

# U.S. COURT FORMS

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## Filer Frequently Asked Questions

### What is TexasOnline eFiling for Courts?

eFiling for Courts is the official electronic filing solution of the State of Texas. It enables filers to submit civil court documents electronically to participating County and District Clerks throughout the state.

The solution is offered through TexasOnline, the official eGovernment initiative of Texas ([www.TexasOnline.com](http://www.TexasOnline.com)). eFiling for Courts is made possible by the Supreme Court of Texas, the Judicial Committee on Information Technology, the Office of Court Administration and leading officials of many local governments. The result is a secure, easy-to-use system that streamlines and manages the two-way flow of information between filers, clerks and court personnel.

### What makes eFiling for Courts different from other e-filing initiatives?

eFiling for Courts provides benefits to both filers and Courts that other electronic filing models do not. With the eFiling for Courts model, filers throughout the state are free to select any participating e-filing vendor of their choice. Once a filer submits a document to his/her chosen electronic filing service provider (EFSP), the document is passed to the Clerk via TexasOnline. Clerks are then able to log in to TexasOnline to process filings electronically. Benefits of this model include:

- Statewide standards for electronic filing rules and technology
- Filers are able to use the same vendor and process to file in any participating Court in Texas (which encourages usage of the system)

### Is the system secure?

Yes. Documents are sent safely and securely to and from the court. eFiling for Courts utilizes a three-tier architecture with multiple firewalls and full-time intrusion detection monitoring. The system is compliant with the security standards of the State of Texas and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), among other leaders in court management.

### What are the benefits of eFiling for Courts for my firm and me?

- Convenience
  - e-File from any location with Internet access 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Extend Your Deadline
  - Extend your filing deadline in most cases from 5:00pm to 11:59pm
- Immediate Confirmation
  - Know immediately that your filing was submitted successfully to the Courthouse of your choice
- Cost Savings
  - e-Filing fees are typically lower than your average courier or shipping fees. e-Filing for Courts also frees your in-house runners to perform other needed tasks.
- Security
  - Benefit from e-filing security that meets the security standards of the State of Texas and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), among other leaders in court management

### How does eFiling for Courts work? How will I know my filing was submitted successfully?

To e-file through TexasOnline, you first login to your EFSP using your secure user name and password. You select the Court you wish to file in and complete your filing information online, just as you would on paper using your current filing process. Then you select the Court services and EFSP services required for the particular filing. Next you upload your document and any attachments associated with the filing. You then review your filing fees and verify your documents uploaded correctly. Once you are satisfied with your filing, you click the submit button to send your filing to your EFSP. You will receive immediate confirmation that your filing was submitted successfully.

Your EFSP then submits the filing to TexasOnline eFiling for Courts. The Clerk logs in to TexasOnline and processes your filing. You are then notified via email that your filing has been processed. To view your filing or filing status at any time, you simply log into your EFSP to review your filing. Once your filing has been accepted, you will also receive an electronic time and date stamped copy of your document.

### What fees are associated with e-filing through TexasOnline?

When you e-file through TexasOnline, you will be able to review your filing fees online before you click the submit button. These fees per filing include:

- Court fees you currently incur today when filing via paper
- \$4.00 TexasOnline e-filing convenience fee
- \$2.00 County e-filing fee (this fee is not charged in all Counties)
- \$3.00 e-Service fee (flat fee)

You will also be responsible for your Electronic Filing Service Provider fees. These vary by provider but may include a per filing fee, a monthly fee, or an additional services fee depending on the additional services you select. Detailed EFSP fee structure information should be obtained by the EFSPs directly.

#### **How are filing fees collected?**

Before you click the submit button to e-file your document, you will be presented with a fee total online for your review, including Court fees, the TexasOnline \$4.00 filing fee, your Court's \$2.00 technology recovery fee, and any EFSP fees incurred. Once you approve the fee total, filers are required to submit a credit card for processing along with the filing. Credit cards currently accepted are MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Discover. Some EFSPs may offer monthly billing or other payment options.

#### **What hardware or software do I need to e-file?**

In order to submit e-filed documents to the court, a filer must have the following:

- A computer with Internet access
- Completed the registration process with an electronic service provider
- Adobe PDF Reader to read submitted and returned documents
- An optional scanner to submit non-electronic documents

#### **What days and hours can I e-file?**

The Texas e-filing rules allow most civil documents to be filed until 11:59pm on the day of the filing deadline, rather than being limited to the hours the Courthouse is physically open. For example, if you file a document at 8:15pm on July 1, you will have met your filing deadline of July 1.

Please note, however, that the electronic filing of a document does not alter any filing deadlines.

Certain case types may not be initiated on Sunday per the Rules of Civil Procedure. See the Electronic Filing of Court Documents Local Rules, Rule 4.3(h) at <http://www.courts.state.tx.us/jcit/standards/Efiling/ElectronicFiling/E-Rules.doc>

#### **What time and date stamp do I receive when I e-file?**

The time and date stamp applied to your filing are the time and date you submit your filing to your EFSP. For example, if you submit your filing at 8:15pm on Friday and the clerk does not accept your document until 3:15pm on Monday, you still receive a time and date stamp of 8:15pm Friday.

#### **What documents can be e-filed through eFiling for Courts?**

eFiling for Courts accepts documents and attachments in a single submission.

For specific information, please visit the Texas Supreme Court Judicial Committee on Information Technology website at: <http://www.courts.state.tx.us/jcit/standards/Efiling/DocumentStandard.pdf>

#### **What document types does eFiling for Courts accept?**

This varies by EFSP, but most service providers accept the majority of standard document types such as Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, TIFF, or PDF.

#### **How can I e-file a document that requires a physical signature or exists only in paper format?**

You may submit these documents by simply scanning them at your office and then uploading the scanned electronic version to TexasOnline eFiling for Courts just like any other e-filed document.

#### **What Courts currently accept documents e-filed through TexasOnline?**

- Bexar District
- Dallas County
- El Paso District and County
- Guadalupe District
- Upton District and County

- Fort Bend County
- Tarrant County

**How can I learn more about eFiling for Courts?**

Visit [www.TexasOnline.com/efiling](http://www.TexasOnline.com/efiling) for more information. Click on "Getting Started for Attorneys" and follow instructions for registering with TexasOnline and select one of the approved electronic filing service providers listed. Upon completion of this registration process, you can file new cases or documents in a pending case electronically.

The list of service providers is updated as new ones become available. For questions about when a particular service provider may be available, please call James Lyle, BearingPoint (vendor), at (512) 542-5304 or send an email to him at [JLyle@bearingpoint.net](mailto:JLyle@bearingpoint.net).

**What if I still have questions after visiting [www.TexasOnline.com/efiling](http://www.TexasOnline.com/efiling)?**

Many of your questions may be answered by the Texas Supreme Court rules on electronic filing which can be found at the Judicial Committee on Information Technology website: <http://www.courts.state.tx.us/jcit/standards/Efiling/ElectronicFiling/E-Rules.doc>