



Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles

Family Law efilng - **Frequently Asked Questions**

(Revised 10/28/2021)

1. IS THERE A GENERAL ORDER THAT GOVERNS EFILING FOR FAMILY LAW?

Yes. The operative General Order Re Mandatory Electronic Filing for Family law is posted on the court's website at <http://www.lacourt.org/division/efiling/efiling2.aspx>. The court suggests that litigants read the order before reviewing these FAQs.

2. HOW DOES EFILING WORK?

Electronic filing of court documents occurs through an electronic filing service provider (EFSP). The user creates an account and the efilng system manages the flow of the documents and fees to and from the court. The filer will submit the documents to the EFSP for submission to the court. The court will accept or reject the documents. The documents are returned to the EFSP for return to the filer through the EFSP's electronic filing portal.

3. IS EFILING MANDATORY?

Yes. Litigants represented by attorneys in family law cases must efile unless they have obtained a court order for exemption. If you are an attorney who cannot use the efilng system, you may apply for an exemption from mandatory electronic filing. You may apply to the site or supervising judge of the courthouse location where your case is pending for an exemption from mandatory electronic filing. You must use Judicial Council Forms [EFS-007](#) and [008](#).

4. I AM A SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT. DO I HAVE TO EFILE?

No. Self-represented litigants are not mandated to file documents electronically; however, they may choose to do so if desired.

5. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FILE CONVENTIONALLY?

Conventionally file means to file in paper instead of efile or electronic filing. Self-represented parties may continue to conventionally file all documents via drop box, mail, or in person.

6. WHAT ARE THE TECHNICAL REQUIRMENTS FOR DOCUMENTS BEING EFILED?

Please refer to the "Technical Requirements" section of the operative General Order Re Mandatory Electronic Filing for Family law. This section sets forth all of the court's requirements for the formatting of the documents.

7. HOW DO I SUBMIT DOCUMENTS EXEMPT FROM EFILING?

Except for lodged documents, documents that are exempt from efilings can be submitted for filing using the designated drop box outside of the courthouse where your case is pending, in the Clerk's Office of the Family Law Division between the office hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., or by mail (visit www.lacourt.org for courthouse addresses).

8. IS EFILING THE SAME AS FAX FILING?

No. Efilings are not the same as fax filings. For efilings, the filing party must use an EFSP and submit documents for filing over the internet. The court will no longer accept fax filings for family law documents.

9. WILL FAX FILING STILL BE AVAILABLE AFTER EFILING IS IMPLEMENTED?

No. Fax filings will not be available for family law documents after efilings are implemented for each family law case type.

10. WILL THE EX PARTE RESOURCE ACCOUNT STILL BE AVAILABLE AFTER EFILING IS IMPLEMENTED?

No. The email Resource Accounts for filing of documents will not be available for ex parte filings after efilings are implemented in family law.

11. CAN I USE MY PERSONAL COMPUTER TO EFILE?

Yes. You can use your personal computer to submit filings through an EFSP. You will use the internet to select the EFSP and submit your documents for filing. You will upload the document as an attachment. For instructions, refer to your EFSP's website.

12. DO I HAVE TO USE AN EFSP?

Yes. The Judicial Council has mandated that all courts accepting electronically filed documents use independent EFSPs. Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure Section 1010.6(e) the court may not accept electronic filings directly. You can find a list of approved service providers on the court's public website at: <http://www.lacourt.org/>

13. WHICH EFSP CAN I USE?

You may use any EFSP that is listed on the court's website. You may view the EFSP list at: http://www.lacourt.org/division/efiling/civil_providers.aspx

14. WHY DO I HAVE TO REGISTER AS AN ELECTRONIC FILER (EFILER / PARTY REGISTERING WITH AN EFSP)?

Registration as an electronic filer is required to establish an account for your electronically filed documents. Your account will allow you to check the status of your electronically filed documents and will provide a path for the court to return your documents to you.

