

**§ 58-24-170. Service of process.**

(a) Every society authorized to do business in this State shall appoint in writing the Commissioner and each successor in office to be its true and lawful attorney upon whom all lawful process in any action or proceeding against it shall be served, and shall agree in such writing that any lawful process against it which is served on said attorney shall be of the same legal force and validity as if served upon the society, and that the authority shall continue in force so long as any liability remains outstanding in this State. Copies of such appointment, certified by said Commissioner, shall be deemed sufficient evidence thereof and shall be admitted in evidence with the same force and effect as the original thereof might be admitted.

(b) Service shall only be made upon the Commissioner, or if absent, upon the person in charge of the Commissioner's office. It shall be made in duplicate and shall constitute sufficient service upon the society. When legal process against a society is served upon the Commissioner, the Commissioner shall forthwith forward one of the duplicate copies by certified or registered mail, prepaid, directed to the secretary or corresponding officer. No such service shall require a society to file its answer, pleading or defense in less than 30 days from the date of mailing the copy of the service to a society. Legal process shall not be served upon a society except in the manner herein provided. At the time of serving any process upon the Commissioner, the plaintiff or complainant in the action shall pay to the Commissioner a fee in the amount set in G.S. 58-16-30. (1987, c. 483, s. 2; 1989, c. 645, s. 4; 1991, c. 720, s. 4.)