

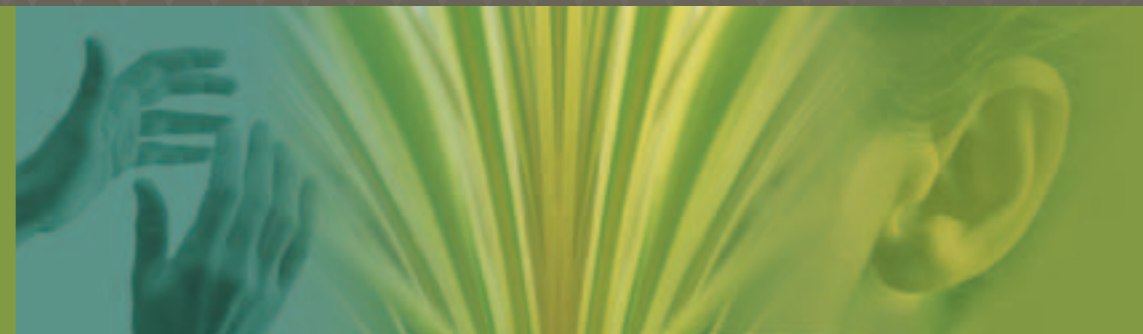
# What is civil justice?

Civil justice relates to disputes between individuals or organisations. Generally, civil cases are not about breaking a criminal law. For example, disputes over business contracts or debts, or disputes between neighbours.

*This publication provides you with information about how to make a civil claim in the District Court.*



SEE [www.justice.govt.nz/civil](http://www.justice.govt.nz/civil) FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MAKING A CIVIL CLAIM.



## *How to make a civil claim in the District Court*



[newzealand.govt.nz](http://newzealand.govt.nz)

COURTS/200



# If you have a dispute

IF YOU HAVE A CIVIL DISPUTE WITH SOMEONE, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO RESOLVE IT WITHOUT GOING TO COURT. MANY CIVIL CASES ARE SETTLED WITHOUT A COURT HEARING BECAUSE ALL PARTIES AGREE ON A SOLUTION.

## Which court?

If your claim is for less than \$200,000, then you can go to the District Court. If the claim is for less than \$15,000 (or less than \$20,000 if everyone agrees) and is disputed, then it may be able to be heard by the Disputes Tribunal. Complex claims, or those worth more than \$200,000, will be dealt with by the High Court. This publication deals with claims heard in the District Court.

## The claims process

A civil claim involves formal legal action against a person or an organisation.

You can make a claim if you have tried other methods to resolve a dispute but have not been successful, or if you want to recover money you believe is owed to you.

Once a claim is filed in the District Court, you will be known as the **plaintiff**. The person you have made the claim against is called the **defendant**. You are both called the **parties**.

## Filing forms

The claims process starts when you file your claim form at the District Court. This formalises the claim. It does not mean that you will need a court hearing. The claims process is designed to help both parties reach agreement so the dispute does not end up in court.

There are easy-to-use forms to help you with the claims process. These forms are available from the District Court or on our website – [www.justice.govt.nz/civil](http://www.justice.govt.nz/civil)

See the diagram for more information.

## Fees

There are fees for making claims in the District Court. Information about fees is available from our website – [www.justice.govt.nz/civil](http://www.justice.govt.nz/civil)

## Getting help

You can make a claim with the help of a lawyer or by yourself.

If you need help filling in the forms or want to know more about the claims process you can also talk to your local community law centre or a citizens advice bureau. You may also be eligible for legal aid.

## Helpful websites

Community Law Centres:  
[www.communitylaw.org.nz](http://www.communitylaw.org.nz)

Legal Aid: [www.justice.govt.nz](http://www.justice.govt.nz)

Citizens Advice Bureau: [www.cab.org.nz](http://www.cab.org.nz)

New Zealand Law Society:  
[www.lawsociety.org.nz](http://www.lawsociety.org.nz)

## Contact us

Contact us for more information about making a civil claim in the District Court:

Website: [www.justice.govt.nz/civil](http://www.justice.govt.nz/civil)

Email: [civil@justice.govt.nz](mailto:civil@justice.govt.nz)

Telephone: call your local court.

It is listed under *Justice, Ministry of* in the blue pages of your telephone book.

# How to make a civil claim

YOU WILL NEED TO REFER TO THE FORMS FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PROCESS.

**Plaintiff:** the person who makes the civil claim.

**Defendant:** the person who the claim is against.

**District Court:** the place where the claim is filed and where the case will be heard if it ends up in court.

💰 Shows at what stages you will need to pay a fee

