

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2007**

**SESSION LAW 2008-36  
HOUSE BILL 2287**

AN ACT TO EXPRESSLY AUTHORIZE THE USE OF ELECTRONIC OR FACSIMILE RECEIPTS UNDER RULE 4 OF THE RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE WHEN SERVICE OF PROCESS IS PROVIDED BY A DESIGNATED PRIVATE DELIVERY SERVICE, AND TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES REGARDING PROOF OF SERVICE, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE GENERAL STATUTES COMMISSION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4(j), reads as rewritten:

"(j) Process – Manner of service to exercise personal jurisdiction. – In any action commenced in a court of this State having jurisdiction of the subject matter and grounds for personal jurisdiction as provided in G.S. 1-75.4, the manner of service of process within or without the State shall be as follows:

- (1) Natural Person. – Except as provided in ~~subsection~~subdivision (2) below, upon a natural person by one of the following:
  - a. By delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to the natural person or by leaving copies thereof at the defendant's dwelling house or usual place of abode with some person of suitable age and discretion then residing therein.
  - b. By delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to an agent authorized by appointment or by law to be served or to accept service of process or by serving process upon such agent or the party in a manner specified by any statute.
  - c. By mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the party to be served, and delivering to the addressee.
  - d. By depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the party to be served, delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.
  - e. By mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint by signature confirmation as provided by the United States Postal Service, addressed to the party to be served, and delivering to the addressee. ~~Nothing in this sub-subdivision authorizes the use of electronic mailing for service on the party to be served.~~
- (2) Natural Person under Disability. – Upon a natural person under disability by serving process in any manner prescribed in this section (j) for service upon a natural person and, in addition, where required by paragraph a or b below, upon a person therein designated.
  - a. Where the person under disability is a minor, process shall be served separately in any manner prescribed for service upon a natural person upon a parent or guardian having custody of the child, or if there be none, upon any other person having the care

and control of the child. If there is no parent, guardian, or other person having care and control of the child when service is made upon the child, then service of process must also be made upon a guardian ad litem who has been appointed pursuant to Rule 17.

- b. If the plaintiff actually knows that a person under disability is under guardianship of any kind, process shall be served separately upon his guardian in any manner applicable and appropriate under this section (j). If the plaintiff does not actually know that a guardian has been appointed when service is made upon a person known to him to be incompetent to have charge of his affairs, then service of process must be made upon a guardian ad litem who has been appointed pursuant to Rule 17.
- (3) The State. – Upon the State by personally delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to the Attorney General or to a deputy or assistant attorney general; by mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the Attorney General or to a deputy or assistant attorney general; or by depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the Attorney General or to a deputy or assistant attorney general, delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.
  - (4) An Agency of the State. –
    - a. Upon an agency of the State by personally delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to the process agent appointed by the agency in the manner hereinafter provided; by mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to said process agent; or by depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the process agent, delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.
    - b. Every agency of the State shall appoint a process agent by filing with the Attorney General the name and address of an agent upon whom process may be served.
    - c. If any agency of the State fails to comply with paragraph b above, then service upon such agency may be made by personally delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to the Attorney General or to a deputy or assistant attorney general; by mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the Attorney General, or to a deputy or assistant attorney general; or by depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the Attorney General or to a deputy or assistant attorney general, delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.

- d. For purposes of this rule, the term "agency of the State" includes every agency, institution, board, commission, bureau, department, division, council, member of Council of State, or officer of the State government of the State of North Carolina, but does not include counties, cities, towns, villages, other municipal corporations or political subdivisions of the State, county or city boards of education, other local public districts, units, or bodies of any kind, or private corporations created by act of the General Assembly.
- (5) Counties, Cities, Towns, Villages and Other Local Public Bodies. –
- a. Upon a city, town, or village by personally delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to its mayor, city manager or clerk; by mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to its mayor, city manager or clerk; or by depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the mayor, city manager, or clerk, delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.
  - b. Upon a county by personally delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to its county manager or to the chairman, clerk or any member of the board of commissioners for such county; by mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to its county manager or to the chairman, clerk, or any member of this board of commissioners for such county; or by depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the county manager or to the chairman, clerk, or any member of the board of commissioners of that county, delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.
  - c. Upon any other political subdivision of the State, any county or city board of education, or other local public district, unit, or body of any kind (i) by personally delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to an officer or director thereof, (ii) by personally delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to an agent or attorney-in-fact authorized by appointment or by statute to be served or to accept service in its behalf, (iii) by mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the officer, director, agent, or attorney-in-fact as specified in (i) and (ii), or (iv) by depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the officer, director, agent, or attorney-in-fact as specified in (i) and (ii), delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.
  - d. In any case where none of the officials, officers or directors specified in paragraphs a, b and c can, after due diligence, be found in the State, and that fact appears by affidavit to the

satisfaction of the court, or a judge thereof, such court or judge may grant an order that service upon the party sought to be served may be made by personally delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to the Attorney General or any deputy or assistant attorney general of the State of North Carolina; by mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the Attorney General or any deputy or assistant attorney general of the State of North Carolina; or by depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the Attorney General or any deputy or assistant attorney general of the State of North Carolina, delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.

