Sacramento County Public Law Library
& Civil Self Help Center
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Sacramento, CA 95814
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DISCOVERY

Responding to Interrogatories

Disclaimer: This guide is intended as general information only. Your case may have factors requiring different procedures or forms. The information and instructions are provided for use in the Sacramento County Superior Court. Please keep in mind that each court may have different requirements. If you need further assistance, consult a lawyer.

FORMS
There is no Judicial Council form for this procedure. Instead, the relevant document must be typed on 28-line pleading paper. A customizable template may be downloaded from this link:

- *Responses to Interrogatories*
  www.saclaw.org/uploads/files/Step-by-Step/Interrogatory_Responses.rtf

BACKGROUND
Interrogatories are written questions sent by one party to another, which the responding party must answer under penalty of perjury. Interrogatories allow the parties to ask who, what, when, where and why questions, making them a good method for obtaining new information.

There are two types of interrogatories: form interrogatories and special interrogatories. You may receive one or both types of interrogatories in your case.

Although these interrogatories look very different, the responses to both are similar. Your answers must be as complete and straightforward as possible (California Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) § 2030.220), and be accurate to the best of your knowledge. In addition, your responses must be "verified," meaning that you must sign under penalty of perjury that your responses are true and correct (CCP § 2030.250).

You have 30 days after the form or special interrogatories were served to you (35 days if served by mail from within California) to serve your responses to the interrogatories.

Sometimes, rather than answering the interrogatory, you may wish to object to the request on legal grounds. Common objections include:

- ***The request is impermissibly compound.*** The propounding party may ask you to answer only one question with each interrogatory. You may object to any request that asks you to answer two or more different questions in a single request. For example, “Please provide the names of all witnesses to the ACCIDENT, and where they were located at the time of the ACCIDENT,” is impermissibly compound. It is asking you to answer two separate questions: the names of witnesses, and the location of witnesses at the time of the accident.

- ***The request is vague, ambiguous or unintelligible***. Sometimes, it is impossible to determine what the propounding party is asking you. In these situations, you may object to the request on the grounds that it is vague, ambiguous or unintelligible. For example, in a case involving a bank account, the question “On what dates did you send statements?” could be considered vague and ambiguous, because it does not specify they type of statement, the account for which statements were sent, or the time period during which the statements were sent. An unintelligible interrogatory is one that makes no sense, often as a result of improper use of cut-and paste, or other difficulties in constructing a cohesive sentence.

- ***The request is not reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of relevant, admissible evidence.*** All interrogatories must be relevant to the issues in the case. If a request does not likely to lead to the discovery of relevant, admissible evidence, you may object. For example, in a car accident case, if the propounding party asks: “Please list the names and addresses of all of your employers over the past 10 years,” you may wish to object to the request. Unless you are seeking loss of income or future income where your past employment is relevant to determine likely employment in the future, or where you have worked in the past is somehow related to the accident, this request not likely lead to relevant evidence in the case.

There are many other objections that may be raised in your responses. See the resources listed at the end of this Guide for more information.

Step-by-Step Instructions

STEP 1: CAREFULLY REVIEW ALL THE REQUESTS
Review each request to ensure you fully understand the question, and can answer it completely. Be sure to review all the information, documents, and other evidence available to you before answering, to ensure that your responses are accurate and thorough. You may need to research the objections you wish to raise.

STEP 2: COMPLETE YOUR RESPONSES TO THE INTERROGATORIES
Immediately after the top caption, your response must include the name of the requesting party, the responding party, and the set number of the request. You must respond to each request individually. You do not need to repeat the text of the question, but your responses must be in the same order as the requests, and each response should be labeled with the same number or letter as the request.

A sample response is available at the end of this Guide. You may download a customizable template for your response from the link listed above.

STEP 3: MAKE COPIES
Make one photocopy of your response for yourself and one for each party in the case, other than the propounding party.

STEP 4: HAVE YOUR RESPONSES SERVED
The **original** of your response document must be served on the attorney for the propounding party or directly on the party if self-represented (*in pro per)*. Courtesy copies should be served on all other attorneys or self-represented parties in the case. Service may be completed by mail, by a person over the age of 18 who is not a party to the case. The person serving your responses must complete a proof of service form, typically a *Proof of Service by First Class Mail* (POS-030), available online at www.courts.ca.gov/documents/pos030.pdf. For more information, see the Step-by-Step guide on Proof of Service by Mail on our website at www.saclaw.org/pages/pos-mail.aspx.

