DECLARATORY JUDGMENT PACKET

Santa Rosa County Courthouse

4025 Avalon Blvd. Milton, Fl. 32583

If you have any questions, you may call us. at 850-981-5667

Price $ 8.00

Updated 2026

OBTAINING VEHICLES TITLES VIA DECLARATORY JUDGMENT

************************************NOTICE************************************

This package is designed to help people seeking to represent themselves in court without the assistance of an attorney. It is not intended as a one size fits all packet. It may be necessary for you to seek the advice of a qualified attorney to fully understand or protect your rights.

One resource available is:
The Florida Bar Lawyer Referral Service
Phone: 1-800-342-8011
Hours: 8:00 am-5:30 pm
It is meant to serve as a guide only.

We **do not** guarantee that either the instructions or the forms will achieve the result desired by the parties or ensure that any individual judge will follow the procedure exactly or accept every form drafted.

Any person using these instructions and forms does so at his or her own risk.

Please note that Florida law prevents our staff from providing legal advice.

FILING FEE: $300.00 for property valued under $ 15,000.00 - filed in county court.

$ 400.00 for property valued over $15, 000.00, but less than $50,000.00 - filed in county court.

$ 400.00 for property valued $50, 0000 - filed in circuit court.

Payable by cash/ cashier's check/ money order/ credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover)

(A service charge of 3.5% will be added when using credit card)

There is also a $10.00 charge for documents that must be notarized at the clerk's office.

It is possible to obtain a declaratory judgment to assist you in obtaining a title for a vehicle you own, but for which you did not receive a title at the time of purchase. This can sometimes prove to be a lengthy and complex process. Obtaining this type of court order is not a one size fits all process. The Court may issue an Order or Declaratory Judgment directing the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to issue a certificate of title for your vehicle.

Before the Court will consider issuing such an order or Declaratory judgment, you must take the following steps:

1) You must make a diligent search to locate the former owner to transfer title.

2) You must provide a bill of sale, cancelled check, letter, memorandum, or some means of establishing your rights to ownership of the vehicle.

3) If the former owner has moved from the area without leaving a forwarding address you should mail a certified, return receipt requested letter demanding title to the vehicle to the former owner's last known address.

4) You must get a form provided by the tag office which lists the last title number issued to this vehicle, to whom the title was issued and that there are no liens against the vehicle.

5) You must get a Motor Vehicle Identification Number Inspection Sheet from your county Sheriff's office, establishing that the vehicle has not been reported as stolen as per the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).

6) You will be required to complete an affidavit for Vehicle Title Application, this document must be notarized.

7) The last known person to have owned the vehicle must be served this lawsuit in a manner compliant to the Florida Statutes/Florida Rules of Civil Procedure.

8) If you are unable to serve the respondent, you may serve the respondent by publication in a newspaper. An Affidavit of Diligent Search and Inquiry (must be notarized) and a Notice of Action are included in this packet. The Notice of Action must be published in newspaper. The publication must run in the paper once a week for four consecutive weeks. The newspaper will charge you a fee for this service. The newspaper will provide you with a notarized affidavit of proof of publication for the Notice of Action. This affidavit of proof of publication is required to be filed with the clerk's office. This is proof to the Court that it was published according to the Florida Statutes.

9) You must file the completed paperwork with the clerk of the circuit court. A filing fee is required.

10) Once the paperwork is filed and the respondent has been served the case , it can be reviewed by the Judge for consideration upon action filed by the petitioner and/or respondent.

11) If the Judge signs an order and/or a declaratory judgment, and a copy will be emailed or sent via regular mail to you by the Judiciary staff.

12) A party not represented by an attorney is required to provide an email address for the service of court documents, unless the party is in custody or unless the party is excused

by the Clerk because the party declares under penalty of perjury that they do not have an email address or do not have regular access to the internet. These forms are in the latter part of the packet. Select the form appropriate for you to receive documents from the court.

13) For further information contact the Clerk of Court office at 850-981-5665

If you have legal questions, please consult with an attorney or legal aid.

IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR SANTA COUNTY

CASE NO._____

_____

Petitioner

_____

Mailing Address

_____

Daytime Phone Number

vs.

_____

Respondent

_____

Last Known Address of person holding title

COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY JUDGMENT AND RELIEF

Plaintiff, _____, files this complaint, under penalty of perjury, seeking a declaratory judgment and other relief pursuant to Sections 86 and 319, Florida Statutes, and alleges as follows:

1. This is an action requesting declaratory judgment and other relief involving the acquisition of a clear title for a

_____

_____

and is located in Santa Rosa County , Florida at the following address:

_____

_____

2. The Plaintiff is a resident of _____ County, Florida, and owner of _____, purchased and paid for in _____ County, _____.

