

# A GUIDE TO THE NEW JERSEY CIVIL COURTS



**REVISED EDITION - AUGUST 2009**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>WELCOME TO THE SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY – CIVIL COURTS</b> .....	1
Purpose of this Booklet .....	1
Judiciary Mission Statement .....	1
Statement of Core Values of the New Jersey Court System.....	1
Civil Part .....	3
Case Type Definitions .....	3
Special Civil Part.....	9
General Equity.....	9
Probate Part .....	11
Filing Special Civil Part Complaints .....	11
Filing Probate Matters .....	11
Filing Complaints in the Civil Part.....	11
Law Division .....	12
Special Civil Part Fees* .....	12
Civil Part Fees* .....	13
<b>COURT HOURS</b> .....	14
<b>COURT HOLIDAYS</b> .....	14
<b>EMERGENCY CLOSINGS</b> .....	14
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b> .....	15
Public Access Terminals, Information and Community Relations.....	15
Access for Persons with Disabilities .....	15
Interpreting and Translating Services.....	15
Preparing for Your Court Appearance .....	16
<b>LAWYER REFERRAL AND LEGAL SERVICES</b> .....	17
<b>IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR COURT OFFICES</b> .....	22
Civil Division Addresses & Telephone Numbers .....	22
<b>WHAT COURT STAFF MAY AND MAY NOT DO</b> .....	25
<b>FORMS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET</b> .....	26
<b>IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO REMEMBER FOR YOUR CASE(S)</b> .....	27

# ***WELCOME TO THE SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY – CIVIL COURTS***

## *Purpose of this Booklet*

This booklet is a guide to services in the Civil Division.

## *Judiciary Mission Statement*

We are an independent branch of government constitutionally entrusted with the fair and just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and this State.

## *Statement of Core Values of the New Jersey Court System*

Required to accomplish our mission are four paramount values representing the core of what we stand for as an organization:

- Independence
- Fairness
- Integrity
- Quality Service

## CIVIL DIVISION OVERVIEW

The Civil Division consists of three operational parts: Civil Part, Special Civil Part, and Chancery, which includes the General Equity and Probate Parts.

The following are parties in civil actions:

- **Plaintiff** - person who sues.
- **Defendant** - person who is sued.
- **Guardian** - person appointed by the court to represent the interests of another with a disability (*e.g.*, minor, incapacitated person).
- **Executor** - person named in a will to carry out the terms of the will, suing or defending on behalf of the estate of a decedent.
- **Administrator** - person suing or defending on behalf of an estate when the decedent died without a will.
- **John or Jane Doe** - fictitious defendant designation used when the true identity of the defendant or potential defendant is unknown.
- **ABC Corporation** - fictitious defendant designation used when the true identity of a corporate defendant or potential corporate defendant is unknown.
- **Crossclaimant** - defendant suing another defendant on a crossclaim.
- **Counterclaimant** - defendant suing a plaintiff on a counterclaim.
- **Intervenor** - a third party who voluntarily requests to participate in a lawsuit and is permitted by the court.
- **Interpleader** - party suing two or more persons claiming the same thing or fund and requesting that the court determine between or among them which is entitled to recover it.
- **Third Party Plaintiff** - party suing a non-party to the original suit on a third party complaint (complaint brought by a defendant against a party not sued by the plaintiff in the complaint).
- **Third Party Defendant** - party being sued in a third party complaint.

It is recommended that litigants seek the advice of an attorney if they have questions about their civil case. However, forms and instructions for filing a complaint are available on the Judiciary's Web Site at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com) or can be obtained from court staff. A list of the telephone numbers and addresses appears on pages 21-23. Legal Services can help people who cannot afford an attorney, and the County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Programs can provide a referral to an attorney. A list of these offices appears on pages 17-20.

## *Civil Part*

In the Civil Part, there is no monetary limit on the value of cases that may be filed. Either party in a Civil Part case may request a jury trial. A jury in a civil case typically consists of six persons. There are approximately 95,000 cases filed in the Civil Part each year. A case gets started in the Civil Part by the filing of a complaint and case information statement and the requisite fee with the court. The following types of cases are filed in the Civil Part and the numbers preceding them refer to the case type numbers that must be used when filling out the case information statement.

### *Case Type Definitions*

The list below contains brief definitions of the various case types contained on the Civil Case Information Statement.

#### **Track I — 150 days' discovery**

- 151 name change** - action to change an individual's or family's name.
- 175 forfeiture** - action by the government for ownership of property taken during the commission of a crime.
- 302 tenancy** - action arising from any dispute between a landlord and tenant, other than eviction and actions for return of a security deposit that is less than \$15,000.
- 399 real property (other than tenancy, contract, condemnation, complex commercial or construction)** - action based on a dispute over real estate, such as a devaluation of property value because of a nuisance.
- 502 book account** - action for the collection of an unpaid bill for goods or services provided.
- 505 other insurance claim (including declaratory judgment actions)** - action involving differing interpretations of an insurance policy or a dispute over insurance coverage.
- 506 PIP coverage** - (PIP means Personal Injury Protection) action brought by an insured or his/her healthcare provider against the insured's automobile insurance company for unpaid medical bills or other insurance benefits.
- 510 UM or UIM claim** - action by an insured against his/her own automobile insurance company seeking damages from that insurance company under either the uninsured motorist (UM) or underinsured motorist (UIM) coverage provision of an insurance policy. The UM policy covers the insured for damages arising from an automobile accident caused by an uninsured driver. The UIM policy covers the insured for damages arising from an automobile accident in which the responsible party does not have enough insurance.
- 511 action on a negotiable instrument** - action against a defendant for failure to honor the obligations of a written instrument. These actions usually involve a bounced check.
- 512 lemon law** - action by the buyer or lessee against the car dealer who sold or leased a new vehicle that is claimed to be faulty.

