

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

HOW TO RESPOND TO RECEIPT OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS, SEARCH WARRANTS, AND VISITS FROM INVESTIGATORS*

Office of General Counsel: 458-8940 or x8941, Washington Hall 32
Public Safety Office: 458-8999 or x8427, Elrod University Commons 254

Who is delivering the document or seeking information?

- Ask for photo identification and check it carefully. Be polite and professional.

What is it?

- Summons
- Subpoena
- Search Warrant
- Court Order
- Other Notice from a Governmental Agency

Should I accept it?

- Do not accept it unless it is addressed to the office/department in which you are employed or to an administrator within that office by name and title. **Do not accept such a document addressed to any other office on campus.**
- Immediately tell your department head of the attempted delivery. If s/he is not available, you may say to the deliverer, **"I do not have the authority to accept it,"** and direct the deliverer to the Office of General Counsel to determine whether it may be accepted.

If you accept it:

- Stamp it with a "received" stamp or other note the date and time received, as well as the method of deliver (e.g. by hand, by campus mail, by US mail, etc.)
- Make a photocopy of the document and get it to the Office of General Counsel on the same day. With the exception of a search warrant, you should not take any action on other official documents until the Office of General Counsel has determined its validity and appropriate action(s).

Do not interfere with a search warrant delivered and addressed to your office, one of your coworkers, or to you personally. Call the Office of General Counsel or Public Safety immediately. Keep a list and copy of all records provided or examined pursuant to the warrant.

Do not talk about the document or the fact that it was received with anyone other than your supervisor, department head, the Office of General Counsel, Public Safety, or others with a legitimate need to know. Talking about certain things with the wrong people may be illegal.

If you are called or visited by a government attorney, investigator, agency representative, or private attorney involving university business, immediately tell your department head of the contact. If s/he isn't available, refer the caller/visitor to the Office of General Counsel and notify the Office of General Counsel or the Director of Public Safety of the contact immediately.

For routine background checks, verify the requestor's photo identification and a copy of the student / former employee's signed release. Do not give copies of the documents to the requestor unless the release specifically authorizes the requestor to receive copies. If the requestor contacts you via phone, ask him/her to fax a copy of the signed release, and take reasonable steps to verify the caller's identity.

*Based on a similar document created by the Washington and Lee University Registrar's Office.