

Inter-Agency Process Serving

Guide to the Bad Actor List

So, you're a process serving agent, eh? How long is it going to be before you're on a bad actor list? If you follow this simple guide, you can avoid that altogether.

Avoid Bad Actor List	Direct Entry to Bad Actor List
Acknowledge instructions with a meaningful reply such as 'I'll attend within the next three days'	Don't acknowledge instructions at all. Causes doubt and leads to a chase up call or email. Acknowledges with casual, meaningless reply (OK – Thumbs Up Emoji etc)
Make attendance and carry out assignment according to the <u>exact instructions</u> provided. If there is something unusual or you're uncertain about then you will ask the instructing agent for clarity.	Make attendance and fail to follow the instructions. This may breach an SLA that the other agent has with client. It may cause the case to appear inconsistent / substandard compared to other cases for the same client. It may actually be a breach of service rules. It may disrupt the tactical approach of the client / instructing agent.
Take relevant attendance photographs that are timed and dated. This documents your attendance and, in some cases, provides a useful illustration of the premises you are visiting.	Don't take photographs or fail to use a TDS stamp. A photograph with TDS simply confirms the presence of an agent at a location which is very useful if service is disputed. It is also useful to demonstrate exactly how many visits were made for billing purposes.

Behave in a polite, courteous and formal manner. You are representing another party and must ensure that their reputation is preserved.	Behave in a slovenly, rude and unprofessional manner. This will lead to a complaint of some sort. Be professional at all times.
Provide updates in a timely manner. This means the instructing agent can keep a client updated. The client may need to take immediate action in response to an update and so it is imperative they are provided straight away.	Don't provide updates or take too long doing so. This will irritate the agent and the client. They are balancing their own workloads and target times. Failure to provide updates leads to 'chaser' calls and messages.
Communicate only with the instructing agent. All updates, messages and paperwork are directed to the instructing agent.	Contact the agent's client. This is a guaranteed cause for complaint. You have no business with the agent's client during the instructions. Deal with the agent only.
Respect the Agent's Business Always present as a colleague of the instructing agent. Never use your own business cards, business name, email addresses, letterheads etc. After the assignment you will not make approaches to the ultimate client to offer your own services.	Disrespect the Agent's Business. Announce your own business name in the course of the assignment. This will lead to confusion and embarrassment. Approach agent's client offering services. This will most likely be discovered. Other agents have long standing relationships and contractual agreements with their client. A reputation for 'poaching' cannot be shaken off.
Telling the truth Keep all your reports truthful.	Telling Lies If you want to really destroy your own reputation in the industry then lying to other agents is a sure-fire way to do it.

	Common examples are around paying bills such as “We’ve just changed to new payment system / bank account etc”. Also, claiming to have carried out work that you haven’t or even carrying it out in a way that is different to how you describe is a recipe for disaster. Covering up mistakes with lies is a very bad practice that not only insults the intelligence of another agent but puts them in a position in which they unwittingly mislead their own client.
Set Fees Reasonably An inter agency rate reduces the level of profit for you but it establishes a new vein of work and a working business relationship. By setting fees reasonably and allowing another agent to fulfil the needs of a client and make a small profit you will become a wheel in the whole industry machine and can look to other agents to reciprocate with assistance when you need it.	Set Fees Unreasonably. By failing to see / understand the industry standard and ‘the big picture’ you are unlikely to receive a great deal of ‘inter agency work’ and, moreover, you won’t find good will from other agents that you approach to assist you.
Being Loyal and Valuing Relationships Once you’ve established a working relationship then you maintain it long term and over time you will exchange knowledge and resources with the other agents.	Flitting Between Agents. If an agent has carried out good work for you then why not retain that agent and provide the agent with future instructions when the opportunity arises? It is quite insulting to agents to see assignments offered in their locality by agents they have worked for before without issue. Doing this and relying on email circulars is indicative of an attitude towards fellow

	agents and it will create ill feeling. People do not like to feel used / abandoned.
GDPR and Confidentiality The transmissions and documents in the case are all strictly confidential. You will take great care to protect personal data.	Careless Approach to GDPR A lazy, thoughtless approach to confidentiality will result in trouble and maybe prosecution. Don't allow third party access to data Shred all documents that are finished with. Make sure there are security measures in place on any devices that you use in the course of your work. A breach of GDPR or simple confidentiality could be disastrous.
Exercising Due Diligence You will take great care in your choice of agent to whom you will entrust the client's instructions. The agent you select will ideally meet the ABI membership criteria. In this way you will reduce risk.	Short Sighted Assignment of Instructions It may be tempting to instruct somebody who is cheap, uninsured, has a criminal record, is unknown / unverified. Failing to carry out a degree of due diligence in respect of agents that you work with can lead to unexpected and unwelcome surprises. Be careful.
CPR and Insolvency Rules You have a good working knowledge of the rules and comply with them to ensure that work is carried out correctly.	Ignorance of Laws If your understanding of the appropriate laws is deficient and you persist in taking instructions then problems will inevitably arise. To remedy this, seek training and guidance from more experienced or knowledgeable industry figures.
Gathering Useful Information You are 'switched on' and understand that there is an opportunity to gather more information that could be useful and / or authenticate the actions taken. For instance, you ask the names of the people you speak to. "The receptionist"	The Bare Minimum You don't really grasp the task ahead and simply do the bare minimum without attempting to enhance your service at all. You don't realise the usefulness of the information you could collect.

becomes “Mrs Bloggs” or “The adult male” becomes “John Smith”.

You might ask for a signature on receipt of documents to overcome a disputed serve.

You might ask for a contact telephone number because you anticipate that you will need to revisit this person as the case evolves.

You might glean information about a debt, about assets, whereabouts or any other useful material pertinent to the matter in hand.