copy of all documents for **each** defendant
- One (1) copy of all documents for your records
- Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope if using the sheriff's department for service and you would like a copy of the return of service
- For out of state service Written instructions to the clerk including the name and address of the sheriff's department in the State and County where the Defendant is to be served and any special requirements they have
- o If you are using a process server include the name and phone number of the server on a separate sheet of paper
- FILING FEE: (payable to ST. LUCIE COUNTY CLERK OF COURT)
 - As per the attached fee schedule payable in cash; money order; MasterCard; Discover or Visa
 - PLUS \$10.00 PER SUMMONS / PER DEFENDANT

• SERVICE FEE:

o FOR SHERIFF SERVICE:

\$40.00 per summons, per defendant, payable by money order or cashier's check (payable to the Sheriff's Department in the county where the defendant is to be served)

o FOR SERVICE BY CERTIFIED MAIL:

\$13.51 per defendant, payable to the Clerk of the Court

• FOR SERVICE BY INSURANCE COMMISSIONER:

For claims against an insurance company \$15.00 payable to Department of Financial Services

FOR PRIVATE PROCESS SERVER

Payment arrangement is made directly with the process server

STEP TWO

File the original, copies and envelope (if applicable) with the Clerk of Courts County Civil Division. You may file your complaint at either of the following locations:

South County Courthouse Annex (Main Office) 250 N.W. Country Club Drive, Room 115 Port St Lucie, Florida 34986

Small Claims Department 201 South Indian River Drive Fort Pierce, Florida 34950

*If submitting your claim by mail, you must have your signature notarized on the Statement of Claim.

All court files are located and all hearings are held at the South County Annex.

STEP THREE

Once the Clerk's Office has processed your complaint, a hearing date will be scheduled and a Notice to Appear for Pre Trial will be issued. You will receive a copy of the Notice to Appear with the hearing date at the time of filing. The Clerk will forward your Statement of Claim and Notice to Appear to the sheriff's department for service on the Defendant. If you are using a process server, give the Clerk the name of the server and they may either pick it up at the Clerk's Office or you make take it with you and deliver it to the process server.

SETTLEMENTS:

If you and the defendant resolve the case prior to the hearing date, you may file a Voluntary Dismissal

If you and the defendant reach an amicable payment plan, you may enter into a Stipulation for Installment Settlement and Stay.

All forms are available on the **on the Clerk of Court's website at** <u>www.stlucieclerk.com</u> and should be filed with the Clerk's Office prior to your scheduled appearance.

Filing of either a dismissal or stipulation will close your case and you will not be required to attend court.



HOW TO COLLECT YOUR JUDGMENT COUNTY CIVIL DIVISION ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Having received a final judgment, your County Court can do just as much, but no more than any other Court can do to help you collect your judgment. You can:

- 1. Record a certified copy of the final judgment with the Clerk of the Court. The charge for recording is \$10.00 for the first page and \$8.50 for each additional page, plus \$.75 for postage. The recording of the certified copy creates a lien of record against any real estate in the county where recorded then or thereafter owned by the Defendant in his name. See Florida Statute 55.10(a) for lien duration and extending the lien. Additional copies are \$1.00 per page plus \$2.00 for certification.
- 2. Judgment liens: You can obtain a Judgment lien against all of the defendant's personal property located anywhere in the State of Florida by filing a Judgment Lien Certificate with the Department of State. A judgment lien lapses after 5 years. If there are liens ahead of yours, as those liens lapse, yours will move to the top. After 5 years, you can file again and obtain another judgment lien but if others have filed after your first filing, those liens will now be ahead of yours. To get the proper form, you can either download the form from the Department of State's website: www.sunbiz.org or call the Department of State, Division of Corporation, Judgment Liens Section, at 850-656-7463.
- 3. Writs of Execution: Fifteen (15) days after entry of a final judgment, you may obtain a Writ of Execution from the Clerk's Office. Deliver this Writ to the Sheriff of the county in which the Defendant lives or where any of his property (real or personal) is located. You must also give the sheriff written instructions, called Instructions for Levy, which describe the property to be levied on and its location. In order to get the sheriff to levy upon the defendant's property, you must first locate it. The sheriff will require you to pay a cost deposit. Before the property can be levied upon, you must check the Department of State's website at www.sunbiz.org to see if there are any judgment liens filed under the name of the defendant. You must also check for creditors who have filed UCC security interests in the name of the Defendant at www.floridaucc.com. You must notify all of these people of the time and date of the sale. You will then give the sheriff a signed affidavit, on which you must provide the information contained in the judgment lien certificates filed against the defendant. Once the notices have been sent, the sale must be properly advertised in a local newspaper. The sheriff can then sell the property at public auction to the highest bidder. Money received from the sale will be paid out first to the sheriff to pay costs (if the sale price covers costs, your deposit will be returned to you); second the sheriff pays you \$500; and third, if anyone obtained a Judgment Lien before you did, the sheriff pays that person before paying you. If any funds are left after paying any Judgment Liens recorded with the State ahead of your, those funds will be paid to you. IMPORTANT: If you previously docketed a Writ of Execution with the sheriff, you must file a judgment lien certificate with the state before October 1, 2003 in order to hold that place in line.
- 4. If you know of any third person, such as an employer, mortgagor or bank (where the Defendant has money deposited), who may owe the Defendant any money, you may secure from the Clerk a Writ of Garnishment against such third party. If the Court finds that your judgment is still in effect and unsatisfied, the Court will order such third person holding the money or property due the Defendant to pay the same to you. The charge for the Writ of Garnishment is \$85.00. In addition, you shall pay \$100.00 to the garnishee on the garnishee's demand at any time after service of the Writ for payment or part payment of his or her attorney fee which the garnishee expends or agrees to expend in obtaining representation in responding to the Writ. This amount may be added to the amount of your final judgment.

FORMS: (for bank account) Motion for Writ of Garnishment; (for wage garnishment) Motion for Continuing Writ of Garnishment

You must remember that under the Constitution and laws of this State, if the Defendant is the "head of a family" (generally a spouse who is living with one or more members of his family who are dependant upon him for support) such "head of household" has certain exempt property which cannot be successfully levied upon, sold, attached or garnished. For example:

- 1. Up to 160 acres of land in the county or up to a half acre within a city limit on which he lives with his family:
- 2. All of this personal property, including money, of a value of not more than \$1,000.00;
- 3. All salary, wages and commissions earned by his labor

FORMS: Claim of Exemption and Request for Hearing

5. Thirty days after the date of a judgment, an individual (businesses are exempt) may file a Motion for Hearing in Aid of Execution. The Defendant must appear in Court and disclose all assets. The cost is a reopen fee of \$25.00 for cases less than \$500.00 and \$50.00 for cases in excess of \$500.00 (reopen fee required only if ninety days have expired since the entry of the judgment) and \$40.00 per Defendant for sheriff's service.

FORMS: Exparte Motion for Hearing in Aid of Execution

6. Collection of Judgments on Automobile Accidents: In addition to the aforementioned procedures, thirty days after the date of judgment, you can request a Record of Unsatisfied Judgment be issued and mailed to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Upon receipt, the Defendant's registration and driving privilege will be suspended until the judgment is satisfied.

MICHELLE R. MILLER, CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER SMALL CLAIMS AND COUNTY CIVIL DIVISION 250 N.W. COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE PORT ST LUCIE, FLORIDA 34986 (772) 785-5880 DEPT. OF HIGHWAY SAFETY & MOTOR VEHICLES BUREAU OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY 2900 APALACHEE PKY, ROOM A-208 TALLAHASSEE, FL 32399-0585 (772) 785-5880

NOTICE OF LIMITATION OF SERVICES PROVIDED

THE PERSONNEL IN THIS SELF-HELP PROGRAM ARE NOT ACTING AS YOUR LAWYER OR PROVIDING LEGAL ADVICE TO YOU.

SELF-HELP PERSONNEL ARE NOT ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE COURT OR ANY JUDGE. THE PRESIDING JUDGE IN YOUR CASE MAY REQUIRE AMENDMENT OF A FORM OR SUBSTITUTION OF A DIFFERENT FORM. THE JUDGE IS NOT REQUIRED TO GRANT THE RELIEF REQUESTED IN A FORM.

