

**MAGISTRATES COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
CIVIL JURISDICTION
FACT SHEET 17**

SUMMONSING A WITNESS

This fact sheet explains how to summons a witness when you are appearing as a claimant or defendant in a civil proceeding.

What is a witness summons?

A witness summons is issued by the Court at the request of a party to a case that requires a person to attend the court to give oral evidence or to produce a record or thing.

Obtaining a witness summons.

An application for a witness summons (**Form 46**); witness summons forms to give oral evidence (**Form 47**) or witness summons to produce a record or things (**Form 48**) can be obtained at any magistrate's court registry or www.magistratescourt.wa.gov.au

Lodging the form

The completed application Form 46 and the relevant witness summons must be lodged at the registry where the trial of the case is to be conducted less than 14 days before the date of the trial.

Reasonable expenses

A party which issues a witness summons must ensure an amount of money that is likely to be sufficient to cover the reasonable expenses for the witness to attend is tendered to the witness at the time of service of the witness summons.

Serving the witness summons?

The witness summons must be served personally.

This can be done by the court who can arrange service of your witness summons by a bailiff. Bailiffs are officers of the Court who are located throughout the state. You must prepay the service fee.

Alternatively you can make arrangements to serve the witness summons yourself.

The witness summons must be served on the witness no less than 14 days before the hearing date.

Proof of service

If you have requested the Court to arrange for a bailiff to serve the witness summons, the bailiff will complete a *certificate of service* and sent it to you.

Witness fees and expenses

If you serve the witness summons yourself, you will need to complete the *Affidavit of Service*. This is proof that you have served the witness summons.

When a person who has obeyed the witness summons attends the hearing to give evidence, and has suffered a loss of earnings or incurred other expenses exceeding the amount of reasonable expenses tendered to them, the party who issued the summons must reimburse the witness in respect of their loss or expense.

If your case is not heard on the day it is listed, you will still have to reimburse your witness expenses.

The Court is not responsible to pay any witness expenses.

Expert witness

A person who has an expert knowledge about the subject they are giving evidence about (eg. a doctor or psychiatrist).

It is your responsibility to reach an agreement with these witnesses regarding their costs for coming to court.

What if a witness lives interstate or overseas?

It is your responsibility to arrange the service of the witness summons and pay their travel and accommodation expenses.

Order for costs

If you win your case, you can apply to the Court for an order for the payment of costs. These costs may include the costs of getting your witnesses to court.

This is a guide only. The content is subject to change. If you are unsure about any of the information in this fact sheet, contact your nearest registry or seek legal advice.