



ADGM COURTS
PRACTICE DIRECTION 6
SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS

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This Practice Direction is to be read with, and subject to, the ADGM Court Procedure Rules 2016 (“**CPR**”) and, in particular, Part 4 of the CPR. Except as provided otherwise in this Practice Direction, terms have the meanings set out in the CPR and a reference to a Rule is a reference to the CPR.

APPLICATION

This Practice Direction must be read in conjunction with the following Practice Directions:

- **Practice Direction 1 – General**
- **Practice Direction 2 – Commercial and Civil Claims**
- **Practice Direction 3 – Small Claims**
- **Practice Direction 4 – Employment Claims**
- **Practice Direction 5 – Particular Claims**
- **Practice Direction 7 – Applications**
- **Practice Direction 8 – Evidence**
- **Practice Direction 9 – Costs**
- **Practice Direction 11 – Appeals**
- **Practice Direction 15 – Real Property Claims**
- **Practice Direction 16 – Short-Term Residential Lease Claims**

To the extent to which the provisions of this Practice Direction differ from or are inconsistent with provisions of other Practice Directions, the provisions of this Practice Direction prevail in relation to the service of a claim form.

Unless the Court orders otherwise, the following provisions shall apply.

A. INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 Rule 15(2) provides that the Registry will serve the claim form on the defendant by any method permitted under Part 4 of the CPR, unless:
- (a) a defendant is to be served outside the United Arab Emirates, in which case the claim form must be served on the defendant by the claimant; or
 - (b) any rule, practice direction, ADGM enactment or Court order provides otherwise.
- 6.2 Subject to Rule 15(1), in relation to documents other than a claim form:

- (a) where a person to be served has access to the eCourts Platform (including through a legal representative), all documents shall be served on that person through the eCourts Platform; and
 - (b) where a person to be served does not have access to the eCourts Platform (including through a legal representative), a document may be served on that person under Part 4 of the CPR as if the document were a claim form.
- 6.3 The provisions which follow in this Practice Direction relate to the service of a claim form (also known as “service of process”).
- 6.4 Service of process is the method by which a party formally is notified that an action against him is pending before the Court. Part 4 of the CPR and this Practice Direction have been developed to provide that, as far as is reasonably possible, a party is notified of the proceedings against him whilst adopting a pragmatic and proportionate approach to service of process. This includes the use of technology to effect service of process.
- 6.5 For the purpose of Part 4 of the CPR and this Practice Direction, and subject to Rule 15(7) as to service outside the United Arab Emirates, a party to the proceedings may use a legal representative or a third party to effect service in lieu of that party effecting service in person, including by means of engaging a courier, process server or like provider.
- 6.6 A claimant should avoid serving a claim form after 1.00 pm on a Friday if the party to be served would likely take offence. Nothing in this paragraph modifies the time limits within which a party is required to serve a claim form under any rule, practice direction, ADGM enactment or Court order.

B. PERSONAL SERVICE ON AN INDIVIDUAL [r. 16]

- 6.7 Rules 16(2)(a) and 16(4)(a) provide that if the individual to be served refuses to receive the claim form, then the claim form is deemed to have been served on the individual at the time of such refusal if the document is left in his presence.
- 6.8 If the claimant elects to leave the claim form with a person for the purpose of Rule 16(2)(b), then the claimant must include the following in any certificate of service filed pursuant to Rule 21:
 - (a) the name of the person who received the document;
 - (b) a signed receipt of the document; and
 - (c) details of the follow up email, text message, WhatsApp (or like message) that was sent for the purpose of Rule 16(3).
- 6.9 If the claimant elects to affix the claim form on the door or gate of the residence of the defendant for the purpose of Rule 16(2)(c), then the claimant must include in, or append to, any certificate of service filed pursuant to Rule 21:
 - (a) the reason why the claimant elected to affix the claim form on the door or gate;

- (b) the evidence relied on to show that the individual to be served with the document still resides at the place of residence at the time the document was affixed on the door or gate;
 - (c) photographic evidence which shows the claim form affixed on the door or gate; and
 - (d) details of the follow up email, text message, WhatsApp (or like message) that was sent for the purpose of Rule 16(3).
- 6.10 If the claimant elects to leave the claim form with a member of management or a co-worker for the purpose of Rule 16(4)(b), then the claimant must include the following in any certificate of service filed pursuant to Rule 21:
- (a) the name and address of the company, business or other place of work where the document was left, the name of the person who received the document and their position in the company, business or other place of work;
 - (b) a signed receipt of the document; and
 - (c) details of the follow up email, text message, WhatsApp (or like message) that was sent for the purpose of Rule 16(5).
- 6.11 If the claimant elects to affix the claim form on the door or gate of the individual's workplace for the purpose of Rule 16(4)(c), then the claimant must include in, or append to, any certificate of service filed pursuant to Rule 21:
- (a) the reason why the claimant elected to affix the claim form on the door or gate of the workplace;
 - (b) the evidence relied on to show that the individual to be served with the document still worked at the workplace at the time the document was affixed on the door or gate;
 - (c) photographic evidence that the claim form was affixed on the door or gate of the workplace; and
 - (d) details of the follow up email, text message, WhatsApp (or like message) that was sent for the purpose of Rule 16(5).
- 6.12 For the purpose of Rules 16(2)(c) and 16(4)(c):
- (a) where the claimant elects to affix the claim form to the door or gate of a place of residence or workplace, affix is to include attach, stick, fasten, bind, fix, post, secure, join, connect and couple. If these actions are not reasonably possible, the claimant may place the claim form against the base of the door or gate and secure it by means of a dense object;
 - (b) the door or gate of a place of residence may include the front or back door or gate; and
 - (c) the door or gate of a workplace is a reference to the main door or gate of the workplace unless, in all the circumstances, it is reasonably necessary to affix the claim form to another door or gate.

- 6.13 It is the responsibility of the claimant to take due care when affixing a claim form to a door or a gate. For the avoidance of doubt, the claimant is not authorised or permitted under Part 4 of the CPR or this Practice Direction to cause damage to a door or a gate when affixing a claim form.

C. SERVICE ON A COMPANY, PARTNERSHIP OR ANY OTHER ENTITY [r. 16A]

- 6.14 For the purpose of Rule 16A, a claimant who leaves a claim form or sends it by post is encouraged to place it in a sealed envelope marked to the attention of one of the following:
- (a) in respect of a company, a director or the chief financial officer, secretary, chief executive, manager or other officer of the company;
 - (b) in respect of a partnership, a member of the partnership or other officer of the partnership;
 - (c) in respect of any other entity, in addition to those persons set out in subparagraphs (a) and (b), the chairman, president or other officer of the entity; or
 - (d) in respect of subparagraphs (a), (b) or (c) above, a representative of a company, partnership or other entity who has previously been involved in dealing with the subject matter of the claim.
- 6.15 For the purpose of Rule 16A, post shall include registered post.
- 6.16 Any certificate of service filed must adequately address the matters set out in paragraph 6.14 above.

D. EMAIL OR OTHER MEANS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION [r. 16B]

- 6.17 This section applies to Rule 16B.

Email

- 6.18 Rule 16B(3)(a) provides that service of a claim form by email is only permitted if it can be shown that the email account to which the document is sent belongs to the person to be served. Depending on the circumstances, this may be demonstrated by one of, or a combination of, the following:
- (a) the person to be served has provided the email account for the purpose of receiving the document;
 - (b) the person to be served has provided the email account as his contact email account in relation to any contractual arrangement entered into between the parties;

Example 1:

Where a bank customer provides his email account in a bank application form.

Example 2:

Where a bank customer updates his email account with the bank as recorded by the bank in its internal records. For the avoidance of doubt, if the bank's internal records for a customer designate an email address for that person, that address shall be deemed to be the current email address that belongs to that person.

- (c) a course of conduct which shows that the person to be served uses the email account;
 - (d) an internet, website or social media search which shows that the person to be served holds out the email account as belonging to them;
 - (e) any government or official record which shows that the email account belongs to the person to be served;
 - (f) any other document which shows that the person to be served holds out the email account as belonging to them; and
 - (g) any other means which reasonably shows that the email account belongs to the person to be served.
- 6.19 For the purpose of service on a company, partnership or other entity, the person to be served must fall within the description in paragraph 6.14. This may include a representative of a company, partnership or other entity who has previously been involved in dealing with the subject matter of the claim (for example, an employment claim brought by an employee may be served on a representative from the human resources department of the employer who has been dealing with the subject matter of the claim).
- 6.20 Any certificate of service filed must adequately address (as applicable) the matters set out in paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 and shall attach any relevant supporting documents. For the avoidance of doubt, where paragraph 6.18(b) is relied on, the email account shall be deemed as belonging to the person to be served.
- 6.21 If the claimant receives a failed delivery notification or an out of message notification in relation to the email sent, service of the document is deemed to have not been effected.

