

Article 2A: Administration of the Court E-filing

2A.01 DESIGNATION OF ELECTRONIC FILING CASE TYPES

- (a) This Court hereby authorizes all civil cases with the exception of Wills (Wills), and sealed and impounded cases as permissible electronic filing case types. The Circuit Court Clerk (Clerk) shall direct the phasing in of case types during implementation of electronic filing.
- (b) Any unapproved document type filed electronically by a subscriber shall be rejected by the Clerk of the Court.
- (c) Any notice of appeal and post judgment enforcement proceeding documents may be e-filed and served in accordance with Supreme Court Rules.

2A.02 DEFINITIONS

The following terms in these rules are defined as follows:

- (a) Clerk - The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Kane County as defined in Art. 6 & 18 of the Constitution of the State of Illinois.
- (b) Conventional manner of filing – The filing of paper documents with the Clerk as is done in cases that are not e-file cases.
- (c) Electronic Document (e-document) - An electronic file containing information text.
- (d) Electronic Filing (e-file) – An electronic transmission of information between the Clerk and a vendor for the purpose of case processing.
- (e) Electronic Image (e-image) - An electronic representation of a document that has been transformed to a graphical or image format.

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- (f) **Electronic Service (e-service)** - An electronic transmission of documents to a party, attorney or representative in a case via the vendor. However, e-service is not capable of conferring jurisdiction under circumstances where personal service is required as a matter of law.
- (g) **PDF-Portable Document Format** is a file format that preserves all fonts, formatting colors and graphics of any source document regardless of the application platform used.
- (h) **Subscriber** - One contracting with a vendor to use the e-filing system.
- (i) **Vendor** - A company or organization that has an executed Electronic Information Project Agreement with the Clerk to provide e-filing services for Kane County.

2A.03 AUTHORIZED USERS

- (a) The Clerk shall accept and approve filings electronically through a vendor or through the Clerk's computer workstation.
- (b) The Clerk shall allow the filing of a document or pleading using the conventional manner of filing. At no time shall the e-filing program prevent or exclude the ability to file any valid pleading with the Clerk. In those circumstances, the Clerk shall scan conventionally filed documents into the electronic file.
- (c) Prior to filing any document electronically, users are required to register with the Clerk and the Court's authorized e-filing vendor. Attorneys must submit an e-filing Registration Form to the Clerk which shall include a minimum of the following information: firm name, attorney names and ARDC registration numbers, address, phone number, e-mail address for e-service, staffs' contact information, selected method for paying filing fees. The vendor shall assign to the subscriber a confidential Personal Identification Number (PIN). The subscriber shall use this PIN to file, serve, receive, review and retrieve electronically filed pleadings, orders and other documents in an assigned case.

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It is the responsibility of the subscriber to keep all contact information current, accurate and complete. No subscriber shall knowingly permit his or her logon to be used by anyone other than authorized attorneys or employees of the attorney's law firm or designated co-counsel, where it has been established in writing by the PIN holder that designated counsel may file documents on behalf of the assigning counsel. Misuse of the e-filing system may result in the loss of a subscriber's registration.

All non-subscribers shall be registered upon confirmation of authorization by the Clerk. Court Partner Agency Users and individual registrations will be used to identify the source of the e-filed document submitted to the court electronically.

- (d) *Pro se* litigants may utilize e-filing through a vendor on the internet by means of individual transactional agreements and credit card payment. *Pro se* litigants will be assigned a user name and password by the vendor.
- (e) Without charge during normal business hours, the Clerk shall provide attorneys and parties in e-file cases access to an e-file computer workstation.

2A.04 METHOD OF FILING

The method of filing shall not affect the right of access to court documents. The Clerk shall maintain public access viewing terminals to allow electronic records and electronic documents to be displayed to the public. Electronic access and dissemination of court records shall be in accordance with the [Electronic Access Policy of Circuit Court Records of the Illinois Courts](#).

2A.05 FILING OF EXHIBITS

Physical items for which a photograph may be substituted may be electronically imaged and e-filed. Items not conducive to electronic filing, such as documents under seal and physical exhibits for which an image will not suffice shall be filed in their physical form at the Circuit Clerk's office or in the courtroom, as directed by order of the court and in conformity with Supreme Court "[Electronic Filing Standards and Principles](#)." The motion and notice of motion for permission to file any of these physical items may be done electronically.

