

Rule 4. Process, CO ST RCP Rule 4

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West's Colorado Revised Statutes Annotated

Colorado Court Rules

Chapters 1--24. Rules of Civil Procedure

Chapter 1. Scope of Rules, One Form of Action, Commencement of Action, Service of Process,  
Pleadings, Motions and Orders

C.R.C.P. Rule 4

Rule 4. Process

Currentness

**(a) To What Applicable.** This Rule applies to all process except as otherwise provided by these rules.

**(b) Issuance of Summons by Attorney or Clerk.** The summons may be signed and issued by the clerk, under the seal of the court, or it may be signed and issued by the attorney for the plaintiff. Separate additional or amended summons may issue against any defendant at any time. All other process shall be issued by the clerk, except as otherwise provided in these rules.

**(c) Contents of Summons.**

(1) The summons shall contain the name of the court, the county in which the action is brought, the names or designation of the parties, shall be directed to the defendant, shall state the time within which the defendant is required to appear and defend against the claims of the complaint, and shall notify the defendant that in case of the defendant's failure to do so, judgment by default may be rendered against the defendant. If the summons is served by publication, the summons shall briefly state the sum of money or other relief demanded. The summons shall contain the name, address, and registration number of the plaintiff's attorney, if any, and if none, the address of the plaintiff. Except in case of service by publication under Rule 4(g) or when otherwise ordered by the court, the complaint shall be served with the summons. In any case, where by special order personal service of summons is allowed without the complaint, a copy of the order shall be served with the summons.

(2) In forcible entry and detainer cases, the summons shall also contain all language and information required by statute, and in addition to the completed Form JDF 101: Eviction Complaint, be accompanied by a blank copy of Form JDF 103: Eviction Answer, and a blank copy of Form JDF 108: Request for Documents in Eviction Cases. Plaintiff may use, and the court shall accept, documents filed or served on different forms if those forms meet all of the requirements of [section 13-40-110, C.R.S.](#), [section 13-40-111, C.R.S.](#), and any other applicable statutes.

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**(d) By Whom Served.** Process may be served within the United States or its Territories by any person whose age is eighteen years or older, not a party to the action. Process served in a foreign country shall be according to any internationally agreed means reasonably calculated to give notice, the law of the foreign country, or as directed by the foreign authority or the court if not otherwise prohibited by international agreement.

**(e) Personal Service.** Personal service shall be as follows:

(1) Upon a natural person whose age is eighteen years or older by delivering a copy thereof to the person, or by leaving a copy thereof at the person's usual place of abode, with any person whose age is eighteen years or older and who is a member of the person's family, or at the person's usual workplace, with the person's supervisor, secretary, administrative assistant, bookkeeper, human resources representative or managing agent; or by delivering a copy to a person authorized by appointment or by law to receive service of process.

(2) Upon a natural person whose age is at least thirteen years and less than eighteen years, by delivering a copy thereof to the person and another copy thereof to the person's father, mother, or guardian, or if there be none in the state, then by delivering a copy thereof to any person in whose care or control the person may be; or with whom the person resides, or in whose service the person is employed; and upon a natural person under the age of thirteen years by delivering a copy to the person's father, mother, or guardian, or if there be none in the state, then by delivering a copy thereof to the person in whose care or control the person may be.

(3) Upon a person for whom a conservator has been appointed, by delivering a copy thereof to such conservator.

(4) Upon any form of corporation, partnership, association, cooperative, limited liability company, limited partnership association, trust, organization, or other form of entity that is recognized under the laws of this state or of any other jurisdiction, (including any such organization, association or entity serving as an agent for service of process for itself or for another entity) by delivering a copy thereof to the registered agent for service as set forth in the most recently filed document in the records of the secretary of state of this state or of any other jurisdiction, or that agent's secretary or assistant, or one of the following:

(A) An officer of any form of entity having officers, or that officer's secretary or assistant;

(B) A general partner of any form of partnership, or that general partner's secretary or assistant;

(C) A manager of a limited liability company or limited partnership association in which management is vested in managers rather than members, or that manager's secretary or assistant;

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(D) A member of a limited liability company or limited partnership association in which management is vested in the members or in which management is vested in managers and there are no managers, or that member's secretary or assistant;

(E) A trustee of a trust, or that trustee's secretary or assistant;

(F) The functional equivalent of any person described in paragraphs (A) through (E) of this subsection (4), regardless of such person's title, under:

(I) the articles of incorporation, articles of organization, certificate of limited partnership, articles of association, statement of registration, or other documents of similar import duly filed or recorded by which the entity or any or all of its owners obtains status as an entity or the attribute of limited liability, or

(II) the law pursuant to which the entity is formed or which governs the operation of the entity;

(G) If no person listed in subsection (4) of this rule can be found in this state, upon any person serving as a shareholder, member, partner, or other person having an ownership or similar interest in, or any director, agent, or principal employee of such entity, who can be found in this state, or service as otherwise provided by law.

(5) [Repealed eff. March 23, 2006.]

(6) Upon a municipal corporation, by delivering a copy thereof to the mayor, city manager, clerk, or deputy clerk.

(7) Upon a county, by delivering a copy thereof to the county clerk, chief deputy, or county commissioner.

(8) Upon a school district, by delivering a copy thereof to the superintendent.

(9) Upon the state by delivering a copy thereof to the attorney general.

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(10)(A) Upon an officer, agent, or employee of the state, acting in an official capacity, by delivering a copy thereof to the officer, agent, or employee, and by delivering a copy to the attorney general.

(B) Upon a department or agency of the state, subject to suit, by delivering a copy thereof to the principal officer, chief clerk, or other executive employee thereof, and by delivering a copy to the attorney general.

