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AB-863 Residential rental properties: language requirements. (2025-2026)

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Date Published: 10/07/2025 10:00 AM

Assembly Bill No. 863

CHAPTER 344

An act to amend Section 412.20 of the Code of Civil Procedure, relating to tenancy.

[Approved by Governor October 06, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State October 06, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 863, Kalra. Residential rental properties: language requirements.

Existing law outlines requirements for civil actions for unlawful detainer filed by landlords to remove tenants from their properties. Existing law also requires plaintiffs to ensure service of a summons and complaint to defendants in civil suits, as specified. Existing law requires a summons to contain, among other things, (1) a direction that the defendant file with the court a written pleading in response to the complaint within 30 days after service on the defendant, (2) a notice that, unless the defendant responds, default will be entered upon application of the plaintiff, (3) a statement advising the defendant of their right to seek an attorney, and (4) an introductory legend at the top of the summons, in English and Spanish, notifying the defendant that they have been sued.

This bill would require the Judicial Council to create, by January 1, 2027, a single summons form for mandatory use in an action for unlawful detainer to remove a tenant from a residential property that includes the information specified above in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean. The bill would require the Judicial Council to publish this form on its internet website.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 412.20 of the Code of Civil Procedure is amended to read:

412.20. (a) Except as otherwise required by statute, a summons shall be directed to the defendant, signed by the clerk and issued under the seal of the court in which the action is pending, and it shall contain:

- (1) The title of the court in which the action is pending.
- (2) The names of the parties to the action.
- (3) A direction that the defendant file with the court a written pleading in response to the complaint within 30 days after summons is served on the defendant.
- (4) A notice that, unless the defendant so responds, their default will be entered upon application by the plaintiff, and the plaintiff may apply to the court for the relief demanded in the complaint, which could result in garnishment of wages, taking of

money or property, or other relief.

(5) The following statement in boldface type: “You may seek the advice of an attorney in any matter connected with the complaint or this summons. Such attorney should be consulted promptly so that your pleading may be filed or entered within the time required by this summons.”

(6) The following introductory legend at the top of the summons above all other matter, in boldface type, in English and Spanish:

“Notice! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read information below.”

(b) Each county may, by ordinance, require that the legend contained in paragraph (6) of subdivision (a) be set forth in every summons issued out of the courts of that county in any additional foreign language, if the legend in the additional foreign language is set forth in the summons in the same manner as required in that paragraph.

(c) A summons in a form approved by the Judicial Council is deemed to comply with this section.

(d) For actions regarding residential property brought pursuant to Section 1161, the Judicial Council shall, by January 1, 2027, create for mandatory use a single summons form that includes the information described in paragraphs (3) to (6), inclusive, of subdivision (a) in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean. The Judicial Council shall publish this form on its internet website.