



# ***Mastering the basics of the state's new e-filing system***

Tips on how to send a file, make  
a payment and avoid common mistakes

Harris County District Clerk Chris Daniel



## ***From the District Clerk***

Everybody has become frustrated while unsuccessfully trying to buy something online or while filling out an e-form. Some of you – I hope it's a minority - may have become similarly frustrated while submitting a file via the state's new portal.

There's nothing worse in today's high-tech saturated world than having your work not reach its target because of digital snafus. I know. I'm a consumer, too.

I asked my staff to put together a Power Point presentation with the aim of providing a simple roadmap for filing documents via the state's system.

Hope it helps!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Daniel".

Harris County District Clerk





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## ***Introduction***

The state Supreme Court mandated that the civil and family courts in Harris County accept only e-filings from lawyers as of January 2014.

The state contracted with Tyler Technologies to create and run the e-filing portal [eFileTexas.gov](http://eFileTexas.gov), through which all lawyer-submitted files will arrive at district clerks' offices.

All files sent to eFileTexas.gov must be sent via an electronic file service provider (EFSP).

This Power Point presentation is intended to:

- Help filers send files correctly to eFileTexas.gov and the Harris County DCO
- Inform filers on how to set up a payment system
- Describe common filing mistakes and ways to avoid them

**The District Clerk's Office does not run eFileTexas.gov or the EFSPs.**



## ***Choosing an EFSP***

The state requires files to be sent to eFileTexas.gov via an EFSP. You can choose an EFSP from a list found at <http://www.efiletexas.gov/service-providers.htm>

Information on the list includes EFSPs' prices and features.

Choose an EFSP that fits your needs. Some offer training videos and webinars.

This presentation will include graphics from the state's EFSP site (<https://efile.txcourts.gov/>) as an example of an EFSP provider.



## ***Registering with an EFSP***

After you choose an EFSP, you will need to designate an employee to serve as your EFSP firm administrator.

The firm administrator should register with the EFSP online.

Each employee in the firm who can file via the EFSP must be signed up. The firm administrator can register employees or employees may register themselves. When registering, lawyers must include their bar numbers. **Be accurate.**



## ***Registering with an EFSP***

An EFSP will email passwords to each filer.

The firm administrator must:

- set up a payment method with the EFSP and supply credit card information
- set up a waiver account so the firm may select the fee waiver box when it is applicable



## *Searching for a case where a filing needs to go*

You may search by:

- Case number
- Party name (except for confidential cases)

### Advanced Search

**Search by Party Name**

Location\*

Person  Business

First Name\*

Middle Name

Last Name\*

Case Type\*

Show Results Sorted by\*





## ***Searching for a case where a filing needs to go***

You also need to say that you are searching Harris District Clerk in the location field.

A screenshot of an "Advanced Search" web form. The form is titled "Advanced Search" and has a sub-section "Search by Party Name". The "Location\*" dropdown menu is highlighted with a red oval and contains the text "All Locations". Below this are checkboxes for "Person" (checked) and "Business" (unchecked). There are input fields for "First Name\*", "Middle Name", and "Last Name\*". The "Case Type\*" dropdown menu is set to "All Case Types". The "Show Results Sorted by\*" dropdown menu is set to "Case Number". At the bottom are buttons for "Reset", "Cancel", and "Search".

**Advanced Search**

**Search by Party Name**

Location\* All Locations

Person  Business

First Name\*

Middle Name

Last Name\*

Case Type\* All Case Types

Show Results Sorted by\* Case Number

[Reset](#) [Cancel](#) [Search](#)



## *Searching for a case where a filing needs to go*

When filing into an existing case at the Harris County DCO, first find that case on the EFSP site by doing a case number or party name search.

**NEW CASE**    [Advanced Search](#)

**NEW CASE**    [Advanced Search](#)

After you have found the case, you will see a folder icon. Click on the icon to file into the case.



**NEW CASE**    [Advanced Search](#)

Searching for:  
As: Case Number

Case Number	Location	Description
201312345	Harris County - 234th Civil District Court	ZENDEJO, MARIA v ANDI RE LLC

Case Type	Actions
Personal Inj (Non-Auto)	
Start a new subsequent filing for this case	



## ***Searching for a case where a filing needs to go***

The Harris County DCO's civil and family courts store only e-case files (except for sealed files, which continue to be paper files).

The DCO's system is designed to allow e-filings to be submitted from the EFSP via eFileTexas.gov into your specific e-case file at the DCO.



## *Starting a filing for a new case*

On the EFSP site, you will see an icon or link for a New Case. **Click it.**

1. Select Harris District Clerk as your filing destination. →
2. Pick the type of court where your filing is headed, such as civil. →
3. Select the type of case, such as breach of contract. →
4. Enter the attorney's name whose filing is being submitted. →
5. Under filer type, your choices will be: →
  - Attorney
  - Non-party filer
  - Government filer
  - Pro-se

① Case Information    ② Parties    ③ Filings    ④ Summary

### Enter the Details for the New Case

Required fields are bold and have an asterisk (\*).

**Select Location\***

Harris District Clerk

**Select Category\***

Civil

**Select Case Type\***

Breach Of Contract

Filing Attorney

Tracy Hopper

**Filer Type\***

Attorney

**Payment Account\***

Waiver



For instance, if you are a court reporter submitting a file to a case, you are a non-party filer.



## *Starting a new filing*

Under the payment category, select credit card or waiver when the latter is applicable.

Harris District Clerk - Breach Of Contract

① Case Information   ② Parties   ③ Filings   ④ Summary

### Enter the Details for the New Case

Required fields are bold and have an asterisk (\*).

**Select Location\***  
Harris District Clerk

**Select Category\***  
Civil

**Select Case Type\***  
Breach Of Contract

Filing Attorney  
Tracy Hopper

**Filer Type\***  
Attorney

**Payment Account\***  
Waiver

A red oval highlights the "Payment Account\*" dropdown menu, which currently shows "Waiver" and has a question mark icon to its right.



