

A Maryland Judiciary Production
My Law, My Courts, My Maryland
Service of Process – How to Serve a Business

Hello. This video provides information about service of process if you are filing a court case against a business. For general information about service of process, be sure to watch one of the other videos in this series – *Service of Process in the Circuit Court* or *Service of Process in the District Court*. You need to know about one extra step you must take if you are filing a lawsuit against a business. Businesses are required to register a full legal name and contact information with the state in which they are incorporated. We will cover how to find this information. You will need it to file your case and serve the business. Let's get started

CHAPTER HEADING - BEFORE YOU FILE YOUR CASE

Gather the necessary information about the business before you start the court filing document. First look up the business to determine if it is registered with the state of Maryland. This information is publicly available from the Maryland Department of Assessments. It can be accessed online at www.dat.state.md.us, under "Search the Business Database" or by calling 410-767-1184. If the business is registered, get the following information:

- The full legal name of the business and
- The name and address of the business' resident agent.

Sometimes, the name a business uses is different from its trade name. For example, the business you deal with might be known to you as Lenny's Variety Store, but it may be registered with the state as Leonard Lufkin & Associates, Inc. "Lenny's Variety Store" is called the "trade name." Be sure to use the official registered name of the business, and not the trade name on your court documents. You may find the business is not registered in the State of Maryland or you simply can't find it. To avoid complications, consider seeking advice from an attorney before filing your case.

CHAPTER HEADING - FILLING OUT THE COMPLAINT

When you fill out the complaint form, there will be a space to enter information about the defendant. In this space, you must write the business's full legal name. Be sure to include any suffix to the business name, such as LLC, Inc., or LP Beneath the name of the business, you should also write the words "serve on resident agent." Then write the name and address of the resident agent.

CHAPTER HEADING - HOW THE BUSINESS IS SERVED

Businesses are served through their resident agent. This is a person or entity the business has designated to accept all court notices. Resident agents are required for all registered businesses. The resident agent may be served by sheriff, certified mail, or private process. In some situations, you may be able to serve an officer of the business.

CHAPTER HEADING - LET'S REVIEW

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Before filing a case against a business, look up the business' full legal name and resident agent information. Write this information on the complaint form before filing it with the court. A business is Served by having its resident agent served. This can be done by certified mail, sheriff, or private process.

For more information on service of process, refer to our videos on service of process in the circuit and district courts. You can find more information about service of process and other legal topics on the People's Law Library website at peoples-law.org. Finally, if you need additional help, speak with a lawyer free of charge at the Maryland Courts Self-Help Center. These lawyers cannot represent you in court, but they can provide brief advice and help with court forms. Call 410-260-1392. The call center is open most weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thanks for watching.