*(Decree n°2002-1436 of 3 December 2002, Article 24, Official Journal of 12 December 2002)*

The date of a service of a process through a bailiff is that of the day where it has been served on the person, at his domicile or residence, at the public prosecutor's office or, in the case specified under Article 659, that of the drawing up of the minutes.

**Article 654**

A service must be personal.

A service on a corporate entity will be personal where the process is delivered to its legal representative, to the latter's proxy, or to any other person empowered for this purpose.

**Article 655**

If the personal service is impossible to do, the process may be delivered either at the place of domicile or, in default of a known place of domicile, at the place of residence.

A copy may be delivered to any person present, in default of the caretaker of the building, or as a last resort, to any neighbour.

A copy may be left only on condition that the person present, the caretaker or the neighbour, accepts it, gives his surname, first names, capacity, and so on; in the case of a neighbour, he gives his address and a receipt.

The bailiff must leave, at all events, at the place of domicile or residence of the addressee, a dated non-delivery notice warning him of the delivery of the copy and indicating the nature of the process and the surname of the petitioner as well as providing such information relating to the person to whom the copy has been delivered.

**Article 656**

If no one may or is willing to receive the copy of the process and if it appears, from the inquiries made by the bailiff to which a reference is made in the writ of service, that the addressee lives at the address indicated, the service will be deemed to have been made at the place of domicile or residence.

In the latter event, the bailiff is bound to deposit a copy of the process at the city hall on the same day, or, no later than the first day on which the city hall services are open to the public. The mayor, his deputy or the town clerk will refer in the delivery list and will give a receipt.

The bailiff will leave at the place of domicile or residence of the addressee a non-delivery notice in pursuance to the provisions of the preceding Article. Such notice must state that a copy of the process must be collected as soon as possible from the city hall, against a receipt or annotation, by the interested party or by any person specially authorised.

The copy of the process will be kept at the city hall for three months. At the expiry of this time-limit, it (the city hall) will be discharged from keeping the same.

The mayor, his deputy or the town clerk may, at the request of the addressee, will transmit a copy of the process to another city hall where it may be collected under the same conditions.

**Article 657**

Where the process is not served upon a person, the bailiff must state on the copy, the particulars of the person with whom the copy was left or those of the city hall where it was handed over to the latter.

A copy of the served process must be placed in a sealed envelope bearing only the surname and address of the addressee and the stamp of the bailiff affixed on the flap of the envelope.

**Article 658**

In all the cases referred to under Articles 655 and 656, the bailiff must inform the interested person of the service on the same day, or no later than the first working day, by ordinary letter containing the same particulars as the non-delivery notice and reminding him of, if a copy of the process was handed over at the city hall, the provisions of the last sub-article of Article 656; the letter will contain further a copy of the writ of service.

It will be likewise in case of service at an elected domicile or where the service has been made upon a corporate entity.

The stamp of the bailiff will be affixed on the envelope.

**Article 659**

*(Decree n°84-618 of 13 July 1984, Articles 5 and 31, Official Journal of 18 July 1984 amendment JORF of 18 August 1984, in force on 1 October 1984)*
*(Decree n°86-585 of 14 March 1986, Articles 4 and 9, Official Journal of 19 March 1986, in force on 2 May 1986)*
*(Decree n°89-511 of 20 July 1989, Article 15, Official Journal of 25 July 1989 in force on 15 September 1989)*

Where the person upon whom the process must be served does not have any known domicile, residence or place of employment, the bailiff will draw minutes in which he will narrate in detail the steps he has taken to look for the addressee of the process.

On the same day, or no later than the first following working day, under penalty of nullity, the bailiff will transmit to the addressee, at the last known address, by a registered letter with the advice of delivery slip sought, a copy of the minutes to which is annexed a copy of the process which is the subject-matter of the service.

On the same day, the bailiff will inform the addressee, by an ordinary letter, of the formality carried out.

The provisions of this Article will apply to service of a process upon a corporate entity that has no premise known at the place indicated as its head office in the Commerce and Companies Register.

**Article 660**

*(Decree n°86-585 of 14 March 1986, Articles 5 and 9, Official Journal of 19 March 1986, in force on 2 May 1986)*