3. Defendant(s)_____

whose last known address is _____

and is the person who must be sued because they are the last known owners of said property described in this action. Co-defendant, State of Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, is an agency of the State of Florida with duly constituted, statutory authority for the issuance of license, tags, identification numbers, plates, and certificates of titles for vehicles, mobile homes, camper trailers, etc.

4. On or about _____, Plaintiff obtained the property from_____ by purchasing said property for the amount of $ _____{Attached bill of sale and/or other documents establishing ownership}

If the plaintiff did not purchase said property, please describe the transaction in which Plaintiff gained ownership in said
property:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

{attach a separate sheet of paper if additional information is needed}

5. This Court has jurisdiction in this matter.

6. On _____, the Plaintiff paid and purchased for the sum of $_____.

7. The VIN# is _____.

8. Plaintiff intends to use said property for the purpose of:

_____

9. Plaintiff has contacted the State of Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and was informed that a court of competent jurisdiction must determine ownership.
{attach a copy of the letter}

10. Plaintiff has taken certain steps to acquire a valid certificate of title:

_____
_____
_____
_____

{attach a separate sheet of paper if additional information is needed}

11. Plaintiff will be unable to sell the above-described property without a valid certificate of title.

12. The Plaintiff has no alternative but to seek the intervention of this Court and request

that this Court grant him relief in the matter.

13. Plaintiff understand that if the court awards ownership to said property, the Plaintiff will be responsible for making application for and paying for all fees in connections with the said application to the State of Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and/or any fees applicable in the Plaintiff's local tag office.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff petitions this Honorable Court for the entry of a Declaratory Judgment declaring Plaintiff to be the true, sole owners of the subject property described in this complaint and directs the State of Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to transfer said ownership to the Plaintiff's name as listed above.

Dated this _____ day of _____, _____.

_____
Plaintiff's Signature

_____
Plaintiff's name

_____
Address

_____
City, State, Zip Code

_____
Telephone number

_____
Email

_____

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF SANTA ROSA Sworn to or
Affirmed and signed before me on

_____by_____
{Date} {Name of Affiant}

_____
NOTARY PUBLIC SIGNATURE
Print, Stamp or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public
Personally known ____
Produced Identification _____
Type of Identification Produced_____

I hereby certify that a copy of the above filed complaint for declaratory judgment and relief has been furnished by regular mail to:

State of Florida

Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles,

2900 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee, FL

32399,

this _____ day of _____, 20____.

_____

Plaintiff's signature

AFFIDAVIT VEHICLE TITLE APPLICATION

AFFIANT

Name:

_____

Address:

_____

City: _____ State: _____Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Year: _____ Make: _____ Model: _____ Body: _____

Vehicle Title Number: _____ State of Issuance: _____

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN):

_____

Purchase Price: _____ Dollar Value: _____

Date of Purchase: _____

Do you owe any money on this vehicle? _☐_ yes _☐_ no

*** I have attached a letter from my county Sheriff's office, dated not more than 30 days from today's date, confirming that this vehicle has not been reported stolen**. *

PREVIOUS OWNER INFORMATION

I have purchased this vehicle from:

_____

Address:

_____

City: _____ State: _____Zip Code: _____

I did not receive the title at the time of purchase because:

_____

_____

_____

_____

I cannot receive the title at this time because:

_____

_____

_____

_____

I have conducted a diligent search in accordance with the attached Affidavit of Diligent Search.

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF SANTA ROSA Sworn to or
Affirmed and signed before me on

_____by_____
{Date} {Name of Affiant}

_____
{Signature of Affiant}

_____
NOTARY PUBLIC SIGNATURE
Print, Stamp or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public
Personally known ____
Produced Identification _____
Type of Identification Produced_____

IN THE COUNTY OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NUMBER: _____

_____
PETITIONER

VS

_____
RESPONDENT

SUMMONS FOR PERSONAL SERVICE ON AN INDIVIDUAL

TO RESPONDENT(S):
Respondent's Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

IMPORTANT

A LAWSUIT has been filed against you. You have 20 days after this Summons is served on you to file a written response to the attached Complaint with the Santa Rosa County Clerk of Circuit Court, 4025 Avalon Boulevard, Milton, Fl. 32570. A phone call will not protect you. Your written response, including the case number and the names of the parties, must be filed if you want the Court to hear your side of the case. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case, and your wages, money, and property may thereafter without further warning from the Court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may call an attorney referral service or a legal aid office (listed in the phone book).
If you choose to file a written response yourself, at the same time you file your written response to the Court, you must also mail or take a copy of your written response to "Petitioner" or "Petitioner's Attorney" named below:

Petitioner's Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

TO EACH SHERIFF OF THE STATE: You are commanded to serve this SUMMONS and a copy of the COMPLAINT in this lawsuit on the above- named Respondent.