THE PERSONNEL IN THIS SELF-HELP PROGRAM CANNOT TELL YOU WHAT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS OR REMEDIES ARE, REPRESENT YOU IN COURT OR TELL YOU HOW TO TESTIFY IN COURT.

THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE TO AND RECEIVE FROM SELF-HELP PERSONNEL IS NOT CONFIDENTIAL AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO DISCLOSURE AT A LATER DATE. IF ANOTHER PERSON INVOLVED IN YOUR CASE SEEKS ASSISTANCE FROM THIS SELF-HELP PROGRAM THAT PERSON WILL BE GIVEN THE SAME ASSISTANCE THAT YOU RECEIVE.

IN ALL CASES, IT IS BEST TO CONSULT WITH YOUR OWN ATTORNEY.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	
PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING PAFILE THE SIGNED DOCUMENT WITH TH	
I CAN READ ENGLISH	
I CANNOT READ ENGLISH, THIS	NOTICE WAS READ TO ME BY
[NAME]	IN [LANGUAGE]
Provided and I understand the limitation of t	[name] do acknowledge that I have read this Notice of ceived an explanation of the Notice of Limitation of Services he services provided. I understand that it is in my best interest in this case. I understand that this form must be signed and gram may provide services to me. Signature Sig
	Signature

	Case No:
PLAINTIFF(S),	
VS	
DEFENDANT(S).	
	MAIL ADDRESS FOR PARTY NOT TED BY AN ATTORNEY
KEI KESENI	ED DI AN ATTORNET
	ractice and Judicial Administration 2.516, I,, designate the below e-mail
address(es) for electronic service of all documents related to this case.	, 8
	zing the court, clerk of court, and all parties to send pleadings, or other written communications to me g Portal.
I will file a written notice with the clerk	of court if my current e-mail address changes.
Designated e-mail address:	
Secondary designated e-mail address(es	s) (if any)
	nished to the clerk of court for St. Lucie County and by
	(signature)
	(printed name)
	(e-mail address)
	(address)
	(phone number)

STATEMENT OF CLAIM (AUTO NEGLIGENCE) FORM 7.330

Case No:				

The Plaintiff:	{SUES}	The Defendant:
Plaintiff's Address:		Defendant's Address:
Telephone No:		Telephone No:
The plaintiff,		, sues the
		, and alleges:
On or about	, in the vici	inity of,
on a public highway in		County, Florida, plaintiff's motor vehicle,
being operated by		, collided with defendant's motor
vehicle, being operated by		; and the collision with
plaintiff's vehicle was caused by th	ne negligent and carel	ess operation of defendant's vehicle, whereby
plaintiff's vehicle was damaged an	d depreciated in value	e.
WHEREFORE, plaintiff de	emands judgment in th	he sum of \$
STATE OF FLORIDA COUNTY OF ST. LUCIE		
The undersigned, being by above named Plaintiff, that the forenamed Defendant to said Plaintiff,	egoing is a just and tr	says that he is the ue statement of the amount owing by the above ffs and just grounds of defense.
Subscribed and sworn to before me	e this day of	, 20
MICH	ELLE R. MILLER,	Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
	By:	
	Deputy Cle	

STATEMENT OF CLAIM (FOR GOODS SOLD) FORM 7.331

Case No: _____

The Plaintiff:	{SUES}	The Defendant:	
Plaintiff's Address:		Defendant's Address:	
T. 1 . 1			
Telephone No:		Telephone No:	
Plaintiff,		sues	
		, and alleges: There is now due,	
owing, and unpaid from defenda	ant to plaintiff \$	with interest since,	
for the following goods sold and	l delivered by plaintiff to	o defendant between	
and			
((list goods, prices and ar	ny credits)	
WHEREFORE, plaintiff	demands judgment for	damages against defendant.	
STATE OF FLORIDA COUNTY OF ST. LUCIE			
The undersigned, being labove named Plaintiff, that the finamed Defendant to said Plainti	foregoing is a just and tr	says that he is the ue statement of the amount owing by the above ffs and just grounds of defense.	
		day of	
Subscribed and sworn to before		day of, 20	
		Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller	
	Deputy Cle		