## ***Starting a new filing***

Make sure that you follow the filing standards mandated by the state Judicial Committee on Information Technology when you submit e-files. Those standards can be found here: [http://www.courts.state.tx.us/jcit/standards/Technology%20Standards\\_v1.3.pdf](http://www.courts.state.tx.us/jcit/standards/Technology%20Standards_v1.3.pdf)

Lawyers may be confused because each county can have different case types and categories from which to choose.

On March 21, 2014, the JCIT agreed to standardize the types of cases that will be listed for e-filings. The Harris County District Clerk's Office will begin offering the standard state selection of case types and categories as early as October 2014.

Also as early as October 2014, the state Supreme Court is expected to pass additional new filing standards. It may take time to get used to the new standards.



## Entering parties

For a new case, you need to enter the parties. Be sure to select the lead attorney from your firm administration set-up listing.

Harris District Clerk - Breach Of Contract

① Case Information ② **Parties** ③ Filings ④ Summary

**Enter the Details for the Parties Involved in this Case**

Party Type	Name	Attorney
Plaintiff	John Smith	Tracy Hopper
Defendant	John Jones	

**ADD PARTY**

**Party Type\***  
Defendant  Person  Business Attorney

**First Name\*** John **Middle**  **Last Name\*** Jones

**Country\***  
United States of America

**Address Line 1\***  
201 Carlonie

**Address Line 2**

**City\***  
Houston

**State\*** Texas **Zip Code\*** 77002

**Phone**



## Entering parties

Harris District Clerk - Breach Of Contract

① Case Information ② Parties ③ Filings ④ Summary

### Enter the Details for the Parties Involved in this Case

Party Type	Name	Attorney
Plaintiff	John Smith	Tracy Hopper
Defendant	John Jones	

ADD PARTY

Click on “add parties” to add parties.

For an existing case filed with Harris County DCO, the party boxes should appear filled when the case comes up.

Party Type\*  
Defendant  Person  Business Attorney

First Name\* John Middle Last Name\* Jones

Country\*  
United States of America

Address Line 1\*  
201 Carlonie  
Address Line 2

City\*  
Houston

State\* Texas Zip Code\* 77002

Phone





## ***Entering parties***

In a class action lawsuit that has hundreds of parties, only the first 200 parties of an existing case will be shown.

You do not have to add the other parties to our system unless they are new parties.



## *Entering filing details*

Under Select Filing Code, you say what type of file you are filing. Examples include breach of contract for a new case filing or an answer, a motion, etc., for a subsequent filing action. Please refer to the most updated state JCIT standards for these choices.

Harris District Clerk - Breach Of Contract

① Case Information   ② Parties   ③ Filings   ④ Summary

### Enter Filing Details ?

**Add Another Filing**

**Select Filing Code\***

Breach Of Contract (\$247.00)  EFile  Service

Filing Description

Your filing description

Reference Number

Firm client re-bill or case tracking #

Optional Services

- Certified Mail Garnishment Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)
- Certified Mail Service Fee - Constable (\$80.00)
- Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Constable (\$85.00)
- Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)
- Citation Additional Copy (\$4.00)
- Citation Not Prepared By Dc (\$8.00)

Add →

← Remove

Selected Optional Services

- Certified Mail Service Fee - Dco (1 x \$80.00)



## Entering filing details

Harris District Clerk - Breach Of Contract

- 1 Case Information   2 Parties   3 Filings   4 Summary

### Enter Filing Details

Add Another Filing

Select Filing Code\*

Breach Of Contract (\$247.00)

EFile    Servi

Filing Description

Your filing description

Reference Number

Firm client re-bill or case tracking #

Optional Services

Certified Mail Garnishment Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)  
Certified Mail Service Fee - Constable (\$80.00)  
Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Constable (\$85.00)  
Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)  
Citation Additional Copy (\$4.00)  
Citation Not Prepared By Dc (\$8.00)

Add →

← Remove

Selected Optional Services

Certified Mail Service Fee - Dco (1 x \$80.00)

Under Filing Description and Reference Number, you can enter information that helps you remember something about the filing. The Harris County DCO does not look at these boxes.



## *Entering filing details*

In the graphic below, you see two options on the right: **Efile** or **Service**.

If the **Efile** box is checked, the filing comes to the Harris County DCO.

If the **service** box is checked, the DCO never receives the filing. The filing is sent only to the person or firm whose name and address you provide.

### Enter Filing Details



Add Another Filing

**Select Filing Code\***

Breach Of Contract (\$247.00)  EFile  Service

Filing Description

Your filing description

Reference Number

Firm client re-bill or case tracking #

Optional Services

- Certified Mail Garnishment Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)
- Certified Mail Service Fee - Constable (\$80.00)
- Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Constable (\$85.00)
- Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)
- Citation Additional Copy (\$4.00)
- Citation Not Prepared By Dc (\$8.00)

Add →

← Remove

Selected Optional Services

- Certified Mail Service Fee - Dco (1 x \$80.00)



## ***Entering filing details***

If opposing counsel doesn't receive the filing, you need to contact your EFSP. The DCO has nothing to do with e-deliveries of service.

The filer must designate which parties and counsel will be served. Please do not add the District Clerk's Office as a party to be served. The DCO receives a filing only if EFile box is checked.



## *Entering filing details*

Some filers have been confused by the phrase “optional services.” eFileTexas.gov will begin using a new phrase: “additional services.” Additional services vary widely from county to county. Added together, there are 4,500 additional services offered in clerks’ offices statewide.

The vast number of additional services has created confusion. To avoid this confusion, the state will require all counties to offer a limited number of standard additional services. There are expected to be about 100 additional services.

