

How to File a Small Claim

Small claims court is a part of the District Court of Maryland. It handles claims for \$5,000 or less. The rules of evidence and procedure are simplified so it's easier to represent yourself without a lawyer. Here are some tips on how to start your small claims case.

Complete the Complaint Form

- Use the Complaint form to start a small claim. This is form [DC-CV-001](#).
- Write the following information on the form:
 - Your name and address.
 - The name and address of the defendant.
 - The amount of money you are seeking, plus interest.
 - A summary of the facts of your claim including a legal reason why money is due to you.
- Check off if your claim is a “contract” or “tort.”
 - Contract cases are when you claim the other person violated a written or oral agreement. This commonly involves leases, loans, home and car repairs, or sale of a product.
 - Tort cases involve injury to a person or damage to property. Car accidents are the most common torts.
- Check the “\$5,000 or less” box to let the court know this case is a small claim.
- Check one of the boxes next to each defendant’s name to let the court know how you wish to have the defendant served. Watch our video titled [Service of Process in the District Court](#) to learn more.

Watch the Video



Maryland Court Help

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- Provide information about the defendant's military service under "Military Service Affidavit." When necessary, certification of the defendant's military status can be obtained online at <https://scra.dmdc.osd.mil/>.
- You are not required to complete the bottom section of the form labeled "Application and Affidavit in Support of Judgment."

File the Complaint

- Submit the completed complaint to the clerk's office at a Maryland District Court.
- Your claim must be within the statute of limitations.
- Court rules generally require that you file your case in the county where the defendant lives, works, or conducts regular business.
- If you printed the form yourself, be sure to bring at least four copies of the form and any attachments.

Pay the Filing Fee

- [Pay a fee](#) when you file the case. If you cannot afford the fee, you may apply to waive this fee. Watch our video titled [Can't Afford Court Filing Fees](#) for more information.
- The clerk will also collect a second fee if you requested service of process by certified mail or sheriff.

Where to Get Help

- **Help Centers** - If you are not already represented by a lawyer, speak with one for free at a Maryland Court Help Center. Lawyers at the Help Center can give you advice and help you with the forms. They cannot represent you in court. Call 410-260-1392 or go online to mdcourt.gov/helpcenter for a list of hours and locations.
- **Law Libraries** - Visit mdcourts.gov/ccll for hours and locations.
- **Mediation** - A way to resolve your conflict without going to court. A trained, neutral person called a "mediator" can help you and the other person find a solution to which you can both agree. Look up a mediator in your area at mdcourts.gov/macro/adr-resourceguide or call 410-260-1676.