

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF SENECA COUNTY, OHIO
GENERAL AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION

In Re:

ELECTRONIC FILING OF DOCUMENTS IN THE GENERAL AND
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION OF THE SENECA COUNTY
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

To promote orderly management of cases, and the efficient administration of justice in all cases filed with the General and Domestic Relations Divisions of the Seneca County Common Pleas Court, the undersigned judges of said Court hereby adopt this Administrative Order, which shall be a standing order applicable to all cases filed in the General and Domestic Relations Divisions of the Court. This Order shall be effective beginning on April 30, 2026, and shall remain in full force and effect until further order of the Court.

1. USE OF THE SENECA COUNTY ELECTRONIC CASE FILING (ECF) SYSTEM.

The ECF System. The ECF System, provided and maintained by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts (the Clerk), shall be the sole method for the electronic filing of Court documents in the Seneca County Court of Common Pleas General Division and Domestic Relations Division. Use of the ECF System shall be in accordance with this Order, the applicable Local Rules of Court, Rules of Civil Procedure, and/or Rules of Criminal Procedure. Users of the ECF System are responsible for its correct usage.

1.2 **Access Limited to Registered Users.** Only Registered Users (e-Users) of the ECF System are permitted to utilize the ECF System to file in cases in which they are counsel of record or a party to the case.

1.3 **Use of the ECF System optional for self-represented litigants.** Self-represented (*pro-se*) litigants may register to become an e-User in their case(s). Individuals previously declared vexatious litigators pursuant to

FILED
COMMON PLEAS COURT
SENECA COUNTY, OHIO
2026 MAY -8 P 4:07
STEPHANIE C. HICKS
CLERK

R.C. 2323.52 shall not be granted an e-User account. Regardless of whether a self-represented litigant registers as an e-User, self-represented litigants will be permitted to file conventionally, subject to Local Rules and Seneca County Clerk of Courts procedures, but REGISTRATION AS AN E-USER CONSTITUTES ACCEPTANCE OF SERVICE VIA ELECTRONIC MEANS BY THE SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT (IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 1.4 OF THIS ORDER) EVEN IF THE SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT ELECTS TO FILE BY CONVENTIONAL MEANS SUBSEQUENT TO REGISTRATION AS AN E-USER.

- 1.4 **Registration constitutes consent to accept electronic service of filings.** Upon registration, the e-User consents to receive service of documents pursuant to electronic means in accordance with Civ.R. 5(B)(2)(f). This includes electronic delivery of documents filed by other litigants; electronic delivery of all entries of judgment served by the Clerk in accordance with Civ.R. 58(B). The ECF System may not be used for service required by Civ.R. 4, or when service is otherwise required by rule or statute to be made in a particular manner, such as personal service, or service by certified mail.
- 1.5 **Registration constitutes consent to adhere to the ECF e-User Guide.** Upon registration, the e-User agrees to adhere to the instructions set forth in the ECF e-User Guide, as amended from time to time.
- 1.6 **Initial Registration.** To receive an e-User account, registration is required. Attorneys can register online through the ECF Portal. Attorneys shall be in good standing and actively licensed by the Supreme Court of Ohio.
- 1.7 **Account Security.** The e-User shall be responsible for the security of their account credentials (username and password). If an e-User believes their account has been compromised, they shall immediately change their password through the ECF System. All documents submitted with the e-User's account are deemed to be made with the authorization of the e-User unless the e-User files a motion to strike the e-filing and proves the contrary by clear and convincing evidence.

1.8 **Account Suspension or Removal.** The Seneca County Clerk of Courts may temporarily or permanently suspend an e-User's account without prior notice upon information or belief of the following: 1) the e-User is not complying with Local Rules, Orders, or Instructions regarding use of the ECF System; 2) violations of law, the Ohio Rules of Court, the Ohio Revised Code, or ECF Terms and Conditions of Use; or 3) violations of public records policies. If the e-User is an attorney, the e-User's account will be suspended if the attorney is no longer licensed to practice law by the Supreme Court of Ohio. The Seneca County Clerk of Courts will provide prompt notification of the suspension to the e-User by electronic notification. If an e-User disagrees with the Seneca County Clerk of Court's determination to temporarily or permanently suspend the e-User's account, the e-User may submit a letter to the Administrative Judge of the Division(s) of the Court in which the e-User files documents, requesting that the e-User's account be restored and stating the reasons why it should be restored.

