

26th Judicial District SelfServe Center District COMPLAINT

NOTE:

THIS PACKET CONTAINS INFORMATION REGARDING FILING A GENERAL CIVIL DISTRICT COURT CLAIM.

DUE TO THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE LAW, the forms and information contained in this packet may become outdated. Therefore, you should review and research statutes and rules of procedure referenced in the instructions to ensure that the forms are accurate and current.

IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS in your mind concerning these forms, the use of these forms, or your legal rights, it is strongly recommended that you consult with or retain an attorney.

IN NO EVENT will the SelfServe Center staff, Clerk of Court, Caseflow Management Division, or anyone contributing to the production of these forms, instructions, or guidelines be liable for any indirect or consequential damages resulting from the use of the forms or information provided to you by the SelfServe Center.

USE THESE FORMS AT YOUR OWN RISK. THESE FORMS MAY OR MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE IN YOUR PARTICULAR CASE. ANY DESIRED OUTCOME FROM THE USE OF THESE FORMS CANNOT BE PREDICTED OR GUARANTEED. IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT YOU SEEK LEGAL ADVICE!

THE FILING FEE FOR THIS ACTION IS:	\$150
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PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THE FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN THIS PACKET.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONSULT WITH AN ATTORNEY.

THESE ARE EDUCATIONAL FORMS DESIGNED TO ASSIST YOU, BUT YOU ARE REPRESENTING YOURSELF. PLEASE REVIEW AND FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE IN YOUR CASE. FAILURE TO READ AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS MAY ADVERSELY IMPACT YOUR CLAIM.

INTRODUCTION

What is this?

This packet of information is provided for individuals who wish to pursue a case without the assistance of an attorney. This is called a *pro se* or self represented case. If you are not sure that you want or need to go to court, please ask the Self Serve Center or Caseflow Management Division staff to direct you to a lawyer referral service or list of local attorneys willing to provide "unbundled services" *(representation for a limited portion of a case at an hourly rate)*.

How will it help me?

If you do not plan to use an attorney, this packet will start the process for you by providing certain forms you will need. Since you are representing yourself, it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that these are the correct forms for the nature of your case. Therefore, you should review and research applicable laws and rules of procedure that apply to your type of case. If you are not able to do this, you should talk with an attorney. If at any point during the process you become confused or wish to proceed with the help of an attorney, contact the Mecklenburg County Bar Lawyer Referral Service at (704) 375-0120 or the North Carolina Bar Lawyer Referral Service at (800) 662-7660.

What does this mean?

Certain legal terms will be used throughout your case. A complete legal glossary is available for your convenience in the SelfServe Center. If you still do not understand the term, consult a legal dictionary or the SelfServe Center staff. You may also want to consult a law library for the North Carolina Rules of Court or the website www.nccourts.org to review the local rules for Mecklenburg County. Staff CANNOT provide legal advice, but can provide procedural information and definitions of legal terms.

Can or should I file a Complaint in Mecklenburg County?

Please note that the SelfServe Center staff CANNOT provide legal advice. Therefore, we cannot tell you if you should file or what you should file. We can tell you that this packet is designed to assist with the preparation of forms for filing a civil lawsuit claiming an amount from \$10,001 up to \$25,000.00. If you wish to file a civil lawsuit in excess of \$25,000.00, you must file your case in Superior Court. The Defendant in this action must be a resident of Mecklenburg County. The Defendant is a person, persons, or a corporation from whom you are attempting to recover money.

What do I do first?

- 1. After you get the packet, READ THE INSTRUCTIONS! You should read through the entire packet before filling out any forms. Once you have read all the instructions, fill out the forms by typing or printing *neatly* in ink. You may fill them out at home or at the courthouse. Please read the forms carefully.
- 2. Please make sure that you have cash or a money order. Personal checks are not accepted. If you want the Sheriff of Mecklenburg County to serve the documents on the defendant, please bring an additional \$30.00 (cash, cashier's check or money order) made payable to the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office. If the defendant lives outside of Mecklenburg County, pay the service of process fee to the sheriff of the county where the defendant resides. (Please refer to the "Service of Process" sheet in this packet for more information).
- 3. Take your completed forms, 2 copies, filing fee, and fee for the Sheriff to serve (if desired) to the Civil Filing Department (Clerk's Office) at 832 E. Fourth Street, Room 3725.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Your case involves complicated legal issues! This packet describes the general process, but it is impossible to cover everything that may affect your rights. If you get confused during the process, you should stop and get advice from an attorney. Judges, Clerk of Court, SelfServe Center staff or the Caseflow Management Division CANNOT give you legal advice. All persons (attorneys and self-represented parties) are required to know and follow the court rules. If you choose to represent yourself, you are responsible for reading and understanding the State and Local Rules of Court.