15. CAN I CHANGE MY EFSP AFTER I HAVE CHOSEN AND REGISTERED WITH ONE?

Yes. You may choose any EFSP. You may change to a different service provider at any time. Selecting and using an EFSP is similar to using an “attorney service” for filings, except the types of filings processed are electronic.

16. IS THERE A COST TO EFILE?

Yes. The court and the EFSP will charge for efile and all fees are collected by the EFSP when the filing is submitted. For court fees related to electronic filing, refer to the Court’s official fee schedule at: <http://www.lacourt.org/forms/pdf/fees/fee-schedule-2019.pdf>.

17. ARE EFILING FEES RECOVERABLE?

Efiling fees may be recoverable pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure Section 1033.5.

18. ARE EFSPs LIMITED ON FEE AMOUNTS?

The fees from an EFSP must be “reasonable” and shall not exceed the cost incurred in processing payments.

19. WHAT TYPES OF PAYMENTS DO YOU ACCEPT?

Please check with the EFSP of your choosing for specific information regarding payment types. Credit cards and electronic checks are accepted.

20. DO COURT-APPOINTED ATTORNEYS HAVE TO EFILE AND PAY THE FEES FOR EFILING?

Absent a fee waiver, fees are required for all filings, including filings from court-appointed attorneys.

21. ONCE I EFILE A DOCUMENT, WHAT IS THE TIME FOR PROCESSING?

Turnaround time will depend on the type of document filed. The court attempts to confirm the filing or receipt of documents within two business days. Proposed orders, writs, abstracts, and other documents requiring review and/or further action by the court may take longer than two days to process.

22. ARE MY EFILED DOCUMENTS PRINTED FOR THE COURT FILE?

No. Documents that are electronically filed and accepted by the Court are automatically uploaded to the court’s case management system. This allows court staff and judicial officers to electronically view the case documents without printing the documents or maintaining physical court files. The electronic record is the official court record pursuant to Government Code Section 68150(a).

23. WHAT ARE THE FILING HOURS FOR EFILING?

You may submit your filings electronically 24 hours a day. Any efile received by the court before midnight will be deemed received or filed on the same business day if accepted. Any efile submitted after midnight will be deemed received or filed as of the next business day if accepted. You may check with your EFSP if you have questions about the timeliness of your submission.

24. ARE DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON SUBMISSION OR UPON PROCESSING?

Filing parties may view submitted documents immediately through their EFSP's portal. All other parties will be able to view a document from the internet, or on public terminals located at any Los Angeles County courthouse, after filing by the court. A document is not considered filed until it is accepted by the court.

25. DOES THE COURT HAVE A POLICY REGARDING DOCUMENTS EFILED ON THE LAST DAY?

No. Statutory requirements apply for preservation of any statute of limitation on filings, including those submitted electronically. Efiling does not change the "last day to file" requirements.

26. WHAT DO I DO IF MY DOCUMENT IS REJECTED?

A Notice of Rejection sent by the court will include the reason for the return of the document. If your document is rejected, correct the deficiency and resubmit the document via efilings. If the document is not timely filed as a result of the rejection or filing error, you will need to apply to the court for relief or other corrective order.

27. WHAT IS AN "ELECTRONIC ENVELOPE"?

An Electronic Envelope is a transaction containing one or more PDF documents on the same case number submitted through the EFSP to the court for filing or processing.

28. WHAT IS A PDF?

Portable Document Format (PDF) is a file format developed by Adobe that provides text formatting in a manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems.

29. WHAT IS A "FILING DOCUMENT NAME"?

A Filing Document Name refers to the type of filing (e.g. petition, response, request for order, etc.) and is used by the EFSP to properly designate the document(s) upon submission. Using the correct Filing Document Name is extremely important as it determines the appropriate fee and court workflow. A list of the court's Filing Document Names is available on the Court's website at <http://www.lacourt.org/division/efiling/efiling2.aspx>.