2. E-Filing Document Requirements

- 2.1 **Mechanical Requirements.** The Seneca County Clerk of Court's electronic file stamp shall occupy the top right of the first page of each document in an area three (3) inches wide and one and a half (1.5) inches high. This area shall be kept free from any text or pictures on documents submitted for filing. E-Filed documents shall otherwise adhere to the applicable Local Rules that govern the formatting of documents as to font size, line spacing, margins, and other filing requirements.
- 2.2 **Digital File Requirements.** Submissions shall be uploaded to the ECF in the Portable Document Format (.pdf) (for proposed entries, see Section 6 of this Order) and contain no external links. Each document shall be uploaded in sufficient resolution to allow readability. Illegal documents will not be accepted for filing. Only one (1) document (e.g., complaint, motion, petition, response), including its exhibits or appendices, shall be e-filed per docket upload.
- 2.3 **Digital File Size.** The digital size of one (1) e-filed document (and its exhibits or appendices, if any) is limited to one gigabyte (1 GB).

- 2.4 **Personal Identifiers and Protected Information.** Pursuant to any specific Court Orders, applicable Local Rules, and in accordance with Sup.R. 44(H) and 45(D), filers shall redact personal identifiers from a document before submitting it for e-filing and utilize a Confidential Disclosure of Personal Identifiers Form.

3. Signatures.

- 3.1 **Conformed Signatures.** E-Filed documents that require the signature of the attorney or filing party shall be signed with a conformed signature of “/s/ [name].”

3.1.1 Example attorney signature: /s/ Jane Doe
Jane Doe (0123456)
Doe and Associates, LPA
123 Address Road
Tiffin, Ohio 44883
(419)123-4567
jane.doe@doelaw.com
Attorney for Defendant

3.1.2 Example self-represented signature: /s/ John Doe
John Doe
123 Address Road
Tiffin, Ohio 44883
(419)123-4567
john.doe@doe.com

- 3.2 **Conformed Signature Meets Signature Requirements.** The conformed signature on an e-filed document is deemed to constitute a signature on the document for purposes of signature requirements imposed by the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio, the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure, and any other legal authority. Any signature on an e-filed document shall be considered that of the attorney or party it purports to be for all purposes. If it is established that a document was transmitted without authority, the Court shall Order the document to be stricken.

- 3.3 **Documents Requiring Two or More Signatures.** When a stipulation or other document requires two or more signatures, the filer shall: (1)

confirm that the content of the document is acceptable to all persons required to sign the document; (2) indicate the agreement of other counsel or parties at the appropriate place in the document, usually on the signature line; and (3) e-file the document, indicating the signatories.

3.3.1 Example signature: /s/ Jane Doe (by email consent)
Jane Doe (0123456)
Doe and Associates, LPA
123 Address Road
Tiffin, Ohio 44883
(419)123-4567
jane.doe@doelaw.com
Attorney for Defendant

3.4 **Documents Requiring Original Signature.** Documents requiring an original signature, such as an affidavit or other notarized documents, shall be e-filed as a .pdf. The filer shall maintain the signed document in the filer's records and have it available for production upon request of the Court. The signed document shall be maintained until the case is closed and the time for appeal has expired, or the appeal has been heard or denied and all opportunities for post-judgment relief are exhausted.

4. **Review and Acceptance by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts.**

4.1 **Review by Seneca County Clerk of Courts.** Each filing submitted through ECF will be reviewed by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts office prior to being accepted for filing. The Clerk will review the submitted documents to ensure accuracy of case numbers, parties, signatures, completion of documentation, and fee payment. Acceptance for filing does not indicate compliance with applicable rules, statutes, deadlines, or other substantive requirements of filings, nor does it indicate leave of Court for the filing, if leave is required. The Seneca County Clerk of Courts office will review submitted filings as expeditiously as possible.

4.2 **E-Payment of Deposits, Costs, Fees.** All required deposits for costs and/or filing fees required for the initiation of a case, document costs, or subsequent filings shall be paid at the time a submission is uploaded.

Any submissions uploaded without payment of the required deposit, cost, or fee may be rejected, subject to R.C. 2323.311. Payment by credit card is processed through Lexis Nexis VitalChek. Payment for any submission will be on hold until the submission is accepted after review by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts office. If at any time the e-Payment suite is not functioning, filers shall pay required deposits or costs directly to the Seneca County Clerk of Courts office not later than three (3) days after their submission is e-filed.

- 4.3 **Notification of Review Completion.** Upon completion of the review, the filer will receive an electronic notice that the submitted document has either been accepted for filing or rejected for filing. If a submission is rejected, the filer will be notified of the deficiency, error, or issue.
- 4.4 **Filing after Review.** Documents may be submitted for filing twenty four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week, but A DOCUMENT SHALL NOT BE CONSIDERED FILED UNTIL ACCEPTED FOR FILING BY THE SENECA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS. Documents submitted for filing shall be considered as filed on the date and time submitted to the Seneca County Clerk of Courts Office if they are subsequently accepted for filing by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts Office.

The ability to file seven (7) days a week shall not advance the date within which any document must be filed to a date on which the Clerk of Courts is not open (that is, on a weekend, legal holiday, or other closure). Further, on the date on which a document must be filed, the document may be electronically filed up until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time or Eastern Daylight Savings Time, whichever is in effect on that date. Any document filed after 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time or Eastern Daylight Savings Time shall be deemed to have been filed on the next day.

- 4.5 **Rejection by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts.** If a document is rejected for filing by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts office for any reason, that document shall not be considered filed, and the filer will need to resubmit the document. The document shall be considered as filed on the date and time of resubmission in accordance with Section 4.4. Filers accept all risk that a filing submitted near a filing deadline may be rejected by the Clerk after the filing deadline has elapsed.

5. Service of Electronic Filings.

- 5.1 **Consent to Acceptance.** E-Users agree to accept the electronic service of documents in accordance with Section 1.4 of this Order.
- 5.2 **E-Service by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts.** E-Users should routinely verify that ECF emails are not blocked by a spam filter or otherwise redirected; the Court and the Seneca County Clerk of Courts office will not contact an e-User if emails are undeliverable. E-Users can confirm service through the ECF. It is the responsibility of E-Users to check the ECF for notices pertaining to recent e-filings; E-Users are advised not to rely solely upon receipt of courtesy emails.
- 5.2.1 Once associated with a case, attorneys will remain counsel of record subject to ECF service for a party (even after a case is closed) until a Motion to Withdraw has been filed and approved by the Court.
- 5.3 **Service Upon Parties.** The filer shall serve all parties with a copy of their e-filing in accordance with the applicable Rules of Procedure.
- 5.4 **Proof of Service/Certificate of Service.** The appropriate certificate of service shall be included in any document submitted for e-filing. The certificate of service shall be originally signed or e-signed by the filer; shall identify, with specificity, the filing or document served; and shall state the name, date and method of service.
- 5.5 **Instructions for service by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts.** A request for service shall be submitted through ECF, with instructions to the Seneca County Clerk of Courts as to the desired method of service, for all filings that require service by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts or for which a filer requests service by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts. For more information on service, please see Local Court Rule Part 2: Civil Rules of Practice and Procedure; and Local Court Rule Part 5: Domestic Rules of Practice and Procedure. A fee, as established by the Seneca County Clerk of Courts, shall be charged for each page of electronically filed document to be physically served upon a party as requested by the filer. This fee is in addition to any other fees required for service.

- 5.6 **Service of Court Orders, Entries.** After the Court files an Order or Entry, the Court or Seneca County Clerk of Courts will serve E-Users by email or mail, and all non-registered parties via ordinary U.S. Mail, unless the Court directs service to be completed in another manner.

6. Proposed Entries.

- 6.1 **Standard Forms.** Proposed entries or orders contained within a standard form generated by the Supreme Court of Ohio, an agency of the State of Ohio, or a local form promulgated by the Court that features a signature line for a Judicial Officer or Seneca County Clerk of Courts shall be submitted as a .pdf.
- 6.2 **Non-Standard Forms.** Proposed entries or orders prepared as non-standard forms as described in 6.1 above shall be submitted in editable file format (.doc or similar).

7. Eligible Filings.

- 7.1 Documents currently eligible for e-filing are listed in the ECF system located on the Seneca County Clerk of Court's website (www.senecacountyclerk.org). The list of Eligible Filings will be updated as they become available.

8. Emergency Filings.

- 8.1 **Filings Constituting Emergency Filings.** Applications for emergency temporary restraining orders or any other motion seeking immediate relief from the Court shall constitute emergency filings under this Section.
- 8.2 **Procedure for Emergency Filings.** Any filer who submits an emergency filing through the ECF system shall simultaneously contact the Seneca County Clerk of Courts office at 419-447-0671 (Legal Department) to verbally notify the Seneca County Clerk of Courts of the submission of the emergency filing.

9. Prohibition.

9.1 **Prohibited Filings.** E-Users are prohibited from filing the following documents through the ECF System:

- 9.1.1. Petitions for Protection Orders.
- 9.1.2. Garnishments.
- 9.1.3. Actions to Collect on a cognovit note.
- 9.1.4. Orders of Sale/Alias Orders of Sale.
- 9.1.5. Court of Appeal cases.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

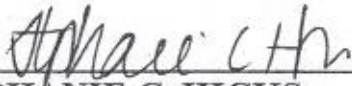


JUDGE STEVE C. SHUFF



JUDGE DAMON D. ALT

AGREED TO AND APPROVED BY:



STEPHANIE C. HICKS
SENECA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS