Service of Process

REVIEWED

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Writ of Body Attachment

A writ of body attachment is a process issued by the court directing the U.S. Marshal to bring a person who has been found in civil contempt before the court. The process may also be called an order of commitment for civil contempt or a warrant for civil arrest.

Territorial Limits:

An order of civil commitment of a person held to be in contempt of a decree or injunction issued to enforce the laws of the United States may be served and enforced anywhere in the United States. An order of civil commitment of a person held to be in contempt of a decree or injunction not involving the enforcement of federal law may only be served at any place within the state in which the district court is located, or at any place outside of the state that is within 100 miles of the courthouse.

Issued By: The writ is issued as an order of a U.S. District Court judge, U.S. magistrate judge, or U.S. bankruptcy judge under the seal of the clerk of the court.

Served By: The writ is served by the U.S. Marshal or by a Deputy U.S. Marshal.

Manner of Service: Service is accomplished by taking the named individual (the contemnor) into custody and bringing the individual before the court without undue delay.

Return: The individual who effects service will make proof of service to the court promptly according to local rules within the district.

Note: The information related to the service of court process that is contained on this web site is general information and not intended to be an exhaustive or definitive explanation or depiction of Federal rules of procedures for the service of process. Readers are directed to the Federal Rules of Criminal and Civil Procedure; personal legal counsel; the United States Code, Titles 18 and 28; their local U.S. Attorney's Office and District Court for specific, authoritative guidance.

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