DATE:_____

JASON D. ENGLISH, ESQ., CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: _____

Deputy Clerk

IMPORTANTE

Se ha presentado una DEMANDA en su contra. Tiene 20 días después de que se le notifique esta citación para presentar una respuesta por escrito a la demanda adjunta ante el Secretario del Tribunal de Circuito, 4025 Avalon Boulevard, Milton, Fl. 32570. Una llamada telefónica no lo protegerá. Debe presentar su respuesta por escrito, incluido el número de caso y los nombres de las partes, si desea que el Tribunal escuche su versión del caso. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso y su salario, dinero y propiedad pueden perderse posteriormente sin Es posible que desee llamar a un abogado de inmediato. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de referencia de abogados o a una oficina de asistencia legal (que figuran en la guía telefónica). Si elige presentar una respuesta por escrito usted mismo, al mismo tiempo que presenta su respuesta por escrito al Tribunal, también debe enviar por correo o llevar una copia de su respuesta por escrito al "Peticionario" o al "Abogado del Peticionario".

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact:
Court Administration, ADA Coordinator
Santa Rosa County
4025 Avalon Blvd
Milton, FL 32583
Phone (850) 623-3159 Fax (850) 983-0602
ADA.SantaRosa@flcourts1.gov
at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR SANTA COUNTY

AFFIDAVIT OF DILIGENT SEARCH AND INQUIRY

I, {insert full legal name} _____, certify that the following information is true:

1. I have made diligent search and inquiry to discover the current residence of

{insert the respondent(s) full legal name} _____.

Specify details of search. Identify all actions taken (any additional information included such as the date of the action taken and the person with whom you spoke is helpful; attach additional sheet if necessary):

[check all that apply]

_____ Inquiry of Social Security Information

_____ United States Post Office inquiry through Freedom of Information Act, current address or relocation

_____ Telephone listings in the last known locations of defendant's residence

_____ Statewide directory assistance search

_____ Internet people finder search {specify sites searched}

_____ Voter registration in the area where defendant was last known to reside

_____ Nationwide Masterfile Death Search

_____ Information about prior owners' possible death, and if deceased, the date, and location of the death _____

_____ Tax Collector's records in area where defendant was last known to reside

_____ Property Appraiser's records in area where defendant was last known to reside

_____ Department of Motor Vehicle records in state of defendant's last known address

_____ Driver's License records search in the state of defendant's last known address

_____ Highway Patrol records in the state of prior owners' last known address

_____ Department of Corrections records in state of defendant's last known address

_____ Law enforcement arrest and/or criminal record search in the last known residential area of prior owner

_____ Federal Prison records search

_____ Regulatory agencies for professional or occupation licensing

_____ Inquiry to determine if defendant is in military service

_____ Last known employment of defendant, including name and address of employer:

_____

_____ The age of prior owner is known {insert age} _____or unknown _____

_____ Prior owner's current residence {check only one}

____ Prior owner's current residence is unknown to me.

____ Prior owner's current residence is in a state or country other than Florida, prior owners last known address is_____

_____ Name and address of relatives and contacts with those relatives, and inquiry as to prior owner's last known address. (You are to follow any leads limited to parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, grandparents, great-grandparent, form in-laws, stepparents, stepchildren

_____

_____

_____

_____

{List all additional efforts made to locate defendant}

_____

_____

_____

Other (explain): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing document and that the facts stated in it are true.

Dated: _____

Signature of Affiant

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF SANTA ROSA Sworn to or
Affirmed and signed before me on

_____by_____
{Date} {Name of Affiant}

_____
{Signature of Affiant}

_____
NOTARY PUBLIC SIGNATURE
Print, Stamp or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public
Personally known ____
Produced Identification _____
Type of Identification Produced_____

IN THE COUNTY OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NUMBER: _____

_____
PETITIONER

VS

_____
RESPONDENT

NOTICE OF ACTION

TO:

Respondent: _____

You are notified that an action for declaratory judgment has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on the petitioner, whose address is

_____

_____

and file the original with the clerk of this court either before service of the petitioner or the petitioner's attorney or immediately thereafter; **within 30 days from the first publication of this notice**, otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

DATED: _____

JASON D. ENGLISH, ESQ., CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

BY: _____

Deputy Clerk

Additional Information

Once the respondent in the case has been successfully served it will be your responsibility to follow the progression of the case and it may be necessary for you to file additional documents or motions to the Court.

After successful service on the respondent, the respondent has twenty days to file a response with the Court and to provide you a copy of that response.

If the Respondent has been served and they file a response/answer with the Court, the Judge will review the response/answer and determine the next actions that will be taken in the case.

It is ***your responsibility*** to monitor your email/mail for any correspondence from the Court directing you to take other actions, setting a hearing, etc.

