

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
BALTIMORE DIVISION**

LAWRENCE HEBERT §
237 Saint Pius St. §
Houma, LA 70363 §
Plaintiff, §

v. §

Case No. §

BLACK & DECKER (U.S.) INC.; THE §
BLACK & DECKER CORPORATION; §
and PORTER-CABLE CORPORATION §
701 E. Joppa Road Towson (Baltimore §
County), Maryland 21286 §

and §

REXON INDUSTRIAL CORP. and §
POWER TOOL SPECIALISTS, INC. §
684 Huey Road §
Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730 §

Defendants §

PLAINTIFF’S COMPLAINT AND JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff LAWRENCE HEBERT (“Plaintiff”), hereby files the instant Complaint and Jury Demand against Defendants, BLACK & DECKER (U.S.) INC., THE BLACK & DECKER CORPORATION, PORTER-CABLE CORPORATION, REXON INDUSTRIAL CORP., and POWER TOOL SPECIALISTS, INC. (collectively referred to as “Defendants”), and states as follows:

PARTIES

1. Plaintiff Lawrence Hebert, is a citizen of the United States and a citizen of the State of Louisiana, residing at 237 St. Pius Street, Terrebonne Parish, Houma, LA 70363.

2. At all times herein mentioned, Defendant Black and Decker (U.S.) Inc., is and has been a corporation existing under the laws of incorporation of the State of Maryland, with its principal place of business located at 701 E. Joppa Road, Towson, Maryland 21286.

3. At all times herein mentioned, Defendant The Black & Decker Corporation, is and has been a corporation existing under the laws of incorporation of the State of Maryland, with its principal place of business located at 701 E. Joppa Road, Towson, Maryland 21286.

4. At all times herein mentioned, Defendant, Porter-Cable Corporation, is and has been a corporation existing under the laws of incorporation of the State of Minnesota, with its principal place of business located at 701 E. Joppa Road, Towson, Maryland 21286, which is where it may also be served with process.

5. At all times herein mentioned, Defendant Rexon Industrial Corp., a designer, manufacturer, distributor, and seller of power tools, including tools sold under the Task Force brand, is and has been a foreign corporation existing under the laws of incorporation of Taiwan, with its principal place of business located in Tacyuan, Taiwan. Rexon Industrial Corp. may be served with process through its U.S. subsidiary, Power Tools Specialists, Inc., which is located at 684 Huey Road, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730.

6. At all times herein mentioned, Defendant Power Tools Specialists, Inc., is and has been a corporation existing under the laws of incorporation of the State of Massachusetts, with its principal place of business located at 684 Huey Road, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730, which is where it may also be served with process.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

7. This Court has jurisdiction over the parties and subject matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332 because there is a complete diversity of citizenship between Plaintiff and Defendants. The amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000 exclusive of interest and costs. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because Defendants reside in this District and because a substantial part of the acts and/or omissions giving rise to these claims occurred within this District. Defendants have engaged in the business of designing, manufacturing, distributing, and selling, the Black & Decker BDT5100 table saw in the City of Towson, located in Baltimore County, Maryland.

FACTS

8. This suit arises out of the serious and permanent personal injuries suffered by Plaintiff due to the wrongful conduct of Defendants in designing, manufacturing, distributing and selling a Porter Cable PCB270TS table saw, serial no. 010327 (the “Subject Saw”).

9. The Subject Saw, like all table saws sold in the United States, is required to be sold with a blade guard. However, the blade guard on the Subject Saw is extremely difficult to use and must be removed for a user to make certain cuts with the saw. Once removed, it is extremely difficult to reattach the blade guard. Thus, it is common practice for users of the Subject Saw to either assemble the saw without the guard or to remove the guard and leave it permanently off the machine while using the table saw. This widespread practice was well known by Defendants, yet Defendants made no effort to improve the design of the guard to make it more user friendly until required to do so by recent changes to industry-wide standards.

