

APR 11 2025

DOMESTIC RELATIONS
Trumbull County

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION AND JUVENILE DEPARTMENT
TRUMBULL COUNTY, OHIO**

SAMUEL F. BLUEDORN
CLERK OF COURTS

2025 APR 11 PM 2:33

JUVENILE COURT
TRUMBULL COUNTY

IN RE:)	2025-5
E-FILING ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER)	
)	JUDGE SAMUEL F. BLUEDORN
)	ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
)	
)	JUDGMENT ENTRY

This E-Filing Administrative Order sets forth the terms, definitions, and procedures for implementation of an electronic filing ("e-filing") system in the Trumbull County Family Court.

This E-Filing Administrative Order may be amended as necessary throughout the phased implementation of the e-filing system. In addition, the Court shall amend the TCFC Local Rules upon complete implementation of each case type and as necessary throughout the implementation process. During the phased implementation of the e-filing system, the most current E-Filing Administrative Order shall govern the e-filing processes and procedures.

This E-Filing Administrative Order applies to all filers (attorney, parties, and non-parties) involved in the specific case type under the instructions contained herein.

PHASE 1 – ABUSE/NEGLECT/DEPENDENCY CASE TYPE

The initial phase of the e-filing system shall consist of Abuse/Neglect/Dependency case types only. On April 14, 2025, the Trumbull County Family Court and the Trumbull County Juvenile Clerk shall initiate the e-filing system with participants in the Abuse/Neglect/Dependency case type category.

PHASE 2 – CSEA CASE TYPES

The second phase of the e-filing system shall commence on May 12, 2025, and shall add cases initiated by/on behalf of Trumbull County CSEA to the e-filing system.

PHASE 3 – ALL OTHER CASE TYPES

At a time to be determined, but not less than thirty (30) days after public notice, e-filing shall be mandatory for all new and subsequent juvenile cases filings/pleadings for all case types. Registered Users must thereafter e-file all documents except: (1) those designated as paper filing only; and (2) those which cannot be effectively electronically

presented. Traditional paper filings will still be accepted: (1) in case types excluded from the e-filing system; (2) by self-represented parties; and (3) by persons not registered with the Court's e-filing system.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

(A) The following terms and definitions shall apply for all electronic filing:

- (1) **"Accepted document"** means an electronically filed document that has been reviewed by the clerk and docketed. A document that is "accepted" will be time-stamped, docketed, imaged and processed within the normal business course through the case management system. A document that is "accepted" becomes a part of the official court record.
- (2) **"Case Management System (CMS)"** is the internal system that manages the receipt, processing, storage and retrieval of data associated with a case. The CMS also allows the Clerk, Court Users, and Registered Users the ability to retrieve data and perform allowed functions.
- (3) **"Clerk"** means the Clerk of Court for the Trumbull County Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations and the Clerk of Court for the Trumbull County Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations, Juvenile Department, and and the employees of both of those offices.
- (4) **"Clerk review"** means a preliminary review of all electronic documents submitted for filing. It consists of a review of data and documents for compliance with court rules, policies, procedures, and practices prior to accepting the documents into the CMS and official record of the Court. If the electronically submitted documents are in compliance, the documents will be "accepted" by the Clerk for e-filing.
- (5) **"Certificate of service"** states the date and manner of document service.
- (6) **"Electronic Identifier"** is the unique electronic credential assigned to a Registered User which allows transmission, receipt, and retrieval of e-filed documents.
- (7) **"Confidential identifiers or information"** includes the first five digits of a social security number, driver's license numbers, bank and other financial account numbers, medical records, information protected by law from public disclosure, and any information ordered sealed, private, or non-public by the court.
- (8) **"Court Electronic Record"** means documents received in electronic form,

recorded in its CMS, and stored in its document management system. This includes documents received in paper form and scanned into electronic format but does not include physical exhibits and other things which cannot be fully captured as an electronic image.