The clerk's office ***will not*** call you. You must keep yourself knowledgeable of the actions the Court may have taken in your case.

Aside from reviewing your emails, you may call the Clerk's office to inquire about your case, and you may also review the documents in your case by viewing the case file online at www.santarosaclerk.com , search court records.

If the Respondent has filed a response/answer with the Court, after reasonable time has elapsed, you may request for the Judge to set a hearing in the matter.

We have included a form titled (Request for Notice of Hearing) in this packet to assist you if you decide to utilize it.

If successful service of the Respondent has taken place and the time for filing a response/answer has lapsed, you must motion the Court to proceed with the case.

We have included some forms to assist you if you decide to utilize them.

Motion for Clerk's Default & Default

Motion for Default Judgment

Final Judgment

We **do not** guarantee that either the instructions or the forms will achieve the result desired by the parties or ensure that any individual judge will follow the procedure exactly or accept each and every form drafted.
Any person using these instructions and forms does so at his or her own risk.

IN THE COUNTY OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NUMBER: _____

_____
PETITIONER

VS

_____
RESPONDENT

REQUEST FOR NOTICE OF HEARING

Comes now the Petitioner in the above styles case and states that this cause is at issue and ready for a hearing or non-jury trial in Chambers.
Petitioner requests a notice of hearing, or a notice of non-jury trial be set for the above styled case.
If this matter is resolved, the Petitioner shall contact the Judge's office to cancel the hearing and submit a notice of cancellation of hearing and a request for dismissal with the Clerk's office.

Dated: _____

_____
Signature of Petitioner

_____
Printed Name of Petitioner

_____
Address, City, State, Zip Code

_____
Telephone Number

_____
Email address

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy hereof has been furnished to_____,

by ____hand delivery _____ mail _____fax _____ email on this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

IN THE COUNTY OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NUMBER: _____

_____
PETITIONER

VS

_____
RESPONDENT

MOTION FOR CLERK'S DEFAULT

Plaintiff asks the Clerk to enter a default against Respondent(s), for failing to respond as required by law.

Plaintiff Signature: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
Telephone No. _____

DEFAULT

A default is entered in this action against the Respondent(s) for failure to respond as required by law.
DATE: _____

CLERK OF COURTS,

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy hereof has been furnished to_____,

by ____hand delivery _____ mail _____fax _____ email on this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

IN THE COUNTY OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NUMBER: _____

_____
PETITIONER

VS

_____
RESPONDENT

MOTION FOR DEFAULT FINAL JUDGMENT

Petitioner asks the court to enter a Default Final Judgment against Respondent for Declaratory Judgment and says:
Petitioner filed a complaint for Declaratory Judgment against Respondent.
Respondent has failed to timely file a response/answer and a default has been entered by the Clerk of this Court.
WHEREFORE, Petitioner asks this Court to enter a Final Judgment for Declaratory Judgment against the Respondent.
Dated: _____
_____
Signature of Petitioner
_____
Printed Name of Petitioner
_____
Address, City, State, Zip Code
_____
Telephone Number
_____
Email address

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy hereof has been furnished to_____,

by ____hand delivery _____ mail _____fax _____ email on this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

IN THE COUNTY OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NUMBER: _____

_____
PETITIONER

VS

_____
RESPONDENT

DECLARATORY JUDGMENT

THIS MATTER came before the Court on Petitioner's Complaint for Declaratory Judgment and Relief requesting the Court's authorization to issue a clear title.

The Court has reviewed the Complaint with attachments and finds:

1. This Court has jurisdiction of this matter pursuant to Florida Statute 86.011 and Florida Statute 319.28(2)(a).

2. Petitioner, _____, is the owner of

the _____.

3. The Petitioner is unable to obtain a clear title due to the unavailability of the previous owner.

4. Petitioner has complied with the requirements of the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED AND AJUDGED as follows:

a. This Court enters a Declaratory Judgment in favor of the Petitioner,

_____.

b. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is hereby ordered and authorized to issue a new and clear title and/or VIN # if needed in the name of

_____for the
_____
currently in the possession and owned by the Plaintiff.

Issuance of title is contingent on Plaintiff submitting an application for same and paying all applicable fees and taxes.

c. The Plaintiff is further authorized to utilize this Order to obtain not only a title but to register the _____ _____, and obtain a license plate in accordance with Florida law.

DONE AND ORDERED in Milton, Santa Rosa County, Florida, this _____ day of _____, _____.

_____

COUNTY JUDGE

Copies furnished to:

Petitioner

Respondent

Notice: Additional Requirement

Service of Pleadings and Documents

A party not represented by an attorney is required to provide an email address for the service of court documents, unless the party is in custody or unless the party is excused by the Clerk because the party declares under penalty of perjury that they do not have an email address or do not have regular access to the internet.

RULE 2.516. SERVICE OF PLEADINGS AND DOCUMENTS

(C) Service on and by Parties Not Represented by an Attorney. Unless excused pursuant to subdivision (b)(1)(D), any party not represented by an attorney must serve a designation of a primary e-mail address and also may designate no more than two secondary e-mail addresses to which service must be directed in that proceeding by the means provided in subdivision (b)(1) of this rule. November 17, 2022 Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. Page 168 of 252

(D) Exceptions to E-mail Service on and by Parties Not Represented by an Attorney.

(i) A party who is in custody and who is not represented by an attorney is excused from the requirements of email service.

(ii) The clerk of court must excuse a party who is not represented by an attorney from the requirements of e-mail service if the party declares on Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration Form 2.601, under penalties of perjury, that the party does not have an e-mail account or does not have regular access to the Internet. The clerks of court shall make this form available to the public at their offices and on their websites. If a party not represented by an attorney is excused from e-mail service, service on and by that party must be by the means provided in subdivision (b)(2).

(E) Time of Service. Service by e-mail is complete on the date it is sent.

Use Form 2.601, Request To Be Excused from Email Service, if you wish to be excused from this requirement. The clerk must approve your declaration for you to be eligible for exemption. You may seek review by a Judge by requesting a hearing time if the clerk does not approve your exemption from email service.

Use Form 2.602, Designation of Email Address for A party Not Represented By An Attorney, if you agree to provide an email address for the service of court documents.

Use Form 2.603, Notice of Change of Address or Designated Email Address, to update or change your email address should the need arise. It is your responsibility to keep the court notified of any changes in your address, email address, and telephone number. It is also your responsibility to follow the progression of your case. Remember email service from the court is complete on the date it is sent. Check your email account, spam folders and junk mail often.

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE FIRST
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR SANTA COUNTY, FLORIDA

_____
Plaintiff

v.

_____
Defendant

CASE NO: _____

DIVISION: _____

REQUEST TO BE EXCUSED FROM E-MAIL SERVICE FOR PARTY NOT REPRESENTED BY ATTORNEY [FORM 2.601]

_____ requests to be excused pursuant to Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.516(b)(1)(D) from the requirements of e- mail service because I am not represented by an attorney and:

☐ I do not have an e-mail account.

☐ I do not have regular access to the internet.

By choosing not to receive documents by e-mail service, I understand that I will receive all copies of notices, orders, judgments, motions, pleadings, or other written communications by delivery or mail at the following address:

_____

_____.

I understand that I must keep the clerk's office and the opposing party or parties notified of my current mailing address.

Pursuant to section 92.525, Florida Statutes, under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing request and that the facts stated in it are true.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE:

I certify that a copy has been furnished by ☐e-mail, ☐delivery, ☐mail [choose one] on _____, to:

_____

_____

(insert name(s) and address(es)

Dated: _____

Signature: _____
Phone: _____

Print Name: _____

CLERK'S DETERMINATION. Based on the information provided in this request, I have determined that the applicant is ☐ excused or ☐ not excused from the e-mail service requirements of Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.516(b)(1)(C).

Dated: _____

Signature of Clerk: _____

A PERSON WHO IS NOT EXCUSED MAY SEEK REVIEW BY A JUDGE BY REQUESTING A HEARING TIME.

Sign here if you want the Judge to review the clerk's determination that you are not excused from the email service requirements. You do not waive or give up any right to judicial review of the clerk's determination by not signing this part of the form:

Dated: _____

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND
FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

_____
Plaintiff

CASE NO: _____

v. DIVISION: _____

_____
Defendant

**DESIGNATION OF E-MAIL ADDRESS FOR A PARTY
NOT REPRESENTED BY AN ATTORNEY [FORM 2.602]**

Pursuant to Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.516(b)(1)(C),
I, _____, designate the e-mail address(es) below for electronic service of all documents related to this case.

By completing this form, I am authorizing the court, clerk of court, and all parties to send copies of notices, orders, judgments, motions, pleadings, or other written communications to me by e- mail or through the Florida Courts E-filing Portal.

I understand that I must keep the clerk's office and any opposing party or parties notified of my current mailing address or e-mail address. I will file a written notice with the clerk if my mailing address or e-mail address changes again.