STEP 1

Reviewing and Filling Out Your Documents ***CHECKLIST***

Review your packet to make sure that the following documents are included:

- *¢COMPLAINT*
- **+ CIVIL SUMMONS**
- ♦ AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY REGISTERED OR CERTIFIED MAIL
- ◆ NOTICE OF ADDRESS CHANGE (Use this form only when necessary.)

Once you have reviewed your documents and read all instructions, you should fill out the Complaint and Civil Summons. The Affidavit of Service of Process by Registered or Certified Mail only needs to be filled out if you are serving the other party through the U.S. Postal Service. Remember to sign your forms wherever a signature is required.

STEP 2

Photocopying Documents

Make two (2) copies of your Complaint and Civil Summons. Copies can be made for a fee in the Civil Files Office, Room 3342.

Once you have completed the necessary documents and made your copies, you may move forward to Step 3.

STEP 3

Filing the Documents

Take these documents, two copies and the filing fee to the Civil Filing Department (832 E. Fourth St., Room 3725) for filing. At that time, a case number will be assigned to your Complaint. Until you receive that number from the clerk, leave the upper right hand corner of the documents blank. Once you have been assigned a case number however, please make a note of it and print or type it on the upper right hand corner of ALL of your papers filed with the court in this case.

STEP 4

Service of Process PLEASE READ THIS SECTION VERY CAREFULLY. If you are confused or have questions, consult an attorney immediately.

Once you have filed the documents to initiate your Complaint you must "serve" (give notice to) the opposing party of the action. In order for your Complaint to be properly served against the Defendant, you must serve the Defendant in a manner that is recognized by the Court. The forms needed for Service of Process and the procedures you must follow are complex and will vary. In order to learn which steps to take next, review the following and choose the correct forms and procedures for your case.

YOU CANNOT SERVE THE PAPERS ON THE DEFENDANT UNTIL YOU HAVE FILED THEM IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE.

Note: Your lawsuit is subject to dismissal or discontinuance by the Clerk if you fail to acquire service or obtain an extension through an Alias & Pluries Summons within 90 days of the filing of the Complaint.

At this point, there are three ways you can proceed with service:

- 1. **SERVICE BY SHERIFF:** If the Defendant lives in North Carolina and can be served by sheriff you will need to pay a fee to the sheriff in the county where the Defendant resides to serve the papers and you will need the following forms:
 - **♦ CIVIL SUMMONS**
 - **♦ COMPLAINT**

If the Defendant lives in Mecklenburg County, the fee is \$30.00. You may take the \$30.00 service fee (cash, money order, or certified check) along with the original Summons and a copy of the Summons and Complaint to the Clerk's office when you file your Complaint. The Clerk's Office may deliver the documents to the sheriff for you. Otherwise, you must deliver the payment and the necessary forms to the sheriff yourself. If the Defendant does not live in Mecklenburg County, you must mail or deliver the documents to the sheriff in the county where the defendant is located. You should include a certified check or money order for the fee for service made payable to the sheriff of that county. Contact the sheriff's office in the county where the person is located to determine the fees and process associated with service of process. YOU MUST PROVIDE THE DEFENDANT'S MOST RECENT ADDRESS IN THE SUMMONS ALONG WITH ANY OTHER INFORMATION THAT WILL ASSIST THE SHERIFF IN LOCATING THE DEFENDANT.

