

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS, EASTERN DIVISION**

MIKHAIL ABRAMOV, individually	)	
and on behalf of a class of similarly situated	)	
individuals,	)	
	)	
<i>Plaintiff,</i>	)	
	)	
v.	)	No.
	)	
THE HOME DEPOT, INC.,	)	
	)	
<i>Defendant.</i>	)	

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

Plaintiff Mikhail Abramov (“Plaintiff”) brings this Class Action Complaint and Demand for Jury Trial against The Home Depot, Inc. (“Defendant” or “Home Depot”) on his own behalf, and on behalf of a class of individuals who purchased Defendant’s dimensional lumber products, to seek redress for Defendant’s sale of lumber products that were falsely advertised and labeled as having product dimensions that were not the actual dimensions of the products sold. On behalf of himself and the proposed class of individuals who purchased Defendant’s dimensional lumber products, Plaintiff seeks damages, restitution and injunctive relief against Defendant for selling products that did not conform to the representations it made to consumers. Plaintiff, for his Class Action Complaint, allege as follows upon personal knowledge as to himself and his own acts and experiences, and as to all other matters, upon information and belief, including investigation conducted by his attorneys.

**NATURE OF THE ACTION**

1. Defendant operates the largest chain of home improvement stores in the country, including a significant number of stores located throughout Illinois. As a seller of home

improvement products, Defendant regularly advertises and sells various construction materials, including a variety of lumber products.

2. Some of the most popular construction materials sold by Defendant are dimensional lumber products, that is, lumber products used in construction and home improvement projects which are commonly sold by reference to three dimensions; height, width, and length.

3. Defendant regularly advertises for sale dimensional lumber products through in-store shelf tags and signage, labels, and flyers, which contain inaccurate and false product dimensions that do not correspond to the actual dimensions of the products being advertised.

4. Defendant's labels and advertisements are false, misleading, and reasonably likely to deceive the public. As a result of Defendant's conduct, consumers – including Plaintiff and the other members of the proposed Class – have purchased dimensional lumber products from Defendant that were not of the same size and quantity as represented.

5. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of himself and other similarly situated consumers in Illinois and elsewhere nationwide, to obtain redress for those who purchased Defendant's dimensional lumber products.

#### **PARTIES**

6. Plaintiff Mikhail Abramov is a natural person and a citizen of Illinois.

7. Defendant The Home Depot, Inc. is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business located in Atlanta, Georgia. Home Depot operates a chain of home improvement stores located in Illinois, and elsewhere throughout the country. Home Depot advertises and sells its dimensional lumber products to thousands of consumers in Illinois and elsewhere across the country in its retail stores.

### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

8. This Court has diversity jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d), because (i) at least one member of the putative class is a citizen of a state different from any Defendant, (ii) the amount in controversy exceeds \$5,000,000, exclusive of interests and costs, and (iii) none of the exceptions under that subsection apply to the instant action.

9. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant transacts business in Illinois and a substantial part of the events giving rise to Plaintiff's claims occurred in Illinois, as Defendant advertised and sold its dimensional lumber products to Plaintiff in Illinois. Defendant has also advertised, distributed, and sold its dimensional lumber products in Illinois such that it has sufficient minimum contacts with Illinois and/or has sufficiently availed itself of Illinois markets to make it permissible for this Court to exercise jurisdiction over Defendant.

10. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1391(b) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to Plaintiff's claims occurred in this District, as Defendant advertised its dimensional lumber products to Plaintiff in this District, and Plaintiff purchased the dimensional lumber products in this District.

### **COMMON FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

11. Defendant operates one of the largest chains of home improvement stores in the country.

12. One of the most common and popular products sold by Defendant is dimensional lumber, that is, lumber materials that are identified by their height, width, and length. The most common example of such products are "two-by-four" wooden planks that are often used in home remodeling and construction projects.

13. Defendant advertises its dimensional lumber products on in-store shelf tags and signage, labels, and flyers. Defendant's advertisements contain specific product dimensions for the dimensional lumber products being offered for sale.

14. However, unbeknownst to consumers, the product dimensions advertised by Defendant are not the actual dimensions of the products being advertised. That is, the dimensional lumber products sold by Defendant do not actually have the same dimensions as stated on Defendant's in-store shelf tags and signage, labels, flyers, and other advertisements.

15. In fact, Defendant's dimensional lumber products all have materially smaller dimensions than those represented in its advertisements and product labeling. For example, lumber labeled as having the dimensions "4x4-6'", actually measures 3.5" x 3.5" – 6', which is approximately 23% smaller than advertised. Further, the most commonly used 2" x 4" – 8' framing lumber actually measures 1.5" x 3.5" – 8'.

16. Nowhere does Defendant state that the advertised dimensions are not the actual dimensions of the products, that the advertised dimensions were "nominal" dimensions, or anything else to indicate that the products' actual dimensions differ from those explicitly stated on the advertising and product labeling.

