



# New Jersey Judiciary – Supreme Court of New Jersey

## A Guide to Filing for Litigants without Lawyers

This kit includes

- [Notice of Petition for Certification \(NPC\) – CN 10945](#) ..... page 2
- [Notice of Motion – CN 11360](#) ..... page 3
- [Certification of Service – CN 12908](#) ..... page 4
- [Certification of Confidential Identifiers – CN 13252](#).....page 6
- How to File with the New Jersey Supreme Court ..... page 7
- Step-by-Step Instructions for *Notice of Petition for Certification (NPC)* – CN 10945 ..... page 14
- Step-by-Step Instructions for *Notice of Motion* – CN 11360 ..... page 15
- Step-by-Step Instructions for *Certification of Service* - CN 12908 ..... page 16
- Things to Think About Before You Represent Yourself in Court ..... page 17
- Glossary ..... page 18

**Note:** These materials have been prepared by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts for use by self-represented litigants. The guides, instructions, and [forms](#) will be periodically updated as necessary to reflect current New Jersey statutes and court rules. The most recent version of the forms will be available at the county courthouse or on the Judiciary's Internet site [njcourts.gov](http://njcourts.gov). However, you are ultimately responsible for the content of your court papers.

**A. Filing Attorney or Self-Represented Litigant Information**

Filer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NJ Attorney ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**B.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Plaintiff**

**v.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Defendant**

**C.** Supreme Court of New Jersey

Appellate Division

Docket Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notice of Petition  
for Certification**

To: Clerk of the Supreme Court  
Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex  
P.O. Box 970  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0970

**D.** (Also, list the attorneys for your adversaries. If they are not represented by counsel, list your adversaries by their names and addresses.)

**E. Take Notice** that \_\_\_\_\_ shall petition the Supreme Court for an Order certifying the entire judgment entered by the Appellate Division in the above matter on \_\_\_\_\_.

**F.** \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**G.** \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature - An original ink signature is required.

**A. Filing Attorney or Self-Represented Litigant Information**

Filer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NJ Attorney ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**B.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Plaintiff**

**v.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Defendant**

**C.** Supreme Court of New Jersey

Supreme Court

Docket Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Appellate Division

Docket Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**D.**

**Notice of Motion for**

**E.** To: (List the attorneys for your adversaries. If they are not represented by counsel, list your adversaries by their names and addresses.)

**F.** (State the reliefs being requested.)

**G.** \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**H.** \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature - An original ink signature is required.

**A. Filing Attorney or Self-Represented Litigant Information**

Filer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NJ Attorney ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**B.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Plaintiff**

**v.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Defendant**

**C. Supreme Court of New Jersey**

Supreme Court

Docket Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Appellate Division

Docket Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Certification of Service**

**D.** I certify that on \_\_\_\_\_, I served two copies of the following document(s):

**E.** By: (select all that apply):

☐ hand delivery

☐ regular mail to last known address

☐ registered or certified mail, return receipt, to last known address

☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

Note: There must be consent of receiving party to use a method of service other than mail or hand delivery. **By signing this form, you are certifying that there is consent.** If serving by email or fax, provide the receiving party's email or fax number below:

\_\_\_\_\_

**F.** on the following parties, or their attorney if represented, in the above-captioned matter

Name of party and party's attorney, if represented:

Address (use attorney's address if represented): Street

City

State

ip Code

Name of party and party's attorney, if represented:		
Address (use attorney's address if represented): Street		
City	State	ip Code

**G.** I certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.  
(See Rule 1:4-4(b))

**H.** \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**I.** \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature – Original ink signature is required.



## Certification that Submission Contains No Confidential Information or Confidential Personal Identifiers

This form shall be completed by any party who files a document in a public court matter in the Supreme Court or in the Appellate Division of the Superior Court.

**1. Confidential information / confidential personal identifiers (must select one):**

I certify that I have reviewed Rules 1:38-3, 1:38-5, and 1:38-7 and:

- ☐ This document does not contain any confidential information or any confidential personal identifiers; **OR**
- ☐ This document; previously contained confidential information or confidential personal identifiers, which have been redacted (meaning removed or made anonymous by using fictitious first names or initials, where applicable). The cover of the redacted version of the document contains the word "REDACTED." I acknowledge that a non-redacted version must be filed simultaneously with the redacted version in matters where the confidential information is necessary to the disposition of the matter: **OR**
- ☐ This document contains confidential information, but redaction is not required because the document is excluded from public access pursuant to court order, Rule, statute, or other authority. If applicable, skip paragraphs 2 and 3.

