

Baldwin's Ohio Revised Code Annotated

Rules of Civil Procedure (Refs & Annos)

Title II. Commencement of Action and Venue; Service of Process; Service and Filing of Pleadings and Other Papers Subsequent to the Original Complaint; Time

Civ. R. Rule 3

Civ R 3 Commencement of action; venue

Currentness

<Staff Notes that are no longer valid have been removed.>

(A) Commencement. A civil action is commenced by filing a complaint with the court, if service is obtained within one year from such filing upon a named defendant, or upon an incorrectly named defendant whose name is later corrected pursuant to [Civ.R. 15\(C\)](#), or upon a defendant identified by a fictitious name whose name is later corrected pursuant to [Civ.R. 15\(D\)](#).

(B) Limited Appearance by Attorney. An attorney's role may be limited in scope, as authorized by Prof.Cond.R. 1.2(c), if that scope is specifically described in a "Notice of Limited Appearance" stating that the limited appearance has been authorized by the party for whom the appearance is made, and filed and served in accordance with [Civ.R. 5](#) prior to or at the time of any such appearance. The attorney's limited appearance terminates without the necessity of leave of court, upon the attorney filing a "Notice of Completion of Limited Appearance" filed and served upon all parties, including the party for whom the appearance was made, in accordance with [Civ.R. 5](#). If there is no objection within ten days of service of this notice, then no entry by the court is necessary for the termination of the limited appearance to take effect.

(C) Venue: Where Proper. Any action may be venued, commenced, and decided in any court in any county. When applied to county and municipal courts, "county," as used in this rule, shall be construed, where appropriate, as the territorial limits of those courts. Proper venue lies in any one or more of the following counties:

- (1) The county in which the defendant resides;
- (2) The county in which the defendant has his or her principal place of business;
- (3) A county in which the defendant conducted activity that gave rise to the claim for relief;
- (4) A county in which a public officer maintains his or her principal office if suit is brought against the officer in the officer's official capacity;
- (5) A county in which the property, or any part of the property, is situated if the subject of the action is real property or tangible personal property;

(6) The county in which all or part of the claim for relief arose; or, if the claim for relief arose upon a river, other watercourse, or a road, that is the boundary of the state, or of two or more counties, in any county bordering on the river, watercourse, or road, and opposite to the place where the claim for relief arose;

(7) In actions described in [Civ.R. 4.3](#), in the county where plaintiff resides;

(8) In an action against an executor, administrator, guardian, or trustee, in the county in which the executor, administrator, guardian, or trustee was appointed;

(9) In actions for divorce, annulment, or legal separation, in the county in which the plaintiff is and has been a resident for at least ninety days immediately preceding the filing of the complaint;

(10) In actions for a civil protection order, in the county in which the petitioner currently or temporarily resides;

(11) In tort actions involving asbestos claims, silicosis claims, or mixed dust disease claims, only in the county in which all of the exposed plaintiffs reside, a county where all of the exposed plaintiffs were exposed to asbestos, silica, or mixed dust, or the county in which the defendant has his or her principal place of business;

(12) If there is no available forum in divisions (C)(1) to (C)(10) of this rule, in the county in which plaintiff resides, has his or her principal place of business, or regularly and systematically conducts business activity;

(13) If there is no available forum in divisions (C)(1) to (C)(11) of this rule:

(a) In a county in which defendant has property or debts owing to the defendant subject to attachment or garnishment;

(b) In a county in which defendant has appointed an agent to receive service of process or in which an agent has been appointed by operation of law.

(D) Change of Venue.

(1) When an action has been commenced in a county other than stated to be proper in division (C) of this rule, upon timely assertion of the defense of improper venue as provided in [Civ.R. 12](#), the court shall transfer the action to a county stated to be proper in division (C) of this rule.

(2) When an action is transferred to a county which is proper, the court may assess costs, including reasonable attorney fees, to the time of transfer against the party who commenced the action in a county other than stated to be proper in division (C) of this rule.

(3) Before entering a default judgment in an action in which the defendant has not appeared, the court, if it finds that the action has been commenced in a county other than stated to be proper in division (C) of this rule, may transfer the action to a county that is proper. The clerk of the court to which the action is transferred shall notify the defendant of the transfer, stating in the notice that the defendant shall have twenty-eight days from the receipt of the notice to answer in the transferred action.

(4) Upon motion of any party or upon its own motion the court may transfer any action to an adjoining county within this state when it appears that a fair and impartial trial cannot be had in the county in which the suit is pending.