- 2. SERVICE OF PROCESS BY REGISTERED OR CERTIFIED MAIL: If you choose not to have the Sheriff serve your papers, you must serve the other party through Registered or Certified Mail. Service of Process can be completed within the state and outside of the state, but within the US (**please consult with an attorney if the Defendant is in the military) by mailing a copy of the Summons and Complaint by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the party to be served and delivered to the address. A postal worker can help you fill out the necessary forms for the registered or certified mailing. If you choose this type of service, you must file an Affidavit of Service of Process by Certified or Registered Mail when you receive the return receipt. You must attach the original return receipt (the "green card") to your affidavit.
- 3. YOU DO NOT KNOW WHERE THE DEFENDANT IS LOCATED: If you do not know where the Defendant is located, you will need to serve the Defendant by "publication." This is a complex process using the newspaper to run notice of the civil action.

**PLEASE NOTE: This type of service is a LAST RESORT. If you either know where the defendant is or can find out, you should never attempt this type of service. **

After Service of Process has been successfully completed, you must wait 30 days from the date of service in order to give the Defendant an opportunity to file an "Answer" (response) to the Complaint. If the Defendant has not filed an answer, you should check the court file to see if a Motion to Extend Time to File an Answer has been filed. The Defendant has an additional 30 days to file an Answer if the motion is in the court file and signed by the Clerk of Court.

STEP 5

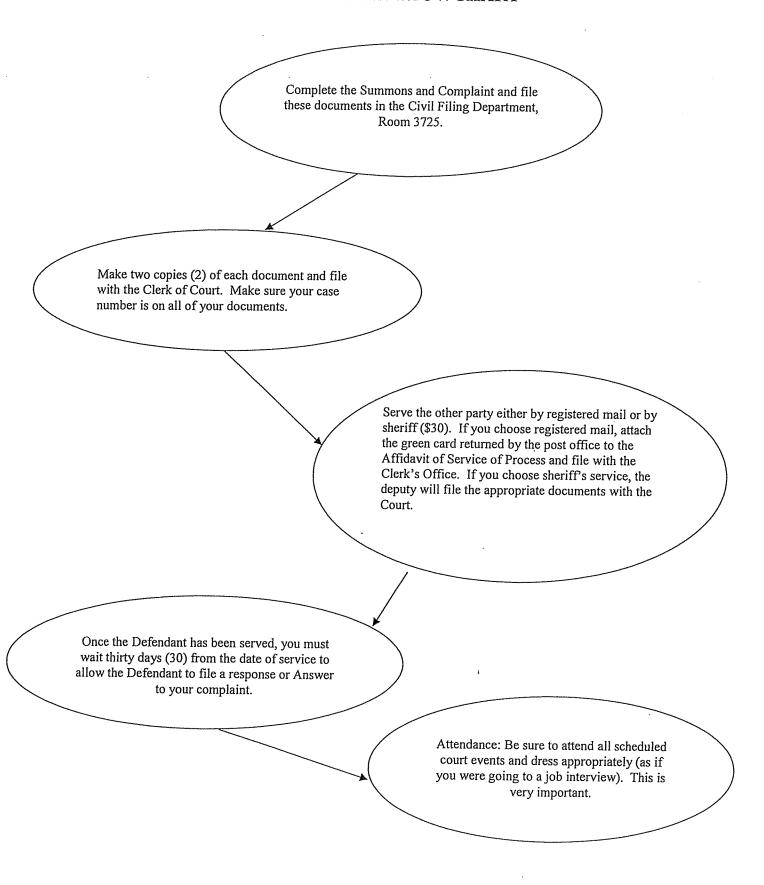
Receiving a Court Date

For your case to be placed on the court's calendar to be heard, you must have filed all of the required documents, served the other party, and the party who is being sued typically has responded to the Complaint by filing an Answer. After all of the documents have been correctly completed and filed, your case may be put on the court's calendar for Arbitration or Trial. Cases set for trial may be tried by a judge or before a jury. Arbitration is a simple, inexpensive, and quick way to resolve disputes prior to trial and is required in all cases involving claims for \$15,000 or less. Collection on account cases (where that is the sole claim), summary ejectment evictions, and titles to real estate are not subject to arbitration. Please note: Because of the nature of District Court, most cases are heard as bench trials before a judge only. Should you seek a jury trial (if it is a triable issue), you will be responsible for selecting and questioning prospective jurors. The judge will not be able to advise you on legal terminology or assist you in any way.