**801 summary action** - action based on a special rule or statute that permits the court to rule on an expedited basis.

**802 Open Public Records Act (OPRA)** – appeal from a governmental agency’s refusal to provide access to certain government records.

### **Track II — 300 days’ discovery**

**305 construction** - action arising out of a construction agreement.

**509 employment (other than CEPA or LAD)** - action arising out of an agreement between an employer and employee.

**599 contract/commercial transaction** - action based upon the failure to honor the terms of an oral or written agreement.

**603 auto negligence - personal injury** - action arising from the negligent use of a motor vehicle, which results in bodily injury.

**605 personal injury** - action caused by the negligence of another’s negligence in the ownership, use or control of property; for example, injury resulting from a slip and fall on someone’s driveway.

**610 auto negligence - property damage** - action arising from the negligent ownership and/or use of a motor vehicle, which results in property damage.

**699 tort – other** - action arising from injuries to a person or property resulting from negligent or deliberate conduct of another; for example, intentional infliction of emotional distress.

### **Track III — 450 days’ discovery**

**005 civil rights** - action claiming that the conduct of another has violated certain constitutionally protected rights.

**301 condemnation** - action also known as eminent domain, brought by a governmental entity seeking to take private real property for a public use.

**602 assault and battery** - action arising from unlawful physical contact.

**604 medical malpractice** - action against a healthcare provider for injuries arising from negligence.

**606 products liability** - action against a manufacturer, distributor or seller of goods for injuries suffered as a result of the use of a product.

**607 professional malpractice** - action against a provider of professional services, other than a healthcare provider, arising from negligence.

**608 toxic tort** - action arising from the release of a harmful substance into the environment.

- 609** **defamation** - action from the publication, either orally (slander) or in writing (libel), of false information concerning another.
- 616** **Whistleblower/Conscientious Employee Protection Act (CEPA)** - action claiming retaliatory acts by an employer against an employee.
- 617** **inverse condemnation** - action for compensation of privately owned real estate taken for a public use.
- 618** **Law Against Discrimination (LAD)** - action claiming differential treatment based on race, creed, color, national origin/nationality, ancestry, sex, age, religion, disability or perceived disability, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, domestic partnership status, genetic information, status as a disabled veteran or veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States, or liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States.
- 620** **False Claims Act.** Actions under *N.J.S.A. 2A:32C-1 et seq.*, which provides that those who knowingly submit, or cause another person or entity to submit, false claims for payment of State government funds are liable for treble the State's damages plus civil penalties of \$5,500 to \$11,000 per false claim. The act also contains fee-shifting and whistleblower provisions. The latter allow citizens with evidence of fraud against government contracts and programs (for example, Medicaid) to sue on behalf of the government in order to recover the misappropriated funds. Under subsection – 7d, in compensation for the risk and effort of filing a whistleblower case, the citizen whistleblower may be awarded a percentage of the recovery (between 25% to 35%) for prosecuting the civil action.

Actions brought under the *False Claims Act* are to be placed under seal and remain so for at least 60 days. The purpose of the seal is two-fold – to encourage citizens to come forward without fear of reprisal, and to allow the Attorney General time to investigate and determine whether to join the action without tipping off the alleged wrong doer.

#### **Track IV – Active Case Management by Individual Judge / 450 days discovery**

- 156** **environmental/environmental coverage litigation** - action by an insured seeking payment from an insurance company for damage to the environment
- 280** **Zelnorm** - actions against the manufacturers and others for damages arising from the use of the drug Zelnorm.
- 285** **Stryker Trident Hip Implants** – actions brought against the manufacturers and others for damages incurred as a result of defects in hip replacement components.
- 303** **Mt. Laurel** - action arising from the allocation of a fair share of affordable housing to lower and moderate income families.
- 508** **complex commercial** - action involving unusually complicated business matters.

- 513 complex construction** - construction matters involving unusually complicated factual or legal issues.
- 514 insurance fraud** - action alleging damages resulting from a fraudulent insurance claim.
- 701 actions in lieu of prerogative writs** - appeal from the action or inaction of a local governmental body; for example, review of a determination of a planning board or zoning board of adjustment.
- mass torts (Track IV)** - Mass torts are groups of cases that have common facts and legal issues that the state Supreme Court has designated for special consolidated handling by a single judge.
- 248 Ciba Geigy** - actions for damages or medical monitoring arising out of the environmental contamination of the byproducts of chemical manufacturing in Toms River, New Jersey.
- 271 Accutane** – actions against the manufacturers of Accutane and others for damages arising from its use.
- 601 asbestos** - actions against the manufacturers, suppliers, distributors or others for damages arising from the exposure to asbestos.
- 266 HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) (266)** – actions against manufacturers, sellers, distributors or others for damages arising from the use of Hormone Replacement Therapy.
- 276 Depo-Provera (276)** – actions for damages or medical monitoring arising out of the use of the contraceptive Depo-Provera.
- 619 Vioxx** – actions against the manufacturers, suppliers, distributors or others for damages arising from the use of the drug Vioxx, an anti-inflammatory medication used to treat arthritis and menstrual pain.
- 272 Bextra/Celebrex** - actions against manufacturers of the drugs Bextra and Celebrex and others for damages allegedly caused by ingestion of one or both of these drugs
- 274 Risperdal/Seroquel/Zyprexa** - actions against manufacturers of the drugs Risperdal, Seroquel, Zyprexa and others for damages allegedly caused by ingestion of one or both of these drugs.
- 275 Ortho Evra** - actions against the manufacturer of the Ortho Evra birth control patch and others for damages caused by use of the patch.
- 277 Mahwah Toxic Dump Site** - actions brought for damage or other relief resulting from the alleged dumping of hazardous chemicals at the Ford Motor Plant, Ringwood Mines landfill and adjacent sites in Mahwah and Ringwood, New Jersey.

