

**IN THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA
(Revised 7/1/2012)**

PROCEDURES FOR PROCESS SERVER CERTIFICATION

1. **Process Server Designation.** Individuals seeking certified process server designation shall:
 - Be at least eighteen (18) years of age;
 - Have **no** pending criminal charges;
 - Be a permanent resident of the United States and the State of Florida. (A resident is defined as a person who has established domicile with intent to remain.);
 - Maintain a current e-mail address

2. **Process Server Class.** Enroll in and successfully complete the process server course offered annually by Hillsborough Community College (HCC), Ybor Campus. On the last day of class, students must pass a written examination with a test score of seventy-five percent (75%) or higher. (A Certificate of Attendance will be awarded). Those who receive a test score of seventy-four percent (74%) or lower may retake the examination within 30 days. Thereafter, the course must be taken again before retesting. The examination covers Chapters 48 and 83.22 of the **Florida Statutes**, and Rules 1.070 and 1.410 of the **Florida Rules of Civil Procedure**.

3. **Process Server Application Packet.** Complete and submit a Process Server Application packet to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The application packet may be found at www.fljud13.org and will also be provided at the class.

4. **The Process Server Application** must have the following attachments:
 - Copy of a valid Florida driver's license/State of Florida identification card.
 - Copy of your social security card
 - If alien status is applicable, applicant must present the Alien Registration Form or Refugee Status Form.
 - If naturalized status is applicable, applicant must present a Naturalization Certificate or a copy of a U.S. Passport or Voter's Registration Card

The Background Check. All applicants are subject to national, Florida, and local criminal record background checks, verifying the status of any pending criminal history and cases. Local record searches are conducted in the felony, traffic, misdemeanor, and mental health areas. Applicants with pending criminal charges are disqualified. Any certified process Server applicant whose application indicates a record of:

- a. a withhold of adjudication for any felony listed in Administrative Order S-2012-32;
- b. a felony conviction for an offense not listed in Administrative Order S-2012-32;
- c. two or more revocations or suspensions of a driver license; or
- d. a currently revoked or suspended driver license

will have the application reviewed by the Judicial Panel for a determination on whether the applicant should be added to the approved certified process server list.

- 5. **Certificate of Attendance.** Submit to the AOC a copy of HCC’s Certificate of Attendance of the Process Server class.

**** Special Note: After the AOC has cleared your Background Check, you may continue the process below):**

- 6. **Application fee.** Validated receipt for payment of the \$100.00 non-refundable application fee paid at the Hillsborough County Clerk of the Circuit Court’s Office, Criminal Division, Room 530, 800 E. Twiggs Street, Tampa, FL 33602. Checks (no counter checks) or money orders must be payable to Clerk of the Circuit Court. No payments are accepted by the AOC.
- 7. **Liability Insurance.** Proof of insurance in the form of a certificate of insurance or policy in the amount of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) coverage per person and three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00) per incident for the benefit of any person wrongfully damaged by malfeasance, neglect of duty or incompetence of the applicant in connection with duties as a certified process server. The certified process servers, the chief judge, and “The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit” must be named as insureds or certificate holders under the insurance policy. The insurance policy must contain a provision that the AOC will be given 30 days’ notification of any cancellation, expiration, termination or change in policy.
- 8. **Process Server Oath & ID Card:** The Process Server Oath will be administered to those who have met the criteria listed above and a Process Server photo ID card will be issued to those who are in full compliance with the provisions of AO [S-2012-032](#).
- 9. The name of each certified process server will be placed on a list and publicly displayed in the Clerk of the Circuit Court’s Office and on the Official Thirteenth Judicial Circuit’s website.

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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special accommodations to complete the application, attend the course, and/or take the examination, please call Court Services at 272-7040.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CERTIFIED PROCESS SERVERS

1. Until an individual is certified as a Process Server in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, one must obtain an order of appointment signed by the Court in each case.
2. Certification in the 13th Circuit does not authorize the service of process for any other court. Certification authorizes service of initial non-enforceable civil process. Attorney General opinion 89-1 defines “initial non-enforceable civil process” as that which is not required by statute to be served by the Sheriff.
3. The certified process server (“CPS”) identification number and the total charges for service must be on the 13th Circuit’s prescribed *Affidavit of Service* form. This form must be notarized. Service is not valid unless the return is on the prescribed form.
4. A Certified Process Server must maintain general liability insurance in good standing and immediately notify the Administrative Office of the Courts, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of any policy cancellation, expiration, termination, or change in insurance agents. Upon insurance renewal, a new original “Certificate of Insurance” must be provided to the Administrative Office of the Courts. Expiration or cancellation of required insurance automatically disqualifies the Certified Process Server until the insurance is reinstated or replaced. **This proof of insurance must be provided prior to or at the time of lapse to avoid removal.**
5. Administrative Office of the courts must be notified at 813-272-5421 within thirty (30) days of any change(s) of name, mailing address, e-mail address, or telephone number.
6. While serving process, Certified Process Servers are required to **ALWAYS** have their VALID “CPS” identification card available upon request.
7. Certified Process Servers shall **not** participate in any action in which they have any interest as provided in Rule 1.070(b) of the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure.
8. All Certified Process Servers are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner that will reflect favorably on the courts.
9. Certification is valid for one (1) year from the initial date of certification. A new CPS identification card will be issued upon completion of the annual renewal requirements below:
 - A) Provide proof of the required general liability insurance;
 - B) Provide validated **receipt** for payment of the \$60.00 renewal fee to the Process Server Program, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, 800 E. Twiggs Street, Room 605, Tampa, FL 33602.

Renewal fee may be **paid** on the 1st floor of the George Edgecomb Courthouse at the Hillsborough County Clerk of the Circuit Court's Office, Customer Service Department. Checks or money orders must be payable to Clerk of the Circuit Court. No payments are accepted by the Administrative Office of the Courts;

- C) Required to clear local, Florida, and national criminal records checks. (Certified Process Servers shall notify Court Administration if criminal charges are filed against them. Charges of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty may prohibit renewal or certification);
- D) Provide a copy of a valid driver's license or State of Florida ID card on file/ need if renewed or reissued within last year.

10. Pursuant to Section 741.30(7)(c), Florida Statutes, temporary or final judgments or injunctions for protection against domestic violence are considered valid and enforceable in all counties of the State of Florida. Pursuant to Section 741.30(8)(a), Florida Statutes, temporary injunctions for protection against domestic violence shall be provided to the Sheriff for service of process upon the respondent.

REINSTATEMENT OF CERTIFIED PROCESS SERVERS

Certified Process Servers removed for:

- A) **Lapse of Liability Insurance:** have up to thirty (30) days to provide proof of valid insurance coverage.
 - B) **Non-renewal of Certification:** have up to six (6) months to comply with the renewal requirements (#9 of Responsibilities of Certified Process Servers).
2. If the time standard, in B) above is not met, the removed process server must re-take the HCC course, pass the examination again, and re-apply following all guidelines and meeting all other qualifications/requirements as outlined in the application procedures.

Questions regarding the policies and procedures for Certified Process Servers in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit should be directed to:

*Process Server Certification Program
Administrative Office of the Courts
Thirteenth Judicial Circuit
800 E. Twiggs Street, CH 605
Tampa, Florida 33602
(813) 272-5421 Fax (813) 276-8757*