



Magistrates Court of Western Australia

Civil Jurisdiction

Fact Sheet 17 – Summoning 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 (evidentiary material)**.

Obtaining a witness summons

The following forms can be obtained from any Magistrates Court registry or our website:

www.magistratescourt.wa.gov.au.

- **Form 46 – Application for a Witness Summons**
- **Form 47 – Witness Summons to give Oral Evidence**
- **Form 48 – Witness Summons to Produce a Record or Thing**

Lodging the form

The completed **Form 46** must be lodged electronically using the Courts Electronic Case Management System (ECMS) [eCourts Portal](#).

These forms should be lodged allowing enough time for service to occur **not less than 14 days** before the date of the trial.

The Form 47 and/or Form 48 Witness Summons will be generated from the [eCourts Portal](#).

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 and/or produce evidentiary material. This 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 and are located throughout the State. **You must pre-pay the service fee.**

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

Proof of Service

The witness summons must be served on the witness **no less than 14 days** before the hearing date or an earlier date as directed by the court.

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 send it to you.

If you serve the witness summons yourself, you will need to complete a **Form 11 – Affidavit of Service**. This is proof that you have served the witness summons.

This form is available from the Magistrates Court website:

www.magistratescourt.wa.gov.au.

Witness fees and expenses

When a witness 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

This is a person who has expert knowledge about the subject they are giving evidence about (for example, 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.