

MAINE JUDICIAL BRANCH

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING A RESIDENTIAL FORCIBLE ENTRY AND DETAINER (EVICTION) CASE

1) In most cases, to evict a tenant from your property, you must first serve the tenant with a written notice of the reason(s) for the eviction, called a Notice to Quit. A Notice to Quit may be written by a lawyer, by you, or you may buy a blank notice from an office supply store. If a notice is required, it must be given to the tenant(s) personally by you, or you may go to the Sheriff's Department and arrange to have the tenant(s) served by a deputy. You will be charged by the Sheriff's Department for service. There are other ways to provide notice, and information on strict notice, timing, and language requirements. For more information see Title 14 of the Maine Revised Statutes, §§ 6001-6016, or hire a lawyer.

2) Complete a Residential Complaint for Forcible Entry and Detainer (form CV-007). Forms can be found on the Judicial Branch website here: www.courts.maine.gov/forms. You are the Plaintiff, and your tenant is the Defendant. If there are multiple tenants on the lease, you must name **all** tenants as Defendants on the Complaint and serve each Defendant. If there are multiple occupants, name your tenant(s) and add the words "all other occupants" as Defendants. Once you complete the Complaint, date and sign it. Make sure that you make copies of this and all other legal documents for your records. Please note: there is not a court form for a Complaint for Forcible Entry and Detainer for a commercial lease/property.

3) For residential evictions, obtain a Residential Forcible Entry and Detainer (Eviction) Information Sheet and Mediation Request (form CV-256) from the clerk or from the Judicial Branch website: www.courts.maine.gov/forms.

4) Obtain a Forcible Entry and Detainer Summons (form CV-034) from the clerk for each tenant. You will be charged for each summons. When filling out the summons, make sure that you fill in the description of your property, with the street address and apartment or house number.

5) Ask the clerk in the court where the hearing will take place for the dates of the next Forcible Entry and Detainer hearings. You will need to choose a date to complete the Forcible Entry and Detainer Summons. If the clerk indicates that the hearing will be held remotely, this information must be notated on the summons. Remember that you must have the summons served on the Defendant at least seven (7) days before the date of the hearing.

6) Take a copy of your complaint, a copy and the original of the summons, and the Residential Forcible Entry and Detainer (Eviction) Information Sheet and Mediation Request (CV-256) to the sheriff's department for service. Please write "Copy for Service" on any copies that are to be served on your tenant(s) (the defendant(s)). Please remember: each tenant must be served with a summons individually. You may not list multiple tenants on one summons. The sheriff's department will charge you for serving each summons. After the service is completed, the sheriff's department will return the original summons, as well as a return of service that has been filled out by a deputy to you.

7) File the Notice to Quit (if required); the original summons; the original complaint; and the return of service with the clerk to initiate the case at least one (1) business day before the hearing. This means that if the hearing is held on a Wednesday, the action must be filed by Tuesday. Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays do not count as business days. You will be charged a filing fee by the clerk's office. If you do not file your Forcible Entry and Detainer Action at least one (1) day before the hearing date, the action may be dismissed and you will have to start over.

IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT AN ATTORNEY.

ADA Notice: The Maine Judicial Branch complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation contact the Court Access Coordinator, accessibility@courts.maine.gov, or a court clerk.

Language Services: For language assistance and interpreters, contact a court clerk or interpreters@courts.maine.gov.