

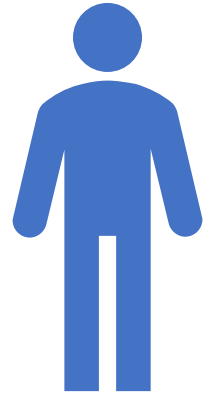
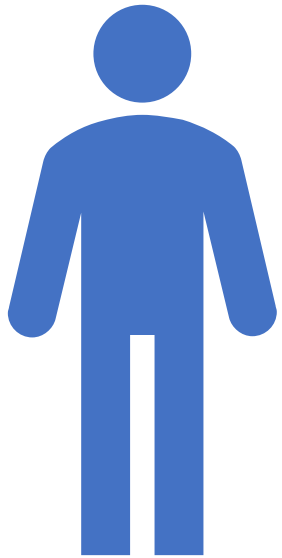


# Guide to Service:

*How to serve court documents for  
Court of Common Pleas civil cases*

**Brought to you by:**

Elder Justice & Civil Resource Center  
First Judicial District of Pennsylvania  
Court of Common Pleas – Civil, Philadelphia County



“Service” is what you must do to let the other parties in the case know that you filed something with the Court. Every time you file something with the court, you must notify the other party.

# How to serve your paperwork

*How you serve your  
paperwork depends on the  
kind of paperwork you are  
filing.*



# There are 2 types of paperwork:

1. Paperwork filed with the court that starts a new case



2. All other paperwork filed with the court after a case has been started



# Serving paperwork that starts a new case

*What are examples of documents that start a new case?*



Complaint



Appeal from Municipal Court

# There are special rules for serving paperwork that **starts** a new case



- The paperwork **must be hand-delivered** to the other side.
- You cannot serve the paperwork to them.

# Serving paperwork that starts a new case

*Who can serve paperwork that starts a new case?*

## 1. An Adult

- Must be over 18 years old.
- Cannot be related to you.
- Cannot be a party in your case.



## 2. Sheriff

- Contact the Sheriff's Office to have them serve your paperwork.
- They may charge a fee .



## 3. A Process Server

- You can hire a private company to serve your paperwork for a fee.



# Serving the other party



- The person serving the paperwork **must** hand-deliver it to the other party.
- If the party cannot be located, the paperwork can be served to the party's legal representative. This is someone who can accept paperwork on the party's behalf.





# Serve the paperwork as soon as possible

- Complete service in 30 calendar days from the date the paperwork is filed.
- If service is not completed in that time, you must file paperwork with the Court to ask for more time to serve your paperwork.

# Telling the court when service is complete

*Once service is complete you must file a “Return of Service Affidavit” with the court. This form must be:*

- Signed by the person who served the document before a notary.
- Filed with the court.



\*\*The Affidavit of Service form can be found online at: <https://www.courts.phila.gov/pdf/forms/civil/Return-of-Service-Affidavit.pdf>

How to serve  
paperwork that  
is filed after a  
case is already  
started



# Serving paperwork filed after a case has been started

*What are examples of documents that are served after a case has already started?*



Answers to Complaints

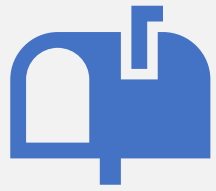


Motions



Petitions

# How do you serve paperwork filed after a case begins?



Mail it to the other parties. If the other parties have an attorney, mail it to the attorney.



Hand deliver it to the other parties or their attorneys.



Fax the paperwork to the other party or their attorney.

*Remember to:*



Check paperwork or  
court docket for  
correct addresses

Serve your  
paperwork as  
soon as  
possible!



# For More Information

- Visit: [www.courts.phila.gov/common-pleas/trial/civil/ojr-civil](http://www.courts.phila.gov/common-pleas/trial/civil/ojr-civil)
- Or Call: (215) 686-6652