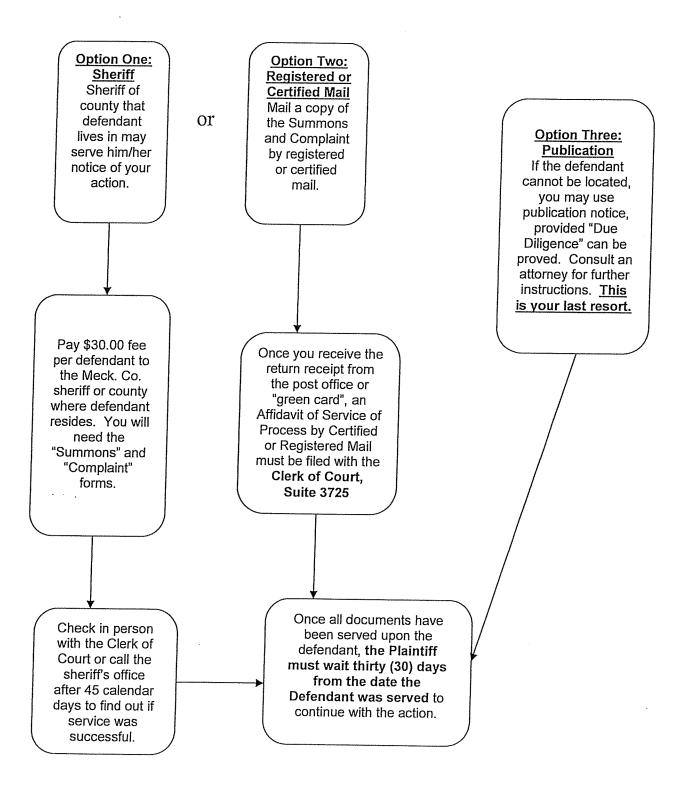
If the Defendant has been served with the Complaint and has not filed an Answer within 30 days or has not filed an Extension of Time to File an Answer, you may then seek a Default Judgment against that defendant. You may not seek Default Judgment if an Answer has been filed in the case.

Lawyer Referral Services: Mecklenburg County Bar Lawyer Referral Service: (704) 375-0120 or <u>www.meckbar.org</u> North Carolina Lawyer Referral Service: (800) 662-7660

PROCEDURAL FLOWCHART



THREE SERVICE OF PROCESS METHODS:



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA		IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION		
CC	OUNTY OF MECKLENBURG) FILE NUMBER:		
)) JURY REQUESTED □		
	Plaintiff, vs.	()))) (COMPLAINT))))		
	Defendant.))))		
	I, the Plaintiff(s), complaining of th	ne Defendant(s), say and allege that		
1.	The Plaintiff is a citizen and resider	nt ofCounty, North Carolina.		
2:	The Defendant is a citizen and resid	ent of County, North Carolina		
3.				
4.	(State what the defendant has done to cause	e the damages you are claiming by listing each wrongful act		
sepai	rately)			
A.				
B.				
C.				

D	
WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment agai	nst the Defendant for:
I am asking the court to award judgment against the de	fendant(s) in the sum of \$ (state claimed damages)
I am also asking for reimbursement of my court costs a of judgment.	nd interest at the legal rate from the date
For such other, further, and different relief to which the	Plaintiff may be entitled.
This the, 20	
	Plaintiff
	Address
	City/State/Zip
•	Telephone

VERIFICATION

says that he/s matter, that he /she has read and understood this COMPLAINT an of his/her own personal knowledge, except for those matters and thinformation and belief; and as to those matters and things, he/she belief.	hings set forth upon
Sworn to and subscribed before me this day of	Plaintiff ,
Notary Public My commission expires:	

