



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

PRE-TRIAL CHECKLIST – SMALL CLAIMS TRIALS

- ☐ **SERVE Your Plaintiff's Claim and Order to go to Court to each named Defendant (JC Form #SC-100). 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 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 form (SDSC #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.

- ☐ **COMPILE and ORGANIZE all documents you will use as evidence for your case.**

- Label paperwork with a "P" if you are the plaintiff, and a "D" if you are the defendant. It is recommended you staple, paperclip, or binder all papers.
- **DO NOT** file exhibits with the court unless you have been authorized to appear by telephone by the Court. Bring them with you on the day of trial.

- ☐ **GATHER any witnesses you will need for your case.**

- Make sure your witnesses are informed of the hearing date, time, and location.
- 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:

- ☐ **Report to the San Diego Superior Court department listed on the Plaintiff's Claim and Order to Go to Small Claims or Notice of Hearing.**

- Be on time.
- Check-in with courtroom clerk or designated staff. Follow all directions.
- You will 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).
- Have your exhibits organized and ready to present to the Court.
- Be prepared to exchange for review by the opposing party any exhibit you plan on submitting the Court.
- Additional department requirements or information may be provided by the courtroom clerk or designated staff on the day of trial. Follow all directions.