

**ELECTRONIC FILING STANDARDS IMPLEMENTING E-FILING PROGRAM**  
**FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT – MARION COUNTY**

**GENERAL**

**A. AUTHORITY**

These standards are implemented pursuant to the authority granted by M.R. 18368 issued by the Supreme Court of Illinois.

**B. EFFECTIVE DATE**

The standards are effective on the date of the Order entered and attached hereto.

**C. DEFINITIONS**

The following terms in these rules are defined as follows:

**ARDC #** - the registration number issued by the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission to attorneys practicing in Illinois.

**Clerk** – the Circuit Clerk of the Circuit Court of the Fourth Judicial Circuit, Marion County, Illinois.

**Conventional Filing** – the filing of paper documents with the Clerk as is done under applicable Supreme Court rules pre-dating the implementation of the Statewide Standards in Marion County.

**Electronic Filing (“e-filing”)** – an electronic transmission of information and documents between the Clerk of the Circuit Court and a Vendor for the purposes of case processing.

**Electronic Service (“e-service”)** – service is completed upon an electronic transmission to the designated parties which includes access to electronically filed documents.

**Facsimile Signature** – a reproduction of a manual signature, saved electronically.

**Filer** – an attorney authorized to practice law in the State of Illinois who has an e-filing account with Vendor.

**PDF** – Portable Document Format is a file format that preserves all fonts, formatting colors and graphics of any source document to have them appear on the recipients monitor or printer as they were intended regardless of the application platform used.

**Statewide Standard** – the “Electronic Filing Standards and Principles” approved by the Illinois Supreme Court by M.R. 18368 on October 24, 2012, as amended from time to time.

**Typographical Signature** – a signature comprised of text (e.g., “/s/ Perry R. Mason”).

**Vendor** – a company or organization under contract with the Circuit Clerk of the Circuit Court of the Fourth Judicial Circuit, Marion County, Illinois, to provide e-filing services in the Court.

## STANDARDS

### 1. IDENTIFICATION OF CASE TYPES

The following case types are eligible for electronic filing:

CH ---- Chancery

D ----- Divorce

F ----- Family

L ----- Law (L)

LM ---- Law Magistrate (LM)

MR ---- Miscellaneous Remedy

[Limited to the following MR categories: Administrative Review, Attachment, Burnt Records, Change of Name, Corporation Dissolution, Declaratory Judgment, Demolition, Abatement of Nuisance, Prohibition, Election Contest, Escheat, Habeas Corpus, Lost Goods or Money, Subpoena, Appointment of Receiver, Fictitious Vital Record, Petition for Discovery or Deposition]

P ----- Probate

SC ---- Small Claims

### 2. ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION OF DOCUMENTS

Any electronic document or record submitted to the Clerk of the Court for filing shall be deemed filed if not rejected by the Clerk. The transmission date and time of transfer shall govern the electronic file mark. Pleadings received by the Clerk before midnight on a day the courthouse is open shall be deemed filed that day. If filed on a day the courthouse is not open for business, the document will be deemed filed the next business day. While the case is pending, the Clerk shall retain an audit trail of submission, acceptance, and filing of electronic documents by recording the dates and times transmitted, received, and accepted or rejected. The electronically filed transmission shall be endorsed with the electronic file mark setting forth, at a minimum, the identification of the Court, the Clerk, the date, and the time of filing.

Pleadings not accompanied by the appropriate filing fee will be rejected by the Clerk.

### **3. IDENTIFICATION OF FILING PARTY – REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

The e-filing system requires that all registered participants (Filers) log in with a user ID (numeric or e-mail) and a password which are associated with an ARDC # when an e-filing account is established. The user ID and password shall be provided by the Vendor when an account is established with the Vendor. The process for establishing an e-filing account on Vendor's system and for verifying the user's identity and associating it with an ARDC # is described in Section 16 below.

### **4. IDENTIFICATION OF INFORMATION REQUIRED TO SUBMIT DOCUMENTS ELECTRONICALLY**

Information required in order to create an Electronic Filing:

a. **Filer** – The ARDC # associated with the Filer by the Vendor is used in order to limit the cases/litigants on which the Filer is permitted to file. The ARDC # is the sole identifier provided to the Court for filings on existing and new cases.

b. **Case Information** – Filings on existing cases in the e-filing system are done from the context of that Circuit Court's case/litigant selection system.

c. **Additional Information Required by Court** – the title or name of each document in the filing.

### **5. ADDITIONAL TYPES OF DOCUMENT FORMATS ALLOWED TO BE SUBMITTED THROUGH THE E-FILING PROCESS IN ADDITION TO PDF**

None

### **6. MAXIMUM FILE SIZE**

There is no maximum file size, though the Court reserves the right to establish such a limit in the future by amending this provision.

### **7. MULTIPLE DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED IN A SINGLE FILING TRANSACTION (RESTRICTIONS ON BULK FILINGS)**

Bulk filings of multiple cases or multiple documents combined into one PDF document shall not be accepted. Documents with different case numbers must be filed individually in separate transactions.

Filing of multiple individual documents within a case shall be accepted in a single electronic filing transaction; however, each individual document must be uploaded and titled individually.

## **8. FILING OF EXHIBITS NOT READILY AVAILABLE IN ELECTRONIC FORM**

File exhibits not readily available in electronic form (e.g. blueprints, large maps) may be filed conventionally. If possible, however, a filing party should scan a paper exhibit and file it electronically, in accordance with the size and scanning limitations set forth in Section 9 below. A party electronically filing evidentiary materials must include an index listing each item of evidence and identifying the related paper.

## **9. FORMAT OF DOCUMENTS**

a. 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 in paper format may be scanned and converted to PDF for electronic filing.

b. Unless otherwise required, documents created by word processing programs must be formatted as follows: (i) the size of the type in the body of the text must be no less than 12 point font, and footnotes no less than 10 point font; (ii) the size of the pages must be 8 1/2 X 11 inches; and (iii) the margins on each side of the page must each be a minimum of 1 inch; and (iv) the top right 2" X 2" corner of the first page of each pleading shall be left blank for the Clerk's stamp.

## **10. REJECTION OF DOCUMENTS WHICH DO NOT COMPLY WITH FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS**

Documents submitted for e-filing may be rejected if not complying with the format specified by: a) applicable statute; b) applicable Supreme Court or Local Rule; c) the Statewide Standard; or d) Section 9 above.

## **11. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSED ORDERS**

Proposed orders submitted in a case must be in PDF format, text searchable, and generated directly from a word processing program. Proposed orders shall be submitted with all pleadings as required by Local Rule or Order.

## **12. EXTERNAL LINKS CONTAINED IN DOCUMENTS**

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 Court file.

## **13. PRODECURE FOR FAILURE OF ELECTRONIC FILING PROCESS**

a. Neither the Court nor the Clerk shall be liable for malfunction or errors occurring in the electronic transmission or receipt of electronically filed or served documents.

b. If a document submitted electronically is not filed or is rejected, the Court may, upon good cause shown, enter an Order permitting the document to be filed effective as of the date of the attempted first filing.

#### **14. PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING OF CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS**

The electronic filing system, the document management system, and the case management system in this Court shall maintain the confidentiality and integrity of the transmission of any document identified as impounded, sealed, or expunged. All documents in confidential, impounded, or sealed cases must be submitted conventionally to the Clerk's office for filing. A party who 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.

#### **15. CONFIDENTIAL CONTENT OF DOCUMENTS**

Filer is responsible to ensure that Court documents filed electronically appropriately segregate and do not disclose previously or statutorily impounded or sealed information or private information defined in Supreme Court Rule 15 and Supreme Court Rule 138. Filer shall indicate during e-filing that any separate document containing confidential information is being filed under seal and indicate the reason it is confidential information, whether being personal identify information as defined by 138, or confidential information pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 15, Statute, Rule or Order.

#### **16. IDENTIFICATION OF REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

Prior to filing electronically with the Court, a Filer must: a) provide the Clerk in writing with his or her ARDC # and an e-mail address; and b) subscribe to the Vendor's e-filing service.

#### **17. REQUIREMENTS FOR UPDATE OF REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

Filer shall keep the required information under Section 16 above current with Clerk and Vendor.

#### **18. COSTS FOR CERTIFICATON OF ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS**

a. The e-filing system will make a file-stamped copy of the filing available on the e-filing site at no additional cost to the Filer by sending a link to the Filer for that filing.

b. The Clerk shall provide copies of any document or certification of same and may provide the copies electronically. The copies shall be available to the requesting party at a reasonable cost, including all applicable fees as set by Rule or Statute.

## 19. PAYMENT METHODS FOR FILING FEES

Filer shall make payment of requisite filing fees to the Clerk in cash, cash equivalent (money order, cashier check) approved check or credit card. Payment made by cash, cash equivalent or approved check must be received by the Clerk prior to the e-filing. Such payments shall be used to establish a balance of funds held by the Clerk and applied as filing fees are incurred. Vendor may charge fees (e.g., service fees, convenience fees or value-added service fees for e-service) in addition to payment of filing fees by credit card.

## 20. PROCEDURE FOR ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

a. **Judiciary** – Judges shall use the Court’s document management system which will allow for electronic signatures in the form of a Typographical Signature or Facsimile Signature applied based upon the password-based login of the document management system. Electronic signature capture tools may also be employed.

b. **Court Staff** – authentication of Court staff shall be by the password-based login to the Court information system which is applying the electronic signature. The form of any associated signatures of such staff will be a Typographical Signature indicating the name and title of the Clerk, as well as the ID of the Court staff member.

c. **Litigants** – the identity of litigants shall be established using original signature.

d. **Attorneys (Filers)** – any document filed electronically using a verified user authentication issued by a Court or Vendor shall be deemed to have been signed by the holder of the user authentication.

e. **Third Party (person not a Filer or Litigant)** – the signature and retention requirements for third parties shall be the same as for litigants.

f. **Non-electronic filers** – if a document requires the signature(s) of one or more persons not a party to the case or not registered for electronic filing (e.g. settlement agreement with a pro-se party, or a witness’ affidavit), the filing party or attorney must confirm all persons required to sign the document approve it. Original signatures on all non-electronic filers must be obtained before filing the document. The document must indicate the identity of each non-registered signatory.

## 21. MAINTENANCE OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENT BY FILER

Filer must retain an original duplicate of any document filed electronically until one 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. The original duplicate may be retained electronically or on paper.

**22. ELECTRONIC SERVICE PROCEDURE**

E-service of e-filed documents on Filers will be accomplished by the Vendor, through the system, sending to the e-mail address (provided to the Court in the manner described in Section 16 above) an e-mail containing a link to the filing. This process will be initiated when the document is transmitted to the Clerk.

Service of documents shall be made as otherwise provided by Rule or Statute. Personal service shall be made as required by law.

**23. DETERMINATION OF MANDATORY FILINGS IN CASE TYPES SELECTED FOR ELECTRONIC FILING**

Electronic filing is not mandatory for any case type or filing type.

**24. EXCLUSION OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BE MAINTAINED IN ORIGINAL FORM**

Documents required to be maintained in original form pursuant to the Manual on Recordkeeping established by the Court's General Administrative Order on Recordkeeping in the Circuit Courts or other Rule or Statute are excluded from electronic filing.

**25. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS NOT ALLOWED FOR ELECTRONIC FILING**

E-filing is not allowed for the following types of documents:

- a. Any filing which is accompanied by an Application to Sue or Defend as an Indigent Person, for the waiver of fees.
- b. Original Wills filed in Probate cases.
- c. Documents provided in requests for discovery.
- d. Any petition to register a judgment from another Court.

**26. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS**

a. Filer may use the e-filing system to request the scheduling of matters. Hearings may not be set solely by the Filer by use of a message accompanying an e-filing. Hearings shall be scheduled with the Court per existing practices.

b. By becoming a Filer, Filer consents to receive e-service on all cases on which they are listed as attorney of record in the Court's case management system.

c. In order to e-file on a case, Filer must be listed as attorney of record on the case in the Court's case management system. An attorney shall not file a document on behalf of another attorney, even as co-counsel.