

HOW TO WRITE INTERROGATORIES (QUESTIONS)

This template was prepared by the Justice & Diversity Center, a nonprofit organization, and is not an official court form. It can be used in civil lawsuits in the Northern District Court of California. This template provides guidance only. Using this template does not guarantee any result.

★ HOW TO GET LEGAL INFORMATION & ADVICE

This packet provides general guidance about asking written questions, called “Interrogatories,” to another party in the case. Before serving this document, make an appointment for free legal information and advice at one of the Legal Help Centers. If you need to submit Interrogatories in an Employment Discrimination case or if you need to Respond to Interrogatories from the other side, you can get additional templates from the Legal Help Centers.

APPOINTMENTS – Based on the courthouse where complaint was filed

- ✪ San Francisco, Oakland, or Eureka-McKinleyville
Federal Pro Bono Project | fedpro@sfbbar.org | (415) 782-8982
NOTE: Contact for scheduling only – no legal advice is given when scheduling.
- ✪ San Jose
Federal Pro Se Program | (408) 297-1480
Drop-in hours Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
280 South 1st Street, 2nd Floor, Room 2070, San Jose

★ UNDERSTANDING LAWS & RULES

The Legal Help Centers (see above) are the best resource for people without lawyers. There are other resources for understanding the laws and rules of the Court:

1. **Handbook for Pro Se Litigants** – The Handbook is a procedural guide for people who are representing themselves. It was prepared by the Court and is available at the Clerk’s Office or on the Court’s website at: <https://www.cand.uscourts.gov/pro-se-handbook/>.
2. **Legal Research Guide for Pro Se Litigants** – The Guide provides information for people who are representing themselves about how to do legal research, like finding statutes and decisions in other cases. It was prepared by the Justice & Diversity Center and is available at the Legal Help Centers and at: <https://www.cand.uscourts.gov/pro-se-litigants/legal-help-center-templates-packets/>.
3. **Federal Rules of Civil Procedure** – These Rules explain the procedures from filing through trial for all civil cases in the federal courts across the country, and are available at: <https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/rules-of-civil-procedure.pdf>.
4. **Civil Local Rules** – The Civil Local Rules follow the same numbering as the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, but generally provide more detail. They apply in this District only, and are available at: <https://www.cand.uscourts.gov/rules/civil-local-rules/>.

★ WHEN TO SEND INTERROGATORIES

1. **Figure out when you can first serve Interrogatories** – When the case was filed, the Clerk issued a document called an Initial Scheduling Order, which set the date of the Case Management Conference. Normally, you can serve discovery (such as these interrogatories or requests for documents) after this Conference, though the Court may set a different deadline at the Conference.
2. **Figure out the discovery deadline** – After the Conference, the Court will send out an updated Scheduling Order setting the “Discovery Cutoff.” You must send your final set of Interrogatories thirty-three (33) days before the Discovery Cutoff (or hand-serve 30 days before).

★ HOW TO COMPLETE THE INTERROGATORIES TEMPLATE

Unless specifically ordered by the Court, discovery requests and responses are only served on other parties in the case and are not filed with the Court.

1. **Read the Pro Se Handbook** – Chapter 16, “What is Discovery?” explains more fully the discovery process.
2. **Fill in the case information** – On the top of the first page, write your name, address, and check the box for the division to which the case has been assigned. Write in the plaintiff’s and defendant’s names in the middle of the page. Then, write in the case number, the name of the responding party, and the set number. If this is the first set of Interrogatories you have sent out, you will write “Set No. 1.” Keep in mind that you are limited to asking 25 Interrogatories to each party, in total, over all sets.
3. **Review the Definitions Section** – Review the standard definitions and add in any definitions specific to your case that will make it easier for the responding party to understand your interrogatories.
4. **Write your Interrogatories** – Write simple questions that may help you prove or defend your case. You may send up to 25 interrogatories to each party. You do not have to send them all at once. If you need help writing your Interrogatories, make an appointment at the Legal Help Center (see page 1). If this is not the first set of Interrogatories you are sending to this party, renumber the Interrogatories, starting with the number you left off on last time.
5. **Prepare the Certificate of Service** – A Certificate of Service is a document that confirms you served a certain document. To prepare the Certificate, follow the instructions on it. Interrogatories are served on the other parties in the case but are **not** filed with the Court. If there are multiple parties in the case, each party should receive a copy of the Interrogatories even if you are not directing the request to them.
6. **Mark your calendar** – The responding party has 30 days (33 days if you serve by mail) to send you a written response. If you need help with getting complete responses to your requests from the responding party, make an appointment at the Legal Help Center (see page 1).