#### **FACTS SPECIFIC TO PLAINTIFF**

17. Plaintiff Abramov visited the Home Depot store located in Palatine, Illinois, in or about December 2016.

18. Looking to purchase a piece of dimensional lumber for a small home improvement project, Plaintiff Abramov went to the lumber yard at the Palatine Home Depot.

19. In the lumber yard Plaintiff Abramov saw a black and white shelf tag, as shown below, advertising "4x4-6' #2 PT GC" pressure-treated pine lumber for \$7.17 per piece.



20. Taking a closer look, Plaintiff Abramov saw that each piece of the pine lumber was also individually labeled, as shown below, stating that its dimensions were “4 x 4 - 6”.



21. Relying on Defendant’s advertisement and product labeling, and the dimensions stated therein, Plaintiff Abramov purchased one piece of the 4" x 4" – 6' pine lumber.

22. Upon returning home, however, Plaintiff Abramov measured the 4" x 4" piece of pine lumber for his project, and determined that its dimensions were not in fact 4" x 4" – 6', but instead measured 3.5" x 3.5" – 6', which was 12.5% shorter in height and width, and approximately 23% less overall material than advertised and represented by Defendant.

23. Plaintiff and the other members of the Class were deceived and/or misled by Defendant’s representations regarding the dimensions of the dimensional lumber products which they purchased. These representations were a material factor that influenced Plaintiff’s and the other Class members’ decisions to purchase Defendant’s dimensional lumber products, as dimensional lumber is specifically purchased based on the represented *dimensions* of the lumber product. Plaintiff and the other members of the Class would not have purchased the dimensional lumber products that they bought from Defendant, or would have paid materially less for them,

had they known that Defendant's representations as to the dimensions of these products were false and misleading.

24. As a result, Plaintiff and the other members of the Class have been damaged by their purchases of Defendant's dimensional lumber products and have been deceived into purchasing a product that they believed had the same dimensions as represented by Defendant, when in fact it was significantly smaller.

25. Defendant has received significant profits from its false marketing and sale of its dimensional lumber products.

#### **CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

26. Plaintiff brings this action pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(2) and 23(b)(3) on behalf of himself and a nationwide class (the "Class"), with one subclass (the "Subclass" or "Illinois Subclass") defined as follows:

- (i) The Class: All persons in the United States and its Territories who, within the applicable statute of limitations, purchased Defendant's dimensional lumber products at any of its retail store locations.
- (ii) The Illinois Subclass: All persons who, within three years prior to the commencement of this action, purchased Defendant's dimensional lumber products at any of its retail store locations in Illinois.

27. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of the other members of the Class and Subclass. Plaintiff has retained counsel with substantial experience in prosecuting complex litigation and class actions. Plaintiff and his counsel are committed to vigorously prosecuting this action on behalf of the other members of the Class and Subclass, and

have the financial resources to do so. Neither Plaintiff nor his counsel have any interest adverse to those of the other members of the Class and Subclass.

28. Absent a class action, most members of the Class and Subclass would find the cost of litigating their claims to be prohibitive and would have no effective remedy. Unless the Class and Subclass is certified, Defendant will retain the monies it received from the members of the Class and Subclass as a result of its unfair and deceptive conduct.

29. The class treatment of common questions of law and fact is also superior to multiple individual actions or piecemeal litigation in that it conserves the resources of the courts and the litigants, and promotes consistency and efficiency of adjudication.

30. Defendant has acted and failed to act on grounds generally applicable to Plaintiff and the other members of the Class and Subclass, requiring the Court's imposition of uniform relief to ensure compatible standards of conduct toward the members of the Class and Subclass, and making injunctive or corresponding declaratory relief appropriate for the Class and Subclass as a whole.

31. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the other members of the Class and Subclass as Plaintiff and the other members of the Class and Subclass have all suffered harm and damages as a result of Defendant's unlawful and wrongful practice of falsely representing and advertising dimensions for its dimensional lumber products that were not the actual dimensions of the products sold.

32. There are many questions of law and fact common to the claims of Plaintiff and the other members of the Class and Subclass, and those questions predominate over any questions that may affect individual members of the Class and Subclass. Common questions for the Class and Subclass include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Whether Defendant advertised, represented, and/or warranted that its dimensional lumber products had certain dimensions;
- (b) Whether Defendant's dimensional lumber products had the same dimensions as advertised and warranted;
- (c) Whether Defendant's advertising of its dimensional lumber products was false or misleading;
- (d) Whether Defendant's conduct violates public policy;
- (e) Whether Defendant's conduct violated the Illinois Consumer Fraud Act and other such similar statutes;
- (f) Whether as a result of Defendant's misrepresentations of material facts related to the dimensions of its dimensional lumber products, Plaintiff and the other members of the Class and Subclass have suffered ascertainable monetary losses;
- (g) Whether Plaintiff and the other members of the Class and Subclass are entitled to monetary, restitutionary or other remedies, and, if so, the nature of such remedies; and
- (h) Whether Defendant should be enjoined from continuing to engage in such conduct.

