

How to Serve Business and Corporation Papers in Oklahoma

A Step-by-Step Guide for Process Servers

Corporations · LLCs · Partnerships · Sole Proprietors · Out-of-State Entities

Just Legal Solutions

Oklahoma Process Serving Resource Library

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Table of Contents

Right-click and select "Update Field" to refresh page numbers

Required Documents Checklist.....	1
Understanding Business Entity Types.....	2
Service Methods Comparison.....	3
Step-by-Step: Serving a Corporation.....	4
Step-by-Step: Serving an LLC.....	5
Step-by-Step: Serving a Partnership.....	6
Step-by-Step: Serving a Sole Proprietor.....	6
Step-by-Step: Serving Out-of-State Entities.....	7
Common Reasons Service Fails.....	8
Key Statutes and Deadlines.....	8
Important Disclaimer.....	9



Required Documents Checklist

Before you attempt to serve papers on any business entity, gather these items. Check each one off as you complete it.

Documents to Prepare

- Certified copy of the summons and petition for each entity being served
- Copy of the summons and petition for each person who will receive service
- Blank Affidavit of Service form for your return
- Process server license (carry at all times while on duty)
- Photo ID showing your name and license status
- \$5,000 surety bond documentation (if requested)

Research to Complete

- Verify the correct legal name of the business entity
- Find the registered agent name and address on sos.ok.gov
- Confirm the entity is still active (not dissolved or suspended)
- Identify the correct person to serve based on entity type
- Check if the entity is domestic (Oklahoma) or foreign (out-of-state)

Before You Leave

- Print or load maps and directions to the service location
- Charge your phone or GPS device
- Bring a pen and notepad for field notes
- Have your camera ready for documenting the location
- Confirm business hours if serving at a commercial location



Understanding Business Entity Types

Oklahoma law treats each type of business entity differently when it comes to service of process. The table below shows the key differences.

Entity Type	Who to Serve	Primary Statute	Best Method
Corporation	Registered agent, President, or Secretary	12 O.S. §2004	Personal delivery to registered agent
LLC (Limited Liability Co.)	Manager or registered agent	18 O.S. §2010	Personal delivery to manager or agent
Partnership	General partner	12 O.S. §2004	Personal delivery to any general partner
Sole Proprietor	The owner personally	12 O.S. §2004	Personal delivery at home or business
Out-of-State Entity	OK Secretary of State	12 O.S. §2004(C)(4)	Serve the OK SOS as statutory agent
Unknown / No Agent	Secretary of State or publication	12 O.S. §2004(C)(3)	SOS service or court-ordered method

Note: Verify the entity type at <https://sos.ok.gov> before attempting service. Entity status can change.

Service Methods Comparison

There are several ways to serve a business entity. Each method has different rules. Pick the method that fits your situation.

Method	When to Use	How It Works	Proof Required
Registered Agent	Entity has an active registered agent on file	Hand papers to the agent personally. Get name and title.	Affidavit with agent name, date, time, place
Officer / Manager	Serving corporation officer or LLC manager directly	Hand papers to the officer at their office or usual place of business.	Affidavit with officer name, title, date, time, place
OK Secretary of State	Out-of-state entity or no registered agent found	Deliver papers to SOS office. SOS sends notice to entity by certified mail.	SOS receipt plus your affidavit of delivery



Method	When to Use	How It Works	Proof Required
Substituted Service	Person to be served is not available	Leave copies at dwelling with person age 15+ residing there.	Affidavit with name of person who accepted, their age, relationship
Certified Mail	Entity has agreed to accept service by mail	Send by certified mail, return receipt requested, restricted to addressee only.	Return receipt signed by addressee
Court-Ordered Method	All other methods fail after due diligence	File affidavit of due diligence. Court orders an alternate method.	Court order + affidavit showing compliance

Personal delivery is the most reliable method. It leaves the least room for the entity to challenge service later. Always try personal delivery first if you can.