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA		File No.	
County		In The	General Court Of Justice
Name Of Plaintiff			
Address		CIVIL SU	JMMONS
City, State, Zip	ALIAS	AND PLURIES	SUMMONS (ASSESS FEE)
VERSUS			G.S. 1A-1, Rules 3 and
Name Of Defendant(s)	Date Original Sumn	nons Issued	C.C. 174-1, Nules 5 and
	Dale(s) Subsequent	f Summons(es) Issued	
To Each Of The Defendant(s) Named Below:			
Name And Address Of Defendant 1	Name And Address	Of Defendant 2	
IMPORTANT! You have been sued! These provided you have to respond within 30 days. You may possible, and, if needed, speak with some impossible, and if needed,	nay want to talk with the who reads Engage of the succentricutes and the succentricutes are con alguien que of the succentricutes as follows:	th a lawyer abouglish and can tra ra! Estos papele consultar con un e lea inglés y que	of your case as soon as instate these papers! is son documentos legales. abogado lo antes posible e pueda traducir estos
File the original of the written answer with the Clerk of Superior	or Court of the county	named above.	iast known address, and
you fail to answer the complaint, the plaintiff will apply to the Co	urt for the relief dema	nded in the compla	int.
me And Address Of Plaintiff's Attorney (if none, Address Of Plaintiff)	Date Issued	. Time	АМРМ
	Signature		
·	Deputy CSC	Assistant CSC	Clerk Of Superior Court
ENDORSEMENT (ASSESS FEE) This Summons was originally issued on the date indicated	Dale Of Endorsement	Time	□ АМ □ РМ
above and returned not served. At the request of the plaintiff, the time within which this Summons must be served is	Signalure		
extended sixty (60) days.	Deputy CSC	Assistant CSC	Clerk Of Superior Court
OTE TO PARTIES: Many counties have MANDATORY ARBITRATION less are heard by an arbitrator before a trial. The pass, what procedure is to be followed.	l programs in which mos arties will be notified if th	t cases where the am is case is assigned fo	ount in controversy is \$25,000 or r mandatory arbitration, and, if

(Over)

I certify that this Summon		,	
Date Served	Time Served	DEFE	NDANT 1
		AM PM	Name Of Defendant
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By delivering to the de	iendant named apo	ve a copy of the sun	mons and complaint,
person of suitable age	ne summons and con and discretion then	mplaint at the dwellir	g house or usual place of abode of the defendant named above w
As the defendant is a c	cornoration service	was affected by deli-	ering a copy of the summons and complaint to the person named
below.	orporation, oct vice	was enected by dent	ening a copy of the summons and complaint to the person named
Name And Address Of Perso	on With Whom Copies Lei	ft (if corporation, give title (of person copies left with)
Other manner of service	e (specify)		
	o (specify)		
☐ Defendant WAS NOT se	erved for the followin	g reason:	
	4		
le Served	I	DEFEN	
le derveu	Time Served	Пам Прм	Name Of Defendant
7 5			
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By delivering to the defen		- sopj of all calling	nie drie dempiant.
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By leaving a copy of the s person of suitable age and	summons and comp nd discretion then res	laint at the dwelling l siding therein.	nouse or usual place of abode of the defendant named above with
By leaving a copy of the s person of suitable age and As the defendant is a corp	summons and comp nd discretion then res	laint at the dwelling l siding therein.	nouse or usual place of abode of the defendant named above with
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STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA	File No.
County	In The General Court Of Justice
Name And Address Of Plaintiff	
	SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT
VERSUS Name And Address Of Defendant	AFFIDAVIT
	·
NOTE: Though this farm may be used in a Chapter (5.5 and a Chapter)	50 U.S.C. 3901 to 404
The control of the co	it is not a substitute for the certification that may be required by G.S. 45-21.12.
The results from my use of that website are attached (NOTE: The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Website is a website are not installed on your computer, you may expend the website. DoD security certificates were automatically added not expect security alerts to appear with this website after July includes the following advice: "Most web browsers don't come is for the user to install all of the DoD's public certificates in the	tps://scra.dmdc.osd.mil/) to determine the defendant's military status. d. ebsite maintained by the Department of Defense (DoD). If DoD security ience security alerts from your internet browser when you attempt to access to to the computers of all Judicial Branch users, such that these users should or of 2015. As of June 22, 2016, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Website with the DoD certificates already installed. The best and most secure solution eir web browser.")
Coast Guard; service as a member of the National Guard under a for a period of more than 30 consecutive days for purposes of resp	ce as a member of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or call to active service authorized by the President or the Secretary of Defense conding to a national emergency; active service as a commissioned officer of the control of
SWORN/AFFIRMED AND SUBSCRIBED TO BEFORE ME	Date
ate	Signature Of Affiant
gnature Of Person Authorized To Administer Oaths	Name Of Affiant (type or print)
Deputy CSC Assistant CSC Clerk Of Superior Court Magistrate	
SEAL Notary Date My Commission Expires	
OTE TO COURT: Do not proceed to enter judgment in a non-criminal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act affidavit (whether	case in which the defendant has not made an appearance until a

is in military service, do not proceed to enter judgment until such time that you have appointed an attorney to represent (Over)

