

WYOMING RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE FOR CIRCUIT COURTS

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Editor's notes. — The Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure for County Courts, adopted April 14, 1982, and effective January 1, 1983, were superseded by revised rules, adopted April 23, 1992, and effective immediately. The Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure for Circuit Courts, which supersede the Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure for County Courts, were adopted on May 9, 2000, and became effective July 1, 2000.

Rule 1. Scope.

The purpose of these rules is to provide maximum access to the Wyoming circuit courts in civil actions; to enhance the provision of just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of civil actions; to provide expedited trial dates; and to focus discovery towards resolution of the issues. These simplified rules should be construed and administered to secure the advantages of simplified procedure as provided herein. Extensions, continuances, and stays are strongly disfavored.

At all times, the court and the parties must address the action in ways designed to assure that the process and the costs are proportionate to the amount in controversy and the complexity and importance of the issues. The factors to be considered by the court in making a proportionality assessment include, without limitation: needs of the case, amount in controversy, parties' resources, and complexity and importance of the issues at stake in the litigation. This proportionality rule is fully applicable to every aspect of these Rules.

Comment:

The idea of proportionality is to reverse the default understanding that parties are entitled to discovery of all facts without limit unless and until a court says otherwise, because the monetary and time costs of unlimited discovery reduce access to justice. It is the purpose of this rule to make clear that all facts are not necessarily subject to discovery. Rather, all pre-trial activities must focus on the facts required to appropriately resolve the particular dispute.

Rule 2. Applicability. [Effective until July 1, 2024]

(a) These Rules shall apply to all civil actions in circuit court pursuant to Wyo.Stat. Ann. § 5-9-128(a)(i)-(iii), (vi), and (vii).

(b) The Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure will continue to govern the

procedure in civil cases in all circuit courts except to the extent that there is an inconsistency, in which case these Rules will take precedence.

(c) Neither these Rules nor the Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure shall govern proceedings initiated in circuit courts pursuant to the small claims jurisdiction of the circuit courts, the forcible entry and detainer jurisdiction of the circuit courts, or petitions for stalking or family violence orders of protection.

(d) The following rules of the Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure shall not apply in circuit courts, unless and until circuit courts shall have statutory subject matter jurisdiction of cases in which such relief is requested:

Rule 23, 23.1 and 23.2 - Class Actions.

Rule 52(d) - Reserved Questions to the Supreme Court.

Rule 62(a), (c), and (e) - Stay on Injunction Appeals.

Rule 65 - Injunctions.

Rule 66 - Receivers.

Rule 70 - Specific Performance, Vesting Title.

Rule 71.1 - Condemnation of Property.

Rule 83 - Rules of District Courts.

Rule 84 - Forms.

Rule 85 - Title.

Rule 86(a) - Effective Date.

History:

Amended April 30, 2024, effective July 1, 2024.

Rule 2. Applicability. [Effective July 1, 2024]

(a) These Rules shall apply to all civil actions in circuit court pursuant to Wyo.Stat. Ann. § 5-9-128(a)(i)-(iii), (vi), and (vii).

(b) The Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure will continue to govern the procedure in civil cases in all circuit courts except to the extent that there is an inconsistency, in which case these Rules will take precedence.

(c) Except as otherwise provided in these Rules, neither these Rules nor the Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure shall govern proceedings initiated in circuit courts pursuant to small claims jurisdiction of the circuit courts, the forceable entry and detainer jurisdiction of the circuit courts, or petitions for stalking orders, petitions for sexual assault protection orders, and family violence orders of protection. Wyoming Rule of Civil Procedure Rule 4(a)-(g) pertaining to the issuance of a summons and service thereof shall apply to all cases involving petitions for stalking protection orders, sexual assault protection orders, or family violence orders of protection.

(d) The following rules of the Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure shall not apply in circuit courts, unless and until circuit courts shall have statutory subject matter jurisdiction of cases in which such relief is requested:

Rule 23, 23.1 and 23.2 - Class Actions.

Rule 52(d) - Reserved Questions to the Supreme Court.

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Rule 85 - Title.

Rule 86(a) - Effective Date.

History:

Amended April 30, 2024, effective July 1, 2024.

Rule 3. Pleadings.

While notice pleading remains the standard, the party that bears the burden of proof with respect to any claim or affirmative defense should plead all material facts that are known to that party that support that claim or affirmative defense and each remedy sought, including any known monetary damages. A material fact is one that is essential to the claim or defense and without which it could not be supported.