**2. Return and resubmission:**

I certify that if any confidential information is discovered in this submission and brought to the court's attention, the court will return the document to me, and I will be responsible to redact or remove the confidential information before resubmission. I understand the court could impose sanctions, including suppression of the brief, dismissal in extraordinary cases, and other measures for a failure to accurately make this certification or for the discovery of confidential information in a document that has been filed.

**3. Briefs posted online:**

I understand that the presence of confidential information or confidential personal identifiers in a document that has been posted on the Judiciary's public website will be grounds for the removal of such online posting, pending correction by the filing party, on an expedited timeline. The court in its discretion could postpone further proceedings pending the resubmission of the document.

This certification pertains to the following documents included in this filing (attach one additional sheet, if necessary, for any information below):

☐ Additional information attached

I certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## A Guide to Filing for Litigants without Lawyers - Supreme Court

### Introduction

This Guide gives you basic information on how to file papers in the *Supreme Court*. The Rules of Court, which can be found on the internet at njcourts.gov or at any public law library, set forth the official requirements. The glossary at the end of this document defines some common legal terms used in this Guide.

The Guide is organized by sections. Read the entire Guide and then follow the procedures that apply to your type of case. Please note that the filing deadlines in the Supreme Court are very short. If you fail to file your papers on time, your case can be dismissed. If you are a respondent, your brief can be suppressed, which means the Court will not read your brief.

### How to File with the New Jersey Supreme Court

The Clerk's Office is located in the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, 25 Market St., Trenton. The telephone number is 609-815-2955.

The mailing address of the Supreme Court is:

Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex  
Attn: Clerk of the Supreme Court  
P.O. Box 970  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0970

### A. General Requirements

In New Jersey, the Supreme Court is the highest state court. Cases come to the Supreme Court after a decision by the Superior Court, *Appellate Division*. If the decision of that court is a *final judgment*, in most cases the proper procedure is to *Petition for Certification* (See page 2). If the decision is not a final judgment, it is *interlocutory* and you must seek review by filing a *motion* (See page 3).

- 1. Format.** Although the Court prefers formal briefs that include a Table of Contents and a Table of Case Citations, you may submit a brief in the form of a letter. If you use a letter format, you do not have to include a formal Table of Citations or have a brief cover.

Your papers should be typed. If you do not have a computer, you may submit hand-written papers. If hand-written, you must print clearly. All pages must be 8.5 inches by 11 inches and double-spaced.

If you use a computer, the type (or "font") must be Times New Roman or a similar font in 14 point with character spacing expanded by 0.3 points. Footnotes and indented quotations may be single-spaced.

You must number all pages. The maximum number of pages you may have for different kinds of briefs is discussed in later sections of the Guide.

- 2. Brief covers.** If you are a *petitioner*, *movant*, or *appellant*, the cover of the brief in support of your application must be white. If you are a respondent, your brief cover must be blue. A reply brief cover must be buff or cream. The covers should be made of paper that is heavier than the paper that makes up the brief.

## A Guide to Filing for Litigants without Lawyers - Supreme Court

3. **Filing Fees.** Unless you have a court order allowing you to proceed as an *indigent*, Supreme Court filing fees are as follows:
  - a. Notice of petition for certification is \$250.
  - b. Notice of appeal is \$250.
  - c. Respondent's brief has no fee.
  - d. A motion that opens a case is \$50.
  - e. Respondent's first motion, if filed is \$50.
  - f. A motion for reconsideration is \$50.
4. **Due Dates.** Each of the sections below lists specific deadlines for the filing of papers in the Supreme Court. As a general rule, if the deadline falls on a weekend or a holiday, the due date is automatically extended to the next business day. Also, if you file your papers by mail, an extra five days are added to the due date – if your papers are postmarked no later than the due date, they will be accepted for filing. (There is an exception to the five-day rule. If the Court has entered a *peremptory order* giving you until a specific date to file papers, you must have them at the Clerk's Office and served on your *adversary* by that date.)
5. **Certification of Service (By Mail or in Person).**

Each time you serve copies of your papers on your adversaries, you must submit proof of your service to the Clerk's Office. You can do this by submitting a *Certification of Service*.
6. **Certification of Confidential Identifiers.** Each time you submit papers to the Supreme Court, you must certify to the Court that the submission contains no confidential information (as set out in Rules 1:38-3 and 1:38-5) or confidential personal identifiers (as set out in Rule 1:38-7). You can do this by submitting a *Certification that Submission Contains No Confidential Information or Confidential Personal Identifiers*.

