

What Happens After the Case is Filed

Case assignment

The clerk's office assigns the case a number that must appear on all documents. The case will randomly be assigned to two judges – a district judge and a magistrate judge. You cannot choose your judges. The district judge may refer your case to the magistrate judge to handle different stages of your case leading up to the trial of your case.

The magistrate judge may handle the entire case if all of the parties in the case consent to having the magistrate judge handle the entire case. See Rule 73 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Local Rule 72.1.1(h). In such cases, the district judge will take no part in the case. The clerk's office can provide you with the form to have your case handled by a magistrate judge or you may get a copy of the form from the court's website.



HINT: In cases where the parties have not consented to the magistrate judge handling the entire case and the magistrate judge enters an order that you believe is clearly wrong, you may ask the district judge to review the order. See Rule 72 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Local Rule 72.1.4. This is done by filing a motion for review. Do not ask the district judge to review every order of the magistrate judge. You should only make this request when you believe the order is **clearly** wrong or contrary to the law.

In cases where the parties have consented to the magistrate judge handling the entire case and the magistrate judge enters a **final** order that you believe is clearly wrong, as a general rule you may be able to appeal the magistrate judge's final order to the court of appeals. See Rule 73(c) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.