★ SERVING YOUR INTERROGATORIES

1. **Copies** – Once the documents are complete, make one copy for each party in the case.
2. **Serve the Requests** – Be sure the Requests and Certificate are served on each party. Do **not** send a copy to the Court.

★ WHAT'S NEXT?

The timeline below lists what generally happens after Interrogatories are served. The Legal Help Centers (see page 1) can provide guidance about these steps and have many other templates for you to use.



★ STAY UP TO DATE

1. **Communications** – Check your mail and tell the Court if you move. You must file a notice with the Clerk right away if your mailing address, email, or phone number changes or you may miss important deadlines, causing you to lose your case.
2. **Tracking** – Keep track of your case. A list of the documents that have been filed, and (usually) the documents themselves can be viewed online. Review the Pro Se Handbook Chapter 7 and contact the Legal Help Center to learn to access documents.
3. **Guidance** – Visit the Legal Help Center for more information about what happens next.

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Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Pro Se

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

Division [check one]: San Francisco Oakland San Jose Eureka-McKinleyville

Plaintiff,
v.

Defendant.

Case No. _____

INTERROGATORIES TO

[name of responding party]

SET NO.: _____

Pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 26 and 33 and Local Rule 33,

[name of responding party] _____

shall respond to these interrogatories within thirty (30) days of service.

1 **I. DEFINITIONS**

2 1. The terms “YOU” or “YOUR” mean [name of the responding party]

3 _____,
4 including its present and former members, officers, agents, employees, and all other persons acting or
5 purporting to act on its behalf, including all present or former members, officers, agents, employees, and all
6 other persons exercising or purporting to exercise discretion, make policy, and/or make decisions.

7 2. The terms “DOCUMENT” and “DOCUMENTS” have the same meaning and are equal in scope to
8 the terms “documents” and “electronically store information” as stored in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure
9 34(a).

10 3. When used in connection with a person or entity, the term “IDENTIFY” means to state the full and
11 complete: (i) name; (ii) home address, telephone, and email address; (iii) employment address, telephone
12 number, and email address; and (iv) relationship, if any, to the plaintiff or defendant.

13 4. When used in connection with a document, as defined by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 34(a), the
14 term “IDENTIFY” means to state: (i) the type of document; (ii) the general subject matter of the document;
15 (iii) the date of the document; (iv) the author(s), according to the document; and (v) the person(s) to whom,
16 according to the document, the document (or a copy) was to have been sent; or, alternatively, to produce
17 the document.

18 **[You may also create your own definitions specific to this case.]**

19 5. _____

20 _____
21 _____
22 _____
23 6. _____
24 _____
25 _____
26 _____
27 _____
28 _____

1 **II. INTERROGATORIES**

2 Write out each question as simply as possible. It may be useful to include information such names or dates
3 to make your question clear. You can ask up to 25 interrogatories during the case. You do not have to ask
4 them at all once.

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10. _____

[You must sign and date]

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

1 **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

2 Unless all parties to the case, including you, are electronic filers, you must serve each document you file by sending or
3 delivering it to the opposing side. Complete this form and include it with the document that you file and serve.

4 1. **Case Name:** _____ v. _____

5 2. **Case Number:** _____

6 3. **What documents were served?** Write the full name or title of the document(s)

7 _____
8 _____

9 4. **How was the document served?** Check one:

- 10 Placed in U.S. Mail
11 Hand-delivered
12 Sent for delivery (e.g., FedEx, UPS)
13 Sent via email [if the other party has agreed to accept service by email]

14 5. **Who did you send the document to?**

15 Write the full name and contact information for each person you sent the document.

16 _____
17 _____
18 _____
19 _____

20 6. **When were the documents sent?** _____

21 7. **Who served the documents?** Whoever puts it into the mail, emails, delivers, or sends for delivery should sign,
22 and print their name and address. You can do this yourself.

23 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct.

24 Signature: _____

25 Name: _____

26 Address: _____

27 _____