**COUNT I**  
**For Violations of Consumer Protection Laws**  
**(on behalf of the Class and the Illinois Subclass)**

33. Plaintiff hereby incorporates the above allegations by reference as though fully set forth herein.

34. The Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act, 815 ILCS 502/1 *et seq.* ("ICFA"), as well as other materially identical consumer fraud statutes enacted by states throughout the country, prohibits deceptive acts and practices in the sale of products such as Defendant's dimensional lumber products.

35. Plaintiff and the other members of the Class and Subclass are "consumers" or "persons," as defined under the ICFA and other states' consumer protection laws.



36. Defendant's conduct as alleged herein occurred in the course of trade or commerce.

37. Defendant's actions in affirmatively representing and advertising dimensions for its dimensional lumber products that were not the actual dimensions of the products sold offends public policy, has caused and continues to cause substantial injury to consumers, and constitutes an unfair and deceptive trade practice.

38. Upon information and belief, and given the fact that Defendant managed and maintained all of the inventory for its products, Defendant knew or should have known at all relevant times that its dimensional lumber products did not have the same dimensions as represented and advertised by Defendant, but Defendant nonetheless continued to advertise and sell its dimensional lumber products using such false representations.

39. Defendant intended for consumers to rely on its representations regarding the dimensions of its dimensional lumber products when choosing to purchase such products. Dimensional lumber products are specifically marketed and sold according to their *dimensions*, and consumers rely on such representations so that they may make an informed decision as to the quantity and type of dimensional lumber product they need to purchase for their home improvement projects.

40. Plaintiff and the other members of the Class and Subclass did reasonably rely on Defendant's misrepresentations in choosing to purchase Defendant's dimensional lumber products, and would not have purchased the dimensional lumber products that they bought from Defendant, or would have paid materially less for them, had Defendant not made the false and deceptive representations regarding their dimensions.

41. As a direct and proximate cause of Defendant's deceptive and unfair trade practices, Plaintiff and the other members of the Class and Subclass suffered actual damages, including monetary losses for the purchase price of the dimensional lumber products which did not have the same dimensions as advertised and contained less lumber material.

42. Defendant's conduct is in violation of the ICFA and other state's consumer protection laws, and pursuant to 815 ILCS 505/10a and other such state's consumer protection laws, Plaintiff and the other members of the Class and Subclass are entitled to damages in an amount to be proven at trial, reasonable attorney's fees, injunctive relief prohibiting Defendant's unfair and deceptive advertising going forward, and any other penalties or awards that may be appropriate under applicable law.

**COUNT II**  
**Breach of Express Warranty**  
**(on behalf of the Class and the Illinois Subclass)**

43. Plaintiff hereby incorporates the above allegations by reference as though fully set forth herein.

44. Through its in-store signage, product labeling, and advertising, Defendant expressly warranted to Plaintiff and the other members of the Class that its dimensional lumber products have the same dimensions as represented on such signage, advertising, and labeling.

45. These affirmations of fact and promises regarding the dimensions of its dimensional lumber products were part of the basis of the bargain between Defendant and Plaintiff and the other members of the Class. Plaintiff and the other members of the Class would not have purchased the dimensional lumber products that they bought from Defendant, or would have paid materially less for them, had they known that these affirmations and promises were false.

46. Defendant breached the express warranties it represented about its dimensional lumber products and their qualities because, as set forth above, the dimensional lumber products sold to Plaintiff and the other members of the Class did not actually have the same dimensions as warranted by Defendant.

47. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's breach of its express warranties, Plaintiff and the members of the Class have been damaged in an amount to be determined at trial.

**COUNT III**  
**Breach of Implied Warranty**  
**(on behalf of the Class and the Illinois Subclass)**

48. Plaintiff hereby incorporates the above allegations by reference as though fully set forth herein.

49. The implied warranty of merchantability is codified in Section 2-314 of the Uniform Commercial Code ("UCC") and requires that goods have to be fit for the ordinary purposes for which goods of that type are used; have adequate labeling; and conform to any promises or affirmations made on any product label.

50. Most states' laws provide for enforcement of the implied warranty of merchantability through their adoption of the UCC, including in Illinois pursuant to 810 ILCS 5/2-314, as well as other states where Home Depot operates its stores.

51. Defendant, as the marketer, distributor, and seller of the dimensional lumber products purchased by Plaintiff and the other members of the class, is a merchant.