### Enter Filing Details



**Add Another Filing**

<b>Select Filing Code*</b>	
Breach Of Contract (\$247.00)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EFile <input type="checkbox"/> Service
Filing Description	
Your filing description	
Reference Number	
Firm client re-bill or case tracking #	
<b>Optional Services</b>	
Certified Mail Garnishment Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)	<b>Selected Optional Services</b>
Certified Mail Service Fee - Constable (\$80.00)	
Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Constable (\$85.00)	
Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)	
Citation Additional Copy (\$4.00)	
Citation Not Prepared By Dc (\$8.00)	
<b>Add →</b>	
<b>← Remove</b>	
Certified Mail Service Fee - Dco (1 x \$80.00)	



## *Entering filing details*

The additional/optional services category is important. You need to choose the additions that pertain to your filing because they will determine its cost. Examples of additional services include a demand for a jury trial, a notice to an employer and a citation.

### Enter Filing Details



[Add Another Filing](#)

#### Select Filing Code\*

Breach Of Contract (\$247.00)  EFile  Service

#### Filing Description

Your filing description

#### Reference Number

Firm client re-bill or case tracking #

#### Optional Services

- Certified Mail Garnishment Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)
- Certified Mail Service Fee - Constable (\$80.00)
- Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Constable (\$85.00)
- Certified Mail Writ Service Fee - Dco (\$85.00)
- Citation Additional Copy (\$4.00)
- Citation Not Prepared By Dc (\$8.00)

Add →

← Remove

#### Selected Optional Services

Certified Mail Service Fee - Dco (1 x \$80.00)



## ***Entering filing details***

Next, you need to provide information about your “Lead Document.” In the Description field, write the exact title you have given the filing, such as “Original Petition of John Doe.” Do not use the same title that you have given the PDF.

Documents

<b>Lead Document*</b> ⓘ	test document.pdf 90.2 kb	<input type="text" value="Original Petition"/>	<b>Security*</b> New Case Filings
<b>Attachments</b> ⓘ	Add More Documents		
	case information sheet.pdf 141.4 kb	<input type="text" value="case information sheet"/>	<b>Security*</b> Civil Case Information Sheet

The state EFSP site automatically copies the title of the PDF filing. The DCO was unsuccessful in persuading the state EFSP to stop copying the PDF title into the Description field. So if you use the state EFSP, the PDF title of your filing will automatically be copied into the Description box.

Delete that PDF title, and put in your exact document title (from the first page of your document).





## ***Entering filing details***

In most counties, the Security field will give you two options: Public Document or Data Sensitive Document.

Documents

<b>Lead Document*</b> ⓘ	test document.pdf 90.2 kb	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="New Case Filings"/>	<input type="button" value="X"/>
	<b>Description*</b>	Original Petition		
	<i>Add More Documents</i>			
<b>Attachments</b> ⓘ	case information sheet.pdf 141.4 kb	<input type="text"/>		<input type="button" value="X"/>

You will have a more expansive set of choices in the security field when your file is headed to the Harris County DCO. That's because the DCO operates a fully electronic filing system. For e-routing purposes, we needed a field where filers could categorize filings by type. Your choices will include: New Case Filings, Answer, Exhibit, Case Information Sheet and Data Sensitive Document. Choose the applicable one.

The information in this field is important, so please be accurate. Judges often will rely on these document descriptions before and during hearings.



## ***Entering filing details***

Next, you should attach separately, one by one, attachments (exhibits, case information sheet) that accompany the filing.

Documents

**Lead Document\*** ⓘ

test document.pdf 90.2 kb	<input type="text" value="Original Petition"/>	<input type="text" value="New Case Filings"/>
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed #ccc;"/>		
case information sheet.pdf 141.4 kb	<input type="text" value="case information sheet"/>	<input type="text" value="Civil Case Information Sheet"/>
test document EXHIBIT A.pdf 98.5 kb	<input type="text" value="EXHIBIT A"/>	<input type="text" value="Exhibits"/>

**Attachments** ⓘ

For each attachment, you need to identify it by its document title and, in the Security field, its document type. Remember that the combined size of all items in your envelope cannot exceed 35 megabytes.



## Entering filing details

In the “Filing Comments” field, include any comments that you want to pass along to court clerks.

Documents

<b>Lead Document*</b> ⓘ	test document.pdf 90.2 kb	<input type="text" value="Original Petition"/>	<b>Security*</b> New Case Filings
<b>Attachments</b> ⓘ	<i>Add More Documents</i>		
	case information sheet.pdf 141.4 kb	<input type="text" value="case information sheet"/>	<b>Security*</b> Civil Case Information Sheet
	test document EXHIBIT A.pdf 98.5 kb	<input type="text" value="EXHIBIT A"/>	<b>Security*</b> Exhibits

Filing Comments

Courtesy Copies ⓘ



## *Entering filing details*

In the fees section, please check to see whether all your optional services have been included.



Breach Of Contract	
Filing Fee	\$0.00
Certified Mail Service Fee - Dco	\$0.00
<hr/>	
Total this Filing	\$0.00
<hr/>	
Case Initiation Fee	\$0.00
Court Service Fee	\$0.00
<hr/>	
Envelope Total	\$0.00

You need to choose your payment type: credit card or waiver.

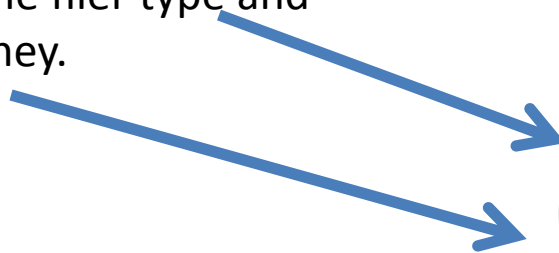


**Payment**

Payment Account\*  
Waiver ?

Filer Type\*  
Attorney

Next, choose the filer type and the filing attorney.



**Filing Attorney**

Filing Attorney  
Tracy Hopper



## Submitting a file

Review your filing before you submit it, and amend it as needed.