30. WHAT IF I CANNOT FIND THE DOCUMENT NAME FOR MY EFILING?

If the document you are efilings is not specified in the list of document names, you must use the name of the document that most closely describes your filing. You may also use a generic document name with name extension and fill in the name extension field in the comment section. For example, use "Request for Order (Name Extension in comment filed)" or "Brief (Name Extension in comment field)" and add the specific title of your document. Please be advised that using an incorrect document name/name extension may result in incorrect routing of your document.

31. ARE ANY DOCUMENTS EXEMPT FROM EFILING?

Yes. The following documents are excluded from efilng:

- a. Peremptory challenges or challenges for cause of a judicial officer pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure Sections 170.6 or 170.3
- b. Bonds/undertaking documents
- c. Trial and evidentiary hearing exhibits
- d. Documents submitted conditionally under seal. The actual motion or application shall be electronically filed. A courtesy copy of the electronically filed motion or application to submit documents conditionally under seal must be provided with the documents submitted conditionally under seal and delivered directly to the courtroom to which the case is assigned
- e. Judgments and supporting documents with self-addressed, stamped envelopes
- f. Qualified Domestic Relations Order of Support (QDROS) and supporting documents with self-addressed, stamped envelopes

32. HOW DO I SUBMIT MY JUDGMENT PACKET?

Judgment packets should continue to be filed in paper via drop box, mail, or in person and shall continue to include self-addressed stamped envelopes for return of conformed copies.

33. CAN I EFILE SURROGACY PACKETS?

Because these include judgments, these are considered judgment packets and should not be efiled at this time. When judgments are efiled, surrogacy judgment packets will also be efiled.

34. WHAT IS A "LEAD DOCUMENT"?

If multiple documents are filed in one transaction, the **Lead Document** is the one that is most important. For example, if you were filing an RFO with a supporting declaration and a proof of service, the RFO would be the lead document. It is important to properly identify the lead document as this will affect the priority and timing for processing by the Court and ensures that the document is directed to the appropriate location for court personnel to process.

35. WHERE DO I FIND MY TRANSACTION NUMBER?

The transaction or envelope number is noted on your confirmation of filing.

36. WHAT IS A "BOOKMARK" ON A DOCUMENT?

A bookmark is a PDF document navigational tool that allows the reader to quickly locate and navigate to a designated point of interest within a document.

37. WHAT IS A "HYPERLINK"?

An electronic link that provides direct access from one distinctively marked place in a hypertext or hypermedia document to another in the same or different document.

38. WHERE IS THE “FILED” STAMP LOCATED ON AN EFILED DOCUMENT?

The court utilizes a **Filed**-stamp “ribbon” which will appear on the top of the first page of the efiled document returned to the efiler through the EFSP. If a document is received, a **Received** “ribbon” will be placed on the left margin.



39. HOW WILL I KNOW TO WHICH JUDICIAL OFFICER MY CASE IS ASSIGNED?

A new filing receives the assigned case number and judicial officer assignment upon acceptance of the filing. This information will appear on the top of the first page of the document.

40. WHAT HAPPENS IF I SELECT THE WRONG COURT LOCATION?

Your electronically filed document will be rejected and electronically returned to you through the EFSP for correction and resubmission with the proper filing location indicated.

41. WILL MY FILING FEES BE AUTOMATICALLY ASSESSED?

Some filing fees are added at the time you select the document type. This only happens if the filing fee always applies. The system will not automatically assess a fee that does not always apply for the document type selected. For example, if two RFOs are filed, the \$60 fee will always be automatically assessed because it always applies. A \$30 court reporter fee will not be auto-assessed because the court reporter fee only applies for the first RFO set on the same day. The filer is required to add the \$30 “optional fee” when they submit the envelope containing two RFOs to be filed.

42. CAN I EFILE A PETITION WITH A FEE WAIVER APPLICATION?

Yes, the initiating document and fee waiver application will be processed at the same time. These documents may be submitted in the same envelope. You will have the option to check the fee waiver box when submitting documents for filing to the court.

