

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AO 398 AND AO 399

AO 398 - NOTICE OF LAWSUIT AND REQUEST FOR WAIVER

(one form needs to be completed for each defendant you are suing)

and

AO 399 - WAIVER OF SERVICE OF SUMMONS

(one form needs to be completed for each defendant you are suing)

Block 1: Middle District of PA

Block 2: Your name

Block 3: First named defendant

Block 4: Do not fill out unless your case has already been assigned a case number. If you are submitting this form with your new complaint, the Clerk's Office will fill in the assigned case number for you.

Block 5: AO 398 – Name of Defendant and AO 399 – Name of Plaintiff's Attorney or Unrepresented Plaintiff.

Block 6: Address of the defendant.

Blocks 1 through 4 will be the same for each form you complete but Block 5 and Block 6 will be different as you need to complete one form for each named defendant.

DO NOT COMPLETE THE REST OF THE FORM. IF THE U.S. MARSHAL IS DIRECTED TO SERVE YOUR COMPLAINT THEY WILL COMPLETE THE REST OF THIS FORM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
Block 1 District of _____

Block 2

Plaintiff

v.
Block 3

Defendant

)
)
)
)
)

Civil Action No. Block 4

NOTICE OF A LAWSUIT AND REQUEST TO WAIVE SERVICE OF A SUMMONS

To: Block 5

(Name of the defendant or - if the defendant is a corporation, partnership, or association - an officer or agent authorized to receive service)

Address: Block 6

(Address of the defendant or - if the defendant is a corporation, partnership, or association - address of an officer or authorized agent)

Why are you getting this?

A lawsuit has been filed against you, or the entity you represent, in this court under the number shown above. A copy of the complaint is attached.

This is not a summons, or an official notice from the court. It is a request that, to avoid expenses, you waive formal service of a summons by signing and returning the enclosed waiver. To avoid these expenses, you must return the signed waiver within _____ days *(give at least 30 days, or at least 60 days if the defendant is outside any judicial district of the United States)* from the date shown below, which is the date this notice was sent. Two copies of the waiver form are enclosed, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope or other prepaid means for returning one copy. You may keep the other copy.

What happens next?

If you return the signed waiver, I will file it with the court. The action will then proceed as if you had been served on the date the waiver is filed, but no summons will be served on you and you will have 60 days from the date this notice is sent (see the date below) to answer the complaint (or 90 days if this notice is sent to you outside any judicial district of the United States).

If you do not return the signed waiver within the time indicated, I will arrange to have the summons and complaint served on you. And I will ask the court to require you, or the entity you represent, to pay the expenses of making service.

Please read the enclosed statement about the duty to avoid unnecessary expenses.

I certify that this request is being sent to you on the date below.

Date: _____

Signature of the attorney or unrepresented party

Printed name

Address

E-mail address

Telephone number

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Block 1 District of _____

Block 2

Plaintiff

v.

Block 3

Defendant

)
)
)
)
)

Civil Action No. Block 4

WAIVER OF THE SERVICE OF SUMMONS

To: Block 5
(Name of the plaintiff's attorney or unrepresented plaintiff)

I have received your request to waive service of a summons in this action along with a copy of the complaint, two copies of this waiver form, and a prepaid means of returning one signed copy of the form to you.

I, or the entity I represent, agree to save the expense of serving a summons and complaint in this case.

I understand that I, or the entity I represent, will keep all defenses or objections to the lawsuit, the court's jurisdiction, and the venue of the action, but that I waive any objections to the absence of a summons or of service.

I also understand that I, or the entity I represent, must file and serve an answer or a motion under Rule 12 within 60 days from _____, the date when this request was sent (or 90 days if it was sent outside the United States). If I fail to do so, a default judgment will be entered against me or the entity I represent.

Date: _____

Signature of the attorney or unrepresented party

Printed name of party waiving service of summons

Printed name

Address

E-mail address

Telephone number

Duty to Avoid Unnecessary Expenses of Serving a Summons

Rule 4 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires certain defendants to cooperate in saving unnecessary expenses of serving a summons and complaint. A defendant who is located in the United States and who fails to return a signed waiver of service requested by a plaintiff located in the United States will be required to pay the expenses of service, unless the defendant shows good cause for the failure.

"Good cause" does *not* include a belief that the lawsuit is groundless, or that it has been brought in an improper venue, or that the court has no jurisdiction over this matter or over the defendant or the defendant's property.

If the waiver is signed and returned, you can still make these and all other defenses and objections, but you cannot object to the absence of a summons or of service.

If you waive service, then you must, within the time specified on the waiver form, serve an answer or a motion under Rule 12 on the plaintiff and file a copy with the court. By signing and returning the waiver form, you are allowed more time to respond than if a summons had been served.