

INFORMATION GUIDES

[Return to Fee Schedule Summary](#)

Title	Description
Court Document required	Two copies of the Summons and Petition, Blank Response any other required documents
Purpose of Process	The court obtains jurisdiction of the case when the summons and petition is served. The parties are also restrained from removing minor children and transferring community property.
Sheriff's Instructions	Specify the name and address of the respondent; indicate any Trial Court Reduction time period imposed by the court; list all documents to be served. The petitioner's attorney or the petitioner (if the petitioner doesn't have an attorney) must sign and date the instructions.
Time for Service	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
Manner of Service	Personal Service
Fee Deposit	N/A
Fee	\$40.00
Proof of Service	The Sheriff mails a Proof of Service to the petitioner if the summons and petition are served. If not served, a Not Found/No Service return is mailed to the petitioner explaining the reason for non-service.

Information Guide

A Summons is the process used by the court to obtain jurisdiction in a dissolution, annulment or legal separation lawsuit. The Summons also includes a temporary restraining order that restrains the parties from removing minor children and transferring community property.

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 Sheriff cannot effect service after three attempts or it is determined that the respondent 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 petitioner indicating the date and time 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

- \$40.00 fee deposit
- Two copies of the Summons and Petition, Blank Response any other required documents
- Sheriff's Instructions