### B. Petitions for Certification

If you or your adversary appealed to the Appellate Division from a final judgment, the decision of the Appellate Division is, in almost all cases, final for purposes of Supreme Court review. Although you can file an *appeal as of right* to the Supreme Court in very limited situations (See page 9), the proper procedure is to petition for certification. In addition to following the General Requirements in Section A, above, you must submit the following:

1. **Notice of Petition for Certification (NPC).** The *Notice of Petition for Certification (NPC)* is one or two pages. It includes the caption of the case, the Appellate Division docket number, and the filing date of the Appellate Division decision you are seeking to have reviewed.

Under Rule 2:12-3(a), you have twenty days from the date of the Appellate Division decision within which to file a *NPC*. A copy must be served on your adversary.

Please note that the time to file a *NPC* is deferred if you have filed a **timely** motion for reconsideration with the Appellate Division; that is, within ten days of that court's decision. The twenty-day period to file a *NPC* stops on the day you file a timely motion for reconsideration.

The time to file a *NPC* does not run while the motion for reconsideration is pending. As soon as the Appellate Division files its decision on that motion, the time begins to run again. For example,



## A Guide to Filing for Litigants without Lawyers - Supreme Court

if the Appellate Division opinion were filed on January 1st, the twenty days would begin to run from that date. If you filed a motion for reconsideration on January 8th, the running of the twenty days would stop with **seven** (January 2 – January 8) days having been used up. If the motion for reconsideration were denied on January 31st, you would have thirteen days from that date to file your *NPC*. In this example, it would be due by February 13th.

**2. *Petition for Certification.*** The *Petition for Certification* is generally a formal brief but can be a letter brief. An original and three copies must be filed with the Clerk's Office within ten days after the filing of the *NPC* or thirty days after the filing date of the final decision of the Appellate Division, whichever is later. Two copies must be served on your adversary. There are special requirements for a petition for certification that make it different from the brief you filed in the Appellate Division.

**a. *Format.*** In addition to the general format requirements of Section A (See page 6), a petition for certification may not be longer than twenty pages. It must include:

1. a short statement of the matter involved;
2. the question presented;
3. the errors complained of;
4. the reasons why certification should be allowed; and
5. comments on the Appellate Division's opinion.

You must also certify that the petition presents a substantial question and is filed in good faith and not for purposes of delay.

**b. *Appendix.*** The appendix to the petition for certification must include:

1. the opinion or *summary order* disposition of the Appellate Division; and
2. a transcript of any oral opinion by the trial judge.

In sentencing cases heard by the Appellate Division without briefs, the petition for certification appendix must also include a transcript of the oral arguments before the Appellate Division. (Defendants who were represented by the Public Defender in the Appellate Division should ask that office to forward four copies of the Appellate Division materials and transcript to the Supreme Court Clerk's Office.)

**c. *Appellate Division Briefs.*** Four copies of your Appellate Division briefs and appendices, exactly as they were filed in that Court, must be filed in the Supreme Court.

**3. *Respondent's Brief.*** If you are responding to someone else's petition for certification, you have fifteen days from the filing of the *Petition for Certification* to file an original plus three copies of your respondent's brief and four copies of your Appellate Division briefs and appendices.

The general format requirements of Section A (See page 6) apply to respondents' briefs, too. The Court does, however, allow a respondent to file an original and three copies of a letter relying on his or her Appellate Division briefs in place of a new Supreme Court brief.

A respondent's brief may not exceed twenty pages.