- (9) **“Court initiated filings”** are documents, such as notices or orders, created by the court and entered into the CMS.
- (10) **“Court User”** is an authorized user within the CMS who is an employee of the court or other county office with permission to utilize the CMS. The restrictions and authorizations will vary dependent on the job duties of the Court User.
- (11) **“Designated e-file case types”** are cases or types of filings which must or may be filed electronically.
- (12) **“Docketed”** is the entry of an item into the official court record.
- (13) **“Document”** includes pleadings, motions, transcripts, reports, exhibits and all other electronically filed items. When printed, documents must produce a clear black image in at least 12 point type. Documents bearing a required original signature shall be e-filed in portable document format (“pdf”). The filing party shall keep the original document until the case is closed and the time for appeal has expired or the appeals have been heard or denied and all opportunities for post judgment relief have been exhausted
- (14) **“Document management system”** (“DMS”) the scheme for receipting, indexing, storing, and retrieving electronic and scanned case documents.
- (15) **“Effective date and time of filing of a document”** is shown by the time stamp on the submitted document.
- (16) **“Electronic filing”** (“E-filing”) is the electronic transmission of documents to and from the court for the purpose of creating a public record of requests and actions in a case. Documents transmitted by facsimile or e-mail are not e-filed documents.
- (17) **“Electronic filing system”** is the software, hardware, mechanisms, procedures, and rules allowing electronic filing.
- (18) **“Electronic filing service provider”** (“EFSP”) is the service provided by the court for e-filing and e-service of documents via the internet. The EFSP is an agent of the court for the purpose of electronic filing, receipt, service and

retrieval of electronic documents. The service may be accessed at <https://courts.co.trumbull.oh.us/eservicesFC/login.page> or in person at the courthouse using a public access terminal.

- (19) **“Electronic receipt”** acknowledges transmission of a document to the e-filing system.
- (20) **“Electronic service” (“E-service”)** is the electronic transmission of a document to a Registered User in a case via the e-filing system. Electronic service does not mean service by facsimile or e-mail.
- (21) **“Electronic signature”** is an electronic symbol, series of symbols or process that is attached to, and intended to act as a substitute for a handwritten signature on a court electronic record. The electronic signature shall have the same force and effect as if it were a handwritten signature. If it is established that a document was electronically transmitted without authority and accepted, the court may order the filing stricken.
- (22) **“Filing deadline”** is the deadline within which a document must be e-filed. If falling on a business day, a document is timely if received at or before 11:59:59 p.m. on the business day. If falling on Saturday, Sunday or a legal holiday a document is timely if received at or before 11:59:59 p.m. on the next business day.
- (23) **“Filed documents”** means e-filed documents that have been transmitted to the court for filing through the electronic filing system but for which the Clerk review has not yet been completed.
- (24) **“Filing fee”** is the fee charged by the court and by a third party providing electronic filing services.
- (25) **“Instructions for Service”** are separately filed instructions for service designating the names and addresses of the parties or persons to be served by the Clerk. Each request for service by a process server must either provide reference to or be accompanied by a current copy of the order appointing the individual process server.
- (26) **“Notification of filing”** is the notice sent by the e-filing system to Registered Users. This notification is service to Registered Users under Civil Rule 5 . Those not registered with the e-filing system must be served traditionally in paper format.

- (27) **“Notice of receipt”** is the notice sent by the EFSP after a document has been submitted to the court. Notice of receipt does not mean the document has been or will be accepted.
- (28) **“Original document”** is the electronic document received by the electronic filing system and accepted by the Clerk. It is part of the official court record. A document filed by electronic means shall be accepted as the effective original. The sending party must maintain possession of the source document and make them available for inspection to the court upon request.
- (29) **“Paper filed case types”** are cases or types of filings which may not be electronically filed. Cases and documents which are not electronically filed must be presented in paper form either via U.S. Mail or in person at the clerk’s office.
- (30) **“Paper filings”** include documents filed under seal, presented for in camera review, and other documents as directed by the court.
- (31) **“Pending documents”** means e-filed documents that have been transmitted to the court for filing through the electronic filing system but for which the Clerk review has not yet been completed.
- (32) **“Public access terminal”** is the scanner and e-filing equipment located near the Clerk’s office. No fee is charged to view or upload documents. The Clerk may charge a fee for printing copies of e-filed and paper documents.
- (33) **“Rejected documents”** are e-filed documents that have been transmitted to the court for filing through the electronic filing system which have been reviewed by the Clerk and due to noncompliance with court rules, policies, procedures, and/or practices have *not* been accepted for e-filing. Rejected documents are not docketed and are not made a part of the official court record.
- (34) **“Registered User”** is a person who is registered with the court and authorized to file and receive documents electronically. To be a Registered User, the individual must have read and agreed to the terms in the E-filing System User Agreement; provided the credentials requested through the e-filing system; completed any required e-filing training; been provided a username and password through the e-filing system; and have established an account for electronic payment of filing and other fees.
- (35) **“Restricted access”** means the court has restricted public access to information or documents. Access may be restricted on the court’s own order

or on the motion of a party or other person who is the subject of information in a case document.

(36) **“Rules”** refers to the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, Juvenile Procedure, and other state and local rules.

(37) **“Time of filing”** is the date and time that the e-filed documents has been transmitted to the court for filing through the electronic filing system as shown on the Electronic Receipt. Documents submitted to the e-filing system on or before 11:59:59 p.m. are considered filed on that day and time if falling on a business day. If falling on Saturday, Sunday or a legal holiday a document is considered filed on the next business day.

REGISTERED USERS

Any person filing a document or pleading in an e-filed case type must register to become a Registered User. Upon proper registration, an electronic identifier shall be issued to the Registered User. By registering as an e-filer, the attorney or party agrees to file documents electronically and consents to electronic service of pleadings, motions, and documents.

Registered Users must follow the requirements for payment information through the third-party vendor in e-services when prompted. Alternate payment methods are not available. The payment information will need to be entered upon each new transaction for security purposes in accordance with the vendor requirements.

Registered Users consent to electronic service of the following: pleadings, motions, documents, judgment entries, and notice of hearings via the electronic service address identified as the Registered User’s e-mail address. Paper notices will be mailed in cases that are exempt from e-filing under this rule and will be provided to any participant/self-represented litigant who is not a Registered User.

An electronic signature of a Registered User on any filed document shall be considered to be the true and authentic signature of that Registered User unless proven otherwise through additional pleadings challenging the signature and accompanying filing as false, at which time the judicial authority will review and act accordingly.

OFFICIAL COURT RECORD

Electronically filed, accepted and docketed documents are the official record of the Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations and the Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations, Juvenile Department (“court”). The court will not keep paper copies of these documents. The court’s electronically filed hearing notices,

schedules, orders, decisions, judgments, and other documents are the official court record. The digital signature of a judge or magistrate has the same force and effect as a handwritten signature on a paper document. All parties and persons interested in court proceedings shall access these documents electronically via the internet or in person at the office of the Clerk.

TIMELY SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS

Registered Users are solely responsible for the timely submission of documents to meet any time limits and/or deadlines. Further, it is the responsibility of a Registered User to submit only documents which comply with the court rules, policies, procedures, and practices. Documents which do not fully comply may be rejected, not docketed, and not made part of the official court record. The Registered User must allow sufficient time for filing, Clerk review, and any necessary re-submission to correct any deficiencies.

Electronic filing does not alter or extend applicable time limits/ deadlines.

FILING DOCUMENTS UNDER E-FILING SYSTEM

(A) The Filing of Documents.

A document transmitted for e-filing is considered a "filed document" as defined under these rules. This means that the document has been filed for purposes of time deadlines. However, it is not an "accepted" document until it has been subjected to a Clerk review and has been accepted by the Clerk. Only upon the document being accepted does it get docketed and become part of the official court record.