43. DOES THE FEE WAIVER COVER THE \$20.00 CONTINUANCE FEE?

Yes. The continuance fee is waived for a party who has an approved fee waiver.

44. ARE REQUESTS FOR ORDER AUTOMATICALLY SCHEDULED BY THE EFILING SYSTEM?

Yes. The system will assign the next available date and the hearing information will be added to the face page of the filing.

45. HOW SHOULD I SUBMIT MY RFO AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS?

When submitting requests for order with supporting documents, each document may be included in the same transaction or envelope. However, all documents, including any proposed order, must be submitted as separate searchable PDF documents.

46. WILL USING EFILING ALTER SETTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN MOTIONS (SPECIFICALLY AS REQUIRED IN CCP SECTION 1005(b))?

Statutory requirements for hearings that must occur within specified timeframes will continue to be met.

47. CAN I INCLUDE DATES I AM NOT AVAILABLE FOR SCHEDULING AN RFO WHEN I EFILE?

No. The date will be scheduled by the e filing system.

48. WHAT CAN WE DO IF THE RFO IS SET ON A DATE THAT I AM NOT AVAILABLE?

The Court will publish a Request to Continue RFO/OSC/Motion form that may be submitted for court approval. Any request to continue using this form must be submitted 45 days before the scheduled hearing date. The court will grant all such requests administratively for a first continuance request. A \$20 fee (waived with an approved Fee Waiver) is applicable for any request to continue.

49. IN WHAT FORMAT SHOULD I EFILE MY PROPOSED ORDER?

Submit your proposed order as a searchable PDF.

50. HOW WILL I RECEIVE A COPY OF MY PROPOSED ORDER?

The proposed order marked "Received", will be electronically transmitted back to the submitting party by the EFSP.

51. HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED WHEN MY PROPOSED ORDER IS SIGNED?

Once a proposed order is reviewed and signed by a judicial officer, the signed and filed order will be transmitted back to the filer via U.S. Mail. It will also be available for viewing through the Attorney Portal or on Public Terminals located in courthouse locations.

52. WHEN SHOULD PROPOSED ORDERS BE EFILED SEPARATELY?

Any motion, request, or application (including an ex parte application) should have the proposed order included in the same envelope. The proposed order must be a separate PDF document.

53. MUST I FILE A PROOF OF SERVICE IF I ELECTRONICALLY SERVE?

Yes. A Proof of Service must be efiled pursuant to California Rules of Court, rule 2.251(j)(1) - (3).

54. HOW CAN I DESIGNATE MY DOCUMENT AS AN EX PARTE FILING?

The filer must select "ex parte" as the document type during the e filing process. All ex parte filings will be expedited.

55. WHAT IS THE CUT-OFF TIME FOR EFILING MY EX PARTE DOCUMENTS?

Ex parte applications must be efiled in accordance with the ex parte filing schedule found in local rule 5.3 (2)(A).

56. IF I EFILE MY EX PARTE APPLICATION, DO I HAVE TO APPEAR?

No. You will be notified if the court sets the matter for hearing.

57. CAN I EFILE MY RESTRAINING ORDER REQUEST OR RESPONSE?

Yes. Attorneys and self-represented litigants may efile their document(s) requesting or responding to a restraining order. Restraining Order requests and responses may also be conventionally filed by attorneys and self-represented parties.

58. IS THERE A FEE TO EFILE A RESTRAINING ORDER REQUEST OR RESPONSE?

Yes, efilng fees apply if the party does not have a waiver of fees.

59. I AM A LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDER, CAN I EFILE ON BEHALF OF FILER?

Self-represented parties have the option to efile. The system does not prevent a legal service provide from submitting filings on behalf of the party. The registered filer will receive conformed copies back from the court and will have portal access to the electronically filed documents.

60. CAN I EFILE A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT?

The filer may not establish a document's security level. In other words, a document submitted as "confidential" by the filer will only become confidential pursuant to legal authority or if that determination is made by the court. For example, a request for fee waiver would automatically be filed as a confidential document.

