

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA

In the Matter of:)
)
RETURN RECEIPT SIGNATURE FOR) Administrative Order
CERTIFIED OR REGISTERED MAIL) No. 2020 - 160
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC)
)
_____)

Due to concern for the spread of COVID-19 in the general population, the Governor of the State of Arizona has declared a statewide emergency pursuant to A.R.S. § 26-303 and in accordance with A.R.S. § 26-301(15). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention established guidelines for social distancing to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Nonetheless, courts remain open and court processes need to continue in order to meet the needs of the citizens of Arizona.

Service of process brings the served party under the jurisdiction of the court. Service of process via certified or registered mail, return signed receipt requested, is a permissible alternative to personal service for many types of court proceedings.

To maintain social distancing, the United States Postal Service (USPS) has temporarily changed the signature requirements associated with the delivery of certified and registered mail. Specifically, the USPS no longer obtains the customer's signature on the receipt. Rather, the postal service employee who is making the delivery enters information on the hard copy or electronic return receipt documenting that the employee has identified the person to whom the mail is being delivered.

Therefore, pursuant to Article VI, Sections 3 and 5, of the Arizona Constitution,

IT IS ORDERED suspending any requirement that a certified or registered mail return receipt for service of any court process be personally signed by the addressee.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a postal employee's written indication on the return receipt that signifies delivery to the address is sufficient to document effectuated service of process.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the provisions of this order may retroactively be applied to return receipts filed before the signing of this order, unless a court issued a ruling to the contrary regarding this issue prior to the effective date of this order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the provisions of this order shall remain in effect until further order of this Court.

Dated this 7th day of October, 2020.

ROBERT BRUTINEL
Chief Justice