

Abstract of Judgment: Putting a Lien on Real Estate after a Judgment

Preparing an [Abstract of Judgment, Civil and Small Claims](https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/ej001.pdf) (EJ-001) is the first step a judgment creditor must take in order to place a lien on a judgment debtor's real property or a judgment debtor's potential recovery in a pending lawsuit.

Templates and Forms

- [Abstract of Judgment, Civil and Small Claims \(EJ-001\)](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/ej001.pdf)

Once you have completed the *Abstract of Judgment, Civil and Small Claims* (EJ-001), you must file the form with the Superior Court that issued the judgment, so that the court clerk can certify the document. You will then need to take the certified abstract to the County Recorder's office to record the document. After recording, you have a judgment lien on any real estate held in the judgment debtor's name in that county.

For a complete list of our guides and videos on enforcement of judgments, visit our [Enforcing Judgments topic page](https://saclaw.org/legal_topic/enforcing-a-courts-judgment/).

Note: This guide is written for Sacramento. Most information should apply throughout California, but if your case is in another county, check with your court for details. [Find Your Court](https://www.courts.ca.gov/find-my-court.htm) If your case is in another state, do not use this guide.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Complete the Abstract of Judgment Form

To put a judgment lien against real property, you must complete:

[Abstract of Judgment, Civil and Small Claims \(EJ-001\)](https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/ej001.pdf)

Instructions are included at the end of this Guide.

2. Copying and Assembling

Make three copies of your completed *Abstract of Judgment, Civil and Small Claims* (EJ-001). Staple each of the photocopies, but leave the original unstapled. The originals will be scanned into the court's filing system, and the staple will damage the scanner.

You will also need to obtain a filed/endorsed (court-stamped) copy of your judgment and memorandum of costs, if you've filed one. If you do not have copies of these documents, get a copy from the court that issued it.

[Sacramento Court's Public Portal](https://prod-portal-sacramento-ca.journaltech.com/public-portal/) (<https://prod-portal-sacramento-ca.journaltech.com/public-portal/>) | [Find Your Court](https://www.courts.ca.gov/find-my-court.htm) (<https://www.courts.ca.gov/find-my-court.htm>)

3. File Your Abstract of Judgment and Related Documents in Court

File the following items with the court:

- *Abstract of Judgment, Civil and Small Claims* (EJ-001) (original + 2 copies)
- File-endorsed (stamped) copy of the judgment (2 copies)
- File-endorsed (stamped) copy of any previously-filed *Memorandum of Costs after Judgment* (MC-012) (2 copies)
- Check or credit card authorization for filing fee ([currently \\$40](https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/fees/docs/fee-schedule.pdf) (<https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/fees/docs/fee-schedule.pdf>))
- Self-addressed stamped envelope with sufficient postage to return the documents to you.

In Sacramento, file your documents in the dropbox at the Gordon D. Schaber Sacramento County Courthouse, located at 720 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, Room 102. The clerk will return the original abstract of judgment to you with the court's seal on it. This may take several weeks.

4. Record the Abstract of Judgment

You will need to record your abstract of judgment in each county where the judgment debtor owns property. You need only record one abstract of judgment per county, even if the debtor owns multiple properties. You may record an abstract of judgment even if the judgment debtor does not currently own property; this will allow a lien to be placed against any property the debtor may acquire in the future.

For property located in Sacramento County, take the original certified *Abstract of Judgment, Civil and Small Claims* to the Sacramento County Recorder's Office, located at 3636 American River Drive, Ste. 110, Sacramento, CA 95864, along with the [recording and lien notification fees](http://www.ccr.saccounty.net/Pages/Fees.aspx) (<http://www.ccr.saccounty.net/Pages/Fees.aspx>) (currently \$23 for recording the two-page abstract of judgment, and \$13 per debtor for involuntary lien notification).

Check with your county's recorder for location and price. [Sacramento Clerk/Recorder](http://www.ccr.saccounty.net/) | [Find Your Recorder](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHSI/Pages/County-Registrars-and-Recorders.aspx)

5. What Happens Next?

The county recorder will provide notice to the debtor that you have recorded the abstract of judgment. You will not be paid automatically, but by putting a judgment lien on real estate, if the debtor refinances or sells the property, you may get paid your money with interest.

For help

[SH@LL \(Self-Help at the Law Library\)](https://saclaw.org/services/civil-self-help/)

609 9th Street, Sacramento CA 95814

(916) 476-2731 (Appointment Request Line)

Services Provided: SH@LL provides general information and basic assistance to self-represented litigants on a variety of legal issues. All assistance is provided by telephone. Visit [“What we can help with](https://saclaw.org/services/civil-self-help/#canhelp) [”](https://saclaw.org/services/civil-self-help/#canhelp) for a list of qualifying cases.

Eligibility: Must be a Sacramento County resident or have a [qualifying case](https://saclaw.org/services/civil-self-help/#who) in the Sacramento County Superior Court.

