



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

PRE-TRIAL CHECKLIST – SMALL CLAIMS VIRTUAL TRIALS

☐ **SERVE your Plaintiff's Claim and Order to Go to Small Claims Court (JC Form #SC-100) on each named Defendant. Most common ways to serve a party include:**

- OPTION 1 – Pay the court a fee to mail your claim by Certified Mail. See the court's Fee Schedule (SDSC Form #ADM-001) for the current fee amount. *Note: This is not a guaranteed method of service, and the fee is not refundable.*
- OPTION 2 – Ask any individual at least 18 years-of-age, and not a party to the lawsuit, to serve one copy of your claim and the Notice of Case Assignment to EACH named defendant.
- OPTION 3 – Hire a professional process server to perform service.

☐ **COMPLETE and SUBMIT the Proof of Service Small Claims (JC Form #SC-104) a minimum of 5 days prior to the trial.**

- You **MUST** fill out a separate Proof of Service (JC Form #SC-104) for EACH named defendant.
- For additional information, see What is "Proof of Service"? (JC Form #SC-104B).
- For ANY additional questions about service of process, contact the Small Claims Legal Advisor at (858) 634-1777.

If you are UNABLE TO SERVE the defendant, see Information for Small Claims Parties (SDSC Form #SC-026) for information regarding how to request a reset or continuance of your trial date. For any additional questions, contact the Small Claims Legal Advisor at (858) 634-1777.

☐ **REQUEST an Interpreter in advance of your hearing.**

- If you have a small claims hearing scheduled and need an interpreter, complete the Interpreter Request/Cancellation form (SDSC Form #ADM-348) as far in advance of your hearing as possible. The form can be brought to the business office during business hours or mailed to the court location noted on your paperwork. The court will try to schedule an interpreter for the date and time of your hearing at no cost to you, but cannot guarantee that one will be available. Failure to provide the court with adequate notice may result in your matter being continued.

☐ **PUT TOGETHER and ORGANIZE all documents you will use as evidence for your case.**

- All evidence to be reviewed and considered by the court must be submitted and received by the court **at least ten (10) court days before your scheduled hearing date. DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS. Evidence will not be returned. Evidence submitted less than ten (10) court days before the hearing may result in the judicial officer not considering the items.**
- **Evidence submitted to the court must be sent via U.S. mail or e-mail to all parties named in the case. Any evidence not provided to the opposing parties may result in the judicial officer being unable to consider the item.**
- Pursuant to San Diego Local Rule 2.5.6, "...Exhibits must be legible and complete, and not require use of another resource to hear or view the exhibit." The following are specifically prohibited and ARE NOT ALLOWED for exhibit submission:
 - Compact Discs (CDs)
 - Digital Video Discs (DVDs)
 - Other types of digital storage devices
 - USB flash drive (thumb drive)
 - External file-sharing links such as Google Drive.
- E-mail attachments are restricted to 10MB. If your file is larger than 10 MB, you will need to submit a compressed file or send hard copies via U.S. Mail to the court.

- If any exhibit is more than one page, each page shall be numbered in sequential order, e.g., 1, 2, 3, and so forth.
- Evidence may be submitted to the court by U.S. mail or e-mail. For more information on how to submit exhibits by e-mail, please visit the Superior Court's website www.sdcourt.ca.gov; click on the Small Claims Virtual Hearings page .



PREPARING for your virtual hearing

- Days before the hearing, download the free Microsoft Teams App on your mobile device or computer. Instructions on appearing virtually may be found by visiting the Court's website at www.sdcourt.ca.gov; click on the Small Claims Virtual Hearings page.
- You may also appear by telephone for the virtual hearing. Instructions on appearing by telephone may be found by visiting the Superior Court's website at www.sdcourt.ca.gov; click on the Small Claims Virtual Hearings page.



GATHER any witnesses you will need for your case.

- Make sure your witnesses are informed that the hearing will be held virtually. Your witnesses should be aware of the hearing date and time. You need to ensure that they will appear through the Microsoft Teams App for the virtual hearing.
- Days before the hearing, make sure your witnesses download the free Microsoft Teams App on their mobile device or computer. Instructions on appearing virtually may be found by visiting the Superior Court's website at www.sdcourt.ca.gov; click on the Small Claims Virtual Hearings page.
- Your witnesses may also appear by telephone for the virtual hearing. Instructions on appearing by telephone may be found by visiting the Superior Court's website at www.sdcourt.ca.gov; click on the Small Claims Virtual Hearings page.
- For information regarding the subpoena process, contact the Small Claims Advisor at (858) 634-1777.



If you are UNABLE TO ATTEND your hearing date due to an emergency:

- Review the Authorization to Appear (JC Form #SC-109) to see who is eligible to appear on your behalf. This form can be found on the Superior Court's website at www.sdcourt.ca.gov.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR SMALL CLAIMS TRIAL:



Connect to the San Diego Superior Court department listed on the Plaintiff's Claim and Order to Go to Small Claims or Notice of Hearing (JC Form #SC-100). For more information on how to appear virtually for your hearing, please visit the Superior Court's website www.sdcourt.ca.gov, and click on the Small Claims Virtual Hearings page.

- Check-in with the courtroom clerk or designated staff 30 minutes before your hearing. Follow all directions.
- You may be offered the opportunity to mediate your case prior to trial. For additional information, see Mediation Information for Small Claims Parties form (SDSC Form #SC-063) or visit the Superior Court's website www.sdcourt.ca.gov, and click on the Small Claims Mediation Services page.
- Have your exhibits organized and ready to present to the court. These are the same exhibits you sent to the court and the other parties in preparation for your hearing.
- Additional department requirements or information may be provided by the courtroom clerk or designated staff on the day of trial. Follow all directions.