

1 **Rule 83. Vexatious litigants.**

2 **(a) Definitions.**

3 (1) The court may find a person to be a "vexatious litigant" if the person, with or
4 without legal representation, including an attorney acting pro se, does any of the
5 following:

6 (A) In the immediately preceding seven years, the person has filed at least five
7 claims for relief, other than small claims actions, that have been finally determined
8 against the person, and the person does not have within that time at least two
9 claims, other than small claims actions, that have been finally determined in that
10 person's favor.

11 (B) After a claim for relief or an issue of fact or law in the claim has been finally
12 determined, the person two or more additional times re-litigates or attempts to re-
13 litigate the claim, the issue of fact or law, or the validity of the determination
14 against the same party in whose favor the claim or issue was determined.

15 (C) In any action, the person three or more times does any one or any combination
16 of the following:

17 (i) files unmeritorious pleadings or other papers,

18 (ii) files pleadings or other papers that contain redundant, immaterial,
19 impertinent or scandalous matter,

20 (iii) conducts unnecessary discovery or discovery that is not proportional to
21 what is at stake in the litigation, or

22 (iv) engages in tactics that are frivolous or solely for the purpose of harassment
23 or delay.

24 (D) The person purports to represent or to use the procedures of a court other than
25 a court of the United States, a court created by the Constitution of the United States
26 or by Congress under the authority of the Constitution of the United States, a tribal
27 court recognized by the United States, a court created by a state or territory of the
28 United States, or a court created by a foreign nation recognized by the United
29 States.

30 (2) "Claim" and "claim for relief" mean a petition, complaint, counterclaim, cross
31 claim or third-party complaint.

32 **(b) Vexatious litigant orders.** The court may, on its own motion or on the motion of any
33 party, enter an order requiring a vexatious litigant to:

- 34 (1) furnish security to assure payment of the moving party's reasonable expenses,
35 costs and, if authorized, attorney fees incurred in a pending action;
- 36 (2) obtain legal counsel before proceeding in a pending action;
- 37 (3) obtain legal counsel before filing any future claim for relief;
- 38 (4) abide by a prefiling order requiring the vexatious litigant to obtain the court's leave
39 permission of the court before filing any paper, pleading, or motion, in a pending
40 action, except that the court may not require a vexatious litigant to obtain the court's
41 permission before filing a notice of appeal;
- 42 (5) abide by a prefiling order requiring the vexatious litigant to obtain the court's leave
43 permission of the court before filing any future claim for relief in any court; or
- 44 (6) take any other action reasonably necessary to curb the vexatious litigant's abusive
45 conduct.

46 **(c) Necessary findings and security.**

- 47 (1) Before entering an order under subparagraph (b), the court must find by clear and
48 convincing evidence that:
- 49 (A) the party subject to the order is a vexatious litigant; and
- 50 (B) there is no reasonable probability that the vexatious litigant will prevail on the
51 claim.
- 52 (2) A preliminary finding that there is no reasonable probability that the vexatious
53 litigant will prevail is not a decision on the ultimate merits of the vexatious litigant's
54 claim.
- 55 (3) The court shall identify the amount of the security and the time within which it is
56 to be furnished. If the security is not furnished as ordered, the court shall dismiss the
57 vexatious litigant's claim with prejudice.

58 **(d) Prefiling orders in a pending action.**

- 59 (1) If a vexatious litigant is subject to a prefiling order in a pending action requiring
60 leave the court's permission of the court to file any paper, pleading, or motion, the
61 vexatious litigant shall submit any proposed paper, pleading, or motion, except for a
62 notice of appeal, to the judge assigned to the case and must:
- 63 (A) demonstrate that the paper, pleading, or motion is based on a good faith
64 dispute of the facts;

65 (B) demonstrate that the paper, pleading, or motion is warranted under existing
66 law or a good faith argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing
67 law;

68 (C) include an oath, affirmation or declaration under criminal penalty that the
69 proposed paper, pleading or motion is not filed for the purpose of harassment or
70 delay and contains no redundant, immaterial, impertinent or scandalous matter;

71 (2) A prefiling order in a pending action shall be effective until a final determination
72 of the action on appeal, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

73 (3) After a prefiling order has been effective in a pending action for one year, the
74 person subject to the prefiling order may move to have the order vacated. The motion
75 shall be decided by the judge to whom the pending action is assigned. In granting the
76 motion, the judge may impose any other vexatious litigant orders permitted in
77 paragraph (b).

78 (4) All papers, pleadings, and motions filed by a vexatious litigant subject to a
79 prefiling order under this paragraph (d) shall include a judicial order authorizing the
80 filing and any required security. If the order or security is not included, the clerk or
81 court shall reject the paper, pleading, or motion.

82 **(e) Prefiling orders as to future claims.**

83 (1) A vexatious litigant subject to a prefiling order restricting the filing of future claims
84 shall submit an application seeking an order before filing. The presiding judge of the
85 judicial district in which the claim is to be filed shall decide the application. The
86 presiding judge may consult with the judge who entered the vexatious litigant order
87 in deciding the application. In granting an application, the presiding judge may
88 impose in the pending action any of the vexatious litigant orders permitted under
89 paragraph (b).

90 (2) To obtain an order under paragraph (e)(1), the vexatious litigant's application
91 must:

92 (A) demonstrate that the claim is based on a good faith dispute of the facts;

93 (B) demonstrate that the claim is warranted under existing law or a good faith
94 argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law;

95 (C) include an oath, affirmation, or declaration under criminal penalty that the
96 proposed claim is not filed for the purpose of harassment or delay and contains no
97 redundant, immaterial, impertinent or scandalous matter;

98 (D) include a copy of the proposed petition, complaint, counterclaim, cross-claim,
99 or third party complaint; and

100 (E) include the court name and case number of all claims that the applicant has
101 filed against each party within the preceding seven years and the disposition of
102 each claim.

103 (3) A prefiling order limiting the filing of future claims is effective indefinitely unless
104 the court orders a shorter period.

105 (4) After five years a person subject to a pre-filing order limiting the filing of future
106 claims may file a motion to vacate the order. The motion shall be filed in the same
107 judicial district from which the order entered and be decided by the presiding judge
108 of that district.

109 (5) A claim filed by a vexatious litigant subject to a prefiling order under this
110 paragraph (e) shall include an order authorizing the filing and any required security.
111 If the order or security is not included, the clerk of court shall reject the filing.

112 **(f) Notice of vexatious litigant orders.**

113 (1) The clerks of court shall notify the Administrative Office of the Courts that a pre-
114 filing order has been entered or vacated.

115 (2) The Administrative Office of the Courts shall disseminate to the clerks of court a
116 list of vexatious litigants subject to a prefiling order.

117 **(g) Statute of limitations or time for filing tolled.** Any applicable statute of limitations
118 or time in which the person is required to take any action is tolled until 7 days after notice
119 of the decision on the motion or application for authorization to file.

120 **(h) Contempt sanctions.** Disobedience by a vexatious litigant of a pre-filing order may
121 be punished as contempt of court.

122 **(i) Other authority.** This rule does not affect the authority of the court under other
123 statutes and rules or the inherent authority of the court.

124 **(j) Applicability of vexatious litigant order to other courts.** After a court has issued a
125 vexatious litigant order, any other court may rely upon that court's findings and order its
126 own restrictions against the litigant as provided in paragraph (b).

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