

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MICHIGAN, SOUTHERN DIVISION

Kimberly Powell-Hatcher v. Wal-Mart Stores East, LP

Powell-Hatcher · No. 24-cv-13296 · Decided December 23, 2025

SUMMARY

This order directs the parties in Powell-Hatcher v. Wal-Mart Stores East, LP to meet and confer regarding a motion to compel discovery responses and to file a joint list of unresolved issues. It sets a January 21, 2026 hearing and provides guidance concerning proportionality, specificity of discovery requests and objections, privilege logs, and sanctions. The order was issued by Magistrate Judge Elizabeth A. Stafford of the Eastern District of Michigan on December 23, 2025.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Elizabeth A. Stafford
DECIDED	December 23, 2025
DOCKET	24-cv-13296
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved to compel plaintiff to provide discovery responses and sought sanctions for plaintiff's alleged violation of a stipulated discovery order. The motion was referred to the magistrate judge for hearing and determination under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(A). The court ordered the parties to meet and confer and submit a joint list of unresolved discovery issues before a scheduled hearing.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Objections to the magistrate judge's ruling on the non-dispositive discovery motion may be sustained by the district judge only if the order is clearly erroneous or contrary to law. The order remains in force unless stayed by the magistrate judge or district judge.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- sanctions
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

discovery

discovery sanctions

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. What procedures must the parties follow before the court resolves defendant's motion to compel discovery?
2. What standards govern the specificity, proportionality, and support required for discovery requests, responses, objections, and privilege claims?
3. What sanctions may be imposed or recommended if plaintiff violated the stipulated order requiring full and complete discovery responses?

HOLDINGS

1. The parties must meet and confer in good faith, in person or by video as required by E.D. Mich. LR 37.1, and must file a joint list identifying each unresolved discovery request, the original response or objection, and each party's arguments concerning relevance and proportionality before the hearing on the motion to compel.
2. Discovery requests must describe requested documents with reasonable particularity, and objections to interrogatories and requests for production must be stated with specificity. A burdensomeness objection to a document request must be supported by affidavits, other evidence, or sufficient information for the court to make a common-sense judgment.
3. Because plaintiff waived objections by stipulating to provide full and complete discovery responses, the court would not consider objections plaintiff might attempt to raise at the January 21 hearing.
4. If plaintiff violated the order requiring full and complete discovery responses, the court may impose non-dispositive sanctions or recommend dispositive sanctions.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A party either objects to production or produces. If it produces, the objections are generally deemed waived."

"Boilerplate objections are legally meaningless and amount to a waiver of an objection."

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

A stipulated order required plaintiff to provide full and complete responses to defendant's discovery requests by May 13, 2025. Defendant contended that plaintiff failed to comply and moved to compel responses and for sanctions. The court directed the parties to meet and confer regarding each unresolved discovery request and warned that sanctions could follow if plaintiff violated the stipulated order.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The parties entered a stipulated order requiring plaintiff to provide full and complete responses to defendant's discovery by May 13, 2025. Defendant moved to compel and for sanctions, and the district judge referred the

motion to Magistrate Judge Stafford. After a December 22, 2025 status conference, the magistrate judge issued this order directing the parties to meet and confer, file a joint list of unresolved issues, and appear for a January 21, 2026 hearing.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Helena Agri-Enterprises, LLC v. Great Lakes Grain, LLC, 988 F.3d 260, 273 (6th Cir. 2021)
- Weidman v. Ford Motor Company, No. CV 18-12719, 2021 WL 2349400, at *3 (E.D. Mich. June 9, 2021)
- Cratty v. City of Wyandotte, 296 F. Supp. 3d 854, 858 (E.D. Mich. Nov. 8, 2017)
- United States v. Quicken Loans, Inc., No. 16-CV-14050, 2018 WL 7351682, at *1 (E.D. Mich. June 5, 2018)
- Cheney v. U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, 542 U.S. 367, 387-388 (2004)
- Effyis, Inc. v. Kelly, No. 18-13391, 2020 WL 4915559, at *2 (E.D. Mich. Aug. 21, 2020)
- In re Heparin Products Liability Litigation, 273 F.R.D. 399, 410-11 (N.D. Ohio 2011)
- Vallejo v. Amgen, Inc., 903 F.3d 733, 743-44 (8th Cir. 2018)
- Siser North America, Inc. v. Herika G. Inc., 325 F.R.D. 200, 209-10 (E.D. Mich. 2018)
- Aprile Horse Transportation, Inc. v. Prestige Delivery Systems, Inc., No. 5:13-CV-15-GNS-LLK, 2015 WL 4068457, at *3 (W.D. Ky. July 2, 2015)
- Riley v. NewPenn Kilt, LLC, No. 5:18CV00014TBRHBB, 2020 WL 59838, at *2 n.1 (W.D. Ky. Jan. 6, 2020)
- Lucas v. Protective Life Insurance Co., No. CIV.A.4:08CV00059-JH, 2010 WL 569743, at *3 (W.D. Ky. Feb. 11, 2010)
- Johnson v. Serenity Transportation, Inc., No. 15-CV-02004-JSC, 2016 WL 6393521, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Oct. 28, 2016)