- 278 **Zometa/Aredia** - actions against the manufacturer for damages arising from use of the drugs Zometa and Aredia.
- 279 **Gadolinium** - actions for damages arising out of the use of gadolinium-based diagnostic contrast agents.
- 281 **Bristol-Myers Squibb Environmental (281)** – actions against Bristol-Myers Squibb for damages and other relief arising from exposure to toxic chemicals released by the defendant into the environment.
- 282 **Fosamax (282)** – actions against the manufacturers and others of Fosamax for damages and other relief arising from the use of this drug.
- 283 **Digitek** - actions for damages and other relief against the manufacturers and others arising from the use of the drug Digitek.
- 284 **NuvaRing®** - actions against the manufacturer and others for damages arising from the use of the contraceptive ring NuvaRing®.
- 286 **Levaquin** – actions against the manufacturer and others for damages arising from the use of the antibiotic Levaquin.

For purposes of managing the civil caseload, the Civil Part caseload is broken down into discrete categories called “tracks.” Cases are assigned to a track upon the filing of the complaint. The track assignment is based on the case type as noted on side 2 of the Civil Case Information Statement and each track provides a specific discovery period. The tracks for each case type and the applicable discovery periods are as follows:

**Track I – 150 days discovery**

151	Name change
175	Forfeiture
302	Tenancy
399	Real Property (other than tenancy, contract, condemnation, complex commercial or construction)
502	Book account
505	Other insurance claim (including declaratory judgment actions)
506	PIP coverage
510	UM or UIM claim
511	Action on a negotiable instrument
512	Lemon law
801	Summary action
802	Open Public Records Act (Summary Action)

**Track II – 300 days discovery**

305	Construction
509	Employment (other than CEPA or LAD)
599	Contract/Commercial transaction
603	Auto negligence - personal injury
605	Personal injury
610	Auto negligence - property damage
699	Tort – Other

**Track III – 450 days discovery**

005	Civil rights
301	Condemnation
602	Assault and battery
604	Medical malpractice
606	Product liability
607	Professional malpractice
608	Toxic tort
609	Defamation
616	Whistleblower/Conscientious Employee Protection Act (CEPA) Cases
617	Inverse condemnation
618	Law Against Discrimination (LAD) Cases
620	False Claims Act

**Track IV – Active Case Management by Individual Judge/450 days discovery**

156	Environmental coverage litigation
280	Zelnorm
285	Stryker Trident Hip Implants
303	Mt. Laurel
508	Complex commercial
513	Complex construction
514	Insurance fraud
701	Action in lieu of prerogative writs

## **Mass Tort (Track IV)**

248	Ciba Geigy
266	HRT
271	Accutane
272	Bextra/Celebrex
274	Risperdal/Seroquel/Zyprexa
275	Ortho Evra
277	Mahwah Toxic Dump
278	Zometa/Aredia
279	Gadolinium
280	Centrally Managed Litigation
281	Bristol-Myers Squibb Environmental
282	Fosamax
283	Digitek
284	NuvaRing®
285	Stryker Trident Hip Implant
286	Levaquin
601	Asbestos
619	Vioxx.

The discovery process is a mechanism for allowing each side the opportunity to learn about the other side's case. The purpose of the pretrial discovery rules is to ensure that there are no surprises at the time of trial and that the end result of a case is based upon the actual merits of a case. During pretrial discovery, each side learns the evidence that will be used at trial to support either side's case.

### *Special Civil Part*

The Special Civil Part is the civil court of limited jurisdiction. The Special Civil Part is a high volume court that deals with three case types: landlord/tenant matters, small claims lawsuits up to \$3,000 and up to \$5,000 for actions to recover security deposits and special civil lawsuits up to \$15,000.

Typical small claims and special civil lawsuits include breach of a written or oral contract, return of money used as a down payment, loss or damage of property caused by a motor vehicle accident, back rent, bad checks, return of a tenant's security deposit, payment for work performed, or defective merchandise.

Landlord/tenant matters involve disputes between landlords and tenants. A landlord may file a complaint against a tenant for failure to pay rent, continued disorderly conduct, willful destruction of property, habitual lateness in the payment of rent, violation of the rules and regulations after a written notice to comply as outlined in a lease or document, or a tenant's conviction of a drug offense or other offenses.

### *General Equity*

General Equity is frequently used where litigants go to obtain temporary restraining orders (TROs) and preliminary and permanent injunctive relief.

General Equity judges handle non-jury cases which may involve:

*Business Disputes*

Specific performance of (business) contracts, trade secrets, unfair competition, employment contracts restrictive covenants;

*Contract Disputes*

Breach of contract (where equitable relief is the principle relief sought), rescission and cancellation, reformation of instruments, subrogation;

*Business Governance*

Partnership and corporate litigation, appointment of fiscal agents, receivership, statutory, custodial or provisional directors, statutory receivership, business dissolutions;

*Property Matters*

Specific performance (real estate contracts), cancellation/discharge of mortgages, discharge of liens (non-mortgage), setting aside fraudulent conveyances, injunctive restraint of nuisances, establishment of lost title documents/instruments, partitions, quiet title, property-line disputes, impress (constructive) trusts;

*Medical/End of Life Matters*

Appointments of Special Medical Guardians (to authorize emergency, life-saving surgical or medical procedures), termination/continuation of life support;

*Miscellaneous*

Arbitration confirmation, labor strike injunctions, exhumations, environmental litigation;

*Foreclosure*

Residential (mortgage) foreclosures, commercial (mortgage) foreclosures, condominium/home owner association lien foreclosures, *in personam* tax foreclosures, *in rem* tax foreclosures, strict foreclosures and setting aside foreclosures.

