

Service of Process in Civil Actions under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(i)

***** EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 4, 2024 – SUPERSEDES PRIOR GUIDANCE *****

Hand Delivery or Email Service as outlined below are the preferred means for service of process on the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(i) because, due to safety and security procedures, all mail sent to the U.S. Attorney's Office is initially routed through a central mail room at the Department of Justice, which can occasionally result in the delay or mis-delivery of that mail. Service will not be deemed perfected until actual receipt by a Civil Process Clerk at the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Litigants who sue federal defendants should note that Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(d)(1) and the corresponding Superior Court Civil Rule 4(c)(4)—which impose a duty to avoid unnecessary expenses of serving the summons on certain individuals, corporations, and associations—do not apply to service on the United States and its agencies, corporations, officers, and employees.

The U.S. Attorney's Office is not authorized to accept service on behalf of the Attorney General or other federal agencies, corporations, officers, or employees. Thus, if an applicable rule requires any such entities and persons to be served, they must be served separately and in addition to service upon the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Hand Delivery and Certified / Registered Mail Service

Service of process on the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia of civil summonses and complaints under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(i)(1)(A) may be made by (i) hand delivery or (ii) registered or certified mail at the following:

Civil Process Clerk
U.S. Attorney's Office for D.C.
601 D Street, NW
Washington, DC 20530

For hand delivery, the entrance to the U.S. Attorney's Office is on D Street, NW, between Sixth and Seventh Streets, NW.

Email Service

In addition to the means of service provided under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(i)(1)(A), the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia may also be served by email according to the following terms and conditions, which must be strictly adhered to if email service is attempted. If service on the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia is performed consistent with the following provisions, the Government will not argue under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(5) that service on the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia has not been accomplished.

- Service may be made at USADC.ServiceCivil@usdoj.gov and no other email address.

- The subject of the email must contain the caption of the suit with the court assigned docket number—e.g., “John v. Doe, 20-9999”.
- The summons, complaint, and all exhibits or other documents must be combined into a single PDF, with the summons coming first in the PDF, unless the file size of the combined PDF exceeds 20 megabytes.
- Service packages exceeding 20 megabytes must be broken into PDF files of no more than 20 megabytes and sent using separate emails with a notation in the subject that it is multi-part service—e.g., “John v. Doe, 20-9999 (Email 1 of 2)”.
- If you are serving a copy of a motion for provisional relief with your summons and complaint (i.e., a motion for a preliminary injunction or temporary restraining order), you must also email the Civil Chief indicating as much. The Civil Chief’s email address can be found on the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s website.

If your service under this procedure is received and accepted, you will receive a responsive email indicating as much, typically within 7 to 10 days after receipt.

Serving the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia via email under these procedures does not relieve a litigant from delivering or serving the other copies as required by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(i)—e.g., to the Attorney General or relevant agencies. Further, the U.S. Attorney’s Office does not waive other requirements for effective service under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4—e.g., the requirements of Rule 4(c)(2), which require a person other than a party to effect service. Additionally, this procedure for email service applies only for service on the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia and not for U.S. Attorney’s Offices for other federal judicial districts or any other component of the Department of Justice.

Please note that the USADC.ServiceCivil@usdoj.gov email address should not be used for any other communications with the U.S. Attorney’s Office aside from civil service of process under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(i)(1)(A). Other communications sent to that address will be deleted and no response will be forthcoming.

Lastly, please note that the information regarding service on this webpage pertains solely to service of a summons and complaint (and materials accompanying those filings) under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(i). It does not pertain to service of filings other than a summons and complaint under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5. If you wish to seek the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s consent to receive service of filings other than a summons and complaint via email before an attorney has appeared in a case, *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 5(b)(2)(E), you should email the Civil Chief.