STEP 5: RETAIN YOUR DOCUMENTS
A photocopy of your responses and the original signed Proof of Service should be retained for your records. If the other party claims you did not respond, you may use these documents to defend yourself against a Motion to Compel. For more information, see the Step-by-Step guide on Motions to Compel on our website at www.saclaw.org/pages/motion-to-compel.aspx

FOR HELP
The Sacramento County Public Law Library's Civil Self Help Center offers assistance with the discovery process:

Introduction to Written Discovery Class
1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., 1st & 3rd Thursdays.
Come to understand what discovery is, how to answer questions you received by mail, and how you can use discovery yourself. Bring a USB flash drive to download sample forms. The Law Library sells USB drives at the Circulation Desk. Arrive by 1:20 p.m.

Discovery Lab
1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., 2nd & 4th Thursdays.
Work on your discovery requests or responses in this drop-in computer lab. Bring your USB flash drive with your requests or responses. No entrance after 3:15 p.m. Lab closes promptly at 3:30 p.m. The Introduction to Written Discovery Class is a prerequisite for the Discovery Lab.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

On the Web:
Introduction to Discovery – Part 5: Responding to Form Interrogatories
www.saclaw.org/pages/selfhelp_video.aspx#discovery
Part 5 of this video series from the Sacramento County Public Law Library's Civil Self Help Center will help you understand how to respond to Form Interrogatories.
Introduction to Discovery – Part 7: Responding to Special Interrogatories
www.saclaw.org/pages/selfhelp_video.aspx#discovery
Part 7 of this video series from the Sacramento County Public Law Library's Civil Self Help Center will help you understand how to respond to Special Interrogatories.

At the Law Library:
California Civil Discovery KFC 1020 .H64 Chap. 5.

California Civil Discovery Practice KFC 1020 .C35 Chap. 7.
Electronic Access: On the Law Library's computers, using *OnLaw.*

California Civil Litigation and Discovery KFC 995 .G674 Chap. 12.

California Deposition and Discovery Practice KFC 1020 .D44 Chap. 60.

California Discovery Citations KFC 1020 .F56 Chap. 3.
Electronic Access: On the Law Library's computers, using *WestlawNext.*

California Forms of Pleading and Practice KFC 1010 .A65 C3 (Ready Reference) Chap. 194.
Electronic Access: On the Law Library's computers, using the *Matthew Bender CD*.

California Practice Guide: Civil Procedure Before Trial KFC 995 .W4 Chap. 8F.
Electronic Access: On the Law Library's computers, using *WestlawNext*.

Matthew Bender Practice Guide: California Civil Discovery KFC 1020 .M37 Chap. 9.
Electronic Access: On the Law Library's computers, using the *Matthew Bender CD*.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS GUIDE, OR IF YOU NEED HELP FINDING OR USING THE MATERIALS LISTED, DON'T HESITATE TO ASK A REFERENCE LIBRARIAN.

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created 11/13 mpj
reviewed 11/13 en
updated 10/14 mpj

PAUL SAMPLE
123 ANYSTREET
SACRAMENTO, CA, 95814
916-555-1234
Defendant, In Pro Per

Responding party's name, address and telephone number. "In Pro Per" means you are representing yourself.

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

Party names and designations.

PAUL SAMPLE, Plaintiff(s)	Case No.: 34-2008-00009999
vs.	DEFENDANT PAUL SAMPLE'S
ACME, INC. Defendant(s)	RESPONSES TO PLAINTIFF ACME, INC'S FORM INTERROGATORIES- GENERAL SET ONE

Indicate what you are responding to.

Set number. This number must match the number shown on the requests.

PROPOUNDING PARTY: ACME, INC.
RESPONDING PARTY: PAUL SAMPLE
SET NUMBER: ONE (1)

Names of the propounding (asking) and responding parties, and the set number. This number must match the number shown on the requests.

RESPONDING PARTY hereby answers PROPOUNDING PARTY's Form Interrogatories:

Respond to each request individually. You do not need to repeat the text of the request, but your responses must be in the same order as the requests, and each response should be labeled with the same number or letter as the request. The downloadable template provides spaces for three responses. Delete those you do not use, or add more if needed

RESPONSE TO FORM INTERROGATORY 2.3:

Yes, I had a driver's license at the time of the incident.

a) It was issued by California:
b) It's number is U0123456
c) It was last issued on November 12, 2007.
d) It is a class C license with no restrictions.

RESPONSE TO FORM INTERROGATORY 2.4:

I had no other permits at the time of the incident.

RESPONSE TO FORM INTERROGATORY 2.8:

I have never been convicted of a felony.

Your responses **must** include this verification language.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: _____

_____
Paul Sample, Defendant In Pro Per