

FILING AN EVICTION LAWSUIT

JURISDICTION:

An eviction case is a lawsuit to recover possession of real property under Chapter 24 of the Texas Property Code, often by a landlord against a tenant. A claim for rent may be joined with an eviction case if the amount of rent due and unpaid is not more than \$20,000, excluding statutory interest and court costs but including attorney fees, if any. Eviction cases are governed by Rules 500-507 and 510 Party V of the Rules of Civil Procedure.

VENUE:

Suit for possession of property, precinct in which all or part of the property is located. Suit for rent in which all or part of the property is located.

NOTICE:

If the occupant is a tenant under written lease or oral agreement, Landlord must give a tenant who defaults or hold over beyond the end of the rental term or renewal period at least **3 days written "Notice to Vacate,"** unless lease specifies otherwise, prior to filing lawsuit. For **NONPAYMENT OF RENT CASES:** Landlord must give **"Pay Rent or Vacate"** notice if the tenant was not previously late, prior to filing lawsuit. May give either **"Pay Rent or Vacate"** notice or **"Notice to Vacate"** if tenant was previously late, prior to filing lawsuit.

Exception: Can be shorter or longer if agreed upon in a written lease. TX Prop Code 24.005(a)

Delivery: Must follow specific rules

Refer to Step 2 of the "Self-Help Information Packet" attached.

Other exceptions: Manufactured Homes & Cares Act

FILING SUIT:

The responsibility for filling out the petition and Servicemember's Civil Relief Act rests with you. Court clerks will assist you if you have *procedural questions*. Please state the tenant's full address including any apartment number. List any known work address or other address where the tenant may be located for service. The **filing fee is \$54.00** and the **service fee is \$90.00 per defendant** if served in Caldwell County. Examples: filing on one defendant is \$144.00 (\$54 + \$90), filing on two defendants is \$234.00 (\$54 + \$90 + \$90). *If out of County service is needed, you will need to determine that counties service fee.*

When filing, the Landlord should bring the following:

1. Copy of the lease (if you have one);
2. Copy of the written "Notice to Pay Rent or Vacate" or written "Notice to Vacate" along with proper filing + service fees.

****Payment must be in the form of a MONEY ORDER or CASHIER'S CHECK made payable to CALDWELL COUNTY TREASURER**** Online payment option available

Effective 01/01/2026

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CITATION:

The Constable/Sheriff will serve each tenant with a citation, based on the information you provide to the Court. The citation will inform the Defendant of the date and time of the hearing and that a Default Judgment may be rendered if he/she does not appear at the appointed time.

REPRESENTATION:

In eviction suits, either of the parties may represent themselves or be represented by their authorized agents in justice court or be represented by an attorney.

HEARING:

Always arrive at least 10 minutes prior to trial and check in with the clerk. Be sure to have a copy of the lease, payment records or any records pertaining to the case.

If the defendant **does not appear** at the Hearing:

- A. The plaintiff will present their case to the Judge;
- B. If the Judge rules in the Plaintiff's favor, a default will be granted.

If the defendant **does appear** at the Hearing:

- A. The Judge will hear both sides;
- B. The Judge will render a judgment;

If the defendant does not vacate the property or appeal the case within 5 days after the judgment; the plaintiff may request a Writ of Possession. The cost of the Writ of Possession is **\$250.00**.
(Payment: Money order or Cashier's check payable to *Caldwell County Treasurer*)

Eviction Lawsuits may be dismissed only in open court or by written request. A "Motion to Dismiss" form is included in this packet.

IF YOU HAVE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE COURT

**LEGAL QUESTIONS CAN NOT BE ANSWERED
LEGAL ADVICE CAN NOT BE GIVEN**

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CAUSE NO. _____

_____	§	IN THE JUSTICE COURT
PLAINTIFF	§	
	§	
v.	§	PRECINCT 2
	§	
_____	§	
DEFENDANT	§	CALDWELL COUNTY, TEXAS

PETITION: EVICTION CASE

COMPLAINT: Plaintiff hereby sues the following Defendant(s) (include name, email address, DOB, and last 3 digits of DL & SSN, if known) : _____

for eviction from Plaintiff's premises (including storerooms and parking areas) located in the above precinct. The address of the property is:

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Street Address	Unit No. (if any)	City	State	Zip

GROUND FOR EVICTION: Plaintiff alleges the following grounds for eviction:

☐ **Unpaid rent.** Defendant(s) failed to pay rent for the following time period(s): _____

The amount of rent claimed as of the date of filing is: \$ _____. Defendant ☐ has or ☐ has not been late/delinquent in paying rent before the month in which notice was given. Plaintiff reserves the right to orally amend the amount at trial to include rent due from the date of filing through the date of trial.

☐ **Other lease violations.** Defendant(s) breached the terms of the lease (other than by failing to pay rent) as follows: _____

☐ **Holdover.** Defendant(s) are unlawfully holding over by failing to vacate at the end of the rental term or periodic tenancy, which ended on _____, 20____.

☐ **Squatter.** Defendant(s) never had a right to possess the property and are unlawfully occupying the premises after a demand to surrender possession given on _____, 20____. Plaintiff ☐ has or ☐ has not attached a Motion for Summary Disposition under Rule 510.10.

☐ **Expiration of Tenancy at Will or by Sufferance.** Defendant(s) had no lease agreement and have failed to vacate the premises after being given a termination notice, if applicable, and a demand to surrender possession given on _____, 20____.