- (6) Domestic or Foreign Corporation. – Upon a domestic or foreign corporation by one of the following:
- a. By delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to an officer, director, or managing agent of the corporation or by leaving copies thereof in the office of such officer, director, or managing agent with the person who is apparently in charge of the office.
  - b. By delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to an agent authorized by appointment or by law to be served or to accept service of process or by serving process upon such agent or the party in a manner specified by any statute.
  - c. By mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the officer, director or agent to be served as specified in paragraphs a and b.
  - d. By depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the officer, director, or agent to be served as specified in paragraphs a. and b., delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.
- (7) Partnerships. – Upon a general or limited partnership:
- a. By delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to any general partner, or to any attorney-in-fact or agent authorized by appointment or by law to be served or to accept service of process in its behalf; by mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to any general partner, or to any attorney-in-fact or agent authorized by appointment or by law to be served or to accept service of process in its behalf; or by depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to any general partner or to any attorney-in-fact or agent authorized by appointment or by law to be served or to accept service of process in its behalf, delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt; or by leaving copies thereof in the office of such general partner, attorney-in-fact or agent with the person who is apparently in

charge of the office. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.

- b. If relief is sought against a partner specifically, a copy of the summons and of the complaint must be served on such partner as provided in this section (j).
- (8) Other Unincorporated Associations and Their Officers. – Upon any unincorporated association, organization, or society other than a partnership by one of the following:
- a. By delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to an officer, director, managing agent or member of the governing body of the unincorporated association, organization or society, or by leaving copies thereof in the office of such officer, director, managing agent or member of the governing body with the person who is apparently in charge of the office.
  - b. By delivering a copy of the summons and of the complaint to an agent authorized by appointment or by law to be served or to accept service of process or by serving process upon such agent or the party in a manner specified by any statute.
  - c. By mailing a copy of the summons and of the complaint, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the officer, director, agent or member of the governing body to be served as specified in paragraphs a and b.
  - d. By depositing with a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) a copy of the summons and complaint, addressed to the officer, director, agent, or member of the governing body to be served as specified in paragraphs a. and b., delivering to the addressee, and obtaining a delivery receipt. As used in this sub-subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt.
- (9) Foreign States and Their Political Subdivisions, Agencies, and Instrumentalities. – ~~Service upon~~ Upon a foreign state or a political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality thereof shall be effected thereof, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1608."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4(j2), reads as rewritten:

"(j2) Proof of service. – Proof of service of process shall be as follows:

- (1) Personal Service. – Before judgment by default may be had on personal service, proof of service must be provided in accordance with the requirements of ~~G.S. 1-75.10(1)~~. G.S. 1-75.10(a)(1).
- (2) Registered or Certified Mail, Signature Confirmation, or Designated Delivery Service. – Before judgment by default may be had on service by registered or certified mail, signature confirmation, or by a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) with delivery receipt, the serving party shall file an affidavit with the court showing proof of such service in accordance with the requirements of ~~G.S. 1-75.10(4), 1-75.10(5), or 1-75.10(6)~~, G.S. 1-75.10(a)(4), 1-75.10(a)(5), or 1-75.10(a)(6), as appropriate. This affidavit together with the return ~~or delivery receipt or receipt~~, copy of the proof of delivery provided by the United States Postal Service ~~Service, or delivery receipt~~, signed by the person who received the mail or delivery if not the addressee raises a presumption that the person who received the mail or delivery and signed the receipt was an agent of the addressee authorized by appointment or by law to be served or to accept service of process or was a person of suitable age and discretion residing in the addressee's dwelling house or usual place of abode. In the event the presumption described in the

preceding sentence is rebutted by proof that the person who received the receipt at the addressee's dwelling house or usual place of abode was not a person of suitable age and discretion residing therein, the statute of limitation may not be pleaded as a defense if the action was initially commenced within the period of limitation and service of process is completed within 60 days from the date the service is declared invalid. Service shall be complete on the day the summons and complaint are delivered to the address. As used in this subdivision, "delivery receipt" includes an electronic or facsimile receipt provided by a designated delivery service.

- (3) Publication. – Before judgment by default may be had on service by publication, the serving party shall file an affidavit with the court showing the circumstances warranting the use of service by publication, information, if any, regarding the location of the party served which was used in determining the area in which service by publication was printed and proof of service in accordance with ~~G.S. 1-75.10(2)~~. G.S. 1-75.10(a)(2)."

**SECTION 3.** G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4, is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(j6) Service by electronic mailing not authorized. – Nothing in subsection (j) of this section authorizes the use of electronic mailing for service on the party to be served."

**SECTION 4.** G.S. 1-75.10 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 1-75.10. Proof of service of summons, defendant appearing in action.**

(a) Where the defendant appears in the action and challenges the service of the summons upon him, proof of the service of process shall be as follows:

- (5) Service by Designated Delivery Service. – In the case of service by designated delivery service, by affidavit of the serving party ~~averring;averring all of the following:~~
- a. That a copy of the summons and complaint was deposited with a designated delivery service as authorized under G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4, ~~delivery receipt requested;requested.~~
  - b. That it was in fact received as evidenced by the attached delivery receipt or other evidence satisfactory to the court of delivery to the ~~addressee; and~~addressee.
  - c. That the ~~genuine~~ delivery receipt or other evidence of delivery is attached.

~~....~~  
(b) As used in subdivision (5) of subsection (a) of this section, "delivery receipt" includes a facsimile receipt and a printout of an electronic receipt."

**SECTION 5.** G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4(j1), reads as rewritten:

"(j1) Service by publication on party that cannot otherwise be served. – A party that cannot with due diligence be served by personal delivery, registered or certified mail, or by a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) may be served by publication. Except in actions involving jurisdiction in rem or quasi in rem as provided in section (k), service of process by publication shall consist of publishing a notice of service of process by publication once a week for three successive weeks in a newspaper that is qualified for legal advertising in accordance with G.S. 1-597 and G.S. 1-598 and circulated in the area where the party to be served is believed by the serving party to be located, or if there is no reliable information concerning the location of the party then in a newspaper circulated in the county where the action is pending. If the party's post-office address is known or can with reasonable diligence be ascertained, there shall be mailed to the party at or immediately prior to the first publication a copy of the notice of service of process by publication. The mailing