2A.06 MAINTENANCE OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

- (a) Anyone filing an electronic document that requires an original signature certifies by so filing, that the original signed document exists in the filing party's possession. Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, the filing party shall maintain and preserve all documents containing original signatures that are filed electronically. The filing party shall make those signed originals available for inspection by the Court, the Clerk or by other counsel, or *pro se* party in the case, upon five (5) business day notice. At any time, the clerk may request from the filing party a hard copy of an electronically filed document which shall be provided within five (5) business days upon reasonable notice.
- (b) All documents that are required to be maintained and preserved must be kept for one (1) year after the appellate process has been completed.

2A.07 PRIVACY ISSUES

- (a) It is the responsibility of the filing party or counsel to ensure that documents filed electronically do not disclose previously or statutorily impounded or sealed information or private information defined in [Supreme Court Rules 15](#) and [138](#). The Clerk is not responsible for the content of filed documents and has no obligation to review, redact or screen any expunged, sealed or impounded information.
- (b) All documents in confidential, impounded, or sealed cases must be submitted conventionally to the Clerk's office for filing. A party who

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has a legal basis for filing a document under seal without prior court order must electronically file a motion for leave to file under seal. The motion must include an explanation of how the document meets the legal standards for filing sealed documents. The document in question may not be attached to the motion as an attachment.

- (c) Parties and their counsel shall refrain from including, or shall redact where inclusion is necessary, the materials referenced in [Supreme Court Rules 15](#) and [138](#). All issues of privacy shall be filed in accordance with [Supreme Court Rules 15](#) and [138](#).
- (d) In addition to the materials referenced in [Supreme Court Rules 15](#) and [138](#), parties and their counsel shall refrain from including, or shall redact where inclusion is necessary, the following personal identifiers from all documents electronically filed with the court, including exhibits, thereto, unless otherwise ordered by the Court: (1) Social Security Number and Driver's License Number - If an individual's social security number must be included in a document, only the last four digits of the number shall be used. An individual's driver's license number shall not be used; (2) Names of Minor Children - If the involvement of a minor child must be included, only the initials of that child's name shall be used; (3) Dates of Birth - If an individual's date of birth must be included in a document, only the year shall be used; and (4) Financial Account Numbers - If financial account numbers are relevant, only the last four digits of these numbers shall be used.

2A.08 FORMAT OF DOCUMENTS

- (a) All electronically filed pleadings shall, to the extent practicable, be formatted in accordance with the applicable rules governing formatting of paper document pleadings. Additionally, each

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electronically filed pleading and document shall include the case title, case number and the nature of the filing.

- (b) Each electronically filed document shall also include the typed name, e-mail address, address and telephone number of the attorney or *pro se* party filing such document. Attorneys shall include their Attorney Number issued by the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission on all documents.
- (c) Documents must be submitted in PDF format. When possible, documents must be converted to PDF directly from the program creating the document, rather than from the scanned image of a paper document. Documents only available in paper format may be scanned and converted to PDF for electronic filing.
- (d) Exhibits attached to pleadings, motions, and the like shall be labeled consecutively with either an alphabetical or numeric symbol on the lower right corner of the first page of each exhibit. Unless required by Statute or Supreme Court Rule, the original document filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall not have attachments that are duplicates or reproductions of previously filed documents. Instead, a reference to the filing date and title of the document shall be used to replace the reproductions.
- (e) Documents shall be formatted as follows:
 - (1) The size of the type in the body of the text must be no less than twelve (12) point font, and footnotes no less than ten (10) point font;
 - (2) The size of the pages must be 8-1/2 by 11 inches;
 - (3) The margins on each side of the page must each be a minimum of one (1) inch;
 - (4) The top right two (2) inch by two (2) inch corner of the first page of each pleading shall be left blank for the Clerk's stamp.

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- (f) Any electronically filed document must be unalterable (sealed PDF), and be able to be printed with the same contents and formats as if printed from its authoring program. The e-filing vendor is required to make each electronically filed document that is not infected by a virus available for transmission to the Clerk immediately after successful receipt and virus checking of the document.
- (g) Bulk filings of multiple cases or multiple documents combined into one (1) PDF document shall not be accepted. Documents with different case numbers must be filed individually in separate transactions. Filing of individual documents within a case shall be accepted in a single electronic filing transaction.
- (h) Documents not complying with the format specified by the applicable statute, or local rule, or standards may be rejected.
- (i) Electronic documents containing links to material either within the filed document or external to the filed document are for convenience purposes only. The external material behind the link is not considered part of the filing or the basic record.

