

12.00 | FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When will my motion be ruled on and why is it taking so long?

There is no timeframe for deciding a motion. The Middle District of Florida is one of the busiest federal courts in the nation. A judge may decide a motion the same day it is filed or take more than a year to decide a motion, depending on numerous factors, including the number of pending motions before the judge.

Can I speak to the judge assigned to my action?

That depends. A litigant may speak to the assigned judge if the judge schedules a courtroom proceeding on a matter. It is never okay to telephone or email a judge directly.

How much is it to file an action?

\$402. The fee may be waived if the court finds the plaintiff is indigent.

Is there a new-case packet to help me file?

There is no "packet," but there are forms you can use. Please see AO 440 (Summons in a Civil Action), JS 44 (Civil Cover Sheet), AO 239 (Application to Proceed in District Court Without Prepaying Fees or Costs (Long Form)), and Pro Se 1 (Complaint for a Civil Case).

How do I fill out a summons? Can the clerk's office do it for me?

Please see AO 440 (Summons in a Civil Action). The clerk's office cannot fill it out for you.

How do I serve the defendant if I'm not proceeding in forma pauperis?

There are many ways, but litigants usually hire a private process server who knows the rules regarding service. Process servers can be found online.



How do I get a copy of everything filed in my case?

You can print a copy of the docket and any filing using a terminal in any clerk's office or ask the clerk's office to print the copy. The clerk's office charges \$.10 a page for a copy made by a litigant and \$.50 a page for a copy made by the clerk.

How do I get a CM/ECF username and password?

The CM/ECF filing system is unavailable to non-lawyers. A litigant may file a document by hand-delivery, United States Postal Service, or a private mail service (like UPS or Federal Express).

How do I file my case? Can it be mailed or faxed?

A complaint must be filed by hand-delivery, United States Postal Service, or a private mail service (like UPS or Federal Express). It may not be filed by facsimile or email.

How do I get court-appointed counsel?

You can ask the court to appoint counsel to represent you at no cost, but you have no right to counsel in a civil action, and that relief is reserved for exceptional circumstances.

How do I file criminal charges?

To file a criminal charge, you must contact your local law enforcement agency. Filing a civil complaint in federal court to initiate a criminal charge is improper.