## A Guide to Filing for Litigants without Lawyers - Supreme Court

4. **Reply Brief.** The petitioner has ten days from the filing of a respondent's brief to file an original and three copies of a reply brief. The maximum length for a reply brief is ten pages. You do not have to file a reply brief.
5. **Transcripts.** Except for transcribed oral opinions, you do not have to forward trial transcripts with your petition for certification.
6. A **Certification of Service** must accompany all papers submitted to the Court.
7. A **Certification of Confidential Identifiers** must accompany all papers submitted to the Court.
8. **Grounds for Granting Certification.** The Supreme Court does not grant certification routinely. In fact, certification is denied in approximately ninety percent of the cases filed.

Grounds for granting certification include the following:

- a. the matter must present a question of general public importance that has not been, but should be, settled by the Court;
- b. the matter is similar to another case already on appeal before the Court;
- c. the Appellate Division's decision is in conflict with a prior Supreme Court or Appellate Division decision or otherwise calls for an exercise of the Supreme Court's supervision; or
- d. if the interest of justice requires a grant.

Please note that certification will not be allowed on final judgments of the Appellate Division except for special reasons. (See R. 2:12-4)

9. **Court Action.** The Court's grant or denial of certification will be by order without oral argument. If certification is denied, the case is concluded. If certification is granted, the Court may either dispose of the matter summarily or may set the appeal down for oral argument. If the Court does **not** decide the case summarily, you must send the Clerk's Office **five** more copies of all of your Appellate Division and Supreme Court briefs and appendices.

If your case is to be argued, you will receive approximately four weeks' advance notice of the argument dates.

## C. Appeals as of Right

1. **When to file.** Appeals as of right to the Supreme Court are proper in very limited circumstances. Grounds for an appeal as of right include:
  - a. A dissent in the Appellate Division (the appeal is limited to the issues discussed in the dissent); or
  - b. When the case presents a substantial constitutional question that has not been the subject of a prior appellate decision. Please note that allegations of constitutional violations are not automatically "substantial questions." If the Court decides they are **not** substantial questions within the meaning of the Rules and case law, the appeal will be dismissed.

## A Guide to Filing for Litigants without Lawyers - Supreme Court

Rather than have an appeal dismissed on procedural grounds, you should petition for certification. If the Court finds your issues to be substantial, it will grant certification.

2. **Time to File and Format.** You have forty-five days from the final judgment of the Appellate Division decision within which to file a notice of appeal. The same Rules that apply to appeals as of right in the Appellate Division apply to the Supreme Court. Please remember that nine copies of all briefs and appendices are required - including your Appellate Division briefs and appendices. You do not have to provide copies of transcripts.
3. A **Certification of Service** must accompany all papers submitted to the Court.
4. A **Certification of Confidential Identifiers** must accompany all papers submitted to the Court.

### D. Motions

Motions are *interlocutory* applications. If you are seeking Supreme Court review of an interlocutory decision by the Appellate Division, you would normally file a *Motion for Leave to Appeal*. In certain circumstances, you might also be filing a *Motion for a Stay Pending Appeal* or a *Motion for Bail Pending Appeal*. You have twenty days from the filing date of the Appellate Division order to file your papers with the Supreme Court and your adversary. (R. 2:5-6) If you are responding to an adversary's motion, you have ten days to do so. (R. 2:8-1) The Court decides motions without oral arguments.

In addition to motions that seek review of interlocutory decisions of the Appellate Division, you may also need to file motions in cases that are already pending in the Supreme Court. Examples would be a "motion for an extension of time to file a petition for certification" or a "motion to supplement the record." If your brief will be late, you must file an extension motion prior to the due date of the brief to keep your case from being dismissed. Motions must follow these requirements:

1. **A Notice of Motion** This is usually one or two pages. In it, you state the nature of your request, such as *Notice of Motion for Leave to Appeal* or *Notice of Motion for a Stay Pending Appeal*.
2. **An Affidavit in Support of the Motion.** This can be your own affidavit. In it, you state, under oath, a short history of the case, the actions taken by the courts below, and why you should be getting the relief you are requesting. An affidavit starts with the case caption and is written in numbered paragraph form.

A notary public or an attorney can take your oath on the affidavit. Please note that the Rules permit you to file a certification in place of an affidavit. If you decide to use that, your document must have the following words appear just before your signature: "I certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment." (R. 1:4-4(b))

Please be careful to make your statements truthful and accurate. Also, be careful not to add new factual material to the case without making a motion to "supplement the record." Other than considering new procedural events in the case, the Court's review is limited to the record that was before the lower courts.

