

RULE 32. ELECTRONIC FILING

32.01 Effective Date and Application

Juvenile Court: Effective June 1, 2026, e-filing shall be required on all juvenile case types unless subject to express exemption herein. This applies to all newly filed cases as well as subsequent filing in juvenile cases previously filed.

Any person who wishes to file a document on a case must become a Registered User and must e-file all documents except as specifically exempted under these rules. Traditional paper filings will still be accepted in case types excluded from the e-filing system under TCFC Loc. R. 32.11.

The Juvenile Court does not accept documents transmitted by facsimile or e-mail, *with the exception that* an attorney who is entering his/her appearance on a juvenile case shall email a copy of his/her Notice of Appearance to the Clerk of Court for juvenile court so that the attorney can be added to the case.

Domestic Court: E-filing will be permitted on all domestic relations cases at such time as the Trumbull County Clerk of Courts, Division of Domestic Relations has in place the mechanisms to accept such filing.

32.02 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 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 online 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 signed/transmitted without authority the Court will review the document and act accordingly, which may include 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.
- (26) “**Notification of filing**” is the notice sent by the e-filing system to all Registered Users upon the filing of a document in a case with the exception that no notification of filing will be sent by the e-filing system upon the filing of the initiating complaint or upon the filing of a motion which reopens a previously closed case. This notification of filing to all Registered Users in a case is determined to be service to all Registered Users under Civil Rule 5 and Juvenile Rule 20. A proof of service is still required to be included with a document filed by any party/counsel as required

under Civ.R. 5(B)(4). Further, in juvenile cases, service on all self-represented parties will still need to be completed under Juv. R. 20 in a manner specified under Civ. R. 5(B)(1) or (2).

- (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 in the Resource Center located at the Trumbull County Family Court courthouse. 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. Registered Users consent to electronic service of pleadings, motions, documents, and judgment entries via the electronic service address identified as the Register’s User’s email address. To be a Registered User, the individual must have 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.

32.03 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 may access these documents electronically via the e-services system or in person at the office of the Clerk.

32.04 No Time Extension.

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.*

32.05 Registered Users.

Except as otherwise set forth under these rules, 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, documents, orders, decisions, and judgment entries. Except for complaints and certain other documents, electronically filed documents are served by the Court’s electronic filing service provider (“EFSP”). The EFSP sends a notice of filing to each Registered User’s account on a case.

The court may revoke the registration of a Registered User in its sole discretion.

The Clerk only accepts e-filing documents from Registered Users through the e-filing system in the CMS. E-filing does NOT include facsimile transmissions and the Clerk will NOT accept facsimile transmissions for filing. Also, e-filing does not include e-mail or other electronic means of communication and the Clerk will NOT accept any electronic documents submitted through any means other than via the CMS and the e-filing system for Registered Users *with the exception that* an attorney who is entering his/her appearance on a *juvenile* case shall email a copy of his/her Notice of Appearance to the Clerk of Court for juvenile court so that the attorney can be added to the case.

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, orders, decisions, and judgment entries via the electronic service address identified as the Registered User's e-mail address.

In juvenile cases, a copy of all orders, decisions and judgment entries shall be served by the Clerk of Courts upon all parties by mailing a copy of the same to each party, whether or not a party is a Registered User. Attorneys shall not receive a copy by mailing, but rather only through the e-filing system. A *certified* copy of any order, decision or judgment entry may be obtained by any party or any attorney by requesting the same at the office of the Juvenile Clerk of Court and paying the required fee.

Paper notices/copies of documents must also be served by all Registered Users in a manner set forth under Juv.R. 20 and Civ.R. 5(B)(2) in cases that are exempt from e-filing under this rule or as required for a hybrid case type as set forth under TCFC Loc.R. 32.11. *Further, in juvenile cases, service on all self-represented parties will still need to be completed under Juv. R. 20 in a manner specified under Civ. R. 5(B)(1) or (2).*

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.

32.06 Filing Documents under E-Filing System.

(A) The Timely Submission 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.

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 corrected within two (2) business days, 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) All documents must be submitted in a searchable portable document format (PDF); and
- (2) All documents must be black and white only. No color pleadings or documents will be accepted; and
- (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; and
- (4) Image resolution must be at least 200 dots per inch (DPI) with 300 DPI preferred; and
- (5) Documents may NOT contain links to other material; and
- (6) Documents must have all confidential identifiers removed (see below); and
- (7) Pleadings must contain a signature (see below); and
- (8) Pleadings must include a certificate of service (see below); and
- (9) Pleadings must have at least a 1" margin at the top of each page; and
- (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) Service.

- (1) *Complaint and related documents.* Initial complaint, re-filed complaints, third party complaints, and other motions or documents initiating a case, reopening a closed case, or adding a new party are electronically filed. 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 or order all documents filed after the initial filing shall be served as required under Civ. R. 5 and/or Juv. R. 20 as applicable. The electronic service through the e-filing system of a subsequent pleading, filing or other document shall be considered as valid and effective service on all Registered Users and shall have the same legal effect as an original paper document served under Civ. Rule 5 and/or Juv. R. 20. In juvenile cases, a copy of all subsequent pleadings, filings or other documents shall be served upon all self-represented parties in compliance with Juv. R. 20 and Civ. R. 5(B)(1) and (2) by the means listed in said rules. This shall be required whether or not a self-represented party is a Registered User.
- (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 and/or Juv. R. 20 as applicable. 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 on the following by electronic means by filing the document through the court's e-filing

system (list counsel of record with e-mail addresses) AND by regular mail/hand delivery/email (as applicable) upon the following: (list all self-represented parties of the Court's e-filing system)."

(F) Proposed Orders and Agreed Judgment Entries.

- (1) *Proposed Orders.* All e-filed motions requesting action by the court without a hearing (for example, a Motion for Continuance) must be accompanied by a proposed order in a separate document which will not be filed but will be transmitted to the proper judicial authority for review, editing, and signature. All proposed orders must be capable of editing in Microsoft Word.

All proposed orders MUST be filed using the template provided in the e-filing system. 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.

Users will need to insert the case information in the caption as well as paste the body of their proposed order into the template. **USERS SHALL NOT ALTER THE SIGNATURE TOKEN FOR THE JUDICIAL OFFICER'S SIGNATURE IN ANY MANNER.**

Users MUST also include the names of all parties and counsel to be served with a copy of the order at the designated section in the body of the proposed order. Use of the language "all parties and counsel" will not be sufficient and may cause rejection of the document by the Court.

- (2) *Agreed Judgment Entries.* Parties shall select the "Agreed Entry" as the document type which shall be accompanied by the Agreed Judgment Entry in PDF format for judicial review and approval.

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

Requests for Ex Parte Orders and/or Temporary Restraining Orders are required to be filed via the e-filing system. However, the filer should be aware that it is the responsibility of the filer to bring the request for an ex parte order or temporary restraining order to the judge/magistrate for review and hearing as may be applicable under these local rules. The filer must also file a proposed order for the request for ex parte, emergency, or temporary order utilizing the applicable template provided in the e-services system.

32.07 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.

32.08 Systemic Error.

In the event of a Systemic Error, the Clerk shall accept paper documents for filing for the duration of the Systemic Error. Since the Clerk will permit the filing of paper documents during a Systemic Error, the Clerk shall not be held responsible for any missed deadlines or other negative effects due to a Systemic Error.

32.09 Self-Represented Litigants/ Public Access to Electronic Filing Equipment.

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 two 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.

32.10 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 Clerk of Court's website. All Registered Users shall monitor the website periodically for any updates.

32.11 Exemptions from E-Filing and Hybrid Case Types through E-Filing System.

The following specific civil case types shall be exempted from e-filing and shall be filed in paper form:

1. Petition for Domestic Violence Civil Protection Order
2. Petition for Domestic Violence Juvenile Civil Protection Order
3. Petition for Dating Violence Civil Protection Order

The following case types shall be a hybrid form as follows:

1. Juvenile Delinquency, Juvenile Unruly, Juvenile Adult Contributing, and Juvenile Traffic cases shall be a hybrid form in which the initiating complaint shall be commenced by e-filing and all counsel of record on a case shall submit subsequent pleadings through the e-filing system. However, there shall continue to be paper service of any documents upon all parties.
2. All other Juvenile cases shall be a hybrid form in which the initiating complaint shall be commenced by e-filing and all self-represented parties and counsel of record shall submit subsequent pleadings through the e-filing system. **However, a party shall continue to complete service of any documents upon all self-represented parties by a method specified under Civ.R. 5(B)(2).**