2A.09 SIGNATURES AND AUTHENTICATION

- (a) Any document filed electronically, including all pleadings, motions, documents, etc., using a verified user authentication shall be deemed to have been signed by the holder of the user authentication. Documents containing facsimile or typographical signatures may be filed electronically and shall be deemed to have been signed in person by the individual identified.
- (b) In the absence of a facsimile or typographical signature, any document electronically filed with a user's identification and password is deemed to have been personally signed by the holder of the user identification and password.

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- (c) Documents containing signatures of one or more persons or third parties may be filed electronically and shall bear a facsimile or typographical signature. The filing party/attorney must confirm approval of all persons, persons not a party to the case or not registered persons (including paralegals or other persons authorized to act on behalf of a registered user) required to sign the document.
- (d) Original signatures of all non-electronic filers must be obtained before filing the document. The document must indicate the identity of each non-registered signatory. The filing party must retain the original document until one (1) year after the date that the judgment has become final by the conclusion of direct review or the expiration of the time for seeking such review.
- (e) Where a Clerk is required to endorse a document, the typed name of the Clerk shall be deemed to be the Clerk's signature on an electronic document.
- (f) All Judges' and other necessary electronic signatures shall be captured and maintained by the Clerk. Each signature shall be protected by internal system security measures and use security tokens and encrypted passwords to authenticate the use of the e-signature.
- (g) Signatures as defined in subparagraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) satisfy Supreme Court Rules and statutes regarding signatures, and give rise to the application of available sanctions when appropriate.
- (h) The original signed document that has been electronically filed pursuant to subparagraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) shall be maintained and preserved as required by the applicable local rule.

2A.10 TIME OF FILING, ACCEPTANCE BY THE CLERK AND

ELECTRONIC FILING STAMP

- (a) Any document filed electronically shall be considered as filed with the Clerk upon review and acceptance, and the transmission has been completed with the Clerk's electronic filing stamp.
- (b) A person who files a document electronically shall have the same responsibility as a person filing a document in the conventional manner for ensuring that the document is complete, readable and properly filed.
- (c) The transmission date and time of transfer shall govern the electronic filing mark. Pleadings received by the Clerk before midnight on a day the courthouse is conducting court shall be deemed filed that day. If filed on a day the courthouse is not conducting court, the document will be deemed filed the next business day.
- (d) Upon receipt by the vendor, and submission of an electronic document to the Clerk, the vendor shall issue a confirmation to the subscriber. The confirmation shall indicate the time and date of receipt, and serve as proof that the document has been submitted to the Clerk. A subscriber will receive e-mail notification from the vendor if a document is not accepted by the Clerk's office. In that event, the subscriber may be required to re-file the document to meet necessary filing requirements.
- (e) Each document reviewed and accepted for filing by the Clerk shall receive an electronic file stamp. The stamp shall be endorsed in the name of the Clerk by the deputy clerk accepting filing, and shall include the identification of the court, the official time and date of filing and contain the word "FILED." This file stamp shall be merged with the electronic document and shall be visible when the document is printed and viewed on-line. Electronic documents are not officially filed without the electronic filing stamp. Filings so endorsed shall have the same force and effect as documents time stamped in the conventional manner.

2A.11 ELECTRONIC SERVICE AND FILING PROOF OF SERVICE

- (a) Electronic service is not capable of conferring jurisdiction. Therefore, documents that require personal service to confer jurisdiction as a matter of law may not be served electronically through an e-file vendor, but must be served in the conventional manner.
- (b) All other documents may be served upon the other parties or their representatives electronically through the e-file vendor. The filing party or attorney shall be responsible for completing electronic service of these other documents using the vendor's system.
- (c) If a party or party's designee has not subscribed to a vendor's services, service of all other documents shall be pursuant to [Supreme Court Rule 12](#).
- (d) E-file service shall be deemed complete at the posted date and time listed by the e-file vendor. However, for the purpose of computing time for any party to respond, any document filed on a day or at a time when the Clerk is not open for business is deemed to be served on the Clerk's next business day. E-service via e-mail shall be deemed complete on the first court day following transmission by the e-file vendor or party. The electronic service of a pleading or other document shall be considered as valid and effective service on all parties and shall have the same legal effect as personal service of an original paper document.
- (e) If electronic service on a party does not occur because of (1) inaccessibility to the vendor's system, (2) an error in the vendor's transmission of notice to the party being served, (3) the vendor's failure to process the electronic filing for service, or (4) the party was erroneously excluded from the service list, the party to be served may, absent extraordinary circumstances, be entitled to an order extending the date for any response or period within which any right, duty or other act must be performed.