(E) Venue: No Proper Forum in Ohio. When a court, upon motion of any party or upon its own motion, determines: (1) that the county in which the action is brought is not a proper forum; (2) that there is no other proper forum for trial within this state; and (3) that there exists a proper forum for trial in another jurisdiction outside this state, the court shall stay the action upon condition that all defendants consent to the jurisdiction, waive venue, and agree that the date of commencement of the action in Ohio shall be the date of commencement for the application of the statute of limitations to the action in that forum in another jurisdiction which the court deems to be the proper forum. If all defendants agree to the conditions, the court shall not dismiss the action, but the action shall be stayed until the court receives notice by affidavit that plaintiff has recommenced the action in the out-of-state forum within sixty days after the effective date of the order staying the original action. If the plaintiff fails to recommence the action in the out-of-state forum within the sixty day period, the court shall dismiss the action without prejudice. If all defendants do not agree to or comply with the conditions, the court shall hear the action.

If the court determines that a proper forum does not exist in another jurisdiction, it shall hear the action.

(F) Venue: Multiple Defendants and Multiple Claims for Relief. In any action, brought by one or more plaintiffs against one or more defendants involving one or more claims for relief, the forum shall be deemed a proper forum, and venue in the forum shall be proper, if the venue is proper as to any one party other than a nominal party, or as to any one claim for relief.

Neither the dismissal of any claim nor of any party except an indispensable party shall affect the jurisdiction of the court over the remaining parties.

(G) Venue: Notice of Pending Litigation; Transfer of Judgments.

(1) When an action affecting the title to or possession of real property or tangible personal property is commenced in a county other than the county in which all of the real property or tangible personal property is situated, the plaintiff shall cause a certified copy of the complaint to be filed with the clerk of the court of common pleas in each county or additional county in which the real property or tangible personal property affected by the action is situated. If the plaintiff fails to file a certified copy of the complaint, third persons will not be charged with notice of the pendency of the action.

To the extent authorized by the laws of the United States, division (G)(1) of this rule also applies to actions, other than proceedings in bankruptcy, affecting title to or possession of real property in this state commenced in a United States District Court whenever the real property is situated wholly or partly in a county other than the county in which the permanent records of the court are kept.

(2) After final judgment, or upon dismissal of the action, the clerk of the court that issued the judgment shall transmit a certified copy of the judgment or dismissal to the clerk of the court of common pleas in each county or additional county in which real or tangible personal property affected by the action is situated.

(3) When the clerk has transmitted a certified copy of the judgment to another county in accordance with division (G)(2) of this rule, and the judgment is later appealed, vacated, or modified, the appellant or the party at whose instance the judgment was vacated or modified must cause a certified copy of the notice of appeal or order of vacation or modification to be filed with the clerk of the court of common pleas of each county or additional county in which the real property or tangible personal property is situated. Unless a certified copy of the notice of appeal or order of vacation or modification is so filed, third persons will not be charged with notice of the appeal, vacation, or modification.

(4) The clerk of the court receiving a certified copy filed or transmitted in accordance with the provisions of division (G) of this rule shall number, index, docket, and file it in the records of the receiving court. The clerk shall index the first certified copy received in connection with a particular action in the indices to the records of actions commenced in the clerk's own court, but may number, docket, and file it in either the regular records of the court or in a separate set of records. When the clerk subsequently receives a certified copy in connection with that same action, the clerk need not index it, but shall docket and file it in the same set of records under the same case number previously assigned to the action.

(5) When an action affecting title to registered land is commenced in a county other than the county in which all of such land is situated, any certified copy required or permitted by this division (G) of this rule shall be filed with or transmitted to the county recorder, rather than the clerk of the court of common pleas, of each county or additional county in which the land is situated.

(H) Venue: Collateral Attack; Appeal. The provisions of this rule relate to venue and are not jurisdictional. No order, judgment, or decree shall be void or subject to collateral attack solely on the ground that there was improper venue; however, nothing here shall affect the right to appeal an error of court concerning venue.

(I) Definitions. As used in division (C)(11) of this rule:

(1) “Asbestos claim” has the same meaning as in [section 2307.91 of the Revised Code](#);

(2) “Silicosis claim” and “mixed dust disease claim” have the same meaning as in [section 2307.84 of the Revised Code](#);

(3) In reference to an asbestos claim, “tort action” has the same meaning as in [section 2307.91 of the Revised Code](#);

(4) In reference to a silicosis claim or a mixed dust disease claim, “tort action” has the same meaning as in [section 2307.84 of the Revised Code](#).

CREDIT(S)

(Adopted eff. 7-1-70; amended eff. 7-1-71, 7-1-86, 7-1-91, 7-1-98, 7-1-05, 7-1-18)

STAFF NOTES

1998:

Rule 3(A) Commencement

The style used for rule references was changed. There was no substantive amendment to this division.

Rule 3(B) Venue: where proper

The 1998 amendment added a new division (10), and renumbered existing divisions (10) and (11) to (11) and (12), respectively. New division (10) clarifies the appropriate venue for an action seeking the entry of a civil protection order in domestic or family violence cases. The Supreme Court's Domestic Violence Task Force recommended this change in order to clarify Ohio law on this matter. Report of the Supreme Court of Ohio Domestic Violence Task Force: Increasing Safety for Victims, Increasing Accountability of Offenders 16 (October 18, 1996). The amendment uses criteria similar to other venue provisions. For example, the concept of residence is used in other divisions of Civ. R. 3(B), and the concept of a current or temporary residence is similar to the reference to plaintiff's residence in Civ. R. 3(B)(11) (renumbered from Civ. R. 3(B)(10)). See, e.g., *State ex rel. Saunders v. Court of Common Pleas of Allen Cty.* (1987), 34 Ohio St. 3d 15, 17, 516 N.E. 2d 232 (“the term, ‘resides,’ as used in [prior] Civ. R. 3(B)(10) ought to be ‘liberally construed and not confused with [the] requirements for domicile.’ ” (quoting McCormac, Ohio Civil Rules Practice)). The respondent remains free to challenge venue under Civ. R. 3(D).

Nonsubstantive grammatical revisions were also made to this division.

Rule 3(C) Change of venue

The style used for rule references was changed. There was no substantive amendment to this division.

Rule 3(F) Venue: notice of pending litigation; transfer of judgments

The style used for rule references was changed and the division was made gender-neutral. There was no substantive amendment to this division.

2005:

Civ. R. 3 is amended in response to requests from the General Assembly contained in Section 3 of Am. Sub. H.B. 342 of the 125th General Assembly, effective September 1, 2004, and Section 4 of Am. Sub. H.B. 292 of the 125th General Assembly, effective September 2, 2004. These acts contain provisions governing tort claims that allege exposure and injury by persons exposed to asbestos, silica, or mixed dust. Each act includes a request that the Supreme Court amend the Rules of Civil Procedure “to specify procedures for venue and consolidation” of asbestosis, silicosis, and mixed dust disease claims.

Rule 3(B) Venue: where proper

Civ. R. 3(B) is amended to include an exclusive venue provision that applies to the filing of actions involving asbestos, silicosis, or mixed dust disease claims. Division (B)(11) states that a civil action alleging one or more of these claims may be filed only in either the county in which all exposed plaintiffs reside, a county where all exposed plaintiffs were exposed to asbestos, silica, or mixed dust occurred, or the county in which the defendant has his or her principal place of business.

Existing divisions (B)(11) and (12) have been renumbered to reflect the addition of new division (B)(11).

Rule 3(H) Definitions

Division (H) is added to reference the statutory definitions of “asbestos claim,” “silicosis claim,” “mixed dust disease claim,” and “tort action” for purposes of Civ. R. 3(B)(11).

2018:

New Division (B): Limited Appearance by Attorney.

This and other July 1, 2018 amendments to the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure encourage attorneys to assist pro se parties on a limited basis without undertaking the full representation of the client on all issues related to the legal matter for which the attorney is engaged. By these amendments, the Supreme Court seeks to enlarge access to justice in Ohio's courts as recommended by a 2006 Report of the Court's Task Force on Pro Se & Indigent Litigants and by a 2015 Report of the Court's Task Force on Access to Justice.

New division (B) permits attorneys to enter a limited appearance on behalf of an otherwise unrepresented litigant. The effect of the limited appearance is to permit an attorney to represent a client on one or more matters in a lawsuit but not on all matters. While normally leave of court is required if an attorney seeks to withdraw from representation, under this provision, leave of court is not required for withdrawal from the case at the conclusion of a properly noticed limited appearance, provided the attorney files and serves the proper Notice of Completion of Limited Appearance in accordance with [Civ.R. 5](#).

The benefits of division (B) are obtained only by filing a notice of limited appearance identified as such. The notice of limited appearance must clearly describe the scope of the limited representation and state that the limitation of appearance has been authorized by the party for whom the appearance is made. It is intended that any doubt about the scope of the limited representation be resolved in a manner that promotes the interests of justice and those of the client and opposing party.

[Notes of Decisions \(520\)](#)

Rules Civ. Proc., Rule 3, OH ST RCP Rule 3

Current with amendments received through October 1, 2024. Some rules may be more current, see credits for details.