Harris District Clerk - Breach Of Contract

1 Case Information 2 Parties 3 Filings 4 Summary

### Envelope and Filing Summary

#### Case Information

Location: Harris District Clerk  
 Case Category: Civil  
 Case Type: Breach Of Contract  
 Date Filed:  
 Filing Attorney: Tracy Hopper  
 Payment Account: Waiver

Edit

#### Parties

Party Type	Name	Address	Phone	Attorney
Plaintiff	John Smith			Tracy Hopper
Defendant	John Jones	201 Carlonie Houston, TX 77002		

Edit

#### Filings

Filing Code	Filing Description	Reference Number	Filing Type
Breach Of Contract	Your filing description		EFile
Lead Document	File Name	Status	Security
	test document.pdf	Ok	New Case Filings
Attachments	File Name	Status	Security
	case information sheet.pdf	Ok	Civil Case...
	test document EXHIBIT A.pdf	Ok	Exhibits
Filing Comments:	Filer Comments to the clerk		

Edit

#### Fees

Breach Of Contract	
Filing Fee	\$0.00
Certified Mail Service Fee - Dco	\$0.00
<b>Total this Filing</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Case Initiation Fee	\$0.00
Court Service Fee	\$0.00
<b>Envelope Total</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

#### Payment

Payment Account\*  
 Waiver   
 Filer Type\*  
 Attorney

#### Filing Attorney

Filing Attorney  
 Tracy Hopper

There are several stages to the submission process. After you hit the send button, your file is in the Submitting process.



## *Submitting a file*

After the file passes through eFileTexas.gov, the file's (or envelope's) status changes to Submitted. In the graphic below, a file's status is listed on the far left.

**FILINGS** BOOKMARKS TEMPLATES REVIEW QUEUE REVIEW HISTORY SERVICE CONTACTS

My Filings All Statuses All Locations From mm/dd/yyyy 15 To mm/dd/yyyy 15 Case or Envelope Filter Export

---

**Envelope # 67277**

Envelope # 67277 filed December 11, 2013 at 3:27 PM by Tracy Hopper

Status	Filing Code	Filing Type	Filing Description	Reference Number
Rejected	Additional Fees	EFile		

---

**Case # 200012345**

Envelope # 26805 filed November 17, 2013 at 11:00 PM by Tracy Hopper

Status	Filing Code	Filing Type	Filing Description	Reference Number
Accepted	Answer	EFile		

The file remains in the Submitted status until a DCO clerk reviews it.

When a clerk opens a file, the file's status automatically changes to Under Review.

That status doesn't mean that the clerk has accepted the file or is even actively working it. It means the clerk opened the file.



## ***Submitting a file***

Your submitted file may be in one of these stages:

- Submitting
- Submitted
- Under Review
- Processing
- Court Processing
- Accepted
- Rejected

If you see that your file is in the “processing” stage for more than 10 minutes, this means something has gone awry. You should contact your EFSP.

If an error occurs, a filing goes into “court processing.”



## *Submitting a file*

The “Court Processing” status – a term that the state chose – is a misnomer. Court Processing doesn’t mean that the DCO is processing the file. Instead, it means that the file ended up in an error queue because something went wrong.

FILINGS BOOKMARKS TEMPLATES **REVIEW QUEUE** REVIEW HISTORY SERVICE CONTACTS

Errored filings ▾ All Filing Codes ▾ All Case Types ▾ From <M/d/yyyy> 15 To mm/dd/yyyy 15 Case or Envelope

### Envelope # 1106248

Envelope # 1106248 filed April 28, 2014 at 1:51 PM by Marissa Fountain on behalf of Robert Greiwe

Status	Filing Code	Case Type	Filing Description	Queue
Court Processing	Personaly Injury - Non-Auto	Personal Inj (Non-Auto)	Personaly Injury - Non-Auto Personal	Errored filings





## *Submitting a file*

The graphic below shows the DCO's Review Queue for the state portal, eFileTexas.gov.

FILINGS BOOKMARKS TEMPLATES **REVIEW QUEUE** REVIEW HISTORY SERVICE CONTACTS

Errored filings ▾ All Filing Codes ▾ All Case Types ▾ From <M/d/yyyy> 15 To mm/dd/yyyy 15 Case or Envelope

### Envelope # 1106248

Envelope # 1106248 filed April 28, 2014 at 1:51 PM by Marissa Fountain on behalf of Robert Greiwe

Status	Filing Code	Case Type	Filing Description	Queue
Court Processing	Personaly Injury - Non-Auto	Personal Inj (Non-Auto)	Personaly Injury - Non-Auto Personah	Errored filings



Even though our clerk accepted this filing above, eFileTexas.gov had some kind of trouble with it. eFileTexas.gov puts these problematic filings into an error queue so the DCO can try to figure out the cause of the problem. Some errors can be corrected, some cannot. If they cannot be corrected, a clerk has no choice but to reject a file.



## ***Submitting a file***

Rejected files are currently listed as “Rejected.”

In August 2014, eFileTexas.gov tweaked its programming. Because of those changes, the DCO now can return a rejected filing to a filer for correction. “Returned for correction” is not listed as one of the possible statuses of a filing. But a filer will receive a filing back and have the chance to clear up the problem.

In upcoming slides near the end of this Power Point presentation, the DCO discusses returned-for-correction filings in detail.



## *Submitting a file*

When you submit a file, eFileTexas.gov will give it an “envelope” number.

You will see the envelope number listed in several places. Please provide this number when calling one of our clerks to check the status of a filing.

FILINGS BOOKMARKS TEMPLATES **REVIEW QUEUE** REVIEW HISTORY SERVICE CONTACTS

Errored filings ▾ All Filing Codes ▾ All Case Types ▾ From <M/d/yyyy> 15 To mm/dd/yyyy 15 Case o



### Envelope # 1106248

Envelope # 1106248 filed April 28, 2014 at 1:51 PM by Marissa Fountain on behalf of Robert Greiwe

Status	Filing Code	Case Type	Filing Description
Court Processing	Personaly Injury - Non-Auto	Personal Inj (Non-Auto)	Personaly Injury - Non-Auto Personal



## ***Getting a file stamp on weekend filings***

The state rules on when a file will be stamped as received when it is submitted on weekends and holidays changed when the e-filing mandate went into effect Jan. 1, 2014.