Designated e-mail address:_____
Secondary designated e-mail address(es), if any:_____

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE:

I certify that a copy has been furnished on _____, by ☐e-mail, ☐delivery, ☐mail [choose one] to:
Clerk of Court for _____ County, and to:

_____

_____

(insert name(s) and address(es))

Plaintiff Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Telephone No. _____

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND
FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

_____

Plaintiff

CASE NO: _____

v. DIVISION: _____

_____

Defendant

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF MAILING ADDRESS OR DESIGNATED E-MAIL ADDRESS [FORM 2.603]

I, _____, certify that my ☐ mailing address or ☐ designated e-mail address has changed to

_____

_____

I understand that I must keep the clerk's office and any opposing party or parties notified of my current mailing address or e-mail address. I will file a written notice with the clerk if my mailing address or e-mail address changes again.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy hereof has been furnished on _____, by ☐ e-mail, ☐ delivery, ☐mail [choose one] to:

_____

_____

(insert name(s) and address(es)

Plaintiff Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Telephone No. _____

Introduction to Case Management Orders

The following Santa Rosa County Administrative Order took effect in 2021. We have included this for informational purposes. These documents are not required to be filed at the onset of the case. They should, however, be reviewed by the Plaintiff.

For further information please review the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure or contact the Santa Rosa County Case Manager at (850) 981-5586.

FORM NOTES ARE FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND MAY NOT COMPLETELY DESCRIBE THE REQUIREMENTS OF FLORIDA LAW.

YOU SHOULD CONSULT AN ATTORNEY AS NEEDED.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL DIVISION

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX,

Plaintiff, Case No.: XXXXXX

v. Division:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX,

Defendant.

_____/

ORDER TO PLAINTIFF REGARDING REQUIRED REPORTING

THIS CAUSE, having come before the Court *sua sponte* upon the filing of this action and pursuant to First Judicial Circuit Administrative Order No. 2021-12, it is hereby,

ORDERED and ADJUDGED that the Plaintiff **shall** do the following:

1. Review and become familiar with First Judicial Circuit Administrative Order No. 2021-12.
2. Within 5 days of service of the complaint on the last of all named Defendants file a Notice of Final Service with the Court that includes the following:
    a. Notice that the last of all named Defendants to be served has been served and the date of said service.
    b. A statement as to whether the case is complex under Fla. R. Civ. P. 1.201, streamlined, or general as defined in First Judicial Circuit Administrative Order No. 2021-12.
3. Upon filing the Notice of Final Service required in paragraph 2, the Plaintiff shall also send a copy of said Notice to the **assigned** Judge's Judicial Assistant via the Proposed Documents function of the ePortal.
4. Failure of the Plaintiff to strictly comply with this Order shall subject the Plaintiff to appropriate sanctions including, but not limited to, the striking of pleadings or dismissal of this action without prejudice.

DONE AND ORDERED on today, in Chambers at Santa Rosa County, Florida.

/S/ Judge name
_____
JUDGE

In cases wherein one party is unrepresented (*pro se*), it is the responsibility of the sole attorney in the case to serve within five business days this Order/Judgment upon any *pro se* party who does not have access to and is not a registered user of Florida Court's e-Filing Portal.

IN THE COURTS OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2021-12

RE: CIVIL CASE MANAGEMENT PLAN – MANDATORY REVIEW OF CIVIL CASES AND SUBMISSION OF CASE MANAGEMENT ORDERS

WHEREAS, the Florida Supreme Court has issued Administrative Order 20-23, Amendment 12, which directs that each chief judge should issue an administrative order requiring presiding judges to actively manage civil cases; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Supreme Court has further directed that each circuit maximize the timely resolution of civil matters, and requires that attorneys and judges strictly observe and comply with Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.545; and

WHEREAS, AOSC 20-23, Amendment 12, sets forth specific provisions for civil case management and resolution which are applicable to the existing backlog of civil cases, which are addressed herein by the undersigned in order to facilitate the timely, fair, and effective resolution of civil cases;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority of the Chief Judge, under section 43.26, Florida Statutes, and Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215 (b);

IT IS HERBBY ORDERED:

1. The case management procedures outlined below must be followed in actions to which the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure apply, as identified in Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.010. As prescribed by AOSC 20-23, Amendment 12, this also applies to cases proceeding "under one or more of the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure pursuant to Florida Small Claims Rule 7.020(c) if the deadline for the trial date specified in Florida Small Claims Rule 7.090(d) no longer applies." Per AOSC 20-23, Amendment 12, the case management procedures outlined below do not apply in cases proceeding under section 51.011, Florida Statutes, post-judgment proceedings, and writs filed pursuant to Fla.R.Civ.P. 1.630.
2. Each judge presiding in civil cases subject to this order shall review each of the civil cases pending in his or her division to determine whether the case is complex, streamlined, or general. These categories are defined as follows:
    a. “Complex” cases are actions that have been or may be designated by court order as complex under Fla.R.Jud.P 1.201. Upon such designation, such an action should proceed as provided in the rule.
    b. “Streamlined” cases are those cases meeting most or all of the following criteria, or as otherwise determined by the presiding judge: few parties; non-complex issues related to liability and damages; few anticipated pretrial motions; a limited need for discovery; few witnesses; minimal documentary evidence; no demand for jury trial and/or an anticipated trial length of less than two days.
    c. “General” cases are all other civil cases.