61. HOW DO I EFILE A MOTION TO FILE A DOCUMENT CONDITIONALLY UNDER SEAL?

The motion to file a document conditionally under seal must be efiled. However, the documents that the party is seeking to file under seal are exempt from efilng. A conformed copy of the electronically filed motion or application to submit documents conditionally under seal must be attached to the documents submitted conditionally under seal and delivered directly to the assigned courtroom.

62. CAN I EFILE A DOCUMENT UNDER SEAL?

If and when a judicial officer orders documents to be filed under seal, those documents must be filed electronically (unless exempted pursuant to the operative General Order Re Mandatory Electronic Filing for Family law). The burden of accurately designating the documents as sealed at the time of electronic submission is the responsibility of the submitting party.

63. WHAT ARE COMMON REASONS FOR REJECTION?

In addition to failing to follow California Rules of Court rules 2.100 et seq., some common reasons a filing may be rejected by the Court include, but are not limited to:

- a. Documents are not submitted as separate PDFs in the same transaction/envelope, e.g. multiple documents are submitted as a single filed document.
- b. Information entered in data fields is incorrect or does not match the document image e.g. the incorrect Filing Document Name is selected, case number does not match.
- c. Party's name or address does not match the party's information stated on the document.
- d. Incorrect payment statement is selected, e.g. fee waiver or Government Code Section 6103.
- e. Incorrect case type or case category selected.
- f. Incorrect court location is selected.
- g. Duplicate submission.
- h. Untimely submission, e.g. ex parte application submitted after filing deadline.
- i. Document is not bookmarked and/or text searchable.

64. HOW CAN I DISPUTE A REJECTION?

If you request to file your document as submitted without correction, you may request to file on demand. There is no guarantee that your documents will be reviewed by staff or the court if the reason for rejection is not cured.

65. HOW DO I CORRECT AN ERROR IN FILING?

Depending on the type of filing, you may file an amended pleading, or apply to the court for relief or other corrective order.

66. CAN I CANCEL A TRANSACTION AFTER SUBMISSION?

No. Once the transaction is electronically submitted, it cannot be cancelled.

67. WILL THE COURT ELECTRONICALLY SERVE OTHER PARTIES FOR ME?

No. The court will not electronically serve other parties on behalf of another party. Contact your EFSP for options.

68. CAN I USE AN EFSP TO ELECTRONICALLY SERVE OTHER PARTIES?

Yes. EFSPs offer this service for a fee. Refer to the specific EFSP's website to determine which service best fits your business needs.

69. WHAT ARE THE RULES OR GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC SERVICE?

Refer to California Rules of Court, rule 2.251 and Code of Civil Procedure Section 1010.6.

70. IF I FILE ELECTRONICALLY, HAVE I CONSENTED TO ELECTRONIC SERVICE ON THIS CASE?

Yes. By e-filing the document, you agree to accept electronic service at the electronic service address you provided. Refer to California Rules of Court, rule 2.251(C)(3). Self-represented parties and parties exempt from e-filing must affirmatively consent to acceptance of electronic service. Refer to California Rules of Court, rule 2.251(b)(1)(B).

71. DO I NEED TO SUBMIT A PRINTED COURTESY COPY?

A judicial officer may request a courtesy copy of documents as needed.

72. DOES IT MATTER WHAT DPI (DOTS PER INCH) IS USED WHEN SCANNING A DOCUMENT?

Yes. The Trial Court Records Manual recommends 300 DPI resolution. DPI refers to the output resolution of the scanner when a document is scanned. The DPI only factors in if you are scanning and attaching a document. If you start your document in a word processing application and convert it to PDF, text searchable format will be preserved.

73. DO I NEED TO SCAN A DOCUMENT THAT INCLUDES AN ORIGINAL SIGNATURE?

No. Retention of original signed documents is governed by California Rules of Court, rule 2.257 and Code of Civil Procedure Section 1010.6.