The new rule says if a file is transmitted on Saturday, Sunday or a legal holiday, it is deemed filed the next workday:

<http://www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us/miscdocket/13/13916500.pdf>

But eFileTexas.gov didn't immediately change its programming to reflect the changes. The changes were supposed to go into effect Aug. 23, 2014, but didn't because of a programming bug.

***The change in weekend filing rules*** now may go into effect as early as **Oct. 25, 2014**. The *change in holiday filing rules will take place later* during a future eFileTexas.gov programming update.

For example, a file transmitted on a Saturday currently receives a file stamp for that Saturday. When the new rule goes into effect, that same file will receive a stamp for the following Monday at 12:00 AM.



## ***Canceling a filing***

Your EFSP should have a link or button that allows you to cancel a filing after you have submitted it.

Once a DCO clerk opens your file and a file's status changes to Under Review, you can no longer cancel it.



## ***Avoiding common errors***

**Credit card errors:** Credit card errors are a very common problem that land filings in the errored filings queue. An error may be caused by a credit card's expiration date, which you enter when you provide payment information to your EFSP. You need to update the card's information when your card expires. Your designated EFSP firm administrator should be able to go into an administration module on the EFSP site and update credit card information.

*When there is an error, such as a credit card error, eFileTexas.gov sends a message to the DCO.*

⏏ <<!Could not perform payment processing because the account has been declined. Ensure there are sufficient funds available and that the account has not expired (Payment was declined).!>>

**Payment Account Name\***

Visa

**Payment Account Type\***

Credit Card

**Enter Credit Card Information**

Available at all locations



## ***Avoiding common errors***

### **Credit card errors, cont.**

Problems may crop up when a firm miscalculates a filing's cost.

Some firms place a \$500 limit on credit card transactions. Say a firm submits a filing and calculates its cost at \$280. eFileTexas.gov then places a pre-authorized charge of \$280 on the card.

But the real cost ends up being \$320 when a DCO clerk modifies the billing to take into account all the requested optional services.

Some credit card companies could take three to five days to remove the pre-authorized charge of \$280.

If that happens, the new \$320 authorization will exceed the card's \$500 limit, causing the card and the filing to be rejected.



## ***Avoiding common errors***

**Built-in security restrictions**: PDF filings that arrive with built-in security restrictions also land files in the error queue.

Such filings do not allow documents to be copied or changed. Most important, they cannot be file stamped. **So please delete all security restrictions from your filing.**

eFileTexas.gov says its new programming should block filings with security restrictions from arriving at the DCO.





## ***Avoiding common errors***

**Unreadable documents:** eFileTexas.gov's system finds some documents unreadable, so these filings do not properly reach their intended destinations, such as the DCO. Some filings with fillable-field forms are editable or changeable. eFileTexas.gov's system finds them unreadable.

eFileTexas.gov sends the error message seen below when a filer sends filings to the DCO with editable PDFs.

**There are two ways for filers to make non-editable PDFs.**

The screenshot shows a table with one row. The first column contains the text "original petition for divorce Rogers.pdf [Original] [PDF]". The second column is labeled "Description" and contains the text "original petition for divorce Rogers.pdf". Below the table is a red error message box with a downward arrow icon on the left. The message reads: "Odyssey File & Serve could not read/modify/save the document because it appears to be un-readable. Please use a PDF Printer to recreate this document in a more standard format and resubmit." To the right of the message is a blue button labeled "Copy".

	Description
original petition for divorce Rogers.pdf [Original] [PDF]	original petition for divorce Rogers.pdf

Odyssey File & Serve could not read/modify/save the document because it appears to be un-readable. Please use a PDF Printer to recreate this document in a more standard format and resubmit.

Copy

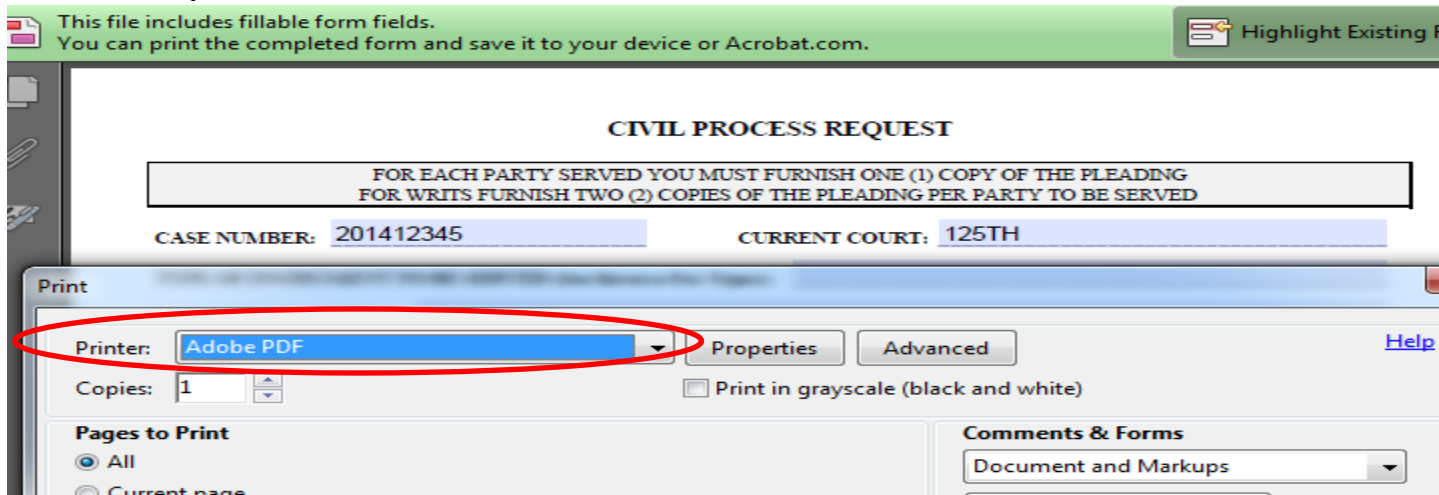


## *Avoiding common errors*

### Unreadable documents, cont.

First way to make a non-editable PDF: When in your document:

- Go to the File menu.
- Select Print in your PDF reader.
- Choose Adobe PDF as the printer.
- Choose where to put the non-editable version of the document.
- Rename your document.





## ***Avoiding common errors***

### **Unreadable documents, cont.**

Second way to make a non-editable PDF: You can make non-editable PDFs from Microsoft Word document forms found on the DCO's web site, [www.hcdistrictclerk.com](http://www.hcdistrictclerk.com).

- On the DCO's home page, click on the icon that says "Forms" or go straight to the forms at:  
<http://www.hcdistrictclerk.com/Common/Forms/forms.aspx>
- Click on the category in general forms that you need.
- Click on the specific type of Word form that you need.

- ✦ Civil Case (Cause) Information Form (Word document for E-Filing) ←
- ✦ Civil Case (Cause) Information Form (Printable PDF Version)
- ✦ Civil Case (Cause) Information Form - Spanish version (Word document for E-Filing) ←
- ✦ Civil Case (Cause) Information Form - Spanish version (Printable PDF Version)
- ✦ Civil Process Request (Word document for E-Filing) ←
- ✦ Civil Process Request (Printable PDF Version)

*Choose a Word form when following this second method for avoiding unreadable errors.*



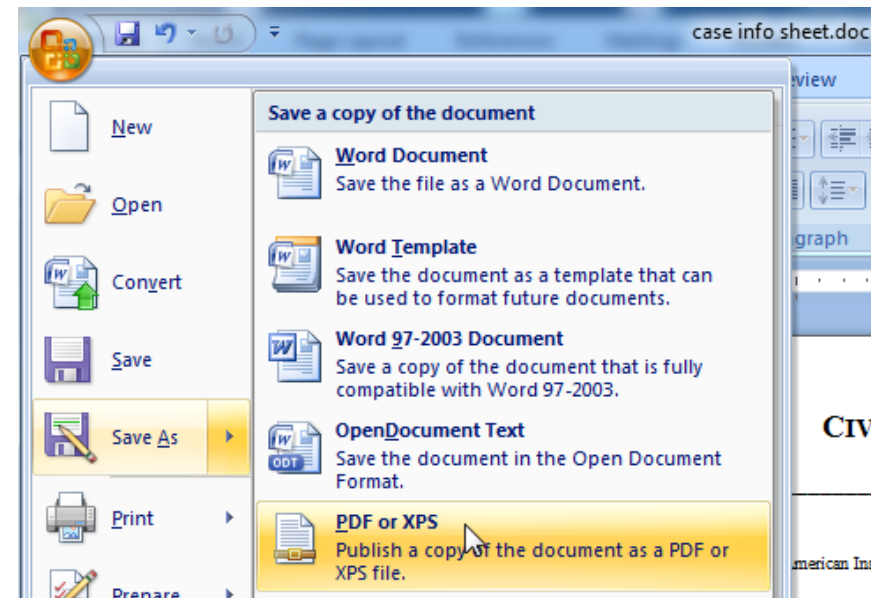
## *Avoiding common errors*

### Unreadable documents, cont.

Second way of creating non-editable documents, cont.:

After you have chosen the Word form that you need:

- Inside Word, click on “File.”
- Click on “Save as.”
- Choose to save the document as a PDF.





## Avoiding common errors

**Document conversion and unreadable errors:** If document conversion errors or other types of unreadable document errors than those previously described cause your file to be rejected, contact your EFSP. Your EFSP should be able to tell you exactly what is triggering the error. You will need to amend your file and re-file.

*Document conversion error (sent by eFileTexas.gov to the DCO)*

Case Info Sheet JG.pdf [Original] [PDF]	Description	Case Info Sheet JG.pdf
A document conversion error could not be translated. Either the error was not found in the PdfLibraryExceptionTranslation table, the database was not available, or an unexpected exception type was encountered. Check the innerException property for details.		
<b>CIVIL CASE INFORMATION SHEET (REV. 2013)</b> CAUSE NUMBER (FOR CLERK USE ONLY): _____ COURT (FOR CLERK USE ONLY): _____ STYLED <b>JUAN GONZALEZ v LINN ENERGY, LLC and SJL WELL SERVICE, LLC</b> <small>(e.g., John Smith v. All American Insurance Co.; In re Mary Ann Jones; In the Matter of the Estate of George Jackson)</small> A civil case information sheet must be completed and submitted when an original petition or application is filed to initiate a new civil, family law, probate, or mental		

*Unreadable document error*

original petition for divorce Rogers.pdf [Original] [PDF]	Description	original petition for divorce Rogers.pdf
Odyssey File & Serve could not read/modify/save the document because it appears to be un-readable. Please use a PDF Printer to recreate this document in a more standard format and resubmit.		



## ***Avoiding common errors***

**Problems with bar numbers:** Problems with lawyers' bar numbers also are delaying filings and may cause problems even after the acceptance process. Possibly your bar number couldn't be verified or you didn't fill in the bar number field when you signed up with an EFSP.

### Manage Users for Your Firm

First Name	Last Name ▲
Tracy	Hopper

#### Add Firm User

<b>First Name*</b>	Middle
<input type="text" value="Tracy"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Email Address*</b>	
<input type="text" value="tracy.hopper@hcdistrictclerk.com"/>	
<b>Roles</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Firm Admin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Filer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attorney	
<b>Attorney Number*</b> ⓘ	
<input type="text" value="99999930"/>	Verified

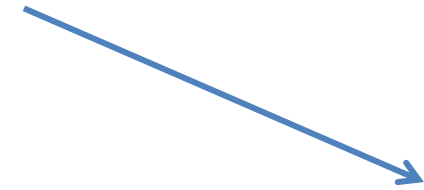


## *Returned for correction*

Some filings reach the DCO even though they have problems. eFileTexas.gov improved its programming so that a DCO clerk now can return a rejected filing to the filer for correction (though there is no formal returned for correction status). The next few slides will explain how the returned-for-correction process works.