10. The Subject Saw also comes with a splitter or spreader attached to the guard that is designed to prevent kickbacks while cutting. A kickback is often the result of the saw blade being

pinched by the wood as it is being cut. The back of the saw blade can cause the wood to jerk or kick back at high velocity into the user, causing the user's hands or fingers to be landed on or be pulled into the spinning blade of the saw and leading to catastrophic and permanent injuries. Kickbacks are a common and well-recognized phenomenon of which Defendants had actual knowledge at the time the Subject Saw was designed, manufactured, distributed and sold.

11. Defendants designed the splitter or spreader of the Subject Saw to be attached directly to the guard. When the guard is removed, as it often is, no kickback protection is provided to the user. Because it used such a splitter or spreader design, the Subject Saw was unreasonably dangerous as designed and manufactured.

12. Defendants have known for many years that kickbacks can be substantially reduced or eliminated by using a riving knife rather than a spreader or splitter. A riving knife is a small piece of metal that sits behind the blade and rises and falls with the blade. Even if the guard is removed, the riving knife remains in place, substantially reducing or eliminating kickbacks. Riving knives have been used for decades in Europe and are required on all power tables saws sold in Europe. Recently, riving knives have been included as necessary safety equipment pursuant to new industry-wide standards adopted in the United States.

13. The Subject Saw used by Plaintiff did not have a riving knife. Had Defendants used this safer alternative design on the Subject Saw, Plaintiff would not have been injured or his injuries would have been substantially reduced. Because it lacked a riving knife, the Subject Saw was unreasonably dangerous as designed and manufactured.

14. For many years other technology has been available that would have eliminated or reduced Plaintiff's injury. Such technology, known as SawStop, stops the spinning saw blade almost instantly upon contact with human skin.

15. In or around November 2000, at a meeting of the Power tool Institute ("PTI") of which Defendants were members, Defendants were made aware of flesh-sensing technology that stops a spinning table saw blade almost instantly upon contact with human skin. At the time of the meeting, Stephen Gass, the inventor of the SawStop technology, offered to make the technology available to Defendants through a licensing agreement. The technology was feasible for incorporation into the Subject Saw.

16. Defendants, and other table saw manufacturers, failed to pursue a license of the available SawStop technology or to incorporate similar technology into the Subject Saw. As a result, the Subject Saw had no flesh-detecting technology or other similar technology that would stop a spinning saw blade upon contact with human skin. Because it lacked such technology, the Subject Saw was unreasonably dangerous as designed and manufactured.

17. On or about November 7, 2014, while using the Subject Saw in the reasonable, foreseeable and intended manner, Plaintiff suffered severe and permanent personal injuries caused by contact between his fingers and the saw's rotating blade. The wrongful acts of Defendants set forth above were a legal cause of Plaintiff's physical pain, mental anguish, physical disfigurement, and physical impairment. The Plaintiff incurred economic loss in the form of medical care and treatment; and lost wages. He further lost his ability to engage in usual and normal activities. At the time of his injury, Plaintiff was acting reasonably and was exercising all due care for his own safety.

CAUSES OF ACTION

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION -- STRICT PRODUCT LIABILITY

18. Plaintiff re-alleges Paragraphs 1 through 17 and incorporates them herein by reference.

19. Defendants are liable under the theory of product liability as set forth in §§402A of the Restatement of Torts 2d. Defendants, at all times material hereto, engaged in the business of designing, manufacturing, assembling, selling, marketing, and/or supplying the Subject Saw. The Subject Saw was in a defective condition at the time that it was designed, manufactured, sold, and/or marketed by Defendants and at the time it left Defendants' possession. The Subject Saw was expected to and reached Plaintiff without any substantial change in its condition and the Subject Saw was in the possession of Defendants at the time the defect occurred.

