

7.01 | FILING AND SERVING DOCUMENTS

Pretrial proceedings include exchanges of documents between the parties. The documents vary, but there are several rules to follow that never change during litigation:

- You must file original documents with the court. That includes documents you write (such as a motion and memorandum of law) and exhibits. You must sign documents you have written.
- You may file documents in the clerk's office in person or by mail. In-person filing must be done Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The clerk's offices are closed on federal holidays and occasionally during an emergency. If you want a file-stamped copy of any document for your records, provide the clerk with a copy of that document (if you are not filing the document in person, you also need to provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a file-stamped copy).
- When you file a document, you must also mail or deliver a copy of that document to each other party's lawyers. If a party does not have a lawyer, you must instead mail or deliver a copy directly to that party. (There is a rare exception for an ex parte proceeding, meaning a proceeding that does not include the opposing party.)
- With every filing except the complaint, you must include a certificate of service stating when and how you served a copy of that document on each party or the party's lawyer. Here is an example of a certificate of service:

I, [name of person filing document], certify that on [month, day, year] I served a copy of this document on [name of other party's attorney or other party if not represented by an attorney] by [mailing, hand delivering, faxing] it to [him, her] at [address, fax number].