3. **A Brief in Support of the Motion.** Your brief contains a statement of the facts, procedural history, issues, and your legal arguments. As noted in the General Format section on page 6, briefs must be on paper that is 8.5 inches by 11 inches and double-spaced. If typed, the font must

## A Guide to Filing for Litigants without Lawyers - Supreme Court

be Times New Roman 14 point. Your brief on a motion cannot be longer than 25 pages. If you prefer, you may rely on the brief you submitted to the Appellate Division. If you do, you must submit nine copies of that brief to the Supreme Court. You must also submit nine copies of your appendix to the motion brief.

The Court permits the use of letter briefs, but they still must be double-spaced. Although handwritten papers are accepted, typed papers are preferred. If the Court cannot read your handwriting, you cannot get the relief you want.

4. **Copies.** You must file an original plus eight copies of your motion papers with the Supreme Court Clerk's Office. You also must serve two copies of the motion papers on your adversaries. If you are seeking Supreme Court review of an Appellate Division order, you must send a copy of your motion to the Clerk of the Appellate Division.
5. **Filing Fees.** If the motion starts a case in the Supreme Court - such as a motion for leave to appeal - there is a filing fee of \$50. If you have already filed papers in the Supreme Court and paid a fee, there is no filing fee. For example, if you had filed a timely notice of petition for certification and then had to make a motion for an extension of time to file your brief, the motion for an extension of time would not need a filing fee.
6. **Indigency.** If the courts below have found you to be indigent, you will be allowed to proceed without filing a fee if you send the Clerk's Office a copy of the order finding you to be indigent and an affidavit from you stating, under oath, that there have been no substantial changes in your financial situation since the date of the order. (See R. 2:7-4)

If the courts below have **not** found you to be indigent, and you want to request that Supreme Court filing fees be waived, you must make an application with the trial court in the first instance. (See R. 2:7-1(a))

7. **Emergent Matters.** Sometimes emergencies arise that require accelerated consideration of a matter. The Supreme Court calls such matters "Emergent Matters."

Before you can request emergent relief from the Supreme Court, you must have a decision from the Appellate Division. Once you have that, you should either call or visit the Clerk's Office for instructions. A single Justice cannot grant final relief. If emergent relief is granted, it is only until the full Court can consider the matter. Under such circumstances, a very short briefing schedule may be set.

8. **Court Action.** As with petitions for certification, motions are decided by the Supreme Court on the papers submitted. When the Court has decided the motion, the Clerk will enter an appropriate order and distribute it to the parties.
9. **Motions for Reconsideration.** If you have a petition for certification or motion denied, or an appeal dismissed or otherwise decided against you, you have ten days from the filing date of the Court's decision within which to file a motion for reconsideration. The format is the same as for other motions but the brief in support is limited to 15 pages. You must submit an original and eight copies to the Clerk's Office and serve two copies on your adversaries. The filing fee is \$50. Reconsideration motions are rarely granted, so you should not file one except in extraordinary circumstances.

**A Guide to Filing for Litigants without Lawyers - Supreme Court**

**10.A *Certification of Service*** must also accompany your motion papers.

**11.A *Certification of Confidential Identifiers*** must accompany you motion papers.

**E. Conclusion**

Neither the Justices nor the employees of the Clerk's Office may give you legal advice. If you have procedural questions about your case, however, you may telephone or write the Clerk's Office.

Try to write your briefs clearly. Make them as short as you can. Be sure that the information in your briefs is accurate. Concentrate on the legal and factual issues before the Court -- do not spend time and effort attacking your adversaries or their attorneys.

If you follow the Rules of Court and the information contained in these Guidelines, the Court can give your application the attention it deserves. You may not win, but a proper presentation will help your chances for success.

