

Rule 3.16 Formatting and Page Limitations for Filings by Unrepresented Parties or Prisoners

Absent leave of the court, all pleadings and documents filed by an unrepresented party or prisoner, including but not limited to (a) petitions for writs of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241 and 2254, (b) motions to vacate sentence pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 2255, (c) motions to correct or reduce sentence pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 35, (d) petitions, motions and civil rights complaints under the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, (e) general civil complaints and petitions, and (f) the initial responsive pleadings thereto, shall not exceed 30 pages, excluding attachments, and shall be typed or legibly printed. Each page must include a page number. Cover pages, tables of content and certificates of service are not counted against the applicable page limit.

As required under Fed. R. Civ. P. 8, a pleading must contain a short and plain statement of the claim showing the pleader is entitled to relief. Each allegation must be simple, concise, and direct. Additionally, Fed. R. Civ. P. 10 requires that a complaint's allegations must also be made in numbered paragraphs, each limited as far as practicable to a single set of circumstances.

Last revised 4/10/26. *See* Historical Notes for full revision history.

Committee Note

Failing to plead discrete claims in separate counts is a form of shotgun pleading. Shotgun pleadings inhibit serious judicial consideration of the claims and often delay the judicial process in contravention of Fed. R. Civ. P. 8 and 10. A pleading or motion should set out the facts that support each claim with a description of the “who, what, when, where and how” of the events at issue.