Mobile SMS, WhatsApp or like messaging

- 6.22 Rule 16B(3)(b) provides that service of a claim form by mobile text message (SMS), WhatsApp (or like messaging) is only permitted if it can be shown that the mobile number to which the document, or notice of the document, is sent belongs to the person to be served. Depending on the circumstances, this may be demonstrated by one of, or a combination of, the following:

- (a) the person to be served has provided the mobile number for the purpose of receiving the document or notice of the document;
- (b) the person to be served has provided the mobile number as his contact mobile number in relation to any contractual arrangement entered into between the parties;

Example 1:

Where a bank customer provides his mobile number in a bank application form.

Example 2:

Where a bank customer updates his mobile number with the bank as recorded by the bank in its internal records. For the avoidance of doubt, if the bank's internal records for a customer designate a mobile number for that person, that number shall be deemed to be the current mobile number that belongs to that person.

- (c) a course of conduct which shows the person to be served uses the mobile number;
- (d) an internet, website or social media search which shows that the person to be served holds out the mobile number as belonging to them;
- (e) any government or official record which shows that the mobile number belongs to the person to be served;
- (f) any other document which shows that the mobile number belongs to the person to be served; and
- (g) any other means which reasonably shows that the mobile number belongs to the person to be served.

6.23 For the purpose of service on a company, partnership or other entity, the person to be served must fall within the description in paragraph 6.14. This may include a representative of a company, partnership or other entity who has previously been involved in dealing with the subject matter of the claim (for example, an employment claim brought by an employee may be served on a representative from the human resources department of the employer who has been dealing with the subject matter of the claim).

6.24 For the purpose of Rules 16(3), 16(5), 16B(3)(b) and paragraph 6.22:

- (a) "like messaging" includes notification via Messenger and any such like applications; and
- (b) "notice" requires the recipient to be notified of the:
 - (i) ADGM Courts' case number;
 - (ii) parties to the proceeding;
 - (iii) any step that the party served must take, otherwise default judgment may be entered against him; and

- (iv) means by which the recipient can obtain a copy of the claim form.

Any certificate of service filed must adequately address (as applicable) the matters set out in paragraphs 6.22 to 6.24 and shall attach any relevant supporting documents. For the avoidance of doubt, where paragraph 6.22(b) is relied on, the mobile number shall be deemed as belonging to the person to be served.

6.25 For the purpose of Rule 16B(3)(c):

- (a) “like messaging” has the same meaning as in paragraph 6.246.24(a);
- (b) the claimant should seek to agree with the person to be served the email address, mobile number or such other contact details of the lawyer nominated for the purpose of accepting service of the claim form; and
- (c) if the claimant receives a failed delivery or similar notification in relation to the mobile text message (SMS), WhatsApp or like message, service of the document is deemed not to have been effected.

E. PLACE TO SERVE THE CLAIM FORM [r. 17]

Proceedings against ADGM and Authorities

6.26 A document, including a claim form, must be served by email on:

- (a) ADGM, at adgm.courtsservice@adgm.com;
- (b) ADGM Registration Authority, at ra.courtsservice@adgm.com; and
- (c) ADGM Financial Services Regulatory Authority, at fsra.courtsservice@adgm.com.

F. SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS BY AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OR AT AN ALTERNATIVE PLACE [r.19]

6.27 In making any application to the Court under Rule 19, the applicant is encouraged to consider alternative methods or places of service that are likely to be effective in bringing the claim form to the attention of the person to be served. In this respect, the applicant ought to consider making use of technology for alternative means of service.

6.28 For example, the applicant should consider whether the person has any social media accounts which are active where the claim form, or notice of the claim form, could be provided to the person. In making any such application for alternative service, the criteria set out in paragraph 6.22 are likely to be relevant here too.

6.29 An application under Rule 19 for service by publication in any newspaper should only be considered as a last resort and should contain evidence that the person to be served is literate in the language of the newspaper in which the advertisement will be placed.

G. SERVICE OUTSIDE THE JURISDICTION [r. 15(4), (5), (6), (7), (8), r.24 and r.25]

- 6.30 Where a claimant is to effect service of a claim form outside the jurisdiction but within the United Arab Emirates, he is not required to serve the claim form through the court in the jurisdiction where he is seeking to effect service.
- 6.31 Rule 15(7) does not prohibit a claimant from making an application for an order for alternative service under Rule 19.