**Note:** Each form contains step-by-step instructions to complete that form.



New Jersey Judiciary - Supreme Court of New Jersey

## **Instructions for Completing a *Notice of Petition for Certification (NPC)***

Please print legibly or type the information on the form.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Instruction</b>
----------------	--------------------

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| A. | Enter your name, address, daytime telephone number and email address. If you are not an attorney, leave the <i>NJ Attorney ID</i> field blank.  |
| B. | Enter the complete caption or title of the case exactly as it appears on the papers from the Appellate Division. Write all party names in full. |
| C. | Enter the Appellate Division docket number.   |
| D. | List the names and addresses of your adversaries' attorneys or, if not represented by an attorney, the names and addresses of your adversaries. |
| E. | Enter your name and the date of the final judgment of the Appellate Division.   |
| F. | Enter the current date.   |
| G. | Sign your name. An original ink signature is required.  |



New Jersey Judiciary – Supreme Court of New Jersey

## **Instructions for Completing a *Notice of Motion***

Please print legibly or type the information on the form.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Instruction</b>
----------------	--------------------

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| A. | Enter your name, address, daytime telephone number and email address. If you are not an attorney, leave the <i>NJ Attorney ID</i> field blank.   |
| B. | Enter the complete caption or title of the case exactly as it appears on the papers from the Appellate Division. Write all party names in full.  |
| C. | Enter the Supreme Court docket number, if known. If you do not have the Supreme Court docket number, leave the line blank, and in the space below, enter the Appellate Division docket number. |
| D. | Enter the specific relief (or reliefs) that you are seeking from the Supreme Court, in just a few words. For example, "Fee Waiver" or "Stay Pending Appeal."                                   |
| E. | List the names and addresses of your adversaries' attorneys or, if not represented by an attorney, the names and addresses of your adversaries.  |
| F. | Briefly state the relief being requested.  |
| G. | Enter the current date.  |
| H. | Sign your name. An original ink signature is required.   |



New Jersey Judiciary- Supreme Court of New Jersey

## Instructions for Completing a *Certification of Service*

Please print legibly or type the information on the form.

Section	Instruction
---------	-------------

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| A. | Enter your name, address, daytime telephone number and email address. If you are not an attorney, leave the <i>NJ Attorney ID</i> field blank.  |
| B. | Enter the complete caption or title of the case <b>exactly</b> as it appears on the papers from the Appellate Division. Write the full names of all parties.  |
| C. | Enter the Supreme Court docket number, if known. If you do not have a Supreme Court docket number, leave the line blank, and in the space below, enter the Appellate Division docket number.  |
| D. | Enter the date you served the documents and list all the documents you are serving on your adversaries.   |
| E. | <p>Select the method(s) of service. If you select "other," you must explain what method of service you are using (for example, email, fax), and whether there is consent to that method of service. <b>There must be consent of the receiving party to use a method of service other than mail or hand delivery.</b> By signing the <i>Certification of Service</i> form, you are certifying to the Supreme Court that there <b>is consent</b> for the alternate method of service.</p> <p>If you are serving by email or fax, you must provide the email address or fax number of the receiving party. If you are serving by registered or certified mail, you are not required to file the return receipt card unless otherwise ordered by the court.</p> |
| F. | List each party you are serving along with the address to which you are serving the document(s) on. If the party is represented by an attorney, you serve the attorney with the document(s). If you are serving by email or fax, you must provide the email address or fax number of the receiving party.   |
| G. | Please read the <u>Rule</u> 1:4-4(b) certification language carefully. By signing the <i>Certification of Service</i> form, you are agreeing to that language.  |
| H. | Enter the current date.   |
| I. | Sign your name. An original ink signature is required.  |



## Things to Think About Before You Represent Yourself in Court

### Try to Get a Lawyer

The court system can be confusing, and it is a good idea to get a lawyer if you can. If you cannot afford a lawyer, you may contact the legal services program in your county to see if you qualify for free legal services. Their telephone number can be found online under “Legal Aid” or “[Legal Services](#).”

If you do not qualify for free legal services and need help in locating an attorney, you can contact the bar association in your county. Most county bar associations have a [Lawyer Referral Service](#). The Lawyer Referral Service can supply you with the names of attorneys in your area willing to handle your particular type of case and sometimes consult with you at a reduced fee.

There are also organizations of minority lawyers throughout New Jersey, as well as organizations of lawyers who handle specialized types of cases. Ask the clerk’s office staff for a list of the Lawyer Referral Services that include these organizations.

### What You Should Expect If You Represent Yourself

While you have the right to represent yourself in court, you should not expect any special treatment, help, or attention from the court. You must still comply with the Rules of the Court, even if you are not familiar with them. The following is a list of some things the court staff can and cannot do for you. Read it carefully before asking the court staff for help.