Respecting foreclosures, detailed information, including answers to commonly asked questions and referral information for homelessness prevention, foreclosure recovery programs and free foreclosure mediation and counseling services appears on the Judiciary's web site at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com) .

NOTE: Until a contesting answer is filed, all foreclosure matters are handled by the Foreclosure Unit in Trenton, and all filings should be sent directly there. The Foreclosure Unit forwards all cases in which contested answers are filed (and all subsequent papers involving the contested foreclosure) to the vicinage's General Equity judge.

*Case Types Frequently Misfiled in General Equity*

Matrimonial or palimony cases, probate cases, actions in lieu of prerogative writs, replevin and declaratory judgment actions (depends upon the nature of the underlying action) are not filed in General Equity.

## *Probate Part*

Judges in the Chancery Division, Probate Part hear cases seeking equitable remedies such as execution of a will, appointment of guardians, and distribution of estates. The probate court's jurisdiction is generally over the following areas:

- Resolving will contests;
- Distributing estates;
- Establishing guardianships to protect persons who are mentally incapacitated and children; and
- Completing gifts of money or property according to the donor's intent.

## *Filing Special Civil Part Complaints*

Special Civil Part complaints must be filed in the county where at least one defendant lives, or where the defendant's business is located. If there is more than one defendant, the complaint can be filed in the county where any one of the defendants lives. If the defendants do not live in New Jersey, the complaint must be filed in the county where the action originated. Complaint forms are available at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com).

Special Civil Part complaints may be filed by mail or in person. The court will process the documents filed, assign a docket number and serve the defendant(s) with the summons. It is important that the plaintiff provide the court with the defendant's correct address and that reference is made to the docket number whenever inquiries are made about the case.

## *Filing Probate Matters*

All pleadings involving probate matters should be filed with the Surrogate. A list of the county Surrogates can be found at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com). Fee and other information, as well as sample forms, may be available in the county Surrogate's office.

## *Filing Complaints in the Civil Part*

Forms and instructions for filing a complaint in the Civil Part are available at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com).

LAW DIVISION <i>Special Civil Part Fees*</i>	
Small Claims - \$3,000 Limit and \$5,000 for Return of Security Deposits	
Summons & Complaint	\$15 + postage
Each additional defendant	\$ 2 + postage
Complaint w/counterclaim, cross-claim or third party complaint <i>(maximum demand \$3,000, except \$5,000 for actions seeking the return of security deposits)</i>	\$32
Each additional defendant	\$ 2
Landlord / Tenant	
Summons & Complaint	\$25 + mileage**
Each additional defendant	\$ 2
Warrant of Removal	\$15 + mileage**
Special Civil Part - \$15,000 Limit	
Complaint w/ or w/o counterclaim, cross-claim or third-party complaint <i>(up to \$3000)</i>	\$32 plus service by mail fee
Complaint w/ or w/o counterclaim, cross-claim or third-party complaint <i>(\$3001 - \$15,000)</i>	\$50 plus service by mail fee
Each additional defendant	\$ 2
Filing of appearance or answer to complaint <i>(other than tenancy or small claims)</i>	\$15
Motion	No fee
Order to Show Cause	No fee
Service of Process by Mail (each defendant)	\$ 7
Writ of Execution	\$ 5
Advertising property under execution	\$10
Selling property under execution	\$10

\* Fees are subject to change.

\*\* Mileage rates can be located at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com).

LAW DIVISION <i>Civil Part Fees*</i>	
Complaint	\$200
Order to Show Cause	\$ 30
Answer, Answer w/cross-claim, Motion (if first paper), Amended Answer adding new defendant	\$135
Answer w/counterclaim or 3 <sup>rd</sup> party complaint	\$200
Third Party Complaint or Counterclaims ( <i>after answer filed</i> )	\$ 65
Motion (Pre and Post Judgment)	\$ 30
Transfer Case from Civil Part to Special Civil Part	\$ 15

CHANCERY DIVISION (GENERAL EQUITY AND PROBATE) <i>Fees</i>	
Complaint (General Equity, Foreclosure)	\$200
Order to Show Cause	\$ 30
Answer, Answer and Counterclaim	\$135
Motion (Pre and Post Judgment)	\$ 30
Other Fees	
Filing of Notice of Appeal ( <i>Supreme Court and Appellate Division</i> )	\$200
Notice of Appeal ( <i>Trial Court</i> )	\$ 10
Warrant of Satisfaction of Judgment	\$ 35
Notice of Application for Wage Execution	\$ 30
Discharging Lien	\$ 5
Jury of six persons	\$ 50

*\*Fees are subject to change.*

## COURT HOURS

The courthouses are generally open  
Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



## COURT HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
Lincoln's Birthday  
Presidents' Day  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day

Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
Election Day  
Veterans' Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day



## EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Information regarding emergency closings or closings due to weather conditions can be obtained by tuning to your local radio station or visiting [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com).

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### *Public Access Terminals, Information and Community Relations*

Computers are available in some counties to the public to access civil case information. The computers are available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and are used on a first-come, first-serve basis.

In order to obtain Civil Division case information, the researcher must have a case name or docket number.

