California Small Claims Claim Worksheet (2026)

Your amount, proof, witnesses, service and hearing notes in one place

Fill this in before you file, then bring it to your hearing. Guide: clearlegaltips.com/california-small-claims-court/

Part 1: Your claim

Defendant's legal/trade name: _____

Defendant's address: _____

[ ] I am suing as an individual (natural person). The limit is $12,500 (CCP 116.221).

[ ] I am suing as a business or other entity. The limit is $6,250 (CCP 116.220).

[ ] My claim is over $2,500, so I have not filed more than two claims over $2,500 in California this calendar year (CCP 116.231).

Amount I am claiming ($): _____

Why the defendant owes it: _____

Date the problem happened: _____

Date I asked for payment in writing: _____

Part 2: Damages math

A repair estimate or an invoice is stronger than your own guess.

Item	Amount ($)	Proof (exhibit number)

Total claimed ($): _____

[ ] If my total is over the limit, I understand I can waive the excess. The waiver takes effect at judgment, and the extra money is gone for good (CCP 116.220(d)).

Part 3: Exhibit list

Exhibit	What it is (contract, invoice, receipt, photo, email, estimate)	What it proves
1		
2		
3		
4		

[ ] The original of each exhibit for me, a copy for the judge and a copy for the other side.

Part 4: Witnesses and subpoenas

Witness name: _____

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[ ] I need a subpoena: I took a blank form SC-107 to the clerk, who signs and stamps it.

Who I am subpoenaing: _____

[ ] Someone 18 or older will deliver the subpoena in person, not by mail. Witnesses can ask for $35 a day and 20 cents a mile each way when it is served.

[ ] I need an interpreter (INT-300) or an accommodation (MC-410, 5 days before).

Part 5: Service tracker

Hearing date on my claim: _____

20 to 70 days after filing (CCP 116.330).

Service deadline: _____

15 days before the hearing, or 20 days if the defendant is in a different county (CCP 116.340).

Server's name: _____

Date, time and place served: _____

Proof of Service (SC-104) due: _____

File it 5 days before the hearing.

Part 6: Hearing notes

My one-sentence opening: _____

Who owes me, how much and why.

The three points I must make: _____

What I am asking the judge to order: _____

Notice of Entry (SC-130) date: _____

30-day date: _____

Earliest day to collect, and the other side's deadline to appeal (CCP 116.750).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Checked in November 2026 against CCP sections 116.220, 116.221, 116.231, 116.330, 116.340 and 116.750 and the California Courts Self-Help Guide. Assembly Bill 2781 changes the $50 and $75 fee tiers on January 1, 2027 (see the filing checklist). General information, not legal advice. Ask your court clerk about local rules, and consult a licensed California attorney for advice. Guide: clearlegaltips.com/california-small-claims-court/