Samples

EJ-001

ATTORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY (Name, address, and State Bar number):
After recording, return to:
Calvin J. Creditor
2036 Donner Drive
Sacramento, CA 95826

TEL NO.: 916-123-4567 FAX NO. (optional):
E-MAIL ADDRESS (optional):
☐ ATTORNEY FOR ☒ JUDGMENT CREDITOR ☐ ASSIGNEE OF RECORD

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF Sacramento
STREET ADDRESS: 720 Ninth Street
MAILING ADDRESS: 720 Ninth Street
AND ZIP CODE: Sacramento, CA 95814
COURT NAME: Civil
PLAINTIFF: Calvin J. Creditor
DEFENDANT: Doug J. Debtor

Check "Judgment Creditor."

Your name, address, and phone number. Check the box next to "Judgment Creditor."

Court name, address, and branch.

Plaintiff's and Defendant's names as they appeared on the Complaint.

Case Number.

FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY
CASE NUMBER: 34-2009-00012345

FOR COURT USE ONLY

ABSTRACT OF JUDGMENT—CIVIL AND SMALL CLAIMS ☐ Amended

1. The ☒ judgment creditor ☐ assignee of judgment applies for an abstract of judgment and represents that:
a. Judgment debtor's Name and last known address:
Doug J. Debtor
11 Main St. #22
Sacramento, CA 95814
b. Driver's license no. (last 4 digits) and state: ☒ Unknown ☐ Unknown
c. Social security no. (last 4 digits): 2935
d. Summons or notice of entry of sister-state judgment was served on:
Doug J. Debtor, 11 Main St. #22, Sacramento, CA 95814
Print your name and address.

Insert name and last known address of the judgment debtor. If Social Security and/or Driver's License numbers are known, insert the last 4 digits. If not known, check "unknown."

Name and Address where Summons was served.

2. Information on additional judgment debtors is shown on page 2.
3. Judgment creditor (name and address):
Calvin J. Creditor
2036 Donner Drive
Sacramento, CA 95826
Date: 5/30/2011
Calvin J. Creditor
Insert your name and date.

4. Information on additional judgment creditors is shown on page 2.
5. Original abstract recorded in this county:
a. Date:
b. Instrument No.:
Signature.

6. Total amount of judgment as entered or last renewed: \$13572.91
7. All judgment creditors and debtors are listed on this abstract.
8. a. Judgment entered on (date): January 20, 2010
b. Renewal entered on (date):
9. ☒ This judgment is an installment judgment.
(SEAL)
Insert exact amount that is stated on your judgment and date judgment was entered.

The Court Clerk will insert the Court's Seal and insert the date the Abstract was certified.

10. ☐ An ☐ executed copy is endorsed on:
a. Amount: \$
b. In favor of (name and address):
Check the box that pertains to your case.

11. A stay of enforcement has:
a. ☒ not been ordered by the court.
b. ☐ been ordered by the court effective until (date):
12. a. ☒ I certify that this is a true and correct abstract of the judgment entered in this action.
b. ☐ A certified copy of the judgment is attached.
Clerk, by _____, Deputy

ABSTRACT OF JUDGMENT—CIVIL AND SMALL CLAIMS
Page 1 of 2
Code of Civil Procedure, §§ 498.480, 674, 700.19C

If you are not attaching a certified copy of your judgment check box 12(a). If you are, check box 12(b).

Abstract of Judgment, EJ-001 (page 1)

<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; margin-right: 20px;">Plaintiff's and Defendant's names as they appeared on the Complaint.</div> <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Case Number.</div>	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">PLAINTIFF: Calvin J. Creditor DEFENDANT: Doug J. Debtor</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">COURT CASE NO.: 34-2009-00012345</div>
<p>NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF ADDITIONAL JUDGMENT CREDITORS:</p> <p>13. Judgment creditor (name and address): 14. Judgment creditor (name and address):</p>	
<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">13-14: If there were any additional Judgment Creditors, insert their names and addresses here.</div>	
<p>15. <input type="checkbox"/> Continued on Attachment 15.</p>	
<p>INFORMATION ON ADDITIONAL JUDGMENT DEBTORS:</p>	
<p>16. Name and last known address</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> <p>Driver's license no. [last 4 digits] and state: <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> <p>Social security no. [last 4 digits]: <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> <p>Summons was personally served at or mailed to (address):</p>	<p>17. Name and last known address</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> <p>Driver's license no. [last 4 digits] and state: <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> <p>Social security no. [last 4 digits]: <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> <p>Summons was personally served at or mailed to (address):</p>
<p>18. Name and last known address</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> <p>Driver's license no. [last 4 digits] and state: <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> <p>Social security no. [last 4 digits]: <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> <p>Summons was personally served at or mailed to (address):</p>	<p>19. Name and last known address</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> <p>Driver's license no. [last 4 digits] and state: <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> <p>Social security no. [last 4 digits]: <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> <p>Summons was personally served at or mailed to (address):</p>
<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;">20. 16-19: If there were any additional Judgment Debtors, insert their names, addresses, the last four digits of their Driver's License and Social Security numbers, and address where the Summons were served in the space provided. If the Driver's License and/or Social Security numbers are not known, check "unknown."</div>	
<p><small>EJ-001 (Rev. July 1, 2014)</small> ABSTRACT OF JUDGMENT—CIVIL AND SMALL CLAIMS <small>Page 2 of 2</small></p>	

Abstract of Judgment, EJ-001 (page 2)