Any statement of fact that is not denied with specificity in any responsive pleading is deemed admitted. General denials of any statement of fact are not permitted and a denial that is based on the lack of knowledge or information shall be so pleaded.

Rule 3.1. Commencement of Action.

(a) *How Commenced.* — A civil action in Circuit Court is commenced:

(1) On the date of filing a complaint with the court so long as service is accomplished within the time periods specified in Rule 4(w) of the Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure; or

(2) On the date of the filing of a copy of the complaint, summons and proof of service. If the action is commenced under this subsection, then the complaint, the summons and proof of service must be filed within fourteen days of such service, and a notice of filing in the form of Appendix A shall be mailed by the plaintiff to the defendant on the same day the complaint is mailed to or filed with the court. A defendant must file an answer within thirty-five (35) days of the filing of the complaint if the complaint is served under this sub-part. If the complaint, summons and proof of service are not filed within fourteen days of service, the action commenced shall be deemed dismissed and the court shall have no further jurisdiction thereof. In such case the court may, in its discretion, tax a reasonable sum in favor of the defendant to compensate the defendant for expense and inconvenience, including attorney's fees, to be paid by plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney. The fourteen-day filing requirement may not be waived by a defendant and shall not be deemed waived upon the filing of an answer or motion to the complaint.

(b) *Form of summons.* —

(1) The summons shall be signed and issued by the Clerk if filed under 3.1(a)(1) or signed and issued by the plaintiff or the plaintiff's attorney if filed under 3.1(a)(2).

(2) The summons shall contain the name and address of the court and the names of the parties to the action. It shall be directed to the defendant, state the name, address and telephone of the plaintiff's attorney, if any, and otherwise the plaintiff's address and telephone number. It shall state the time within which the defendant is required to answer the complaint in writing, and shall notify the defendant that in case of failure to do so, judgment by default may be rendered against the defendant. It shall state either that the complaint is on file with the court or that the complaint will be filed with the court within fourteen days of service.

(3) If the action is commenced under Rule 3.1 (a)(2), the summons shall also state

(i) that the defendant need not answer if the complaint is not filed within fourteen days after service, and

(ii) that plaintiff will mail a notice of filing to the defendant upon filing the summons, complaint and proof of service.

History:

Adopted January 16, 2014, effective April 1, 2014; amended June 30, 2015, effective September 1, 2015; amended February 8, 2017,

effective March 1, 2017; amended February 27, 2018, effective June 1, 2018; amended June 19, 2018, effective September 1, 2018.

Rule 4. Compulsory Counterclaim, Cross-Claim, or Third-Party Claim Outside Court's Subject Matter Jurisdiction.

(a) When a compulsory counterclaim, cross-claim, or third-party claim requesting relief outside the subject matter jurisdiction of the circuit court is filed in a case properly before the circuit court, the party filing such compulsory counterclaim, cross-claim, or third-party claim shall also file with the circuit court a motion for transfer of the case, as a whole, to the court which would have jurisdiction if the relief requested were to be granted. The circuit court shall order the case transferred to the district court if the proponent of the motion makes a prima facie showing that the claim for relief is outside the jurisdiction of the circuit court and that it is not specious.

(b) The party who files the motion for transfer of the case shall deposit the district court docket fee with the motion in the circuit court, and if the case is ordered to be transferred to the district court the deposited filing fee shall also be sent with the transferred file to the clerk of the district court. If the motion for transfer of the case is denied, the district court docket fee shall be returned to the moving party.

Rule 5. Disclosures.

No later than 30 days after service of a pleading defending against a claim for relief, each party shall file with the court a statement listing all persons with information related to the claim for relief and the defenses asserted, and the nature of the information each such individual is believed to possess, whether the information is supportive or harmful. The statement shall also include a certification that the party has available for inspection and copying all reasonably available documents and other physical evidence related to the claims, along with a description by category and subject area of the documents and other physical evidence being disclosed, whether they are supportive or harmful.

Parties shall make disclosures in good faith and may not object to the adequacy of the disclosures until the initial case management conference. Each party has an ongoing duty to supplement the initial disclosures promptly upon becoming aware of the supplemental information.

Rule 6. Case Management.

The judge to whom the case has been assigned shall hold an initial case management conference no later than 45 days after all responsive pleadings are filed, except when the judge determines that an initial case management conference is unnecessary. Each pro se party or party's counsel shall attend the conference.

As soon as possible after the initial case management conference, the judge to whom the case is assigned shall issue an initial case management order. Discovery permitted by the case management order shall be based on proportionality. The court should consider, but is not bound by, the assessments made by the parties. Modifications to the initial case management order may be made only upon a showing of good cause.

