



March 18, 2020

**YOUR RIGHTS IN SMALL CLAIMS COURT DURING THE CORONAVIRUS
OUTBREAK**

Because of the coronavirus COVID-19, the Trial Court, which includes Small Claims Court, has made some new rules:

1. **POSTPONED COURT DATES**: All pending Small Claims cases are postponed until *no earlier than Monday, May 4, 2020*. That means if your Small Claims case is currently scheduled for any date before May 4, 202, you do NOT have to go to court. If a debt collector wants a telephone (rather than in-person) hearing before May 4, 2020, they must file a motion showing why they want an earlier date. You should receive notice of any new court date by mail. If you don't receive notice of a new date, you can look up your case file online at www.masscourts.org or call the Chelsea District Court clerk's office at (617) 660-9200 or the Boston Municipal Court-Roxbury's Clerk's office at (617) 427-7000.
2. **DO NOT SIGN AN AGREEMENT TO PAY WITHOUT LEGAL ADVICE**: The attorney for the company suing you might reach out to you urging you to sign an agreement to pay outside of court. *We strongly urge you to get advice before signing any agreement*, even one that does not require you to make payments now. You may have defenses in these cases and the company suing you cannot force you to make payments without a court order. Please do not sign an agreement without consulting an attorney. If you have questions about a pending Small Claims case, you may contact GBLS for intake/assistance at 617-603-1671.

For more information, the Standing Orders ordering postponement of the cases can be found here:
<https://www.mass.gov/guides/court-system-response-to-covid-19>