3. A case management order must be issued for each pending and newly filed streamline or general civil case. Each case management order must include the following:
    a. Deadlines for service of complaints, service under extensions, and the addition of new parties;
    b. Deadlines by which fact and expert discovery shall be complete;
    c. Deadlines by which all objections to pleadings and pretrial motions shall be resolved;
    d. A deadline by which mediation shall have occurred;
    e. A projected date of trial;
    f. A statement that the deadlines included will be strictly enforced; and

g. A statement that a firm trial date will be ordered when the case is at issue pursuant to Fla.R.Jud.P. 1.440.

4. If a streamlined or general civil case is subject to dismissal for a lack of prosecution under Fla.R.Jud.P. 1.420(e), a case management order is required only if the court determines that the action should remain pending. If the action remains pending, the case management order should be issued no later than 30 days after such determination is made by the presiding judge.

5. In cases subject to a statutory stay or memorandum preventing the prosecution of the case the management order should be issued in accord with the following deadlines:

    a. For cases filed on or after April 30, 2021, the case management order should be issued within 45 days after the stay or memorandum ends, or within 30 days after service of the complaint on the last of all named defendants, whichever date is later.
    b. For cases filed before April 30, 2021, the case management order should be issued by December 3, 2021, within 45 days after the stay or moratorium ends, or within 30 days after service of the complaint on the last of all named defendants, whichever date is later. The case management order shall include each of the items prescribed above in paragraph 3, including the projected date of trial, if the trial has not yet occurred or a trial date has not yet been specified by separate order.

6. In cases that are not subject to a statutory stay or moratorium, the case management order should be issued in accord with the following deadlines:
    a. For cases filed on or after April 30, 2021, the case management order shall be issued within 30 days after service of the complaint on the last of all named defendants.
    b. For cases filed before April 30, 2021, the case management order shall be issued by December 3, 2021. The case management order shall include each of the items prescribed above in paragraph 3, including the projected date of trial, if the trial has not yet occurred or a trial date has not yet been specified by separate order.

7. Plaintiff (if self-represented) or Plaintiff's counsel should file a Notice of Final Service when the last named defendant has been served with the complaint to notify the presiding judge that service is complete and that the case management order may be prepared.

8. For all existing and newly filed cases, the presiding judge will automatically generate a standard case management order containing deadlines in compliance with this order. Should any party desire to alter the initial case management order, and amended case management order meeting the time requirements outlined in this order may be prepared and stipulated to by the parties. The proposed order should be submitted for final approval by the presiding judge. The required form for the agreement is included as Attachment A. A sample management order is included as Attachment B.

9. The following periods are applicable to the deadlines to be included in case management orders for <u>streamlined</u> cases:

    a. Deadlines for service of complaints, service under extensions, and the addition of new parties: Service should be made within 120 days of the filing of the complaint unless the presiding judge grants an extension. The extension shall not exceed a time period beyond 240 days from the date of filing the complaint.
    b. Deadlines to complete fact and expert discovery: Discovery should be complete within 270 days after the complaint is filed.
    c. Deadline for objections to pleadings and resolution of pretrial motions: Objections to pleadings and pretrial motions should be resolved within 45 days of filing and prior to the pretrial conference.
    d. Deadline for mediation: Mediation should be completed within 270 days after the complaint is filed.
    e. Projected Trial Date: Trial dates should be set within 12 months of the filing complaint.

10. The following periods are applicable to the deadlines to be included in case management orders for general cases (unless otherwise ordered based on good cause):

    a. Deadlines for service of complaints, service under extensions, and the addition of new parties: Service should be made within 120 days of the filing of the complaint unless the presiding judge grants an extension. The extension shall not exceed a time period beyond 240 days from the date of filing complaint.
    b. Deadlines to complete fact and expert discovery: Discovery should be complete within 450 days after the complaint is filed.
    c. Deadlines for objections to pleadings and resolution of pretrial motions: Objections to pleadings and pretrial motions should be resolved within 45 days of filing and prior to the pretrial conference.
    d. Deadlines for mediation: Mediation should be completed within 450 days after the complaint is filed.
    e. Projected Trial Date: Trial dates should be set within 18 months of the filing of the complaint.

11. All judges are directed to strictly comply with Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.545(a), (b), and (e), which respectively require judges to conclude litigation as soon as it is reasonably and justly possible to do so, to take charge of all cases at an early stage, and to control the progress of the case thereafter until it is determined, and to apply a firm continuance policy allowing continuances only for good cause shown.