### *Access for Persons with Disabilities*

The Judiciary is committed to providing equal access to its services and programs in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each courthouse has a coordinator responsible for implementing the ADA. Disabled individuals who need an accommodation are encouraged to contact the vicinage ADA coordinator.

The Judiciary will make reasonable accommodations for disabled persons in a way that integrates the individual into the mainstream of court activities to the fullest extent possible. The disabled person is responsible for requesting an accommodation, and the Judiciary is responsible for providing a reasonable accommodation.

Advance notice to the court of the need for auxiliary aids or service is strongly encouraged. The ADA coordinator should be notified at least two weeks in advance of court sessions and hearings. For ongoing services and programs, the ADA coordinator should be notified at least 48 hours in advance. For emergencies or urgent requests, the ADA coordinator should be notified immediately.

### *Interpreting and Translating Services*

If any of the parties or their witnesses do not speak English, the court should be promptly notified so that an approved interpreter can be provided. This service is provided at no cost. Please note that the court will not permit a non-approved individual, *e.g.*, a friend or relative of a party, to serve as an interpreter.



#### Judiciary Anti-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the Judiciary not to permit discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, age, national origin, physical or mental disability or any other basis prohibited by law.

## *Preparing for Your Court Appearance*

Whenever you contact or appear in court, it is important to have the information notifying you of your docket number, date to appear, and the location of the courtroom in which you are scheduled to appear. If you have an attorney, you should meet with him/her to discuss your case.

If you need an accommodation for a disability, you must notify the court as soon as possible. Information about the availability of special services and assistance can be obtained by calling the civil division in the county in which your case is pending.

You can learn more about the rules governing the practice, procedure and administration of the state's courts in the New Jersey Rules of Court, which can be found in public libraries, law libraries and at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com) in the "Legal Reference Desk" section.

### **On the day of your court appearance.....**

- Arrive on time. If you are late, the judge may postpone, dismiss or decide your case in your absence.
- When entering the courtroom, remove your hat and turn off all cell phones and pagers.
- Bring your court notice with you; it contains your case information.
- Do not bring any food or beverages into the courtroom.
- If you need additional time to prepare your case, you may ask the judge to grant you an adjournment. An adjournment is the postponement of a session, hearing, trial or other proceeding to another day or time. It is within the judge's discretion to grant or deny an adjournment.
- While addressing the court, you must use appropriate language. Address the judge as "Your Honor" and speak directly to the judge and not to the other party.
- You should not interrupt the opposing party while he or she is speaking. After the other party has finished speaking, you or your lawyer may request an opportunity from the judge to respond. An opportunity to respond is left to the judge's discretion.
- After each party has presented his or her side, the judge or jury will make a decision.
- In some cases, the court may refer your case to a settlement program on the day scheduled for your trial. Although you will have to participate in such programs, you are not obligated to settle your case. If your case does not settle, a judge will hear your case on that day.



### IMPORTANT

If the plaintiff does not appear, the case may be dismissed. If the defendant does not appear, the court may find him or her in default. If judgment is awarded and the defendant refuses to pay or cannot pay immediately after the court proceedings, the plaintiff should contact court staff, who can provide information on collecting the judgment.

## LAWYER REFERRAL AND LEGAL SERVICES

Education Law Center  
60 Park Pl., Suite 300  
Newark, NJ 07102  
973-624-1815  
*(Education matters)*

Fort Dix Legal Assistance Office  
Office of the Staff Judge Advocate  
5418 Delaware Ave.  
Fort Dix, NJ 08640-5054  
609-562-3043

Fort Monmouth-Legal Services Program  
Office of the Staff Judge Advocate  
Semaphore Ave., Bldg. 1105  
Fort Monmouth, NJ 07703  
732-532-4371  
*(Services military members, retirees and their dependents)*

Legal Services of New Jersey  
100 Metroplex Dr. at Plainfield Avenue  
Suite 402  
P.O. Box 1357  
Edison, NJ 08818-1357  
732-572-9100

N.J. Department of the Treasury/OMB  
State Office of Legal Services  
50 W. State Street  
P.O. Box 211  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0211  
609-292-6262

National Legal Aid & Defender Association  
(NLADA)  
Washington Office  
1140 Connecticut Ave., Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-452-0620  
*(Civil and defender law)*

New Jersey Protection and Advocacy, Inc.  
210 S. Broad St., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Trenton, NJ 08608  
800-922-7233  
*(Legal advocacy for clients with disabilities)*

Pro Bono Partnership  
160 Littleton Rd., Suite 205  
Parsippany, NJ 07054  
973-968-7043

Rutgers University School of Law Newark  
Center of Law and Justice  
123 Washington St.  
Newark, NJ 07102  
973-353-3000  
Legal clinics:

<i>Animal Rights</i>	<i>Constitutional Law</i>
<i>Urban Legal</i>	<i>Women's Rights</i>
<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Federal Tax</i>
<i>Special Education</i>	<i>Community Law</i>
<i>Women &amp; AIDS</i>	<i>Pro Bono Program</i>

Seton Hall University School of Law  
Center for Social Justice  
833 McCarter Highway  
Newark, NJ 07102  
973-642-8700  
Seven legal clinics:

<i>Appellate Litigation</i>	<i>Family Law</i>
<i>Civil Litigation</i>	<i>Fair Housing</i>
<i>Juvenile Justice</i>	<i>Immigration</i>
<i>Pro Bono Service</i>	<i>Homelessness</i>