20. The condition of the Subject Saw made it unreasonably dangerous for its intended use. Plaintiff was a user of the Subject Saw and was unaware of the defect and used the Subject Saw in a reasonable, foreseeable and intended manner. The injury suffered by Plaintiff was the exact type of substantial harm that can be caused by a defective table saw.

21. The Subject Saw failed to perform as safely as an ordinary consumer, such as Plaintiff, would expect when used in an intended or reasonably foreseeable manner. The benefits of the design of the Subject Saw do not outweigh the risk of danger inherent in such design. Moreover, Defendants could have provided a safer, alternative design to the Subject Saw. Such a safer, alternative design existed at the time the Subject Saw was manufactured, and it would not have substantially impaired the Subject Saw's utility. Such a safer, alternative design was economically and technologically feasible at the time the product left the control of Defendants by the application of existing or reasonably

achievable scientific knowledge. The Subject Saw's defective design was a proximate cause of Plaintiff's injuries and damages.

22. The defective condition of the Subject Saw was a legal and proximate cause of Plaintiff's injury and of his resulting physical pain, mental anguish, physical disfigurement, physical impairment, medical care and treatment, lost wages and loss of his ability to engage in usual and normal activities.

23. For these reasons, Defendants are strictly liable under Maryland product liability law without regard to proof of negligence or gross negligence.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that the Court enter judgment against Defendants for the damages set forth herein as well as pre-judgment and post-judgment interest and costs of suit and that the Court grant Plaintiff such other and further relief to which he may be justly entitled.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION -- NEGLIGENCE

24. Plaintiff re-alleges the consistent allegations in Paragraphs 1 through 23 and incorporates them herein by reference.

25. Defendants had a duty to exercise reasonable care, and to comply with the then existing standards of care, in the design, manufacture, marketing, testing, approval, application for approval, inspection, sale and distribution of the Subject Saw into the stream of commerce.

26. Defendants failed to exercise ordinary care, and deviated from then existing standards of care, in the design, manufacture, marketing, testing, inspection, sale and/or distribution of the Subject Saw into interstate commerce and thus Defendants were negligent in all of these areas. As a result of the negligence of Defendants, the Subject Saw was unreasonably dangerous for its ordinary and foreseeable use at the time it left the possession of Defendant.

27. Defendants' negligence was a proximate cause of Plaintiff's injury. Had the Defendant not been negligent, the Plaintiff would not have been injured.

28. As a proximate cause of the Defendant's negligence, the Plaintiff suffered physical pain, mental anguish, physical disfigurement, physical impairment, medical care and treatment, lost wages and loss of his ability to engage in usual and normal activities.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that the Court enter judgment against Defendants for the damages set forth herein as well as post-judgment interest and costs of suit and that the Court grant Plaintiff such other and further relief to which he may be justly entitled.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION -- BREACH OF IMPLIED WARRANTY OF FITNESS

29. Plaintiff re-alleges the consistent allegations in Paragraphs 1 through 28 and incorporates them herein by reference.

30. Defendants had reason to know that the particular purpose for which the Subject Saw was to be used. Defendants had reason to know that the buyer or supplier was relying on the skill and judgment of Defendants to select or furnish suitable products. The product supplied by Defendants was unfit for the particular purpose for which it was purchased. This lack of fitness for the product's purpose was a legal cause and proximate cause of Plaintiff's injury and of his resulting physical pain, mental anguish, physical disfigurement, physical impairment, medical care and treatment, lost wages and loss of his ability to engage in usual and normal activities. Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for breach of the implied warranty of fitness.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that the Court enter judgment against Defendants for the damages set forth herein as well as pre-judgment and post-judgment interest and costs of suit and that the Court grant Plaintiff such other and further relief to which he may be justly entitled.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff requests a jury trial on all triable issues raised herein.