The court shall provide active case management from filing to resolution or hearing on all pending issues. A party may request additional conferences with the court. The court may hold additional status conferences on its own motion. A conference may be held in-person or by telephone or videoconference, at the court's discretion.

Rule 7. Expedited Trial Setting.

Cases subject to these Rules will receive an expedited trial date. Trials shall begin within seven months after the last responsive pleading, absent unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances. The trial date will be set in the initial case management order, or at the earliest practicable time thereafter, and shall not be changed absent extraordinary circumstances. The parties may not stipulate to extensions.

If motions are filed, motions will be resolved forthwith by the court setting a telephonic, video, or in-person hearing for purposes of addressing the motion without need for responsive filings in order to maintain the expedited nature of the case.

History:

Amended May 3, 2022, effective July 5, 2022.

Rule 8. Discovery.

Unless otherwise provided in the case management order, each side may take no more than two depositions limited to three hours each. Each side may propound requests for production, interrogatories, and requests for admission, each not exceeding 20 in number including all discrete subparts. The court may set additional limits or provide for further discovery in the initial case management order, upon a showing of good cause and proportionality.

No other discovery will be permitted absent further court order based on a showing of good cause and proportionality. Discovery shall be limited to matters that would enable a party to prove or disprove a claim or defense or to impeach a witness and shall comport with the factors of proportionality.

History:

Amended October 15, 2014, effective January 5, 2015.

Rule 9. Expert Testimony.

In accordance with the deadline set in the case management order, a party seeking to introduce expert testimony shall, for each retained expert and any party or representative of a party who is testifying in part as an expert, furnish a report signed by the expert and with each paragraph initialed by the expert, setting forth the opinions to be offered, and the reasons for them. The substance of each expert's direct testimony shall be fully addressed in the expert's report. Each expert witness report shall, at a minimum, contain:

- (a) a specific statement of the opinions by the expert and the facts and other information which form the basis for each opinion;
- (b) a listing of all of the material relied upon by the expert;
- (c) references to literature which may be used during the witness testimony;
- (d) any then-existing exhibit prepared by, or specifically for, the expert for use at trial;
- (e) witness' curriculum vitae including a list of publications over the last 10 years;

- (f) a list of all trial or deposition testimony given by the witness in the last four years;
- (g) an accounting of all time spent on the case; and
- (h) a fee schedule.

There shall be no depositions or other discovery of experts, except as provided by court order upon a showing of good cause and proportionality. Except in extraordinary circumstances, only one expert witness per side may be permitted to submit a report and testify in any given specialty and/or with respect to any given issue.

Rule 10. Enforcement.

For any failure to provide, or for unnecessary delay in providing, required disclosures or discovery, unless justified under the circumstances, the court may order the following:

- (a) a denial of the right to use, for any purpose, the information not disclosed;
- (b) a denial of the right to object to the admissibility of the evidence;
- (c) a dismissal of all or part of any claim or defense;
- (d) assessment of attorney fees and costs; and
- (e) any other sanction the court deems appropriate, including those set forth in Rule 901 of the Uniform Rules for District Courts of the State of Wyoming.

Rule 11. Title.

These rules shall be known as the Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure for Circuit Courts and may be cited as W.R.C.P.C.C.

Rule 12. Disqualification.

A Circuit Court Judge may be disqualified only for cause.

History:

Adopted September 24, 2019, effective December 1, 2019.

APPENDIX A

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE _____ JUDICIAL DISTRICT
OF AND FOR _____ COUNTY, WYOMING**

_____ ,

PLAINTIFF(s),

vs.

CIVIL ACTION NO.

_____ ,

DEFENDANT(s).

NOTICE OF FILING

The Complaint in the above titled action was mailed to or filed with the Court on _____. You are required to file with the Clerk of Court, and serve upon the Plaintiff's attorney, an answer to the Complaint that was served upon you, within thirty-five (35) days after the date the Complaint was filed with the Court, exclusive of the day of filing. If you fail to do so, Default Judgment may be entered against you. If

a Default Judgment is entered against you, the Plaintiff reserves the right to take all legal remedies available to enforce said judgment. Please call the court to obtain the exact date the complaint was filed.

The undersigned does hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing NOTICE OF FILING was mailed by United States Mail, postage prepaid, on _____ to the following person at the last known address.

Defendant's full name

Defendant's street address

Defendant's city, state, zip

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20____ .

By: _____