<p><b>Atlantic County</b>  South Jersey Legal Services, Inc.  26 S. Pennsylvania Ave.  Atlantic City, NJ 08404  609-348-4200</p>	<p><b>Atlantic County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  Atlantic County Courthouse  1201 Bacharach Blvd.  Atlantic City, NJ 08401  609-345-3444</p>
<p><b>Bergen County</b>  Bergen County Community Mental Health Law Project  327 E. Ridgewood Ave.  Paramus, NJ 07652-3761  <b>201-634-2761</b></p>	<p><b>Bergen County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  15 Bergen St.  Hackensack, NJ 07601</p>
<p><b>Legal Services of Northeast New Jersey</b>  Bergen County Division  61 Kansas St.  Hackensack, NJ 07601  201-487-2166</p>	
<p><b>Burlington County</b>  South Jersey Legal Services, Inc.  107 High St.  Mt. Holly, NJ 08060  609-261-1088</p>	<p><b>Burlington County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  45 Grant St.  Mt. Holly, NJ 08060  609-261-4862</p>
<p><b>Camden County</b>  Community Health Law Project  Station House Office Bldg.  900 Haddon Ave., Suite 400  Collingswood, NJ 08108  856-858-9500</p>	<p><b>South Jersey Legal Services</b>  Administrative Offices  745 Market St.  Camden, NJ 08102  856-964-2010  <i>(Also serves counties of Burlington, Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem)</i></p>
<p><b>Camden County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  1040 Kings Highway, Suite 201  Cherry Hill, NJ 08034  856-482-0618</p>	
<p><b>Cape May County</b>  South Jersey Legal Services, Inc.  1261 Route 9  Cape May Courthouse, NJ 08210  609-465-3001</p>	<p><b>Cape May County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  Cape May County  Route 9, Main St.  P.O. Box 425  Cape May Courthouse, NJ 08210  609-463-0313</p>

<p><b>Cumberland County</b>  South Jersey Legal Services, Inc.  411 Fayette St..  Bridgeton, NJ 08302-1933  856-451-0003</p>	<p><b>Cumberland County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  P.O. Box 2374  Vineland, NJ 08362  856-453-7000</p>
<p><b>Essex County</b>  Community Health Law Project  185 Valley St.  South Orange, NJ 07079  973-275-1175</p>	<p><b>Essex County Legal Aid Association</b>  Hall of Records, Room 118  465 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.  Newark, NJ 07102  973-622-0063</p>
<p><b>Essex-Newark Legal Services</b>  5 Commerce St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  Newark, NJ 07102  973-824-3000  <i>(Family, Consumer, Government Benefits, Elder Law and Housing Law Units)</i></p>	<p><b>Essex County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  354 Eisenhower Pkwy, Plaza II  Livingston, NJ 07039  973-533-6775</p>
<p><b>Gloucester County</b>  South Jersey Legal Services, Inc.  47 Newton Ave.  Woodbury, NJ 08096  856-848-5360</p>	<p><b>Gloucester County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  Justice Complex  P.O. Box 338  Woodbury, NJ 08096  856-848-4589</p>
<p><b>Hudson County</b>  Northeast New Jersey Legal Services  Hudson County Division  574 Summit Ave.  Jersey City, NJ 07306  201-792-6363</p>	<p><b>Hudson County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  583 Newark Ave.  Jersey City, NJ 07306  201-798-2727</p>
<p><b>Hunterdon County</b>  Legal Services of Northwest New Jersey  Hunterdon County Division  82 Park Ave.  Flemington, NJ 08822-1168  908-782-7979</p>	<p><b>Hunterdon County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  P.O. Box 573  Annandale, NJ 08801  908-236-6109</p>

<p><b>Mercer County</b>  Central New Jersey Legal Services, Inc.  Mercer County Division  198 W. State St.  Trenton, NJ 08608-1103  609-695-6249</p>	<p><b>Community Health Law Project</b>  225 E. State St.  Trenton, NJ 08608  609-392-5553</p>
<p><b>Mercer County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  1245 Whitehorse-Mercerville Rd., Suite 420  Hamilton, NJ 08619-3894  609-585-6200</p>	
<p><b>Middlesex County</b>  Central New Jersey Legal Services, Inc.  Middlesex County Division  317 George St., Suite 201  New Brunswick, NJ 08901-2006  732-249-7600</p>	<p><b>Middlesex County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  87 Bayard St.  New Brunswick, NJ 08901  732-828-0053</p>
<p><b>Monmouth County</b>  Legal Aid Society of Monmouth County  P.O. Box 86  Ocean, NJ 07712  732-869-5619</p>	<p><b>Community Health Law Project</b>  601 Grand Ave., Suite 505  Asbury Park, NJ 07712  732-502-0059</p>
<p><b>Ocean-Monmouth Legal Services, Inc.</b>  Monmouth County Office  303 W. Main St.  Freehold, NJ 07728  732-866-0020</p>	<p><b>Monmouth County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  Courthouse  Freehold, NJ 07728  732-431-5544</p>
<p><b>Morris County</b>  Legal Services of Northwest New Jersey  Morris County Division  30 Schuyler Pl., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., P.O. Box 900  Morristown, NJ 07963-0900  973-285-6911</p>	<p><b>Morris/Sussex Co. Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  28 Schuyler Pl.  Morristown, NJ 07960  973-267-5882</p>
<p><b>Ocean County</b>  Ocean-Monmouth Legal Services, Inc.  599 Route 37 W  Toms River, NJ 08755  732-341-2727</p>	<p><b>Ocean County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  Courthouse, P.O. Box 381  Toms River, NJ 08753  732-240-3666</p>

