

COUNTY OF BERKS – CIVIL ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can you have more than one email attached to an attorney's name? For example, can an attorney register his/her email address and also register the email address of his/her paralegal and/or secretary?

A registered user can add up to 3 email addresses to his/her profile. If additional email addresses are wanted for a firm, it is recommended that the firm establish one of the three email addresses as a firm email distribution list that will allow everyone on the list to receive a copy of the email.

2. Will both attorneys and paralegals be issued logins or will a paralegal use the attorney's login?

You must be a PA licensed attorney in good standing with the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania to register in the first phase of this project. If a paralegal is submitting a filing for an attorney, they must utilize the login for that attorney. The attorney is responsible for any filings that are submitted from their profile.

3. Is there a limit to the size (megabytes) of my document?

The current size limit for PDF files is 10 megabytes.

4. How many pages will fit in 10 megabytes of storage?

This will vary depending on how the file was created and how much text or images are in the file. If the file was saved from Word, normally over 2,000 pages of single spaced text could be saved. If an 80 page file that has a lot of images and text is scanned and then saved as a PDF, it may take about 5 megabytes of storage. Where possible, the Word or WordPerfect file should be saved as a PDF instead of scanning to reduce the number of megabytes.

5. What types of documents can be uploaded?

Only PDF files will be accepted.

6. Is there a fee to eFile?

Yes, there are fees. Electronic filing fees will be \$15.00 for new filings and any subsequent filing that has a fee associated with it. For subsequent filings with no fee associated with it, the fee will be \$8.00.

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7. What authority will govern the fees (i.e. statute or administrative order)?

Local Rule 205.4(f)(4)(i).

8. Is the court mandating electronic filing?

Optional electronic filing will begin on August 4, 2014 with Berks County attorneys and law firms. On August 18, 2014, optional electronic filing will begin with attorneys and law firms outside of Berks County. Mandatory electronic filing is scheduled to begin on October 6, 2014.

9. Will electronic service be available?

At the present time there is no electronic service. Electronic service will be addressed as a future project milestone.

10. What if my hearing or document is due within 24 hours?

It is the filer's responsibility to ensure their filing is submitted in time for it to be reviewed and processed by Prothonotary before any deadlines. If the filing is rejected, the filer must correct and resubmit the filing before it can be reviewed and accepted by the Prothonotary's office.

11. When will my filing be processed if I submit it while the court is closed?

Your filing goes into a queue which will be reviewed by the Prothonotary's office during regular business hours (8 AM to 4 PM Monday to Friday except for County holidays).

12. What date/time will constitute the official "stamped" date and time for an accepted filing (i.e. the time it is submitted or the time it is accepted)?

If the filing is accepted by Prothonotary, the official date and time will be the date and time of submission.

13. What if the document is not accepted for eFiling?

You will receive an e-mail with the reason for rejection. You will need to correct any errors and resubmit the filing. If your filing is rejected, the official date and time will be the date and time of a correct resubmission, not the date and time of the earlier rejected submission.

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14. What are the signature requirements for eFiling?

Per the local rules, the filer will confirm that the content of the document is acceptable to all parties and obtain the physical signatures of all parties on the document. All documents that have client signatures (e.g. verifications, divorce consents, agreements, etc.) should have the image of that signature incorporated into the document before it is converted to a PDF and electronically filed. The /s/ format is acceptable for the attorney of record as their signature on documents.

15. How do I file my documents under seal or as confidential?

It is the filer's responsibility to obtain a signed court order directing that the Prothonotary seal the filing or case. Until this order is received by the Prothonotary, the document(s) cannot be sealed.

16. Will this system prevent you from viewing documents or entering documents on a case you are taking over from prior counsel, even if they have not yet been removed from the case?

There will be 2 ways to view case documents. The first way is you will be able to view images for all cases where you are not counsel, except for Family cases. For Family cases, you will only be able to view the docket summary. The second way is to pay to print the documents using the public docket view from the Public Terminals in the Prothonotary office.

17. What is the formal process to be permitted to view case documents prior to submitting an entry of appearance?

See #16.

18. What is the difference between a filing that is listed on the "My Filings" page versus the filings listed on the "My Cases" page?

The filings that are being "worked on" by the filer will be listed in a separate page called "My Filings". This page will contain the work in progress filings that have not been accepted by Prothonotary. Once they are accepted by Prothonotary, the filing and assigned case number will be displayed on the "My Cases" page. The following is the list of statuses for the "My Filings" page.

1. Draft – Filing that is being worked on, is not final and has not been submitted to Prothonotary.

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2. Rejected – Filing refused for filing by Prothonotary. The reason for rejection will be given in the email.
3. Submitted - Filing sent to Prothonotary for review and acceptance.
4. Inactive – If a Draft filing is inactive for two weeks, the status of the filing will change to Inactive. After a Filing is in an inactive status for two weeks, it will be deleted. If the filing needs to be changed back to a Draft status, send an email to CivileFS@countyofberks.com.

Note: You can “hover” over the status and see the definition of any status on the *My Filings* page.