52. Plaintiff and the other Class members purchased Defendant's dimensional lumber products in a consumer transaction.

53. The dimensional lumber products sold by Defendant were not fit for the ordinary purposes for which goods of that type are used because they were labeled as having specific dimensions which were not the actual dimensions of the product sold.

54. The dimensional lumber products sold by Defendant were not adequately labeled because they were labeled as having specific dimensions which were not the actual dimensions of the product sold.

55. The dimensional lumber products sold by Defendant did not conform to the promises and affirmations made by Defendant on the product labeling because they were labeled as having specific dimensions which were not the actual dimensions of the product sold.

56. Plaintiff and the other Class members did not receive the dimensional lumber products that were warranted to them, as the products they purchased contained substantially less lumber material and had different dimensions than the products they were promised and expected.

57. As a result of Defendant's breach of warranty, Plaintiff and the other Class members suffered damages by purchasing dimensional lumber products which they would have not purchased, or would have paid materially less for, had they known that the products were not as warranted.

**COUNT IV**  
**Unjust Enrichment**  
**(in the alternative to the Second Cause of Action and**  
**on behalf of the Class and the Illinois Subclass)**

58. Plaintiff hereby incorporates the allegations set forth in Paragraphs 1–32 above.

59. Plaintiff and the other members of the Class conferred a benefit on Defendant by purchasing its dimensional lumber products.

60. It is inequitable and unjust for Defendant to retain the revenues obtained from Plaintiff's and the other Class members' purchases of Defendant's dimensional lumber products because Defendant knowingly misrepresented the qualities of its dimensional lumber products and Plaintiff and the other members of the Class would not have purchased Defendant's dimensional lumber products, or would have paid materially less for them, had Defendant not made these misrepresentations.

61. Accordingly, because Defendant will be unjustly enriched if it is allowed to retain such funds, Defendant must pay restitution to Plaintiff and the other Class members in the amount which Defendant was unjustly enriched by each of their purchases of its dimensional lumber products.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and the Class and Subclass, prays for the following relief:

1. An order certifying the Class and Subclass as defined above;
2. An award of actual or compensatory damages, or, in the alternative, disgorgement of all funds unjustly retained by Defendant as a result of its unfair and deceptive sales practices;
3. Injunctive relief prohibiting Defendant's unfair and deceptive advertising practices;
4. An award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs; and
5. Such further and other relief the Court deems reasonable and just.

**JURY DEMAND**

Plaintiff requests trial by jury of all claims that can be so tried.

Dated: March 8, 2017

Mikhail Abramov, individually and on behalf of a  
class of similarly situated individuals

/s/ Eugene Y. Turin  
One of Plaintiff's Attorneys

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CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

DEFENDANTS
County of Residence of First Listed Defendant
NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.
Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
2 U.S. Government Defendant
3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)
Citizen of This State
Citizen of Another State
Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country
PTF DEF
1 1
2 2
3 3
4 4
5 5
6 6

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
CONTRACT
REAL PROPERTY
TORTS
CIVIL RIGHTS
PRISONER PETITIONS
FORFEITURE/PENALTY
LABOR
IMMIGRATION
BANKRUPTCY
SOCIAL SECURITY
FEDERAL TAX SUITS
OTHER STATUTES

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
1 Original Proceeding
2 Removed from State Court
3 Remanded from Appellate Court
4 Reinstated or Reopened
5 Transferred from Another District (specify)
6 Litigation-Transfer
8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION (Enter U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing and write a brief statement of cause.)

VII. Previous Bankruptcy Matters (For nature of suit 422 and 423, enter the case number and judge for any associated bankruptcy matter previously adjudicated by a judge of this Court. Use a separate attachment if necessary.)

VIII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:
CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.
DEMAND \$
CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:
JURY DEMAND: Yes No

IX. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY (See instructions):
JUDGE
DOCKET NUMBER

X. This case (check one box)
Is not a refiling of a previously dismissed action
is a refiling of case number previously dismissed by Judge
DATE SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44**

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

**I. (a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.

(b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)

(c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".

**II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.

United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.

United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.

Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.

Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.)

**III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties.** This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.

**IV. Nature of Suit.** Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerk(s) in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.

**V. Origin.** Place an "X" in one of the six boxes.

Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.

Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.

Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.

Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.

Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.

Multidistrict Litigation. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.

**VI. Cause of Action.** Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity. Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service

**VII. Previous Bankruptcy Matters** For nature of suit 422 and 423 enter the case number and judge for any associated bankruptcy matter previously adjudicated by a judge of this court. Use a separate attachment if necessary.

**VIII. Requested in Complaint.** Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P. Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.

**IX. Related Cases.** This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

**X. Refiling Information.** Place an "X" in one of the two boxes indicating if the case is or is not a refiling of a previously dismissed action. If it is a refiling of a previously dismissed action, insert the case number and judge.

**Date and Attorney Signature.** Date and sign the civil cover sheet.