The Clerk will only be available to review e-filed submissions during normal business hours, Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, excluding holidays and other emergency closures. Submissions transmitted after these hours will be reviewed in the normal course of business on the next business day(s).

Following the Clerk review if a document is rejected due to noncompliance, an e-notification shall be sent to the Registered User and the Registered User will be afforded time to correct any deficiencies in the filing. So long as the deficiencies are *timely* corrected, the filing date for the resubmitted/corrected document will relate back to the date the document was originally transmitted for e-filing for purposes of the timely submission of documents. Registered Users should take into consideration the possibility that there may be a delay due to a rejection of a submission when filing.

In exceptional circumstances, the Administrative Judge shall have the ability to override the time-stamped date upon application in writing to the

Administrative Judge. The burden will be on the Registered User to prove the document was timely submitted or resubmitted. THIS WILL BE FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY.

(B) Format.

All electronically filed documents should be formatted according to the rules governing formatting of paper pleadings, motions and documents and shall be submitted in accordance with the following requirements:

- (1) Except for proposed orders or judgments, all documents must be submitted in a searchable portable document format (PDF).
- (2) All documents must be black and white only. No color pleadings or documents will be accepted.
- (3) Documents must not exceed twenty megabytes (20 MB). If a submission exceeds this requirement, it must be condensed into several compliant submissions within this restriction.
- (4) Image resolution must be at least 200 dots per inch (DPI) with 300 DPI preferred.
- (5) Documents may NOT contain links to other material.
- (6) Documents must have all confidential identifiers removed (see below).
- (7) Pleadings must contain a signature (see below).
- (8) Pleadings must include a certificate of service (see below).
- (9) Pleadings must have a 1 ½ inch margin at the top.
- (10) Pleadings must comply with the local rules governing paper pleadings for substance and format unless otherwise indicated herein.

(C) Removal of Confidential Identifiers and Information.

Registered Users must remove all metadata and non-public data from all e-filed documents, including but not limited to the following: identifying numerals in a social security number (i.e., the first five digits of a social security number); financial account numbers; medical records; driver's license numbers; and similar private information. Redaction of personal, confidential, or private information is solely the responsibility of the party filing the document.

(D) Signature Requirements.

As indicated above, all pleadings and motions must contain either a signature or an e-signature of the Registered User. In the event the Registered User is not utilizing an e-signature, the pleading (PDF) with the original signature must be uploaded for filing. In the event the document bears more than one signature, the Registered User must confirm agreement of the other signers prior to filing. The Registered User shall retain

the original document until the case is closed and the time for appeal has expired or the appeal has been fully adjudicated.

In addition to the signature, the Registered User must include the following information underneath the signature line: Typed name; Attorney registration number if applicable; Firm name; Identity of party represented; Address; Telephone number; E-mail address.

(E) Certificate of Service.

- (1) *Complaint and related documents.* Initial complaint, re-filed complaints, third party complaints, and other documents initiating a case or adding a new party are filed electronically. However, service of summons must still be completed pursuant to the applicable rule or statute. A Registered User submitting an initial case or adding a new party must include instructions for service with the required information pursuant to the Local Rules and applicable Civil/Juvenile Rules. This includes instructions for a process server, if applicable. The Clerk shall issue a summons and shall serve the pleading in accordance with the applicable rules and instructions only after the initiating document is accepted for e-filing.
- (2) *Subsequent Service.* Unless otherwise instructed by judgment entry, rule or statute, all documents filed after the initial filing shall be served to the Registered User's e-mail address on file with the Clerk. The electronic service of a subsequent pleading, filing or other documents shall be considered as valid and effective service on all parties and shall have the same legal effect as an original paper document served under former rules. Those participants or litigants who are not Registered Users will continue to receive paper format copies and service via the U.S. Mail.
- (3) *Certificate of Service.* A certificate of service on all parties entitled to service is still required when a party files a document electronically and shall be in compliance with Civ.R. 5(B)(4). The Certificate of Service shall be signed in accordance with applicable Ohio court rules and laws, including these Rules and shall contain the following language: "I hereby certify that on (date) I served this document by electronic mail on the following: (list counsel of record with e-mail addresses) AND by regular mail upon the following: (list counsel or self-represented litigants who are not registered users of the Court's e-filing system)."

