



New Process Server Starter Guide – Washington State

Welcome to the New Process Server Starter Guide for Washington State. This guide provides essential knowledge to help you begin serving legal documents with confidence and compliance.

1. Legal Requirements in Washington State

- You must be 18 years or older.
- You cannot serve documents in a case where you are a party.
- No license is required to be a process server in Washington, but registering as a business is recommended.
- RCW 18.180 governs process server registration.

2. Understanding Due Diligence

- Make multiple attempts at different times of day.
- Attempt at varied days (weekday, weekend).
- Document every attempt: date, time, address, result.
- Take notes and photos when appropriate.

3. What You Can Serve

- Summons and Complaint
- Subpoenas
- Small Claims Notices
- Eviction Notices (14-day, 3-day, etc.)
- Restraining Orders and Protection Orders
- Wage Garnishments and Bank Garnishments

4. How to Conduct a Professional Service

- Always verify the address before attempting.
- Approach safely—identify yourself professionally.
- Ask for the individual by name; do not disclose case details.
- Hand documents directly when possible.
- If substitute service is allowed, understand RCW requirements.
- Never trespass or enter locked areas.

5. Documenting a Service Attempt

- Include: date, time, address, weather, description of interaction.
- Note the person served and relationship to named party.
- Record identifying details when safe and appropriate.
- Maintain neutrality and professionalism.

6. Completing Proof of Service

- Ensure your Proof of Service form matches the document type.
- Include: your name, date of birth, business address, attempts, method of service, and signature.
- Attach photos or notes if required by the client.
- Keep copies for your records.

7. Safety Guidelines

- Always trust your instincts.
- Keep distance and avoid confrontations.
- Use a phone-based tracking system to log attempts.
- Let someone know your route if serving at night.
- Be aware of no-contact orders and safety concerns.

8. Recommended Tools & Equipment

- Smartphone with GPS
- Portable printer (optional)
- Flashlight and reflective vest for night serves
- Notepad or mobile logging app
- Body camera (optional, based on client policy)

9. Helpful Washington State Resources

- RCW 18.180 – Process Servers
- Washington Courts: www.courts.wa.gov
- Court Directory: https://www.courts.wa.gov/court_dir/
- Protection Order Resources: <https://protectionorder.org/>

Thank you for choosing the process serving profession—your role is critical to the justice system. Stay safe, stay professional, and always serve with integrity.