- We *can* explain and answer questions about how the court works.
- We *can* tell you what the requirements are to have your case considered by the court.
- We *can* give you some information from your case file.
- We *can* provide you with samples of court forms that are available.
- We *can* provide you with guidance on how to fill out forms.
- We *can* usually answer questions about court deadlines.
- We *cannot* give you legal advice. Only your lawyer can give you legal advice.
- We *cannot* tell you whether you should bring your case to court.
- We *cannot* give you an opinion about what will happen if you bring your case to court.
- We *cannot* recommend a lawyer, but we can provide you with the telephone number of a local lawyer referral service.
- We *cannot* talk to the judge for you about what will happen in your case.
- We *cannot* let you talk to the judge outside of court.
- We *cannot* change an order issued by a judge.

### Keep Copies of All Papers

If you do not hire an attorney and decide to represent yourself, be sure to make and keep for yourself copies of all completed forms and any canceled checks, money orders, sales receipts, bills, contract estimates, letters, leases, photographs, and other important documents that relate to your case.

## Glossary

**Adversary** - Opponent, the other party to the litigation.

**Appeal as of Right** - An application to the Supreme Court that is based on a dissent in the Appellate Division or a substantial constitutional question. Applies only when the decision is a final judgment.

**Appellant** - The party who is appealing the judgment of the Appellate Division.

**Appellate Division** - The intermediate appellate court in the New Jersey state court system.

**Certification of Confidential Identifiers** – A sworn statement regarding confidential information and confidential personal identifiers. This statement must accompany all submissions to the Supreme Court.

**Certification of Service** - A sworn statement that you have delivered copies of your materials to your adversaries.

**Emergent Matter** - If circumstances require emergency handling of a motion or other matter, arrangements can be made through the Clerk's Office to have the question presented to a single Justice. If the single Justice grants relief, that relief remains in effect pending the full Court's consideration of the application.

**Final Judgment** - A decision of a court that resolves all issues for all parties; for example, in a criminal case, a final judgment is entered after a conviction and sentence have been imposed on the defendant. In a civil case, a final judgment is entered after a jury verdict or the disposition of the case by the trial court.

**Indigent** - One who is unable to afford court filing fees and related costs. In criminal matters, an indigent is entitled to receive transcripts at public expense. Except in rare cases, free transcripts are not provided in civil cases. A party making a motion to be declared an indigent must submit a detailed financial statement to the trial court on an appropriate form.

**Interlocutory** - A decision by a court or an application by a party that does not decide the entire case. For example, if a trial court denies a defendant's motion to suppress evidence in a criminal matter, the defendant may seek leave to appeal that decision before going to trial. Such an application would be interlocutory.

**Motion** - An interlocutory application made to a court.

**Movant** -The name given to a party who has filed a motion.

**Notice of Appeal** - If you are claiming an appeal as of right, the notice of appeal begins Supreme Court proceedings by placing the other parties and the court below on notice of your intention.

**Notice of Petition for Certification** - The document that begins a Supreme Court case after a final judgment in the Appellate Division. It puts the Appellate Division and all of the parties on notice that you are seeking Supreme Court review of the Appellate Division's decision.

## Glossary

**Peremptory Order** - An order that gives you a specific date within which to file particular papers. No extensions of time will be granted. If you were to miss the deadline, your case could be dismissed or, if you were a respondent, your brief suppressed without further notice.

**Petition for Certification** - The name given a brief filed in the Supreme Court when a party is seeking Supreme Court review of a final decision of the Appellate Division. A petition for certification involves “discretionary review,” which means that the Supreme Court does not have to hear the case or issue a full opinion.

**Petitioner** - The name given to a party who files a petition for certification.

**Respondent** - The name given to a party who opposes a petitioner, an appellant, or a movant.

**Stay** - An order of a court preventing an act from occurring. For example, a party may make a motion to the Appellate Division for a stay of its judgment pending a petition for certification to the Supreme Court.

**Summary Order** - The Supreme Court may dispose of matters before it by the entry of an order without hearing oral argument of the parties. Such summary decisions are normally entered at the time the petition for certification or motion is considered, but summary dispositions can be entered in appeals as of right as well.

**Supreme Court** - The court of last resort in the New Jersey state court system.