Finding the Registered Agent

The Oklahoma Secretary of State website is the official source for registered agent information. Follow these steps:

- 1. Go to <https://sos.ok.gov>** --- Open the Oklahoma Secretary of State website in your browser.
- 2. Click Business Entity Search** --- Look for the business entity search or entity filings section.
- 3. Enter the business name** --- Type the exact or partial name of the business you need to serve.
- 4. Review search results** --- Find the matching entity and click to view details.
- 5. Record the agent info** --- Write down the registered agent name, address, and entity status.

Tip: Print or screenshot the SOS search results. This proves you used the official record at the time of service.

Step-by-Step: Serving a Corporation

Corporations are separate legal persons under Oklahoma law. You must serve the right person or the service may be invalid. 12 O.S. §2004(C)(2) governs service on corporations.



Who You Can Serve

Person	Title Requirements	Notes
Registered Agent	Listed on SOS file	Most reliable method. Agent is appointed to accept service.
President	Current corporate president	Verify title if possible. Ask the person their title.
Secretary	Current corporate secretary	Corporate secretary, not administrative assistant.
Managing Agent	Person with substantial management control	Verify with the court if this title applies.

Procedure Steps

- Search sos.ok.gov to find the registered agent name and address.
- Go to the registered agent address during normal business hours.
- Ask for the registered agent by name. If unavailable, ask for the president or secretary.
- Hand the summons and petition to the person. State: You are being served with legal papers.
- If the person refuses to take the papers, place them on a desk or table near the person and leave.
- Record the persons name, title, date, time, and exact location of service.
- Complete your Affidavit of Service the same day while memory is fresh.

If the Registered Agent Is No Longer There

Sometimes the registered agent has moved, quit, or died. If this happens:

- Ask the receptionist or office manager who replaced the agent.
- Check the SOS website again for updated agent information.
- If no valid agent exists, serve the Oklahoma Secretary of State under 12 O.S. §2004(C)(4).
- File an affidavit explaining why the registered agent could not be served.

Step-by-Step: Serving an LLC

Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) have different service rules than corporations. 18 O.S. §2010 governs service on Oklahoma LLCs. Verify the current statute before serving.

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Page 6 of 12



Who You Can Serve

Person	When to Use	Notes
Registered Agent	Agent is active on SOS file	Best option. LLCs must maintain a registered agent.
Manager	LLC has managers listed	A manager runs the LLC. Not all LLCs have managers.
Member (Verify)	No manager or agent available	Some LLCs allow service on members. Verify with the court.

Procedure Steps

- Search sos.ok.gov for the LLC name and registered agent.
- Check if the LLC is member-managed or manager-managed on the filing.
- If manager-managed, serve the registered agent or a listed manager.
- If member-managed, serve the registered agent first.
- Hand papers personally and identify yourself as a licensed process server.
- Document the managers name, your attempt details, and complete the affidavit.

Step-by-Step: Serving a Partnership

Partnerships include general partnerships, limited partnerships (LPs), and limited liability partnerships (LLPs). Service is made on any general partner.

Who You Can Serve

Partner Type	Can You Serve?	Notes
General Partner	Yes	Always the correct person to serve.
Limited Partner	No	Limited partners do not manage the business.
Registered Agent	Yes	If partnership has a registered agent, serve the agent.



Procedure Steps

- Search sos.ok.gov to confirm the partnership type and general partners.
- Find the general partners business address or usual place of business.
- Serve the general partner personally with the summons and petition.
- If the general partner is not available, try substituted service at the dwelling.
- If no general partner can be found, serve the Oklahoma Secretary of State.

Step-by-Step: Serving a Sole Proprietor

A sole proprietorship is not a separate legal entity. The business and the owner are the same person under the law. Serve the owner personally.

Key Points

- Search for the owners name, not just the business name.
- Serve the owner at their home or place of business.
- If the owner is not available, use substituted service at the dwelling with a person age 15+.
- Do not serve employees. Only the owner counts for valid service.

Step-by-Step: Serving Out-of-State Entities

When a business from another state does business in Oklahoma, service can often be made through the Oklahoma Secretary of State. 12 O.S. §2004(C)(4) creates this option.