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- (f) The e-filing vendor is required to maintain an e-service list for each e-filed case. The vendor shall immediately update the service list upon being given notice of new contact information. Whenever a document is submitted for service upon other parties by the e-filing vendor's system, the e-filing vendor shall use the most current e-service list to perform service.
- (g) All subscribers and other participants must immediately, but no later than ten (10) business days prior to when such a change takes effect, notify other parties, the Clerk and the e-filing vendor of any change of firm name, delivery address, fax number or e-mail address.

2A.12 COLLECTION OF FEES

- (a) The e-filing of a document requiring payment of a statutory filing fee to the Clerk in order to achieve valid filing status shall be filed electronically in the same manner as any other e-file document. All subscribers shall maintain a valid credit card on file with the e-filing vendor for the payment of statutory filing fees.
- (b) At the end of each business day, the vendor shall electronically transmit to the Clerk's bank account all statutory filing fees required for that day's electronic filings. The vendor shall electronically provide the Clerk a detailed breakdown including case number, type of transaction and party being billed for the payment for each deposit. The vendor shall act as a limited agent for the Clerk and collect such required filing fees from the subscriber through direct billing of that subscriber, unless payment of the fee has been waived by court order or law.
- (c) Fees charged to e-filing subscribers by the vendor for vendor services are solely the property of the vendor and are in addition to any statutory fees associated with statutory filing fees.

- (d) Copies of any document or certification of same shall be available to the requesting party at a reasonable cost, including all applicable fees as set by rule or statute.
- (e) When the electronic filing includes a request for waiver of fees by a petition for indigence, payment of the requisite fees shall be stayed until the court rules on the petition.

2A.13 SYSTEM OR USER ERRORS

- (a) The Court and Clerk shall not be liable for malfunction or errors occurring in electronic transmission or receipt of electronically filed or served documents.
- (b) If the electronic filing is not filed with the Clerk because of (1) an error in the transmission of the document to the vendor which was unknown to the sending party or (2) a failure to process the electronic filing when received by the vendor or (3) rejection by the Clerk or (4) other technical problems experienced by the filer or (5) the party was erroneously excluded from the service list, the Court may upon satisfactory proof enter an order permitting the document to be subsequently filed effective as of the date filing was first attempted.
- (c) In the case of a filing error, absent extraordinary circumstances, anyone prejudiced by the Court's order to accept a subsequent filing effective as of the date filing was first attempted, may be entitled to an order extending the date for any response, or the period within which any right, duty or other act must be performed.

2A.14 VENDOR CONDITIONS

- (a) E-filing vendor(s) with Electronic Information Project Agreements executed with the Clerk are hereby appointed to be the agent of the Clerk regarding electronic filing, receipt, service and/or retrieval of any pleading or document via the e-filing vendor system.

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- (b) The e-filing vendor shall make electronically filed documents, and documents being served electronically through the e-filing vendor's system, available to subscribers and the designated court authorized users through the e-filing vendor's system in accordance with the current contract between the Clerk and the filing vendor, and consistent with the [Supreme Court's Electronic Access Policy for Circuit Court Records of the Illinois Courts](#).
- (c) The e-filing vendor may require payment of a fee or impose other reasonable requirements by contract with a subscriber as conditions for processing electronic filings. Pursuant to contract terms, the e-filing vendor must provide services but is not permitted to require payment of a fee for government users or parties deemed indigent by the Court.
- (d) The Chief Judge of the Court or his/her designee, in coordination with the Clerk, shall review and approve the terms of the subscriber agreement. The vendor shall provide at least thirty (30) days of notice prior to the effective date of any subscriber agreement changes.
- (e) Ownership of the documents and access to the data associated with all e-filed documents remains with the Court. The electronic documents processed by the e-filing vendor remain the property of the Court and neither the documents nor the data from the documents and/or transactions shall be used by the e-filing vendor for any other purpose other than those specifically authorized by the Chief Judge of this Court or his/her designee, in coordination with the Clerk.