(C) For all purposes the date of service upon the officer, agent, employee, department, or agency shall control, except that failure to serve copies upon the attorney general within 7 days of service upon the officer, agent, employee, department, or agency shall extend the time within which the officer, agent, employee, department, or agency must file a responsive pleading for 63 days (9 weeks) beyond the time otherwise provided by these Rules.

(11) Upon other political subdivisions of the State of Colorado, special districts, or quasi-municipal entities, by delivering a copy thereof to any officer or general manager, unless otherwise provided by law.

(12) Upon any of the entities or persons listed in subsections (4) through (11) of this section (e) by delivering a copy to any designee authorized to accept service of process for such entity or person, or by delivery to a person authorized by appointment or law to receive service of process for such entity or person. The delivery shall be made in any manner permitted by such appointment or law.

**(f) Substituted Service.** In the event that a party attempting service of process by personal service under section (e) is unable to accomplish service, and service by publication or mail is not otherwise permitted under section (g), the party may file a motion, supported by an affidavit of the person attempting service, for an order for substituted service. The motion shall state (1) the efforts made to obtain personal service and the reason that personal service could not be obtained, (2) the identity of the person to whom the party wishes to deliver the process, and (3) the address, or last known address of the workplace and residence, if known, of the party upon whom service is to be effected. If the court is satisfied that due diligence has been used to attempt personal service under section (e), that further attempts to obtain service under section (e) would be to no avail, and that the person to whom delivery of the process is appropriate under the circumstances and reasonably calculated to give actual notice to the party upon whom service is to be effective, it shall:

(1) authorize delivery to be made to the person deemed appropriate for service, and

(2) order the process to be mailed to the address(es) of the party to be served by substituted service, as set forth in the motion, on or before the date of delivery. Service shall be complete on the date of delivery to the person deemed appropriate for service.

**(g) Other Service.** Except as otherwise provided by law, service by mail or publication shall be allowed only in actions

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affecting specific property or status or other proceedings in rem. When service is by publication, the complaint need not be published with the summons. The party desiring service of process by mail or publication under this section (g) shall file a motion verified by the oath of such party or of someone in the party's behalf for an order of service by mail or publication. It shall state the facts authorizing such service, and shall show the efforts, if any, that have been made to obtain personal service and shall give the address, or last known address, of each person to be served or shall state that the address and last known address are unknown. The court, if satisfied that due diligence has been used to obtain personal service or that efforts to obtain the same would have been to no avail, shall:

(1) Order the party to send by registered or certified mail a copy of the process addressed to such person at such address, requesting a return receipt signed by the addressee only. Such service shall be complete on the date of the filing of proof thereof, together with such return receipt attached thereto signed by such addressee, or

(2) Order publication of the process in a newspaper published in the county in which the action is pending. Such publication shall be made once each week for five successive weeks. Within 14 days after the order the party shall mail a copy of the process to each person whose address or last known address has been stated in the motion and file proof thereof. Service shall be complete on the day of the last publication. If no newspaper is published in the county, the court shall designate one in some adjoining county.

**(h) Manner of Proof.** Proof of service shall be made as follows:

(1) If served personally, by a statement, certified by the sheriff, marshal or similar governmental official, or a sworn or unsworn declaration by any other person completing the service as to date, place, and manner of service;

(2) [Repealed eff. March 23, 2006.]

(3) If served by mail, by a sworn or unsworn declaration showing the date of the mailing with the return receipt attached, where required;

(4) If served by publication, by a sworn or unsworn declaration that includes the mailing of a copy of the process where required;

(5) If served by waiver, by a sworn or unsworn declaration admitting or waiving service by the person or persons served, or by their attorney;

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(6) If served by substituted service, by a sworn or unsworn declaration as to the date, place, and manner of service, and that the process was also mailed to the party to be served by substituted service, setting forth the address(es) where the process was mailed.

**(i) Waiver of Service of Summons.** A defendant who waives service of a summons does not thereby waive any objection to the venue or to the jurisdiction of the court over the defendant.

**(j) Amendment.** At any time in its discretion and upon such terms as it deems just, the court may allow any process or proof of service thereof to be amended, unless it clearly appears that material prejudice would result to the substantial rights of the party against whom the process is issued.

**(k) Refusal of Copy.** If a person to be served refuses to accept a copy of the process, service shall be sufficient if the person serving the process knows or has reason to identify the person who refuses to be served, identifies the documents being served, offers to deliver a copy of the documents to the person who refuses to be served, and thereafter leaves a copy in a conspicuous place.

**(l) No Colorado Rule.**

**(m) Time Limit for Service.** If a defendant is not served within 63 days (nine weeks) after the complaint is filed, the court--on motion or on its own after notice to the plaintiff--shall dismiss the action without prejudice against that defendant or order that service be made within a specified time. But if the plaintiff shows good cause for the failure, the court shall extend the time for service for an appropriate period. This subdivision (m) does not apply to service in a foreign country under rule 4(d).

**Credits**

Amended effective July 1, 1997; March 23, 2006; February 7, 2008; January 1, 2012; June 21, 2012; September 5, 2013; April 17, 2020; May 2, 2024; December 19, 2024; January 16, 2025.

**Editors' Notes**

**COMMENTS**

**2020 [Amendment]**

Rule 4(h) on the manner of proving service was amended following the adoption in 2018 of the Uniform Unsworn Declarations Act. [C.R.S. § 13-27-101 et seq.](#) This Act defines a “sworn declaration,” which includes an affidavit, and an “unsworn declaration,” which “means a declaration in a signed record that is not given under oath, but is given under penalty

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of perjury.” § 13-27-102(6) and (7). An unsworn declaration which complies with the Act is sufficient to prove service under Rule 4(h).

[Notes of Decisions \(308\)](#)

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Current with amendments received through July 1, 2025.

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