



Superior Court of the District of Columbia Civil Division

- ☐ **Civil Actions Branch** | 500 Indiana Ave NW, Room 5000, Washington DC 20001 | 202-879-1133
- ☐ **Landlord & Tenant Branch** | 510 4th St NW, Room 110, Washington DC 20001 | 202-879-4879
- ☐ **Small Claims & Conciliation Branch** | 510 4th St NW, Room 120, Washington DC 20001 | 202-879-1120

Case Caption: _____

Case Number: _____

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT (JUDGMENT-DEBTOR) REGARDING WAGE GARNISHMENT AND EXEMPTIONS

There was a judgment entered against you. Your wages may be taken to pay a debt.

Read this notice carefully to protect your rights.

Why am I getting this notice?

You are receiving this notice because a company or a person (the plaintiff) filed a lawsuit against you and won a money judgment against you (see attached Writ of Attachment). A money judgment is a court's decision that you owe money to someone else (the "judgment creditor"). The plaintiff (the judgment creditor) is now seeking to garnish (take) some of your wages. Garnishment is a process in which a portion of an employee's wages are taken each pay period to pay money owed until the judgment is paid in full.

Will my wages be garnished? If so, by how much?

Possibly, D.C. Law (D.C. Code §16-572) protects part of your wages from garnishment. If you earn the equivalent of full-time hours at the D.C. minimum wage (40 times the hourly minimum wage per week or less), your wages are fully protected, and nothing will be taken from your paycheck.

If you earn more than that, a portion of your wages may be garnished. The exact amount your employer must withhold is calculated using a formula shown on the Writ of Attachment – the court order sent to your employer. Review that document to see how much may be taken.

Is there anything I can do?

If you are already fully protected from garnishment, or if you can afford the amount that will be taken out of your paycheck to pay the judgment creditor, you do not need to do anything. However, you have the right under D.C. Code §16-572.01 to request that the court adjust the amount of wages withheld based on your financial hardship. To make such a request, you or your attorney must file a written motion in the appropriate Civil Division Clerk's Office or via eFileDC (electronically). In addition, there may be circumstances under which you may be able to ask the court to vacate (remove) the judgment.

How do I protect my wages or ask the court to adjust the amount of wages withheld?

File a Motion to Exempt (Protect) Wages and Request Hearing. The motion form is attached with instructions at the end of this notice. You can also get a copy from the Clerk's Office or online at <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/forms>. If you file a motion to adjust the amount of wages subject to garnishment based on financial hardship, you should provide a copy of the motion to your employer immediately so that the garnishment can be put on hold until the court makes a decision.

Lawyers from legal services providers may be able to help you for free. For more information on finding legal help, you can visit: www.dccourts.gov/services/represent-yourself.