PRE-SUIT NOTICE: Plaintiff has given Defendant(s) a ☐ notice to vacate ☐ notice to pay or vacate (according to Property Code § 24.005(f-3) or (f-4)) and demand for possession. Such notice was delivered on _____, 20____ by this method: _____

SUIT FOR RENT: Plaintiff ☐ does or ☐ does not include a suit for unpaid rent.

ATTORNEY'S FEES: Plaintiff ☐ will be or ☐ will not be seeking applicable attorney's fees. The attorney's name, address, phone and fax numbers are:

IMMEDIATE POSSESSION BOND: If Plaintiff has filed a bond for immediate possession, Plaintiff requests that: (1) the court set the amount of the bond; (2) the court approve the bond; and (3) proper notices, as required by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, are given to Defendant(s).

SERVICE OF CITATION: Service is requested on Defendant(s) by: personal service at home or work, or by delivery to a person over the age of 16 years at Defendant's usual place of residence. If required, Plaintiff requests alternative service as allowed by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. Home or work addresses other than the premises where Defendant(s) may be served are:

Plaintiff knows of no other home or work addresses of Defendant(s) in this county.

RELIEF: Plaintiff requests that Defendant(s) is served with the citation and that Plaintiff is awarded a judgment against Defendant(s) for: possession of the premises, including removal of Defendant(s) and Defendant's possessions from the premises, unpaid rent, if set forth above, attorney's fees if applicable, court costs, and interest on the above sums at the rate stated in the lease, or if not so stated, at the statutory rate for judgments.

☐ I hereby request a jury trial. The fee is \$22 and must be paid at least 3 days before trial.

SERVICE BY EMAIL: (Normally, documents in this case are sent by mail. If it is easier for you, you can choose to get some of the documents sent by email. If you choose to get documents by email, you must have an email account where you can receive, open, and view large attachments, and it is important that you check this email account every day. **Even if you receive some documents by email, you will still receive some documents about the case by mail or personal service, so you must not ignore any documents from the court or other parties received by mail or personal service.**)

☐ Yes, I would like to receive documents related to this case by email at this email address:

☐ No, I do not want to receive any documents by email.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION:

Hearing by Phone Call: *(When a hearing happens by phone call, you will be able to talk to and hear the judge, Defendant, or any witnesses, but you will not be able to see them. Copies of any evidence to be used must be exchanged by the parties and sent to the judge before the hearing.)*

☐ Yes, I am able to have any hearings in this case, except a jury trial, by phone call with the judge and Defendant and understand that I must have a phone to use on the date and time of the hearing.

☐ No, I am not able to have hearings by phone call.

Hearing by Video Conference: *(When a hearing happens by video conference, you can hear, see, and talk to the judge, Defendant, and any witnesses. You will be able to see any evidence presented during the hearing. You will need to have a computer, a smartphone, or tablet that has a camera feature. You will also need access to the internet to be able to have a video conference.)*

☐ Yes, I am able to have any hearings in this case, except a jury trial, by video conference. I understand that I am responsible for having the equipment and internet access needed to participate in a video conference on the date and time of the hearing.

☐ No, I am not able to have hearings by video conference.

NOTE: Your responses in this section do not guarantee that hearings will be held remotely, but rather they help the court know how you are able to participate.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature of Plaintiff

Signature of Agent or Attorney, if any

Printed Name: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Fax: _____

State Bar No.: _____

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me on _____, 20____.

CLERK OF THE JUSTICE COURT OR NOTARY

FORM 126 – SERVICEMEMBER'S CIVIL RELIEF ACT

CAUSE/DOCKET NO. _____

**AFFIDAVIT
50 USC Sec. 520**

Plaintiff being duly sworn on oath deposes* and says that defendant(s) is (are)

(CHECK ONE)

- ☐ not in the military
- ☐ not on active duty in the military and/or
- ☐ not in a foreign country on military service
- ☐ on active military duty and/or is subject to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act of 2003
- ☐ has waived his/her rights under the Servicemembers Civil Act of 2003
- ☐ military status is unknown at this time

PLAINTIFF

(Select the applicable title under the signature for the jurat below)

Subscribed and sworn to before me no this the _____ day of _____, 20__.

NOTARY / CLERK

☐ Notary Public in and for the State of Texas

SEAL

☐ Clerk of the Justice Court

***Penalty for making or using false affidavit – a person who makes or uses an affidavit knowing it to be false, shall be fined as provided in Title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned for not more than one year or both.**

CAUSE NO. _____

PLAINTIFF

vs.

DEFENDANT

§

IN THE JUSTICE COURT

§

§

§

§

§

§

PRECINCT NO. 2

CALDWELL COUNTY, TEXAS

MOTION TO DISMISS

TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF SAID COURT:

NOW COME, _____, Plaintiff, in the above styled and numbered cause and respectfully requests the Court to dismiss the above entitled and numbered cause in which the Plaintiff has filed, to-wit; Civil Eviction and which is currently pending in the Justice Court, Precinct 02. Plaintiff has directed and specifically requests the Court to DISMISS this cause of action.

Executed this the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Plaintiff / Plaintiff's Attorney

ORDER CONCERNING MOTION FOR DISMISSAL

CAME ON to be heard this the ____ day of _____, 20____, in the above styled case and cause, MOTION FOR DISMISSAL, by and through the Plaintiff and/or the attorney of record, and the Court having heard the testimonies, and the same having been considered, it is THEREFORE, ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED, that the above said entitled and numbered cause be and, in all things dismissed.

ISSUED AND SIGNED this the _____.



SHANNA CONLEY

Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2

Caldwell County, Texas

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