(F) Proposed and Agreed Judgment Entries.

- (1) *Proposed Judgment Entries.* All motions must be accompanied by a proposed order in a separate document in Microsoft Word which will NOT be filed but rather will be *transmitted through the e-filing system to the proper judicial authority for*

review, editing and signature. All proposed orders MUST use the applicable ProposedOrderTemplate.docx provided in the e-filing system. In addition, all proposed orders MUST be capable of editing in Microsoft Word. This template includes the appropriate signature tokens and formatting for the judicial authority. Proposed orders that do not use the template are at risk of rejection by the Court. No additional identifying information other than the case caption and case number shall be included on any proposed order, i.e., no company identifier or other internal tracking system.

- (2) *Agreed Judgment Entries.* Parties shall select and file the Proposed Agreed Judgment Entry as the document type which shall be accompanied by the proposed Agreed Judgment Entry in Word format for judicial review and signature using the applicable *ProposedOrderTemplate.docx* provided in the e-filing system.

(G) Requests for Ex Parte Orders and/or Temporary Restraining Orders.

Requests for Ex Parte Orders and/or Temporary Restraining Orders are also required to be filed via the e-filing system. However, the filer should be aware that it is the responsibility of the filer to be physically present at the court to bring the request for an ex parte order or temporary restraining order to the judge for review and hearing, as may be applicable. The filer must still file provide a proposed order accompanying the e-filed motion for the ex parte, emergency or temporary order utilizing the applicable *ProposedOrderTemplate.docx* provided in the e-filing system.

FILING FEES

Any document filed electronically that requires a filing fee may be rejected by the Clerk unless the filer has complied with the mechanism established by the court for payment of filing fees. Registered Users must establish an appropriate account for electronic payment of filing and other fees. Registered Users will pay an additional fee for credit service charges. Persons proceeding under a poverty affidavit may file electronically without payment of the filing fee and thereafter comply with any further orders as to the payment and/or waiver of fees.

SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS AND PUBLIC ACCESS

In the event the Clerk receives, via mail, documents to be filed from a self-represented litigant, the Clerk will register the party as a Registered User in the e-filing system. If the self-represented litigant does not have access to the means for electronic notification, the Clerk shall note an exception that this person will not receive electronic notices. However, if the self-represented litigant does have access and ability to utilize e-mail, the self-represented litigant shall receive electronic notification and service.

The Clerk shall then scan and upload the filing into the e-filing system as submitted by the self-represented litigant. Provided any filing fee requirements have been paid, the Clerk shall then e-file the document identifying the self-represented litigant Registered User as the e-filer.

The self-represented litigant should make every effort to file any subsequent filings via the e-filing system either via a remote connection or via the Court's public access terminals. In the rare instance a self-represented litigant is unable to access the e-filing system remotely or on-site, the Clerk will continue to file the subsequent filings as indicated above. In order to promote and facilitate access to justice, the Court shall provide public terminals equipped with a computer, internet access and scanner for those persons who need access to the equipment.

If a party, attorney or any other filer presents a hard-copy paper document in person to the Clerk's office for filing in an active e-filing case type, the Clerk's office will direct the person to the public access terminal and provide registration assistance.

Self-Represented litigants are encouraged to file proposed orders with the submission of any motion. However, the failure to attach a proposed order shall not be the reason for the rejection of a pleading from a self-represented litigant.

SUPPLEMENTAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

The court may issue supplemental administrative orders during the implementation of the e-filing system as necessary. Any Supplemental Administrative Orders shall be posted on the Court's website. All Registered Users shall monitor the website periodically for any updates.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Date: _____

4/11/25



JUDGE SAMUEL F. BLUEDORN
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE