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**Odyssey File & Serve**

Partnering with the MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS

## Top 10 Tips for E-Filing with the Court of Appeals

In the past couple of years, the use of electronic filing has grown substantially at the Michigan Court of Appeals. Documents arrive over the electronic counter 24/7, including weekends and holidays. In fact, more than 60% of our cases now include documents filed electronically. We would like to provide the following tips to help ensure your continued success with the current system.

### 1. Convert All Documents to PDF

All documents must be converted by the filer to PDF format. While appendices and other non-original filings may be scanned and need not be searchable, the Court very strongly prefers to receive original appellate pleadings in searchable PDF.

For detailed instructions on document preparation, please take a few minutes to review [Preparing a PDF Document for Electronic Filing at the COA](#). The instructions can assist you in creating documents that are both acceptable and useful at the Michigan Court of Appeals. In addition, the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) address many common questions related to document preparation.

### 2. Avoid Using Adobe Acrobat 9 or Acrobat 10 or MAC Utilities

Currently, the Odyssey E-File & Serve system will not accept PDF documents created with Adobe Acrobat 9 or Acrobat 10 or MAC Utilities. If you attempt to submit a document created with that software, you may receive a format error. Note: If this is the version of Acrobat that you are using, be sure to save the file so that it is compatible with earlier versions of Acrobat.

### 3. Filenames: Do Not Include Special Symbols and Use Descriptive Names

It is acceptable to include upper- and lower-case letters, spaces and hyphens in your filenames. We advise that you avoid using special characters (such as # / \$ & %) as they may cause problems. Filenames that begin with "Attach" at the beginning of the filename can also cause problems. In addition, a good filename should include descriptive keywords. The names should be reasonably concise and provide some idea about the file contents. Although you may not think twice about the filenames you use for your pleadings, following these guidelines will make it easier for the E-File & Serve system and the Court to work with your electronic files.

### 4. Do Not Add Security or Password Protection to the PDF Files You E-File with the Court

Be sure that any PDF document that you submit through the Odyssey E-File & Serve system does not have security methods or password protection added to the document. Security is not allowable because the Odyssey E-File & Serve system applies a timestamp to your filing in the left margin that reflects the date and time of submission. If any documents in the e-filing envelope are secured or protected in some manner, then the entire envelope will NOT be processed by the E-Filing system. Instead, you will receive an Error status displayed in the E-file Queue. You can click on the "Error" link next to the document name for more details. You must correct the problem and resubmit the filing.

It has come to our attention that sometimes a transcript that you may receive electronically from a Court Reporter has security applied as part of the reporter's business process. It is unlikely that you will be able to remove this security; however to get around this you can scan the transcript and submit the resulting PDF, which no longer will have security, unless you apply it. However, the original version is preferred to the scanned version.

## **5. Keep Briefs and Attachments Separate**

A distinct document that will be docketed separately – such as a brief or a motion – should always be in its own separate PDF file to facilitate internal handling. While it is possible to combine a number of separate PDF documents into a single PDF document, the Court prefers that “appendices” to pleadings be created as separate PDF files and submitted as e-filing “attachments” to the primary document. (We do not require an Index of Authorities or other materials mandated in the federal e-filing system.)

## **6. Be Reasonable With Exhibits and Attachments**

In general, individual attachments should be manageable, in terms of the time it takes to download or open the file. For example, if you are filing an application for leave to appeal and you need to submit the trial transcripts, each day of trial should be a separate attachment to the application, rather than combining several transcript volumes in a single attachment. Please be judicious and reasonable when deciding which information to include with your e-filing. The judges will have access to the lower court record when deciding the appeal, so there is no reason to duplicate large portions of the lower court record.

## **7. Add Yourself to the Service List and Double-check the List of Approved E-mail Addresses for E-Service**

You can add yourself to the Master Service List for a case you are involved in. By attaching yourself, you will receive all documents filed by yourself or other parties in the case. Also, because Odyssey File & Serve is a voluntary system, the Court has been diligent in maintaining the [List of COA Approved E-Service Addresses](#). Please consult this list to locate registered participants of the Odyssey File & Serve system. Participants have provided email addresses for electronic filings to be served on them. It would be a good idea to confirm your entry in this listing. Please report any discrepancies to the following email address: [COAfileSupport@courts.mi.gov](mailto:COAfileSupport@courts.mi.gov). Note: If you have already submitted the [Registration Confirmation form](#) but would like to add or update names and e-mail addresses, please use the [Update E-Service form](#).

## **8. After e-filing, check the E-File Queue to Check for Errors and Confirm E-Service Success**

Be sure to check the status of your filings on the E-File Queue page to ensure that your filing was submitted without formatting errors or transaction errors. Until your document has an “A” in the status column and the Court reviewer's initials in the "Reviewed By" column, you should keep checking back on the status of the filing.

- If there is a problem with your filing, click the "Error" link next to the document name for more details. You must correct the problem and resubmit the filing.
- If your filing is rejected by the Court, which is indicated by an "R" in the status column, click the Filing Details icon to view the comments from the Clerk's Office.
- To confirm e-service, click the Service Details icon.
- If it appears that your filing was not accepted by the Odyssey E-File & Serve system, you should contact Tyler at 800.297.5377.

## **9. Take Advantage of Training and When You Encounter Difficulties Contact Technical Support**

We have partnered with Tyler Technologies (formerly Wiznet Inc.) to be able to offer Odyssey File&Serve electronic filing. Tyler offers regularly scheduled on-line, on-demand training. To sign up, contact Tyler Technical Support at 800.297.5377 or [efiling.support@tylertech.com](mailto:efiling.support@tylertech.com). You may also register for a session at the [Odyssey File & Serve Online Training](#) webpage. For any technical support issues, you should contact Tyler Technical Support at 800.297.5377 or [efiling.support@tylertech.com](mailto:efiling.support@tylertech.com). Technical Support is available 8 am EST to 8 pm EST, Monday through Friday.

## **10. Be Sure to Keep Your Account Information Current**

Do not assume that Tyler will notify you when the credit card that you have on account is about to expire. Instead, the Firm Administrator should double-check the account information to be sure that the credit card associated with the account is current. If the expiration date is no longer valid, you will not likely realize that until after you complete a filing and receive an error.

Thank you for taking the time to review these tips. If you have questions or feedback, please send your email to [COAfileSupport@courts.mi.gov](mailto:COAfileSupport@courts.mi.gov).

## **Important MCOA E-Filing Links**

### **Odyssey File&Serve Website**

<https://wiznet.wiznet.com/appealsmi>

### **Resources**

Preparing a PDF Document for Electronic Filing at the COA

<http://courts.mi.gov/Courts/COA/efiling/Documents/Preparing%20a%20PDF%20Document%20for%20Electronic%20Filing%20at%20the%20COA.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions

<https://wiznet.wiznet.com/appealsmi/docs/Frequently%20Asked%20Questions.pdf>

List of COA Approved E-Service Addresses

<http://courts.mi.gov/courts/coa/efiling/pages/eservice.aspx>

Odyssey File & Serve Online Training

<http://www.tylertech.com/news-events/tyler-events/client-training/odyssey-file-serve-online-training>

### **Registration Forms**

Registration Confirmation Form

<http://courts.mi.gov/Courts/COA/efiling/Documents/Registration%20Confirmation.pdf>

Update E-Service Address form

<http://courts.mi.gov/Courts/COA/efiling/Documents/Update%20E-Service%20and%20Listserv.pdf>

### **Tyler Technical Support**

[efiling.support@tylertech.com](mailto:efiling.support@tylertech.com)

800.297.5377