

# INFORMATION GUIDES

[Return to Fee Schedule Summary](#)

Title	Description
<b>Court Document required</b>	Two copies of Summons and Complaint (form 982(a)(9)), any Statement of Damages, Notice of Case Assignment, Notice of Case Management Conference (form CM-100), or Affidavit of Jurisdiction
<b>Purpose of Process</b>	The court obtains jurisdiction of the case when the summons and complaint is served
<b>Sheriff's Instructions</b>	Specify the name and address of the defendant (or agent) to be served; indicate any Trial Court Reduction time period imposed by the court; list all documents to be served. The plaintiff's attorney or the plaintiff (if the plaintiff doesn't have an attorney) must sign and date the instructions.
<b>Time for Service</b>	Generally, a Summons must be served within three years after it is issued. However, the court may require the Summons to be served within a shorter period of time, e.g., 60 days after issuance in Los Angeles County
<b>Manner of Service</b>	Personal Service or Substitute Service
<b>Fee Deposit</b>	N/A
<b>Fee</b>	\$35.00 if served, not found or canceled
<b>Proof of Service</b>	The Sheriff mails a Proof of Service to the plaintiff if the summons and complaint are served. If not served, a Not Found/No Service return is mailed to the plaintiff explaining the reason for non-service.

## Information Guide

The court acquires jurisdiction to hear a case when the summons and complaint is served on the defendant. The Summons advises the defendant to file a written response with the court within a specified time, usually thirty days. The Complaint describes the nature of the lawsuit.

Due to a large volume of process, allow the Sheriff a minimum of two weeks to make a diligent effort to effect service. Usually, three attempts at service will be made, one of which will be in the evening if necessary. If the defendant is a natural person, service by substitution may be on the third attempt by leaving a copy of the summons and complaint with a suitable person at the service address and mailing a copy to the defendant. If the defendant is an artificial person (corporation, partnership, etc.), substitute service may be made on the first attempt (due diligence is not required.) The address for service must be the defendant's usual place of abode (residence), business or mailing address. If the Sheriff cannot effect service after three attempts or it is determined that the defendant does not live or work at the address, a Not Found fee will be assessed and the process returned to the plaintiff with a Certificate of Not Found/No Service explaining the reason for non-service. If service is successful, a Proof of Service is mailed to plaintiff indicating the date, time, person served and method of service.

The Sheriff provides a cost effective, credible service and successfully serves most defendants. However, the case is civil in nature and the Sheriff cannot utilize criminal investigative tactics such as stakeouts or computer inquiries (DMV, arrest records, etc.) to serve process. If it is immediately apparent that the defendant may be evading service, the Sheriff will No Service the process, refund the fee deposit and return the documents to the plaintiff. In this event, the services of a registered process server or a person over the age of 18 years who is not a party to the action should be considered.

Sheriff's Instructions-General Civil Process

## Checklist

- \$35.00 fee deposit per person
- Two copies of the Summons and Complaint

- Two copies of any other required documents (Statement of Damages, Case Assignment, etc.)
- Sheriff's Instructions

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