Information About Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Affidavits

1. Plaintiff to file affidavit

In any civil action or proceeding, including any child custody proceeding, in which the defendant does not make an appearance, the court, before entering judgment for the plaintiff, shall require the plaintiff to file with the court an affidavit—

- (A) stating whether or not the defendant is in military service and showing necessary facts to support the affidavit; or
- (B) if the plaintiff is unable to determine whether or not the defendant is in military service, stating that the plaintiff is unable to determine whether or not the defendant is in military service.

50 U.S.C. 3931(b)(1).

2. Appointment of attorney to represent defendant in military service

If in a civil action or proceeding in which the defendant does not make an appearance it appears that the defendant is in military service, the court may not enter a judgment until after the court appoints an attorney to represent the defendant. If an attorney appointed to represent a service member cannot locate the service member, actions by the attorney in the case shall not waive any defense of the service member or otherwise bind the service member. 50 U.S.C. 3931(b)(2). State funds are not available to pay attorneys appointed pursuant to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. To comply with the federal Violence Against Women Act and in consideration of G.S. 50B-2(a), 50C-2(b), and 50D-2(b), plaintiffs in Chapter 50B, Chapter 50C, and Chapter 50D proceedings should not be required to pay the costs of attorneys appointed pursuant to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. Plaintiffs in other types of actions and proceedings may be required to pay the costs of attorneys appointed pursuant to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. The allowance or disallowance of the ordering of costs will require a case-specific analysis.

3. Defendant's military status not ascertained by affidavit

If based upon the affidavits filed in such an action, the court is unable to determine whether the defendant is in military service, the court, before entering judgment, may require the plaintiff to file a bond in an amount approved by the court. If the defendant is later found to be in military service, the bond shall be available to indemnify the defendant against any loss or damage the defendant may suffer by reason of any judgment for the plaintiff against the defendant, should the judgment be set aside in whole or in part. The bond shall remain in effect until expiration of the time for appeal and setting aside of a judgment under applicable Federal or State law or regulation or under any applicable ordinance of a political subdivision of a State. The court may issue such orders or enter such judgments as the court determines necessary to protect the rights of the defendant under this Act. 50 U.S.C. 3931(b)(3).

4. Satisfaction of requirement for affidavit

The requirement for an affidavit above may be satisfied by a statement, declaration, verification, or certificate, in writing, subscribed and certified or declared to be true under penalty of perjury. 50 U.S.C. 3931(b)(4). The presiding judicial official will determine whether the submitted affidavit is sufficient.

5. Penalty for making or using false affidavit

A person who makes or uses an affidavit permitted under 50 U.S.C. 3931(b) (or a statement, declaration, verification, or certificate as authorized under 50 U.S.C. 3931(b)(4)) knowing it to be false, shall be fined as provided in title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both. 50 U.S.C. 3931(c).

STATE OF	NORTH CAROLINA	File No.	
	County	In The General Court Of Justice District Superior Court Division	
Name Of Plaintiff(s)		AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY	
	VERSUS	REGISTERED MAIL	
Name Of Defendant		☐ CERTIFIED MAIL ☐ DESIGNATED DELIVERY SERVICE G.S. 1-75.10(a)(5), (a)(6); 1A-1, Rule 4(
I, the undersigned	d, did mail by registered mail (return receipt designated delivery service (de	requested),	
a copy of the sum	mons and complaint and other document(s)	(list)	
addressed as follows: Further, that copie received by the de	s of the summons and complaint and the ab	ove listed other document(s) <i>(check, if applicable)</i> were in fact, as evidenced by the attached original receipt.	
	MED AND SUBSCRIBED TO BEFORE ME	Signature Of Plaintiff/Attorney	
Dale	Signature Of Person Authorized To Administer Oaths	Name (lype or print)	
ille Of Person Aulhorized	I d To Administer Oaths		
Notary	Date My Commission Expires		
SEAL	County Where Notarized		