

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING A CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT

Attached is a complaint form for filing an action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Observe the following instructions for completing the complaint:

**1. Caption:** It is very important, if possible, that you state the first and last name of each defendant and badge number, if appropriate. You are required to furnish the correct name and address of each person so that service of process upon each defendant can be made.

**2. Contents:** The form should be fully completed. It can be typewritten or handwritten. It must be legible. If you need more space to answer a question, attach a separate sheet of 8 ½ by 11 paper to your complaint. You are required to state facts, such as the date and location of the events. You need not make legal arguments or cite to cases. The complaint must have an original (not photocopied) signature by each plaintiff. The complaint need not be notarized.

**3. Copies:** You must send the Court the original complaint and two exact copies (a complete set of three). You should keep another copy for your records. Copies can be xeroxed, handwritten or typewritten, but all copies must be identical to the original.

**4. Fee:** The filing fee is **\$405**, payable to the Clerk of the Court, USDC, EDNY by certified check, bank check, personal check, money order or cash (if paying in person). If the filing fee is paid, the U.S. Marshal will not be directed to serve the defendants and plaintiff will be responsible for service of process on defendants. Service of the summons and complaint can be made by anyone over the age of 18 who is not a party to the action.

**5. Not Legal Advice.** No form provides legal advice. No form substitutes for having or consulting a lawyer. If you are not a lawyer and are suing or have been sued, it is best to have or consult a lawyer if possible. **No Guarantee.** Following a form does not guarantee that any pleading is legally or factually correct or sufficient.

**6. Variations Possible.** A form may call for more or less information than a particular court requires. The fact that a form asks for certain information does not mean that every court or-a-partieular-eourt-requires it. And if the form does not ask for certain information, a particular court might still require it. Consult the rules and caselaw that goven in the court where you are filing the pleading.

**7. Privacy Requirements.** Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2 addresses the privacy and security concerns over public access to electronic court files. Under this rule, papers filed with the court should not contain anyone's full social-security number or full birth date; the name of a person known to be a minor; or a complete financial-account number. A filing may include only the last four digits of a social-security number and taxpayer identification number; the year of someone's birth; a minor's initials; and the last four digits of a financial-account number.

When you have completed the forms, mail the original and 2 copies to the:

United States District Court  
Eastern District of New York  
225 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Attention: Pro Se Office

or

United States District Court  
Eastern District of New York  
100 Federal Plaza, Central Islip, NY 11722  
Attention: Pro Se Office

Keep this page and a copy of the complaint for your records. You may call 718-613-2665 in Brooklyn or 631-712-6060 in Central Islip if you have questions on how to file your complaint.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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*(Write the full name of each plaintiff who is filing this complaint. If the names of all the plaintiffs cannot fit in the space above, please write "see attached" in the space and attach an additional page with the full list of names.)*

**-against-**

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*(Write the full name of each defendant who is being sued. If the names of all the defendants cannot fit in the space above, please write "see attached" in the space and attach an additional page with the full list of names. Do not include addresses here.)*

**Complaint for Violation of Civil Rights**

(Non-Prisoner Complaint)

Case No. \_\_\_\_\_  
*(to be filled in by the Clerk's Office)*

Jury Trial:     Yes     No  
*(check one)*

**NOTICE**

Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 5.2 addresses the privacy and security concerns resulting from public access to electronic court files. Under this rule, papers filed with the court should *not* contain: an individual's full social security number or full birth date; the full name of a person known to be a minor; or a complete financial account number. A filing may include *only*: the last four digits of a social security number; the year of an individual's birth; a minor's initials; and the last four digits of a financial account number.

Plaintiff need not send exhibits, affidavits, grievance or witness statements, or any other materials to the Clerk's Office with this complaint.

In order for your complaint to be filed, it must be accompanied by the filing fee or an application to proceed *in forma pauperis*.

**I. The Parties to This Complaint**

**A. The Plaintiff(s)**

Provide the information below for each plaintiff named in the complaint. Attach additional pages if needed.

Name	_____
Street Address	_____
City and County	_____
State and Zip Code	_____
Telephone Number	_____
E-mail Address	_____

**B. The Defendant(s)**

Provide the information below for each defendant named in the complaint, whether the defendant is an individual, a government agency, an organization, or a corporation. For an individual defendant, include the person’s job or title (if known) and check whether you are bringing this complaint against them in their individual capacity or official capacity, or both. Attach additional pages if needed.

Defendant No. 1

Name	_____
Job or Title (if known)	_____
Street Address	_____
City and County	_____
State and Zip Code	_____
Telephone Number	_____
E-mail Address (if known)	_____

Defendant No. 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Job or Title \_\_\_\_\_  
(if known)  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City and County \_\_\_\_\_  
State and Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(if known)

Defendant No. 3

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Job or Title \_\_\_\_\_  
(if known)  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City and County \_\_\_\_\_  
State and Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(if known)

Defendant No. 4

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Job or Title \_\_\_\_\_  
(if known)  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City and County \_\_\_\_\_  
State and Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(if known)

**II. Basis for Jurisdiction**

Under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, you may sue state or local officials for the “deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution and [federal laws].” Under *Bivens v. Six Unknown Named Agents of Federal Bureau of Narcotics*, 403 U.S. 388 (1971), you may sue federal officials for the violation of certain constitutional rights.

A. Are you bringing suit against (*check all that apply*):

- State or local officials (a § 1983 claim)
- Federal officials (a *Bivens* claim)

B. Section 1983 allows claims alleging the “deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution and [federal laws].” 42 U.S.C. § 1983. If you are suing under section 1983, what federal constitutional or statutory right(s) do you claim is/are being violated by state or local officials?

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C. Plaintiffs suing under *Bivens* may only recover for the violation of certain constitutional rights. If you are suing under *Bivens*, what constitutional right(s) do you claim is/are being violated by federal officials?

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D. Section 1983 allows defendants to be found liable only when they have acted “under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, of any State or Territory or the District of Columbia.” 42 U.S.C. § 1983. If you are suing under section 1983, explain how each defendant acted under color of state or local law. If you are suing under *Bivens*, explain how each defendant acted under color of federal law. Attach additional pages if needed.

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**IV. Injuries**

If you sustained injuries related to the events alleged above, describe your injuries and state what medical treatment, if any, you required and did or did not receive.

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**V. Relief**

State briefly what you want the court to do for you. Make no legal arguments. Do not cite any cases or statutes. If requesting money damages, include the amounts of any actual damages and/or punitive damages claimed for the acts alleged. Explain the basis for these claims.

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**VI. Certification and Closing**

Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11, by signing below, I certify to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief that this complaint: (1) is not being presented for an improper purpose, such as to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of litigation; (2) is supported by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument for extending, modifying, or reversing existing law; (3) the factual contentions have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, will likely have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery; and (4) the complaint otherwise complies with the requirements of Rule 11.

**A. For Parties Without an Attorney**

I agree to provide the Clerk's Office with any changes to my address where case-related papers may be served. I understand that my failure to keep a current address on file with the Clerk's Office may result in the dismissal of my case.

Date of signing: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

Signature of Plaintiff \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Plaintiff \_\_\_\_\_