74. SHOULD A DOCUMENT BE PASSWORD PROTECTED?

No. Documents should not be password protected and will be rejected if the content cannot be viewed.

75. CAN JUDICIAL COUNCIL FORMS BE EFILED?

Yes. Judicial Council forms are fillable and can be uploaded for e-filing.

76. WILL THE COURT ACCEPT A SCANNED PDF WHEN THIRD PARTY LEGAL SOFTWARE IS USED TO COMPLETE FORMS?

Yes. Forms completed using third party software can be efiled as an uploaded PDF. Documents submitted via e-filing must be text searchable.

77. WHAT IF I USE WORD, WORD PERFECT OR OTHER SOFTWARE THAT IS NOT PDF?

Your EFSP can help get your document in ready state to submit to the court if you use other programs such as WORD, WORD PERFECT, PDF or any other software. They can help with hyperlinks, bookmarks, and making a document (including scanned documents) a searchable pdf.

78. WHAT ARE THE FILE SIZE LIMITATIONS FOR EFILING?

The court technically has no limit. However, the EFSPs may have restrictions. As a general rule of thumb, 25 megabytes per document and 60 megabytes per e-filing transaction is a good guideline. The majority of filings can be submitted with ease through the EFSP.

79. WHAT IS THE PROCESS WHEN AN EFILED DOCUMENT EXCEEDS THE FILE SIZE LIMIT?

If the document exceeds the size limit, it will be sent back to the filer with the error message, "File size too large – please reduce and resubmit." If your document or transaction exceeds the limits, your EFSP can assist in optimizing your files and/or utilizing its File Transfer Protocol (FTP) for extremely large documents.

80. WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SERVICES OFFERED BY THE EFSP?

Information about services offered by individual EFSPs can be found on their websites. A list of EFSPs can be found on the Court's website at: http://www.lacourt.org/division/efiling/civil_providers.aspx

81. CAN I ASK TO SEND A CONFIRMATION EMAIL TO ANOTHER PARTY / PERSON?

The EFSP may provide the option to send a confirmation email to another email address other than what is indicated in your registered account. The confirmation email is not considered electronic service of the document.

82. HOW DO I OBTAIN A CERTIFIED COPY?

Certified copies may be requested from the court's records unit by mail or in person. If submitted by mail, include a pre-paid method of return, such as a self-addressed stamped envelope. In the future, the court will be certifying documents electronically. The Government Code allows institutions, including banks, to accept electronically certified documents from the court (GC 68150(f) and (g)).

83. HOW CAN I REQUEST A REFUND?

Use the form LACIV150 to request a refund. Complete the form and submit to the location where the case is assigned. The request will be reviewed by the court. Fees for efiled documents will be refunded to the EFSP pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure Section 411.20 and Government Code Section 6159.

84. WHO CAN I SPEAK WITH IF I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT A FILING?

The first point of contact for any question should be the EFSP. If the question cannot be resolved with the EFSP, you may contact the court by using the phone number for the assigned location. The specific location resource number is located at: <http://www.lacourt.org/courthouse>

85. ARE CASES WHERE CSSD ENFORCING EXEMPT FROM EFILING?

No, you may efile documents to the general family law case even if the Department of Child Support Services is enforcing support. You may not efile on AB1058 case numbers. The AB1058 document filings may still be filed conventionally or via fax filing until the time that efilings becomes available.

86. CAN CONFIDENTIAL CHILD CUSTODY EVALUATION REPORTS BE EFILED?

Yes, confidential child custody evaluation reports may be efiled. Doctors filing the reports are not required to efile, but have the option to do so.

87. IS THERE A COURT FEE TO EFILE MY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REQUEST OR RESPONSE?

The Court does not charge a fee to file the Request or Response on a Domestic Violence matter. Select the fee waiver check box when submitting documents for efile to the court. The court will not charge the \$2.25 transaction fee when the fee waiver checkbox is marked. Some EFSPs will also waive their fee when using the fee waiver indicator.