19. At the time of go live, will attorneys see all of their active cases in their “My Cases” dashboard view?

The attorney will be able to view their active cases and final cases in the *My Cases* page.

20. Will the “My Cases” dashboard view be customizable by the attorney?

The attorney will be able to filter what is displayed on the My Cases page. This will allow them to search by Docket Number, Filing Type or Filing Date.

21. Will a filer have the ability to enter in (free text) any types of subsequent filings that are not listed in the drop down menu (i.e. a petition for special relief)?

In an effort to have a consistent way of submitting filings to the Prothonotary, the filer must select one of the provided filing descriptions. If the filer cannot find an applicable description they should contact the Prothonotary at CivileFS@countyofberks.com or (610.898.5565).

22. Can exhibits be submitted electronically?

Yes. The preferred way of attaching exhibits is to include them in the same document as the filing (compliant, summons, etc.).

23. How will exhibits too large for electronic submission be submitted and distributed?

If the exhibits are too large to be submitted with the filing, please separate the exhibits into one or more files and then electronically submit the exhibits separately using the *Exhibits/Records* template.

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24. *Can online help, status descriptions, etc. be added directly to the screen?*

We have added some help and screen tips. We will continue to monitor areas that may benefit from additional help and tips to make the filing process as easy as possible.

25. *Will a filer be able to click on the docket number and see the docket and/or the actual document?*

The filer will be able to see the case docket if they select the docket number on the *My Cases* page. They will be able to see the actual documents if they are entered as counsel for the case or if they are a registered user they will be able to view non-family documents. There is no cost for viewing/printing the documents.

26. *What will be the process for original service?*

Original process has not changed.

27. *How will additional parties be issued service?*

Service will remain as is in effect now.

28. *How will communications with the Sheriff's department be handled for Original Service Complaints, Garnishments, Writ of Execution and PFA?*

Service will remain as is in effect now.

29. *How will form filings be submitted and attached?*

If a filer has a form that they electronically fill out, they should save it as a PDF file and submit it as a filing. If the form is printed out and manually filled out, the filer will need to scan the document and attach the scanned PDF as a filing.

30. *Can a free text field be added to appear on the cost summary statement to be used for attorney internal billing information?*

There is a firm reference number that can be used by the firm to enter information relating to the case or filing. This number will be printed on the summary report.

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31. How do I change an address for a party that is included in an existing electronic filing/case?

A change of address form can be filed electronically. This form is currently exempt from any fees.

32. I am experiencing problems with activating my registration – what should I do?

When you first register you should receive an email that contains the below language. I have highlighted the “Follow this link” that you will select to activate your account. If you experience problems with the link please send an email to the CivilEFS@countyofberks.com and we will try to assist you. Your account must be activated before you can complete the registration process.

Hello “User Name”

Please do not reply to this automated email address.

An account has been created using this e-mail address for the County Of Berks Electronic Filing System.

With The Following StateID: 99999

To activate your account:

[Follow this link](#)

If you believe this email has been sent in error, please contact the County Of Berks Prothonotary's Office Immediately.

Office of Prothonotary

CivilEFS@countyofberks.com

610.898.5565

33. My registration was activated what should I do next?

Once your account is activated, you will be able to sign into the EFS system and edit your Profile. The first time you log into the system you will be brought to the Profile page. Make sure you make any necessary changes and select the submit button at the bottom of the page. This is necessary for Prothonotary to review and accept your profile.

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34. How do I pay for the e-filing?

We have selected PayPal as the third-party vendor for processing the payments for e-filing. PayPal payment information is entered at the end of the filing process. A filer has the option of entering in credit card information at the time of payment or using a PayPal account.

35. Do I need to electronically file a Civil Cover Sheet or Family Court Cover Sheet?

The data for both cover sheets is collected through the e-filing system, therefore it is no longer necessary to a separate sheet.

36. How can I send in envelopes for an electronically filed document?

Since envelopes cannot be filed electronically, the Prothonotary's Office will print the envelopes and provide the postage.

37. What if I have an emergency and do not have time to electronically file the documents?

Emergency motions or petitions can be presented to the Court and the documents filed electronically later.

38. Are fees waived if you are filing Pro Bono?

Yes. On the summary screen there is the option to submit the filing Pro Bono. If this option is selected, the e-filing will be submitted electronically. Please make sure that the supporting affidavit is included with the filing to justify that no fees are being paid.

39. What documents cannot be filed electronically?

A current list of documents that cannot be filed can be found on the Prothonotary website at:
<http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/Prothy/Pages/Default.aspx>

40. What is the difference between the email notifications and EService?

Email notifications are received by the filer when they are submitting e-filings to the Prothonotary. These emails are when the filing are received, accepted, or possibly rejected. EService is when emails are sent to registered attorneys when documents for the cases where they are attorneys of record are filed by the Courts.

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41. *What service is included in the EService?*

Initially the service will only pertain to documents filed by the Courts. Other services such as notifications to attorneys when documents are filed will be addressed at a later date.