<p><b>Passaic County</b>  Legal Services of Northeast New Jersey  Passaic County Division  152 Market St.  Paterson, NJ 07505  973-523-2900</p>	<p><b>Passaic County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  Courthouse, 77 Hamilton St.  Paterson, NJ 07505  973-278-9223</p>
<p><b>Salem County</b>  Salem County Bar Association  Lawyer Referral Service  856-935-5629</p>	
<p><b>Somerset County</b>  Legal Services of Northwest New Jersey  Somerset County Division  34 W. Main St., Suite 301  Somerville, NJ 08876  908-231-0840</p>	<p><b>Somerset County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  10 N. Bridge St., P.O. Box 1095  Somerville, NJ 08876  908-685-2323</p>
<p><b>Sussex County</b>  Legal Services of Northwest New Jersey  Sussex County Division  4 Park Pl.  Newton, NJ 07860  973-383-7400</p>	
<p><b>Union County</b>  Central Jersey Legal Services, Inc.  60 Prince St.  Elizabeth, NJ 07208  908-354-4340</p>	<p><b>Union County Bar Association</b>  Lawyer Referral Service  Courthouse, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  Elizabeth, NJ 07207  908-353-4715</p>
<p><b>Warren County</b>  Legal Services of Northwest New Jersey  Warren County Division  91 Front St., P.O. Box 65  Belvidere, NJ 07823  908-475-2010</p>	<p><b>Warren County Bar Association</b>  413 Second St.  Belvidere, NJ 07823  908-387-1835</p>

# IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR COURT OFFICES

## *Civil Division Addresses & Telephone Numbers*

### **Atlantic**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Atlantic County Civil Courthouse  
1201 Bacharach Blvd.  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401  
609-345-6700 x 3579

Special Civil Part Information  
Atlantic County Civil Courthouse  
1201 Bacharach Blvd.  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401  
Landlord/Tenant: 609-343-2382  
Small Claims: 609-343-2355

### **Bergen**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Bergen County Justice Center  
10 Main St., Room 415  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
201-527-2601

Special Civil Part Information  
Justice Center  
10 Main St., Room 427  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
201-527-2730

### **Burlington**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Burlington County Courts Facility 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
49 Rancocas Rd.,  
Mt. Holly, NJ 08060  
609-518-2815

Special Civil Part Information  
County Administration Building  
49 Rancocas Rd., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Mt. Holly, NJ 08060  
609-518-2865

### **Camden**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Hall of Justice  
101 S. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 110 (with fee)  
Suite 150 (no fee)  
Camden, NJ 08103-4001  
856-379-2202 x2234

Special Civil Part Information  
Hall of Justice  
101 S. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 110(with fee) Suite  
150 (no fee)  
Camden, NJ 08103-4001  
856-379-2000 x3033

### **Cape May**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Cape May Court House  
DN-203 Central Mail Room  
9 N. Main St.  
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210  
609-463-6514

Special Civil Part Information  
Cape May Courthouse  
DN-203 Central Mail Room  
9 N. Main St.  
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210  
609-463-6522

### **Cumberland**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Cumberland County Courthouse  
60 West Broad Street  
Corner of Broad and Fayette Street  
Bridgeton, NJ 08302  
856-453-4330

Special Civil Part Information  
Cumberland County Courthouse  
60 West Broad Street  
Corner of Broad and Fayette Street  
Bridgeton, NJ 08302  
856-453-4350

### **Essex**

Civil Customer Service  
Hall of Records  
465 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.  
Newark, NJ 07102  
973-693-6521

Special Civil Part Information  
Essex County Hall of Records  
465 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Newark, NJ 07102  
973-693-6531

**Gloucester**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Gloucester County Courthouse  
Attn: Intake  
1 N. Broad St., First Floor, Court House  
P.O. Box 750  
Woodbury, NJ 08069  
856-853-3392

Special Civil Part Information  
Gloucester County Courthouse  
1 N. Broad St., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, P.O. Box 881  
P.O. Box 750 (no fee), P.O. Box 881  
(with fee)  
Woodbury, NJ 08069  
856-853-3392

**Hudson**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Brennan Courthouse  
583 Newark Ave.  
Jersey City, NJ 07306  
201-217-5162, 5163

Special Civil Part Information  
595 Newark Ave., Room 711  
Jersey City, NJ 07306  
201-795-6680

**Hunterdon**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Hunterdon County Justice Center  
65 Park Ave.  
Flemington, NJ 08822  
908-237-5820

Special Civil Part Information  
Hunterdon County Justice Center  
65 Park Ave.  
Flemington, NJ 08822  
908-237-5820

**Mercer**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Mercer County Civil Courts Building  
175 S. Broad St., P.O. Box 8068  
Trenton, NJ 08650-0068  
609-571-4474

Special Civil Part Information  
Mercer County Civil Courts Building  
175 S. Broad St., P.O. Box 8068  
Trenton, NJ 08650-0068  
609-571-4490

**Middlesex**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Middlesex County Courthouse  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Tower  
56 Paterson St.,  
P.O. Box 2633  
New Brunswick, NJ 08903-2633  
Phone: 732-519-3686

Special Civil Part Information  
Middlesex County Courthouse  
Tower, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, P.O. Box 1146  
New Brunswick, NJ 08903-1146  
Civil Actions: 732-519-3756  
Small Claims: 732-519-3755  
Landlord/Tenant: 732-519-3754

**Monmouth**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Monmouth County Courthouse  
71 Monument Park  
P.O. Box 1269  
Freehold, NJ 07728-1269  
732-677-4240

Special Civil Part Information  
Monmouth County Courthouse  
P.O. Box 1270  
Freehold, NJ 07728  
Civil Actions: 732-677-4223  
Small Claims: 732-677-4292  
Landlord Tenancy: 732-677-4285