STATEMENT OF CLAIM (FOR WORK DONE AND MATERIALS FURNISHED)

FORM 7.332

	Case No:		_
The Plaintiff:	{SUES}		The Defendant:
Plaintiff's Address:			Defendant's Address:
		_	
Telephone No:			Telephone No:
Plaintiff,			sues
			, and alleges: There is now due,
owing, and unpaid from defer	ndant to plaintiff	\$	with interest since,
and (list time and n	naterials, showin	ng charges therefor	re and any credits)
			lamages against defendant.
COUNTY OF ST. LUCIE			
The undersigned, being above named Plaintiff, that the named Defendant to said Plaintiff.	ne foregoing is a	just and true stat	tement of the amount owing by the above
Subscribed and sworn to befo	re me this	day of	
	MICHELLE F	R. MILLER, Cler	k of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
	By:		
		Deputy Clerk	

STATEMENT OF CLAIM (FOR MONEY LENT) FORM 7.333

Case No:

The Plaintiff:	{SUES}	The Defendant:
Plaintiff's Address:		Defendant's Address:
Telephone No:		Telephone No:
Plaintiff,		sues
		, and alleges: There is now due,
owing, and unpaid from defenda	nt to plaintiff \$	for money lent by plaintiff to
defendant on	with inter	rest thereon since
STATE OF FLORIDA COUNTY OF ST. LUCIE		
The undersigned, being babove named Plaintiff, that the formamed Defendant to said Plaintiff	oregoing is a just and tr	says that he is theue statement of the amount owing by the above ffs and just grounds of defense.
Subscribed and sworn to before	me this day of	·
		Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
1,110		ciera or ene circuit court una compirone.
	Deputy Cle	

STATEMENT OF CLAIM (PROMISSORY NOTE) FORM 7.334

Case No:

The Plaintiff: {S	SUES}	The Defendant:
Plaintiff's Address:	,	Defendant's Address:
Telephone No:		Telephone No:
Plaintiff,		sues
defendant,		
1. This is an action for damages	that do not exceed	I the jurisdictional amount pursuant to
Florida Small Claims Rule 7.010(b).		
2. On, def	endant executed a	nd delivered to plaintiff a promissory note,
a copy being attached, in	Cou	nty, Florida.
3. Defendant failed to pay		
(a) said note when due; of	or	
(b) the installment paym	ent due on said no	te on, and plaintiff
(hashas r	not) elected to acce	elerate payment of the balance.
4. There is now due, owing, and	unpaid from defer	ndant to plaintiff \$
on said note with interest since		
WHEREFORE, plaintiff deman		
STATE OF FLORIDA COUNTY OF ST. LUCIE		
The undersigned, being by me fabove named Plaintiff, that the foregoin named Defendant to said Plaintiff, exclusion	ng is a just and true	e statement of the amount owing by the above
Subscribed and sworn to before me this	day of	, 20
		Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

STATEMENT OF CLAIM (ACCOUNT STATED) FORM 7.337

Case No:

The Plaintiff:	{ <i>SUES</i> }	The Defendant:
Plaintiff's Address:		Defendant's Address:
Telephone No:		Telephone No:
Plaintiff,		sues
defendant,		
1. This is an action for of Florida Small Claims Rule 7.01	•	exceed the jurisdictional amount pursuant to
		iff and defendant had business transactions they agreed to the resulting balance.
3. Plaintiff rendered a st defendant did not object to the		to defendant, a copy being attached, and
4. Defendant owes plain, on the account.		that is due with interest since
WHEREFORE, plaintif	f demands judgment	for damages against defendant.
above named Plaintiff, that the	foregoing is a just an	orn, says that he is the nd true statement of the amount owing by the above et-offs and just grounds of defense.
Subscribed and sworn to before	me this da	y of, 20
	CHELLE R. MILL	ER, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
	Deputy	Clerk