When to Use SOS Service

- The out-of-state entity is registered to do business in Oklahoma.
- The entity's registered agent in Oklahoma cannot be found.
- The entity has no Oklahoma office or agent.
- Other methods of service have failed after due diligence.

How to Serve the SOS

Step	Action	Details
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Page 8 of 12



1	Prepare two copies	One copy for the SOS, one for the SOS to mail to the entity.
2	Go to SOS office	Oklahoma Secretary of State, 421 N.W. 13th St., Suite 100, OKC. Verify address with the court.
3	Deliver papers	Hand the summons and petition to the SOS or designated staff.
4	Get receipt	The SOS will provide a receipt showing date and time of delivery.
5	SOS mails notice	Within 3 working days, SOS sends notice by certified mail to the entity.
6	Complete affidavit	File your affidavit showing you served the SOS on the stated date.

Note: The SOS charges a fee for this service. Verify the current fee before you go. The SOS mailing starts the clock for the entity to respond.

Common Reasons Service Fails

Service on business entities fails more often than service on individuals. Avoid these common mistakes to protect your work and your clients case.

Mistake	Why It Fails	How to Avoid It
Wrong person served	Only certain people can accept service for each entity type.	Always verify the persons name and title before leaving papers.
Agent no longer works there	The SOS record may be outdated.	Call ahead to confirm the agent is still at the listed address.
Entity is dissolved	A dissolved company may not have valid agents.	Check SOS status before attempting service.
Employee takes papers	Employees cannot accept service unless they are the registered agent.	Ask: Are you the registered agent? Get a clear yes or no.
Business moved	The address on file may be old.	Verify the address through SOS and



Mistake	Why It Fails	How to Avoid It
		a quick phone call or web search.
Not enough copies	You must leave a complete set of papers.	Bring at least two full copies: one to leave, one for your records.
Incomplete affidavit	Missing details void the proof of service.	Include name, title, date, time, place, and method on every affidavit.
Waiting too long	Service must happen within 180 days of filing.	Attempt service within the first 30 days after receiving the papers.

Key Statutes and Deadlines

These are the most important legal deadlines and rules for serving business papers in Oklahoma. All citations come from the Oklahoma statutes.

Rule	Statute	What It Means for You
180-day deadline	12 O.S. §2004(I)	Service must be completed within 180 days after the petition is filed. If not, the case may be dismissed.
Proof of service	12 O.S. §2004(G)(2)	Licensed process servers must file an affidavit showing county, name served, date, place, and method.
Serve SOS for out-of-state	12 O.S. §2004(C)(4)	The SOS acts as agent for service on foreign corporations and entities with no Oklahoma agent.
Service by publication	12 O.S. §2004(C)(3)	If no other method works, publish one day a week for three weeks after filing affidavit of due diligence.
Amendment allowed	12 O.S. §2004(H)	Courts can fix errors in proof of service unless material prejudice would result.
No service by prisoner	12 O.S. §2004(C)(7)	Prisoners, parolees, and probationers cannot serve process.
Summons and petition together	12 O.S. §2004(D)	Always serve the summons and



Rule	Statute	What It Means for You
LLC service on manager	18 O.S. §2010	petition together. Write the service date on the copy left. Service on LLCs may be made on a manager or registered agent. Verify with the court.

Defendant Response Deadlines

After service is completed, the defendant has a limited time to respond:

- Civil cases: Defendant must file a response within 20 days after being served.
- Small claims: Deadlines vary by court. Check with the court clerk.
- Forcible entry and detainer (eviction): Deadlines are shorter. Verify with the court.

Your Deadlines as Server

You also have deadlines to meet. Do not wait to complete your paperwork.

- Make proof of service promptly after completing service.
- File the affidavit within the time the defendant has to respond.
- Return all proofs to the court clerk or your client without delay.

Important Disclaimer

NOT A LAW FIRM

This document provides procedural information only. It is not legal advice. Just Legal Solutions is not a law firm. The information here is based on Oklahoma statutes and court rules as of April 2026.

Laws change. Always verify current statutes, rules, and fees before relying on any procedural detail. Consult an attorney for legal advice about your specific case.

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