**Morris**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Morris County Courthouse  
P.O. Box 910  
Morristown, NJ 07963-0910  
973-656-4110

Special Civil Part Information  
Morris County Courthouse  
Washington & Court sts.  
Morristown, NJ 07963  
973-656-4125

**Ocean**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Ocean County Court Complex  
Room 119  
118 Washington St.,  
Toms River, NJ 08754  
732-929-2042

Special Civil Part Information  
Ocean County Courthouse  
118 Washington St., Room 121  
Toms River, NJ 08754  
732-929-2016

**Passaic**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Passaic County Courthouse  
77 Hamilton St.  
Paterson, NJ 07505  
973-247-8176

Special Civil Part Information  
Passaic County Courthouse  
77 Hamilton St.  
Paterson, NJ 07505  
973-247-8261

**Salem**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Salem County Courthouse  
92 Market St.  
Salem, NJ 08079  
856-935-7510 x8213

Special Civil Part Information  
Salem County Courthouse  
82 Market St.  
Salem, NJ 08079  
856-935-7510 x8213

**Somerset**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Somerset County Courthouse  
40 N. Bridge St., P.O. Box 3000  
Somerville, NJ 08876-1262  
908-231-7054

Special Civil Part Information  
Somerset County Courthouse  
40 N. Bridge St., P.O. Box 3000  
Somerville, NJ 08876-1262  
908-231-7014

**Sussex**

Sussex County Judicial Center  
43-47 High St.  
Newton, NJ 07860  
973-579-0918

Special Civil Part Information  
43-47 High St.  
Newton, NJ 07860  
973-579-0918

**Union**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Union County Courthouse  
2 Broad St., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Elizabeth, NJ 07207  
Case Management (Room 107) 908-659-4931  
Assignment (Room 105) 908-659-4815

Special Civil Part Information  
Union County Courthouse  
2 Broad St., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Elizabeth, NJ 07207  
908-659-4900

**Warren**

Civil Division Case Management Office  
Warren County Courthouse  
413 2<sup>nd</sup> St., P.O. Box 900  
Belvidere, NJ 07823  
908-475-6140

Special Civil Part Information  
Warren County Courthouse  
413 2<sup>nd</sup> St., P.O. Box 900  
Belvidere, NJ 07823  
908-475-8140

## **WHAT COURT STAFF MAY AND MAY NOT DO**

We will be happy to help you if we can. However, we are allowed to help you only in certain ways. This is a list of some things the court staff CAN and CANNOT do for you. Please read it carefully before asking the court staff for help.

- WE CAN explain and answer questions about how the court works.
- WE CAN tell you what the requirements are to have your case considered by the court.
- WE CAN give you some information from your case file.
- WE CAN provide you with samples of court forms that are available.
- WE CAN provide you with guidance on how to fill out forms.
- WE CAN usually answer questions about court deadlines.
- WE CANNOT give you legal advice. Only your lawyer can give you legal advice.
- WE CANNOT tell you whether or not you should bring your case to court.
- WE CANNOT give you an opinion about what will happen if you bring your case to court.
- WE CANNOT recommend a lawyer, but we can provide you with the telephone number of a local lawyer referral service.
- WE CANNOT talk to the judge for you about what will happen in your case.
- WE CANNOT let you talk to the judge outside of court.
- WE CANNOT change an order issued by the judge.

We look forward to helping you in accordance with these guidelines.

## FORMS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET

The following forms are available at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com) or may be obtained in hard copy from the Civil Division Manager of each county. A list of the county civil offices appears on page 21. A list of civil presiding judges is available at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com). All mentions of appendices refer to the appendix to the New Jersey Rules of Court.

### Publications for Individuals Who Wish to Represent Themselves in Court

#### Small Claims (under \$3,000)

- Small Claims: A Guide to the Court
- How to Sue for an Amount of Money under \$3,000 - Auto
- How to Sue in Small Claims Court – Non-Auto (English)

#### Special Civil Part (under \$15,000)

- Special Civil: A Guide to the Court
- How to Sue for an Amount of Money Under \$15,000
- How to Answer a Complaint in the Special Civil Part
- How to File a Motion in the Special Civil Part
- How to Request a Judgment or Dismissal Without a Trial (Summary Judgment)
- How to Request a Default Judgment in the Superior Court of New Jersey - Special Civil Part (Small claims and Regular Special Civil Part Case)
- How to File a Motion to Dismiss the Complaint or to Strike the Answer for Failure to Answer Interrogations in the Special Civil Part
- How to Apply for the Return of Your Personal Property or to Return to Your Rental Premises

#### Collecting after You Win in Small Claims or the Special Civil Part

- Collecting a Money Judgment
- How to Get Financial Information about Someone Who Owes You Money
- How to Ask the Court to Order a Bank to Turn Over Funds that Have Been Frozen
- How to Ask the Court to Order a Wage Execution in a Special Civil Part Case

#### Landlord/Tenant

- Information for Landlords
- Information for Tenants

#### Law Division – Civil Part

- How to File a Complaint in the Superior Court of New Jersey – Law Division
- How to File an Answer to a Complaint in the Superior Court of New Jersey – Law Division
- How to File a Motion in the Superior Court of New Jersey – Law Division

#### Name Change

- How to ask the Court to Change Your Name (Minor – under age 18)
- How to ask the Court to Change the Name (Adult)

*Copies of any of the above forms can be obtained on request from court staff. A list of the court staff in each county appears on page 22-24*

***IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO REMEMBER FOR YOUR CASE(S)***

Docket Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Judge(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Arbitrator or Mediator: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hearing Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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This brochure is published by the

New Jersey Judiciary  
Civil Practice Division

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Updated 08/2009