Dated: November 6, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Robert K. Jenner

Robert K. Jenner, Esquire (Bar No. 04165)

Lindsey M. Craig, Esquire (Bar No. 29522)

Adam P. Janet, Esquire (Bar No. 11222)

JANET, JENNER & SUGGS, LLC

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Baltimore, Maryland 21208

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LCraig@MyAdvocates.com

AJanet@MyAdvocates.com

Pro Hac Vice admission to be sought for:

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John K. Chapman, Esquire

HEYGOOD, ORR & PEARSON

2331 West Northwest Highway, 2nd Floor

Dallas, TX 75220

Telephone: (214) 237-9001

Facsimile: (214) 237-9002

eric@hop-law.com

jchapman@hop-law.com

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

DEFENDANTS

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff, 2 U.S. Government Defendant, 3 Federal Question, 4 Diversity

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- Citizen of This State, Citizen of Another State, Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country, PTF DEF, Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State, Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State, Foreign Nation

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

Table with 5 columns: CONTRACT, REAL PROPERTY, TORTS, CIVIL RIGHTS, PRISONER PETITIONS, FORFEITURE/PENALTY, LABOR, IMMIGRATION, BANKRUPTCY, SOCIAL SECURITY, FEDERAL TAX SUITS, OTHER STATUTES. Contains various legal categories and checkboxes.

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 Original Proceeding, 2 Removed from State Court, 3 Remanded from Appellate Court, 4 Reinstated or Reopened, 5 Transferred from Another District, 6 Multidistrict Litigation

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):
Brief description of cause:

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. DEMAND \$ Exceeds \$ CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions): JUDGE DOCKET NUMBER

DATE SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT # AMOUNT APPLYING IFP JUDGE MAG. JUDGE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence.** For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys.** Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.
 United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.
 United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.
 Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.
 Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.**)
- III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties.** This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit.** Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerk(s) in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.
- V. Origin.** Place an "X" in one of the six boxes.
 Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.
 Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.
 Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.
 Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.
 Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.
 Multidistrict Litigation. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.
- VI. Cause of Action.** Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity.** Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service
- VII. Requested in Complaint.** Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.
 Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction.
 Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases.** This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.
- Date and Attorney Signature.** Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

_____ District of _____

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_____)	
Plaintiff(s))	
v.)	Civil Action No.
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_____)	
Defendant(s))	

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)*

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. _____

PROOF OF SERVICE

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))

This summons for *(name of individual and title, if any)* _____
was received by me on *(date)* _____ .

I personally served the summons on the individual at *(place)* _____
_____ on *(date)* _____ ; or

I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with *(name)* _____
_____, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,
on *(date)* _____ , and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

I served the summons on *(name of individual)* _____ , who is
designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* _____
_____ on *(date)* _____ ; or

I returned the summons unexecuted because _____ ; or

Other *(specify)*: _____ .

My fees are \$ _____ for travel and \$ _____ for services, for a total of \$ _____ .

I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.

Date: _____

Server's signature

Printed name and title

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

_____ District of _____

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Plaintiff(s)
v.

Civil Action No. _____

Defendant(s)

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)*

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

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If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. _____

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_____, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,
on *(date)* _____ , and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

I served the summons on *(name of individual)* _____ , who is
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Server's signature

Printed name and title

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

_____ District of _____

Plaintiff(s)

v.

Defendant(s)

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Civil Action No.

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)*

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. _____

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on *(date)* _____ , and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

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Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

_____ District of _____

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)	
<i>Plaintiff(s)</i>)	
v.)	Civil Action No.
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)	
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_____)	
<i>Defendant(s)</i>)	

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)*

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

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If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

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designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* _____
_____ on *(date)* _____ ; or

I returned the summons unexecuted because _____ ; or

Other *(specify)*: _____ .

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Server's signature

Printed name and title

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

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for the

_____ District of _____

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_____)	
<i>Plaintiff(s)</i>)	
v.)	Civil Action No.
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)	
_____)	
<i>Defendant(s)</i>)	

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If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. _____

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Server's signature

Printed name and title

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc: