Ohio Small Claims Filing Checklist (2026)

From the claim limit to the trial notice

R.C. means the Ohio Revised Code. Guide: clearlegaltips.com/ohio-small-claims-court/

1. CHECK YOUR CLAIM

[ ] My claim is for money or taxes only, $6,000 or less, before interest and costs (R.C. 1925.02(A)(1)).

Amount I am claiming ($): _____

[ ] My claim is not for libel, slander, replevin, malicious prosecution, abuse of process or punitive damages (R.C. 1925.02(A)(2)(a)).

[ ] My claim is not brought by an assignee or agent. The statute bars those, with exceptions for certain government tax claims and claims filed by a person designated under R.C. 1925.18. If unsure, I will ask a lawyer or a legal aid office.

[ ] I checked whether my claim fits one of the two things the statute does not exclude: consumer-law damages or a portfolio holder's own case (R.C. 1925.02(A)(2)(b)).

2. CHECK THE DEADLINE

Date I first could have sued ('accrued'): _____

Written contract: six years (R.C. 2305.06). Contract not in writing: four years (R.C. 2305.07(A)). Consumer transaction for personal, family or household purposes: six years, counted from 30 calendar days after the later of the last charge or the last payment (R.C. 2305.07(C)). Consumer sales law claim: two years after the violation, or one year after attorney general proceedings end, whichever is later (R.C. 1345.10(C)). Other sections can change a deadline.

Deadline I calculated: _____

3. PICK THE COURT

Court I am filing in (municipal or county): _____

[ ] I asked the clerk which court covers my case (R.C. 1925.02(A)(3)).

4. ASK FOR PAYMENT IN WRITING

Date I sent my written demand: _____

How I sent it, and my proof of delivery: _____

5. GET THE DEFENDANT'S DETAILS RIGHT

Defendant's exact legal name: _____

Address for delivering the notice: _____

[ ] I know the court cannot get power over a defendant by published service, substituted service (the statute doesn't define it) or warrant of attorney, and I asked the clerk which delivery methods the court uses (R.C. 1925.02(A)(3); 1925.05(A)).

6. FILE THE CLAIM

[ ] I will state the amount and nature of my claim, where the parties live and the defendant's military status (the court's form shows what it asks) (R.C. 1925.04(B)).

[ ] The claim is written in concise, nontechnical form and signed under oath (R.C. 1925.04(B)).

[ ] I understand that starting the case waives my right to a jury trial (R.C. 1925.04(A)).

Filing fee set by the court ($): _____

Additional filing fee set by statute ($11; R.C. 1901.26(C) or 1907.24(C)): _____

Ask the clerk for the court's own fee and for any added charges the court sets by rule (R.C. 1901.26(B)(1); 1907.24(B)(1)).

7. THE NOTICE AND THE DATES

Date I filed: _____

Trial date and place on my memorandum: _____

The trial must be set not less than 15 or more than 40 days after the case starts (R.C. 1925.04(B)). Notice is served as the Rules of Civil Procedure provide (R.C. 1925.05(A)). If it comes back undelivered, ask for a further notice; the court may charge an additional fee (R.C. 1925.05(B)).

8. COUNTERCLAIMS

[ ] A counterclaim must be filed and served at least seven days before the trial of my claim (R.C. 1925.02(C)). One for more than $6,000 sends the case to the regular docket (R.C. 1925.10(A)).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

This worksheet is general information, not legal advice. Ask your court clerk about amounts and forms. For deadlines and legal questions, ask a lawyer or a legal aid office. Full guide: clearlegaltips.com/ohio-small-claims-court/