

### **Rule 113. Practice and Procedure in Mortgage Foreclosure Cases**

**(a) Applicability of the Rule.** The requirements of this rule supplement, but do not replace, the requirements set forth in the Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law (735 ILCS 5/15-1101 *et seq.*) and are applicable only to those foreclosure actions filed on or after the effective date of May 1, 2013.

**(b) Supporting Documents for Complaints.** In addition to the documents listed in section 15-1504 of the Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law (735 ILCS 5/15-1504), a copy of the note, as it currently exists, including all indorsements and allonges, shall be attached to the mortgage foreclosure complaint at the time of filing.

#### **(c) Prove-up Affidavits.**

(1) Requirement of Prove-up Affidavits. All plaintiffs seeking a judgment of foreclosure, under section 15-1506 of the Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law (735 ILCS 5/15-1506), by default or otherwise, shall be required to submit an affidavit in support of the amounts due and owing under the note when they file any motion requesting a judgment of default against a mortgagor or a judgment of foreclosure.

(2) Content of Prove-up Affidavits. All affidavits submitted in support of entry of a judgment of foreclosure, default or otherwise, shall contain, at a minimum, the following information:

(i) The identity of the affiant and an explanation as to whether the affiant is a custodian of records or a person familiar with the business and its mode of operation. If the affiant is a person familiar with the business and its mode of operation, the affidavit shall explain how the affiant is familiar with the business and its mode of operation.

(ii) An identification of the books, records, and/or other documents in addition to the payment history that the affiant reviewed and/or relied upon in drafting the affidavit, specifically including records transferred from any previous lender or servicer. The payment history must be attached to the affidavit in only those cases where the defendant(s) filed an appearance or responsive pleading to the complaint for foreclosure.

(iii) The identification of any computer program or computer software that the entity relies on to record and track mortgage payments. Identification of the computer program or computer software shall also include the source of the information, the method and time of preparation of the record to establish that the computer program produces an accurate payment history, and an explanation as to why the records should be considered “business records” within the meaning of the law.

(3) Additional Evidence. The affidavit shall contain any additional evidence, as may be necessary, in connection with the party’s right to enforce the instrument of indebtedness.

(4) Form of Prove-up Affidavits. The affidavit prepared in support of entry of a judgment of foreclosure, by default or otherwise, shall not have a stand-alone signature page if formatting allows the signature to begin on the last page of the affiant’s statements. The affidavit prepared shall, at a minimum, be prepared by utilizing, or substantially adopting the appearance and content of, the form provided in the Article II Forms Appendix. If executed within the boundaries of Illinois, the affidavit may be signed pursuant to section 1-109 of the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure (735 ILCS 5/1-109) rather than being notarized.

**(d) Defaults.**

(1) Notice Required. In all mortgage foreclosure cases where the borrower is defaulted by court order, a notice of default and entry of judgment of foreclosure shall be prepared by the attorney for plaintiff and shall be mailed by the Clerk of the Circuit Court for each judicial circuit. Within two business days after the entry of default, the attorney for plaintiff shall prepare the notice in its entirety, file it with the Clerk of the Circuit Court, and provide the Clerk with one copy for mailing to each borrower address specified in the notice. Within five business days after the entry of default, the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall mail, by United States Postal Service, a copy of the notice of default and entry of judgment of foreclosure to the address(es) provided by the attorney for the plaintiff in an envelope bearing the return address of the Clerk of the Circuit Court and file proof thereof. The notice shall be mailed to the property address or the address on any appearance or other document filed by any defendant. Any notices returned by the United States Postal Service as undeliverable shall be filed in the case file maintained by the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

(2) Form of Notice. The notice of default and entry of judgment of foreclosure shall be prepared by utilizing, or substantially adopting the appearance and content of, the form provided in the Article II Forms Appendix.

**(e) Effect on Judgment and Orders.** Neither the failure to send the notice required by paragraph (d)(1) nor any errors in preparing or sending the notice shall affect the legal validity of the order of default, the judgment of foreclosure, or any other orders entered pursuant to the Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law (735 ILCS 5/15-1101 *et seq.*) and cannot be the basis for vacating an otherwise validly entered order.

**(f) Judicial Sales.** In addition to the requirements for judicial sales set forth in sections 15-1506 and 15-1507 of the Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law (735 ILCS 5/15-1506, 15-1507) the following will apply to mortgage foreclosure sales:

(1) Notice of Sale. Not fewer than 10 business days before the sale, the attorney for the plaintiff shall send notice by electronic service pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 11(c) to all defendants appearing of record and shall send notice by mail to all defendants not appearing of record. Additionally, a self-represented litigant who has an e-mail address must designate a single e-mail address to which service may be directed under Rule 11. If a self-represented litigant does not designate an e-mail address, then service upon and by that party must be made by a method specified in Rule 11 other than e-mail transmission. The notice shall include the foreclosure sale date, time, and location of the sale, unless such sale is an adjourned sale occurring less than 60 days after the last scheduled sale, wherein notice of such adjourned sale need not be given in accordance with section 15-1507(c)(4) of the Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law (735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(4)).

(2) Selling Officers. Any foreclosure sale held pursuant to section 15-1507 may be conducted by a private selling officer who is appointed in accordance with section 15-1506(f)(3).

(3) Surplus Funds. If a judicial foreclosure sale held pursuant to Section 15-1507 of the

Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law (735 ILCS 5/15-1507) results in the existence of a surplus of funds exceeding the amount due and owing as set forth in the judgment of foreclosure, the attorney for the plaintiff shall send a special notice to the mortgagors advising them of the surplus funds and enclosing a form for presentment of the motion to the court for the funds.

**(g) Special Notice of Surplus Funds.** The special notice shall be mailed and shall be prepared by utilizing, or substantially adopting the appearance and content of, the form provided in the Article II Forms Appendix.

**(h) Petition for Turnover of Surplus Funds.** Each judicial circuit shall make readily available a form petition for turnover of surplus funds to be included in the Special Notice of Surplus Funds required to be mailed by the attorney for plaintiffs. The petition shall be prepared by utilizing, or substantially adopting the appearance and content of, the form provided in the Article II Forms Appendix.

**(i) Deceased Mortgagors.** In all mortgage foreclosure cases where the mortgagor or mortgagors is or are deceased, and no estate has been opened for the deceased mortgagor(s), the court shall, on motion of a party, appoint a special representative to stand in the place of the deceased mortgagor(s) who shall act in a manner similar to that provided by section 13-209 of the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure (735 ILCS 5/13-209). Special representatives appointed under this paragraph shall be entitled to costs and reasonable attorney fees from the party who sought the appointment as well as any successor or assign of that party as may be applicable, subject to administrative regulation by the court.

**(j) Remote Appearances.** All aspects of foreclosure proceedings, including but not limited to status hearings, case management hearings, entry of judgment of foreclosure, judicial sales, and entry of an order approving sale, may be conducted remotely, including by telephone or video conference. Each court shall determine which aspects of a foreclosure proceeding may be conducted remotely based on the needs of the jurisdiction, case participants, and technology available.

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#### Committee Comments

(February 22, 2013)

On April 11, 2011, the Illinois Supreme Court created the Special Supreme Court Committee on Mortgage Foreclosures and charged it with the following tasks: investigating the procedures used throughout the State of Illinois in mortgage foreclosure proceedings; studying relevant Illinois Supreme Court Rules and local rules that directly or indirectly affect such proceedings; analyzing the procedures adopted in other states in response to the unprecedented number of foreclosure filings nationwide; and reviewing legislative proposals pending in the Illinois General Assembly that may impact the mortgage foreclosure rules for the state. To meet this

charge, the Committee established subcommittees, one of which was the Practice and Procedures Subcommittee. The Practice and Procedures Subcommittee submitted proposals for changes to the practice and procedures for mortgage foreclosure cases for discussion at a public hearing held on April 27, 2012. After consideration of comments and discussion at the public hearing, the Committee proposed this new rule governing mortgage foreclosure practice and procedure.

Paragraph (b) is derived from the need to address evidentiary issues that often arise during the course of a mortgage foreclosure. The new requirement to attach a copy of the note, as it currently exists with all indorsements and allonges, supplements the Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law to provide this necessary document to the defendant and the court at the outset. Including this additional document will prevent unnecessary delays caused by motion practice and discovery often used by defendants.

In drafting this section of the rule, the Committee took into consideration the positions of both the judiciary and comments provided at the public hearing regarding attaching a copy of all assignments to the complaint. The Committee members recognized that with the increase in transfers of mortgages and notes, Illinois courts have seen a dramatic increase in assertions by mortgagors that the mortgagee lacks standing to bring the foreclosure complaint. Quite often, mortgagors who ignore the judicial process until after a foreclosure or sale has occurred have raised standing issues as a defense, but have been told that their claim was forfeited by the failure to raise it in a timely manner. The Committee considered that as a matter of judicial economy, requiring that all executed assignments of the mortgage be attached at the time of filing could provide current documentation at the outset to all defendants and the circuit court demonstrating how the plaintiff has standing to file the complaint. However, due to industry changes in the documentation requirements for mortgage assignments over the past two decades, a requirement to attach all copies of assignments to the complaint at the time of filing proved to be impractical and overly burdensome for practitioners given the current volume of foreclosures statewide. This rule does not prohibit the attachment of such assignments should a plaintiff choose to do so. This rule also does not preclude the requirement of submission of all assignments at a later date in the litigation should the appropriate issues present themselves and presentation of the documents to the court and litigants becomes necessary.

Paragraph (c) addresses some of the many issues that arise from document handling procedures by lenders and servicers. Illinois courts, along with courts nationwide, have faced issues relating to “robo-signing” practices at major lenders, where affidavits were not properly notarized or where the affiant did not actually review any of the pertinent loan records. In addition to questionable document handling procedures, circuit courts have dealt with prove-up affidavits that come in varied forms, many of which do not properly address the foundational requirements necessary for establishing the accuracy of computerized business records nor the correct amount due and owing under the mortgage and note. Paragraph (c)(2) identifies the minimum requirements necessary for a prove-up affidavit submitted by the mortgagee for entry of a judgment of foreclosure and Form 1 gives a form affidavit that should be used.

No judgment of foreclosure will be entered without compliance with Paragraph (c). However, Form 1 establishes only the amounts due and owing on the borrower’s loan. Paragraph

(c)(2) and Form 1 do not relieve the foreclosing party from establishing other evidentiary requirements, as necessary, in connection with proving the allegations contained in its complaint including, but not limited to, the party's right to enforce the instrument of indebtedness, if applicable.

Paragraph (d) addresses the desire of the Illinois courts to have adequate assurance that the mortgagor is sufficiently notified when an order of default and a judgment of foreclosure are entered against the mortgagor. Many mortgagors ignore court notices, believing that they are in error because their lender is negotiating with them for a loan modification. Other mortgagors have been told by servicers that their foreclosure case is on hold, but the servicer has not told the plaintiff's attorneys to place the file on hold. Currently, many circuit court clerks send a generic postcard that notifies any defendant, who has an appearance on file, of entry of a default order. Thus, if the mortgagor has not filed an appearance, the mortgagor may not receive notice of the default order from the clerk. The post card may not contain any helpful information that the defendant can understand. Likewise, notice of the default order is not mailed to the property address as a matter of course. While section 2-1302 of the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure (735 ILCS 5/2-1302) requires that a plaintiff give notice of entry of a default order to be sent to all parties against whom the order applies, failure to give such notice does not affect the validity of the order. As a result, a mortgagor may not receive notice of entry of the default order from either the Clerk of the Circuit Court or the mortgagee's counsel.

Paragraph (d) addresses this deficiency in the notification process and requires the mortgagee's counsel to prepare a specific "Notice of Entry of Default and Judgment of Foreclosure" (Form 2). Counsel for the plaintiff must prepare this notice for the property address or any other address where the defendant is most likely to receive it. A defendant may have filed an appearance or another court paper that would indicate an address that may be different from the address of service of summons and different from the property address. By preparing this notice, and having the Clerk of the Circuit Court mail the notices, any undeliverable mail will remain in the court file and defaulted mortgagors will receive a clearer notice of the order and the judgment of foreclosure than they do currently.

Paragraph (f) addresses two issues relating to judicial sales that have become substantial problems throughout the state. Paragraph (f)(1) attempts to provide adequate notice to those mortgagors who are about to lose their home. Currently, the Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law does not specify that a separate notice of the sale be sent to defaulted defendants, and assumes that the publication requirements are adequate for those that have not otherwise participated in the foreclosure proceedings. See 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(3) (lacking a specific requirement that a separate notice of sale be sent to a defaulted mortgagor). However, in many residential cases, a lack of participation, for any reason, results in a lack of notice of the sale to the mortgagor living in the property being foreclosed. That lack of notice often results in the mortgagor learning about the sale on the eve of the sale and filing an emergency motion to stay the sale. In cases where the mortgagor finds out about the sale from a notice of confirmation of sale or through the sheriff's notice of eviction, the courts then must hear motions to vacate the sale and motions to stay possession. See 735 ILCS 5/15-1508(b-5) (requiring notice of confirmation of sale be sent to a

defaulted mortgagor). Many of these motions could be avoided and judicial efficiency increased if all parties, including defaulted parties, are given notice of the sale. Accordingly, paragraph (f)(1) implements a new notice requirement to supplement section 15-1507(c)(3) by mandating a separate notice to a defaulted mortgagor presale while also complementing section 15-1508(b-5) that requires notice postsale for confirmation.

Paragraph (f)(2) addresses the selling officer. Currently, section 15-1506(f)(3) of the Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure Law (735 ILCS 5/15-1506(f)(3)) allows, by special motion, an official other than the one customarily designated by a court to be appointed to conduct judicial sales. The Committee recognized that the customarily appointed selling officer is the sheriff in many counties statewide, section 15-1506 allows a court to appoint a private selling officer upon motion. Given the high volume of foreclosures throughout the state, many sales are being held nearly a year after the expiration of the redemption period. In some cases, this is due to the failure of the sheriff to promptly obey the court order commanding him to sell the property at auction. Accordingly, the loan accrues late fees and increased interest charges. These additional charges do not benefit any party to the foreclosure and do not help the communities if the property remains vacant during that idle period. In order to correct these deficiencies in the process, the Committee recommended that a rule be enacted that expressly allows the use of private selling officers throughout the state. In many instances, private selling officers have lower costs with the capacity and ability to conduct a sale in a timely manner that prevents the accrual of additional fees and facilitates the rehabilitation of properties into valuable components of neighborhoods.

Paragraph (g) implements a specific notification process for informing mortgagors about the existence of surplus funds resulting from a judicial sale. Currently, many clerks of the circuit courts are holding unclaimed surplus funds from judicial sales. Due to the lack of notice, these funds remain unclaimed. Paragraph (g) implements a specific “Special Notice of Surplus Funds” (Form 3) that the plaintiff’s counsel must send to the mortgagors and paragraph (h) includes a specific motion (Form 4) that can be completed by the mortgagors for presentment to the court without an attorney. This paragraph is intended to facilitate the ability of mortgagors to claim those funds to which they may be entitled.

Paragraph (i) addresses the issue of a deceased mortgagor and the subject matter jurisdiction issues addressed in *ABN Amro Mortgage Group, Inc. v. McGahan*, 237 Ill. 2d 526 (2010), which have not been specifically addressed by remedial legislation.