

RULE 24

DISMISSAL OF ACTION FOR DELAY

WHERE AVAILABLE

24.01 A defendant who is not in default under these rules or an order of the court may move to have an action dismissed for delay where the plaintiff has failed,

- (a) to serve the statement of claim on all the defendants within the prescribed time;
- (b) to have noted in default any defendant who has failed to deliver a statement of defence, within thirty days after the default;
- (c) to set the action down for trial within six months after the close of pleadings;
- (d) to move for leave to restore to a trial list an action that has been struck off the trial list, within thirty days after the action was struck off.

NOTICE WHERE PLAINTIFF UNDER DISABILITY

24.02 Where the plaintiff is under disability, notice of a motion to dismiss the action for delay shall be served on,

- (a) the litigation guardian or committee of the estate of the plaintiff; and
- (b) on the Official Guardian, unless
 - (i) the Public Trustee is committee of the estate or litigation guardian of the plaintiff, or
 - (ii) a judge orders otherwise.

NOTICE OF ORDER

24.02.1 If the defendant is successful on the motion to dismiss an action for delay, the defendant shall serve a copy of the order dismissing the action on every defendant to the action who has crossclaimed against them.

EFFECT OF DISMISSAL ON COUNTERCLAIM

24.03 Where an action against a defendant who has counterclaimed is dismissed for delay, the defendant may within thirty days after the dismissal deliver a notice of election to proceed with the counterclaim (Form 23 B), and if the defendant fails to do so, the counterclaim shall be deemed to be discontinued without costs.

EFFECT OF DISMISSAL ON CROSSCLAIM OR THIRD PARTY CLAIM

24.04 (1) Unless the court orders otherwise, where an action against a defendant who has crossclaimed or made a third party claim is dismissed for delay,

- (a) the crossclaim or third party claim shall be deemed to be

dismissed with costs; and

- (b) the defendant may recover those costs and his or her own costs of the crossclaim or third party claim from the plaintiff.

EFFECT OF DEEMED DISMISSAL ON SUBSEQUENT ACTION

- (2) A deemed dismissal under this Rule is not a defence to a subsequent action unless the order dismissing the action provides otherwise.

EFFECT ON SUBSEQUENT ACTION

- 24.05** (1) The dismissal of an action for delay is not a defence to a subsequent action unless the order dismissing the action provides otherwise.
- (2) Where a plaintiff's action has been dismissed for delay with costs, and another action involving the same subject matter is subsequently brought between the same parties or their representatives or successors in interest before payment of the costs of the dismissed action, the court may order a stay of the subsequent action until the costs of the dismissed action have been paid.

APPLICATION TO COUNTERCLAIMS, CROSSCLAIMS AND THIRD PARTY CLAIMS

24.06 Rules 24.01 to 24.05 apply, with necessary modifications, to counterclaims, crossclaims and third party claims.

Elbaz v. Government of P.E.I., 2023 PESC 52

The defendants made a motion pursuant to Rule 24.01(c). The statement of claim was filed in 2005 and the motion for delay filed in 2022. The court dismissed the defendants' motion finding that while the delay was inordinate, it was not intentional by the plaintiffs, the plaintiffs were not wholly responsible for the delay, and the delay was not inexcusable.

Diversified Metal v. Trivett, 2014 PESC 25

The Court refused to dismiss the action for delay finding there was a plausible explanation for the delay, and there had not been prejudice to the defendant in the legal sense, such that a fair trial may not still be had.

Johnston v. Stewart McKelvey Stirling Scales, 2014 PECA 8

The Court of Appeal agreed with the trial judge's conclusion that the claim should be dismissed for delay. The Court confirmed the trial judge's finding to stay the action for abuse of the court's processes considering the length of time since the events which gave rise to the claim, the length of time since the action was commenced and the length of time since expiration of the limitation period.

Connick v. Ramsay, 2008 PESCTD 42

The defendants made a motion pursuant to Rule 24.01(c) for dismissal of the action because of delay. To establish that the action be dismissed because of delay the defendant had to show the delay was: (i) unreasonable in that it was inordinate and inexcusable; and (ii) there is a substantial risk a fair trial would not be possible, if the action is allowed to continue.

The motion was dismissed.