If your filing is returned for correction, first click on the icon that represents “copy this envelope.”

“copy this envelope” icon



### Case # 200812345 - LOWRANCE, ANGIE v CLAYTON, CHARLES JR

Envelope # 4296 filed September 12, 2014 at 4:11 PM by Tracy Hopper on behalf of Steve Steve



Copy this envelope

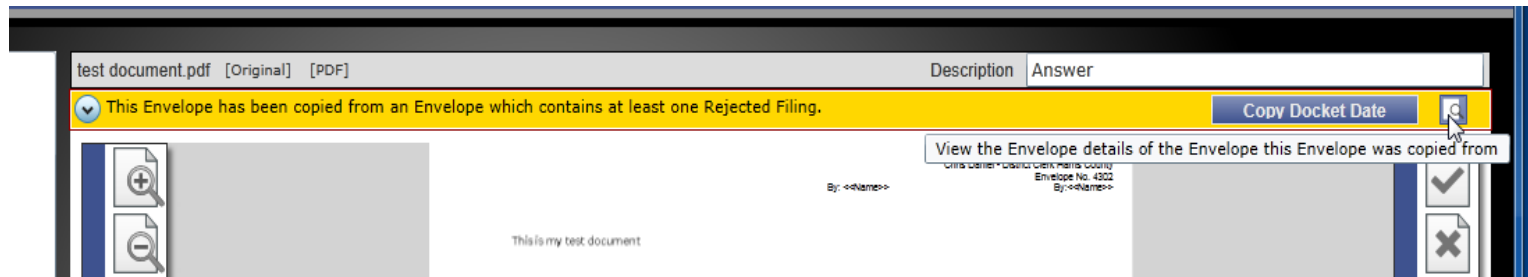
Status	Filing Code	Filing Type	Filing Description	Reference Number
Rejected	Answer	EFile		



## *Returned for correction*

Next, fix your filing and submit it again.

A DCO clerk will review your resubmitted filing, noting when it was originally submitted and when it was rejected.



*Clerk will note original file date stamp and rejection date.*

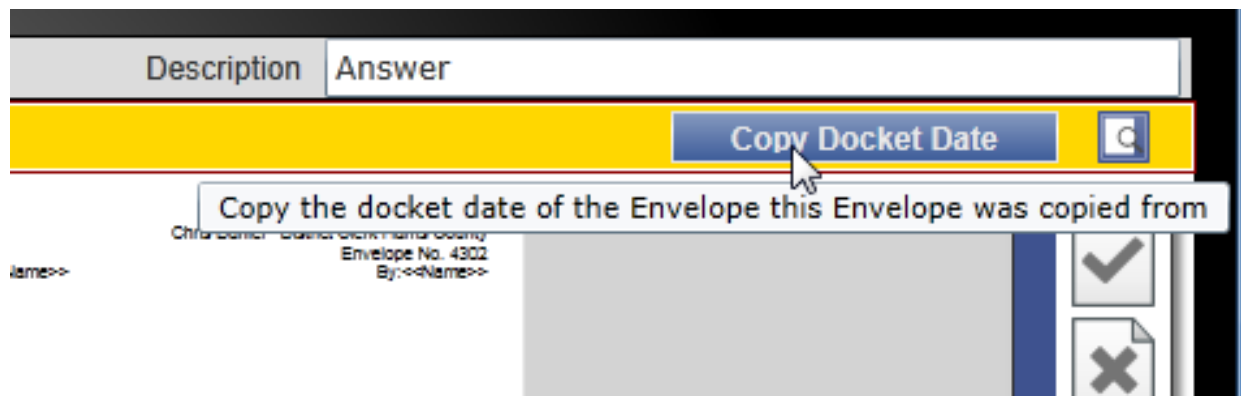
Answer		
Filing Type	EFile	
Filing Code	Answer	
Filing Description		
Reference Number		
Comments		
Preliminary Copies		
Status	Rejected	
<b>Fees</b>		
Court Fee	\$0.00	
Filing & Service Fee	\$0.00	
<b>Rejection Information</b>		
Rejection Reason	Date / Time	Rejection Comment
Rejected	9/12/2014 4:13 PM	Wrong document attached
Rejected	9/14/2014 9:00 AM	
Rejected	9/14/2014 9:01 AM	
<b>Documents</b>		
Lead Document	test documentL.pdf [Original]	92,439 bytes
Attachments		





## *Returned for correction*

After confirming that filings have been corrected and have been returned for correction, clerks click on the “Copy Docket Date” button to give the filer the original file date. “Copy Docket Date” is a state or eFileTexas.gov term and not particularly a well-chosen one. It means the original file date.





## ***Returned for correction***

After the DCO clerk makes changes, eFileTexas.gov then is supposed to change the filing date for the return-for-correction envelope.

*Graphic showing how filings appear on eFileTexas.gov's site*

A screenshot of the eFileTexas.gov interface showing case details. The interface includes buttons for "Edit" and "Verify Parties" at the top left, and a "Waiver" label at the top right. The case information is organized into sections: Case # 200812345, Envelope # 00004302, and Filer Information. The Envelope # 00004302 section is highlighted with a blue arrow pointing to the "Docket Date" field, which shows "Sep 15, 2014 6:09:17 PM".

