

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI, SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION

Darrell Hardin v. Unknown Lang, et al.

Hardin · No. 1:25-cv-00138-SNLJ · Decided January 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri dismisses Darrell Hardin’s civil rights action without prejudice for failure to comply with an order requiring an amended complaint and payment of an initial filing fee. The court relies on Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and the plaintiff’s failure to prosecute, and certifies that an appeal would not be taken in good faith.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, Southeastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Stephen N. Limbaugh, Jr.
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, Southeastern Division
DECIDED	January 30, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00138-SNLJ
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court reviewed the file and dismissed Plaintiff's civil-rights action without prejudice for failure to comply with a court order and failure to prosecute.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Dismissal for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with a court order is committed to the court's inherent authority and may be imposed sua sponte when the plaintiff has meaningful notice, an opportunity to comply, and adequate warning of dismissal.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- section 1983
- civil rights

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed without prejudice because Plaintiff failed to comply with the court's order to file an amended complaint.
2. Whether dismissal was warranted for Plaintiff's failure to prosecute the action.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court may dismiss an action without prejudice sua sponte when the plaintiff, after meaningful notice and adequate time, fails to comply with a court order and fails to prosecute the case.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Plaintiff was given meaningful notice of what was expected, he was cautioned that his case would be dismissed if he failed to timely comply, and he was given ample time to comply.”

“The Court will therefore dismiss this action, without prejudice, due to Plaintiff’s failure to comply with the Court’s December 5, 2025 Order and his failure to prosecute his case.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Darrell Hardin brought a civil-rights action alleging violations by eight corrections officers at Southeast Correctional Center. After finding the complaint defective, the court ordered him to file an amended complaint and warned that failure to comply would result in dismissal. Hardin did not file an amended complaint or request additional time by the deadline.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff commenced the action on August 28, 2025, against eight corrections officers. On December 5, 2025, the court granted leave to proceed without prepaying fees or costs, assessed an initial filing fee, found the complaint defective, and ordered Plaintiff to file an amended complaint by January 5, 2026. Plaintiff neither complied nor sought additional time, so the court dismissed the action without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Link v. Wabash R.R. Co., 370 U.S. 626, 630-31 (1962)
- Brown v. Frey, 806 F.2d 801, 803 (8th Cir. 1986)

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