12. Attorneys are also reminded that they must strictly comply with Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.545(a), which requires lawyers to conclude litigation as soon as it is reasonably and justly possible to do so, and that the pandemic alone is not basis for a lawyer's failure to prepare a case for trial or otherwise actively manage a case.

13. The procedures set forth in herein do not supplant any existing rule, statute, or law nor should they be construed as granting any rights not already provided by rule, statute, or law. To the extent that any provision of this Order may be construed as being in conflict with any rule, statute, or law, the rule, statute, or law shall prevail.

14. This order is effective April 30, 2021.

DONE AND ORDERED this 30th day of April, 2021.

JOHN L. MILLER
CHIEF JUDGE

Copies of Administrative Order No. 2021-12 furnished to:
All Judges, First Judicial Circuit
Robin Wright, Trial Court Administrator
William Eddins, State Attorney, First Judicial Circuit
Bruce Miller, Public Defender, First Judicial Circuit
All Clerks of Court, First Judicial Circuit
Candice Brower, Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel
Justice Administration Commission
Craig Waters, Florida Supreme Court
For Broadcast by: Escambia-Santa Rosa Bar Association
For Broadcast by: Okaloosa Bar Association
For Broadcast by: Walton County Bar Association
For Posting at www.FirstJudicialCircuit.org

IN THE COUNTY COURT IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

_____

Plaintiff

CASE NO: _____

vs.

_____

_____

Defendant(s)

CIVIL CASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. **Case Track Assignment** (check one): Case disposition time for all case tracks have been established in accordance with Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.250(a)(1)(B).

   ☐ Streamlined Track (Case resolved within 12 months without a jury trial).

   ☐ General Track (Case resolved within 18 months with or without a jury trial).

   ☐ Complex Track (Case resolved pursuant to Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.201, with or without a jury trial).

2. **Case Deadlines and Events:**

Deadline or Event	**Party (if applicable)**	**Date**
Deadlines for service of complaints, service under extensions, and the addition of new parties.		
Deadlines to complete fact and expert discovery	Plaintiff(s):	
	Defendant(s):	
Deadlines for all objections to pleadings and pretrial motions to be resolved		
Deadline for mediation to have occurred		
Projected date of **Pretrial conference**		
Projected date of trial (a firm trial date will be ordered by the presiding judge when the case is at issue pursuant to Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.440)		

3. **Trial Information**

Estimated Length of Trial (specify Number of trial days)	
Identification of Jury or Non-Jury Trial	☐ Jury Trial
	☐ Non-Jury Trial

The schedule of deadlines herein will be strictly adhered to by the parties unless change is otherwise agreed to by the parties and approved by the Court. The Court will consider a request to approve changes to these deadlines upon a showing of good cause by either party based on matters arising from an emergency nature or unavailability. However, once the *Civil Case Management Plan* has been approved by the Court, procrastination in completing discovery or the unavailability of counsel will not constitute good cause for a change to these deadlines. The failure to abide by these deadlines may result in sanctions.

4. **SIGNATURE OF COUNSEL/UNREPRESENTED PARTIES IF SUBMITTED AS AGREED UPON PLAN**

Plaintiff's Counsel	Defendant's Counsel
Address:	Address:
Phone:	Phone:
Fax:	Fax:
E-Mail:	E-Mail:
Fla Bar #:	Fla Bar #:
Plaintiff (if unrepresented)	Defendant (if unrepresented)
Address:	Address:
Phone:	Phone:

IN THE COUNTY COURT IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

_____

Plaintiff

CASE NO: _____

vs.

_____

_____

Defendant(s)

CIVIL CASE MANAGEMENT ORDER

THE COURT having reviewed the *Civil Case Management Plan* filed on, _____ and finding it to be satisfactory, it is now

ORDERED that all parties shall abide by the terms of the *Civil Case Management Plan.*

DONE and ORDERED on [date]_____, in Santa Rosa County, Florida.

_____

Judge

Copies:

IN THE COUNTY COURT IN AND FOR SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA
COUNTY CIVIL DIVISION

_____
Plaintiff

CASE NO: _____

vs.

_____

_____
Defendant(s)

NOTICE OF FINAL SERVICE

Service of the Complaint: The Defendant(s) was served with the complaint on

_____
.

Case Track Assignment (check one): Case disposition times for all case tracks have been established in accordance with Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.250(a)(1)(B).

Streamlined Track (Case resolved within 12 months without a jury trial.)

General Track (Case resolved within 18 months with or without a jury trial.)

Complex Track (Case resolved pursuant to Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.201, with or without a jury trial)

Date:_____

Plaintiff(s) Printed Name: _____

Plaintiff(s) Signature: _____

Mail to: Santa Rosa County Clerk of Courts

Attn: Civil Division

4025 Avalon Blvd

Milton, FL 32583