Case # 200812345	
Location	Harris County - 270th Civil Dis
Description	LOWRANCE, ANGIE v CLAYTON, CHARLES JR
Category	Civil - Other Civil
Type	Personal Injury-Auto
Status	Unknown
Filed Date	1/1/0001 12:00:00 AM
Judge	

Envelope # 00004302	
Submit Date	Sep 15, 2014 6:09:17 PM
Docket Date	<u>Sep 15, 2014 6:09:17 PM</u>
Filing Attorney	Steve Steve
Payment Account	Waiver
Filer Type	Attorney

Filer Information	

Before a DCO Clerk accepts a return-for-correction envelope, the returned-for-correction filing will have a docket date that corresponds to the time that it arrived at the DCO.



## *Returned for correction*

Edit Verify Parties **Waiver**

Case # 200812345

Location	Harris County - 270th Civil Dis
Description	LOWRANCE, ANGIE v CLAYTON, CHARLES JR
Category	Civil – Other Civil
Type	Personal Injury-Auto
Status	Unknown
Filed Date	1/1/0001 12:00:00 AM
Judge	

Envelope # 00004302

Submit Date	Sep 15, 2014 6:09:17 PM
Docket Date	<u>Sep 12, 2014 4:11:46 PM</u>
Filing Attorney	Steve Steve
Payment Account	Waiver
Filer Type	Attorney

Filer Information

After a DCO clerk accepts the returned-for-correction document, eFileTexas.gov's docket date/filing date changes from the time that the returned-for-correction document arrived to the time that the filing that had an error arrived. In other words, the returned-for-correction filing receives the file date of the filing that had an error.



## ***Returned for correction***

Once a DCO clerk accepts the returned-for-correction filing, it receives the file date stamp of the filing submitted 9/12/2014.

Example of a DCO file date stamp

***The DCO will include the time that the returned-for-correction filing was submitted.***

***But the returned-for-correction filing will be given the file date stamp of the original filing that had an error.***

9/15/2014 6:09:17 PM  
Chris Daniel - District Clerk Harris County  
Envelope No. 4302  
By: Tracy Hopper  
Filed: 9/12/2014 4:11:46 PM



## Improving the e-filing process

In May 2014, the DCO began offering a way for lawyers (and pro-se litigants) to gain access to confidential cases when they are a party of record. Lawyers can see case information, settings, activities and images. Access may be gained from home, office or courthouse kiosks.

Issues with a PIN? Contact the DCO at:  
[DCSA@hcdistrictclerk.com](mailto:DCSA@hcdistrictclerk.com) or 713-755-7835

\* Enter the PIN you received in your email:

**Verification Check:**

You are forbidden to access this site using an automated program. Please type the word you see in the verification text box and then click on the Submit button to process your request.

\* Verification

Forget your Pin? click .. [Forgot My PIN](#)

### Search Results

[View Mobile Version](#)

The records you have queried are currently **CONFIDENTIAL** or this case has been **SEALED**. No further information regarding the below case will be disseminated until such time as the records are no longer confidential.

Case (Cause) Number	File Date	Court	Are you part of this case?
201400461J-7	1/29/2014	315	<a href="#">Click here to get access</a>

To access this **CONFIDENTIAL** case, click on the case link and provide the PIN you received by email.

Case (Cause) Number	File Date	Court	
<a href="#">201400461J-7</a>	1/29/2014	315	



## ***Offering other improvements at the DCO***

You can now access electronic docket sheets at the DCO. You can view docket sheets at no cost or buy them for \$1 per page.

Harris County Docket Sheet

<b>2013-12345</b>		
COURT: 234th		
FILED DATE: 2/28/2013		
CASE TYPE: PERSONAL INJURY (NON-AUTO)		
<b>ZENDEJO, MARIA</b> Attorney: BICKERS, CURTIS JAMES  vs.  <b>ANDI RE LLC</b> Attorney: TORRES, ENRIQUE		
<b>Trial Settings</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Comment</b>	
6/2/2014	Docket Set For: Trial Setting	
<b>Docket Sheet Entries</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Comment</b>	
6/12/2013	SBSRX - ORDER GRANTING SUBSTITUTED SERVICE SIGNED	
11/13/2013	DCORX - DOCKET CONTROL/PRETRIAL ORDER SIGNED	
1/9/2014	4 - ORDER OF NON-SUIT SIGNED	



## ***Offering other e-improvements***

- Images of filed documents show up more quickly on the DCO web site. The DCO now displays court documents before they go through the office's final verification process.
- Through the DCO's efforts, judges soon will be able to sign documents electronically in court. As part of a pilot project, judges in three state district courts – the 151st, 269th and 312th - are already using e-signature pads.
- eFileTexas.gov will try to improve its system in the coming months with programming tweaks. Expected future changes include improvements to: the case information sheet fields, the procedure and remedy codes, the code for amount of damages, additional party data, appellate case information, password resettings, listings of cases for a service contract, ability to attach or detach a history for a service contract and management of user notification preferences.



## ***Finding help***

Supreme Court Mandate Rules

<http://www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us/miscdocket/13/13916500.pdf>

JCIT Technology Standards

[Technology Standards v1.3 \[pdf\]](#) (Adopted March 21, 2014)

Electronic Filing Service Provider (EFSP) Comparison Chart

<http://www.efiletexas.gov/service-providers.htm>

eFileTexas.gov's site where you may submit a question or find useful links:

<http://content.tylerhost.net/helptx/selfservice/>

FAQs

<http://www.efiletexas.gov/faqs.htm>

JCIT Electronic Filing Page

<http://www.courts.state.tx.us/jcit/Efiling/EfilingHome.asp>

Civil eFiling FAQs

<http://www.hcdistrictclerk.com/Common/Civil/EFileFAQ.aspx>





## ***Finding help***

If you have questions about how the DCO is handling your e-filed document, you may send a question to: [eFiling@hcdistrictclerk.com](mailto:eFiling@hcdistrictclerk.com).

If you have problems with your PIN, please contact us at: [DCSA@hcdistrictclerk.com](mailto:DCSA@hcdistrictclerk.com) or call 713-755-7835.