

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

Misc. Docket No. 11-9118

FINAL APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO THE TEXAS RULES OF APPELLATE PROCEDURE AND TEMPLATES FOR LOCAL RULES GOVERNING ELECTRONIC COPIES AND ELECTRONIC FILINGS IN THE COURTS OF APPEALS

ORDERED that:

1. Pursuant to Section 22.004 of the Texas Government Code, the Supreme Court of Texas amends Rules 9.2 and 9.3 of the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure, as follows.

9.2. Filing

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- (c) *Electronic Filing.* Documents may be permitted or required to be filed, signed, or verified by electronic means by order of the Supreme Court or the Court of Criminal Appeals, or by local rule of a court of appeals. A technical failure that precludes a party's compliance with electronic-filing procedures cannot be a basis for disposing of any case.

9.3. Number of Copies; Electronic Copies

- (a) *Courts of Appeals.*
- (1) Paper Copies in General. A party must file:
- (A) the original and three copies of all documents in an original proceeding;
 - (B) the original and two copies of all motions in an appellate proceeding; and
 - (C) the original and five copies of all other documents.
- (2) Local Rules. A court of appeals may by local rule require:

- (A) the filing of more or fewer paper copies of any document other than a petition for discretionary review; and
- (B) an electronic copy of a document filed in paper form.

(b) *Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals.*

- (1) **Paper Copies of Document Filed in Paper Form.** A party must file the original and 11 copies of any document addressed to either the Supreme Court or the Court of Criminal Appeals, except that in the Supreme Court, only an original and one copy must be filed of any motion, response to the motion, and reply in support of the motion, and in the Court of Criminal Appeals, only the original must be filed of a motion for extension of time or a response to the motion, or a pleading under Code of Criminal Procedure article 11.07.
- (2) **Electronic Copies of Document Filed in Paper Form.** An electronic copy of a document filed in paper form may be required by order of the Supreme Court or the Court of Criminal Appeals.
- (3) **Paper Copies of Electronically Filed Document.** Copies of each document that is electronically filed with the Supreme Court or the Court of Criminal Appeals must be mailed or hand-delivered to the Supreme Court or the Court of Criminal Appeals, as appropriate, within one business day after the document is electronically filed. The number of paper copies required shall be determined, respectively, by order of the Supreme Court or the Court of Criminal Appeals.

(c) *Exception for Record.* Only the original record need be filed in any proceeding.

2. The Supreme Court also promulgates the attached templates for local rules governing electronic copies and electronic filings in the courts of appeals.

- a. A court of appeals' local rule requiring electronic copies of documents must be in the form of Appendix A with modifications only as permitted by the Supreme Court. The local rule must be approved by Order of the Supreme Court.

b. A court of appeals' local rule permitting the electronic filing of documents must be in the form of Appendix B with modifications only as permitted by the Supreme Court. The local rule must be approved by Order of the Supreme Court.

c. The procedures prescribed by the local rules apply in lieu of those prescribed by the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure to the extent there are differences between the procedures; otherwise, the Rules of Appellate Procedure continue to apply with full force and effect.

3. By Order dated February 28, 2011, in Misc. Docket No. 11-9032, the Court proposed amendments to Rules 9.2 and 9.3 of the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure and invited public comment. This Order contains the final version of amended Rules 9.2 and 9.3 of the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure that take effect June 30, 2011.

4. The Clerk of the Supreme Court is directed to:

a. file a copy of this Order with the Secretary of State;

b. cause a copy of this Order to be mailed to each registered member of the State Bar of Texas by publication in the Texas Bar Journal;

c. send a copy of this Order to each elected member of the Legislature; and

d. submit a copy of the Order for publication in the Texas Register.

Dated: June 27, 2011.

Wallace B. Jefferson, Chief Justice

Nathan L. Hecht, Justice

Dale Wainwright, Justice

David M. Medina, Justice

Paul W. Green, Justice

Phil Johnson, Justice

Don R. Willett, Justice

Eva M. Guzman, Justice

Debra H. Lehrmann, Justice

APPENDIX A

Local Rule ____. Electronic Copies of Documents Filed in Paper Form.

(a) Electronic copies of documents required. For the convenience of the court, attorneys, parties, and the public, an attorney for a party must email to the court an electronic copy of every document filed with the court, except a document under seal or subject to a motion to seal. A party who is not represented by an attorney is encouraged to email to the court an electronic copy of every document filed with the court, except a document under seal or subject to a motion to seal. [Courts may add exceptions for attorneys and unrepresented parties.]

(b) Filing required. An electronic copy does not constitute a filing. Documents must continue to be filed as provided by the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure[, except that only the original and [insert number] copies must be filed of any document other than a petition for discretionary review. A party must file the original and 11 copies of a petition for discretionary review].

(c) Time to email electronic copy. The electronic copy must be emailed to the court at [insert applicable email address] on the same day the original document is filed. Also on that day, the electronic copy must be emailed to each other party's lead counsel for whom the filing attorney has an email address.

(d) Identification of document. The email subject line must identify the document by case number and by name. The electronic copy must be named as follows: [insert court's desired naming conventions here].

(e) Redaction of electronic copies. An electronic copy must be substantively identical to the original document filed with the court, except it must not contain a social security number; a birth date; a home address; the name of any person who was a minor when the underlying suit was filed; a driver's license number, passport number, tax identification number, or similar government-issued personal identification number; or a bank account number, credit card number, or other financial account number. The attorney emailing the electronic copy must redact all such information in accordance with the redaction guidelines posted by the Supreme Court's Clerk on the Supreme Court's website; however, the electronic copy may contain a reference to this information as long as the reference does not include any part of the actual information (e.g., "passport number"). For good cause, the court may order redaction of additional information.

(f) Certification of counsel. The submission of an electronic copy constitutes a certification by all attorneys of record for the party filing the document that the electronic copy complies with paragraph (e).

(g) Posting of electronic copies. The clerk may post electronic copies of documents in a case on the court's website. By letter to the clerk, a party to the case may request that electronic copies posted on the court's website be redacted further or removed altogether. The request must identify with particularity the document(s) to be removed or the information to be redacted and state specific reasons for the request. If the request is for further redaction, the party must email a copy of the requested version of the document.

(h) Format of electronic copies. An electronic copy must be formatted as follows:

(1) An electronic copy must be in text-searchable portable document format (PDF) compatible with the latest version of Adobe Reader.

(2) Except as otherwise provided by this rule, an electronic copy of a document created by a word processing program must not be a scan of the original but must instead be converted from the original directly into a PDF file using Adobe Acrobat, a word processing program's PDF conversion utility, or another software program.

(3) Records filed in original proceedings and appendix materials may be scanned if necessary, but scanning creates larger file sizes with images of lesser quality and should be avoided when possible. An appendix must be combined into one computer file with the document it is associated with, unless the resulting computer file would exceed the size limits in paragraph (i). If a record filed in an original proceeding or an appendix contains more than one item, it should include a table of contents and either bookmarks to assist in locating each item or separator pages with the title of the item immediately following and any number or letter associated with the item in the table of contents.

(4) A scanned document must be made searchable using optical-character-recognition software, such as Adobe Acrobat, and have a resolution of 300 dots per inch (dpi).

(5) An electronic copy may contain hyperlinks to another part of the same document, an external source cited in the document, an appendix item associated with the document, an embedded case, or a record cite. Hyperlinks within an appendix item are also permitted.

(6) An electronic copy must not contain a virus or malware. The submission of an electronic copy constitutes a certification by all attorneys of record for the party filing the document that the electronic copy has been checked for viruses and malware.

(7) An electronic copy need not be signed.

(i) Size of electronic copies. A electronic copy must not exceed 20 megabytes. Electronic copies larger than 20 megabytes must be divided into smaller files.

(j) Communications with the clerk. An attorney who emails an electronic copy of a document must supply the clerk with an email address to which the clerk may send notices or other communications about the case in lieu of mailing paper documents. If the attorney's email address changes, the attorney must provide the clerk with the new email address within one business day of the change. Lead counsel must register for Casemail and follow the instructions for receiving notices for cases in which they represent a party.

APPENDIX B

Local Rule ____. Electronic Filings of Documents.

(a) Electronic filing permitted. A party may electronically file (e-file) any document that may be filed with the court in paper form, except a document under seal or subject to a motion to seal.

(b) E-filing mechanism. E-filing must be done through Texas.gov, the portal established by the Texas Legislature. Directions for its use may be found on its website. This is a summary. A person must first register with an Electronic Filing Service Provider (EFSP). A list of approved EFSPs is on the Texas.gov website. The EFSP will provide the registrant with a confidential, secure username and password to use when e-filing a document. This username and password will also function as a signature on each e-filed document, and will authorize payment of all filing fees and service fees. A document to be e-filed must be transmitted to the EFSP, which will send the document to Texas.gov, which in turn will send the document to the clerk. The e-filer will receive by email an immediate acknowledgment of the e-filing, a confirmation of the clerk's acceptance of the filing, and a file-stamped copy of the document. Fees charged by Texas.gov for the e-filing of a document are in addition to any filing fees and are costs of court.

(c) Electronic service. A party who has registered to e-file documents through an EFSP may electronically serve (e-serve) documents through that EFSP on any other party who has consented to e-service by registering for the e-service option with an EFSP or by setting up a complimentary account with Texas.gov. Directions may be found on the Texas.gov website.

(1) Service through an EFSP is complete on transmission to the e-served person's EFSP or complimentary Texas.gov account. The e-filer's EFSP will send proof of service to the e-filer. Fees that an EFSP charges for e-service are not costs of court.

(2) If an e-filer must serve a copy of a document on a party who has not consented to e-service, the e-filer must comply with the service requirements in Texas Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.5 and, on the same day the document is e-filed, must send the document to:

(A) the party's lead counsel by email if the e-filer has an email address for the lead counsel; or

(B) if the party is not represented by counsel, to the party by email if the e-filer has the party's email address.

(d) Redaction of information in e-filed document.

(1) Unless the court orders otherwise, an e-filed document must not contain a social security number; a birth date; a home address; the name of any person who was a minor when the underlying suit was filed; a driver's license number, passport number, tax identification number, or similar government-issued personal identification number; or a bank account number, credit card number, or other financial account number. The e-filer must redact all of this information in accordance with the redaction guidelines posted by the Supreme Court's Clerk on the Supreme Court's website; however, the e-filed document may contain a reference to this information as long as the reference does not include any part of the actual information (e.g., "passport number"). For good cause, the court may order redaction of additional information.

(2) The e-filing of a document constitutes a certification by all attorneys of record for the party filing the document that the document complies with paragraph (1) of this rule.

(3) If an e-filer believes any information described in paragraph (1) of this rule is essential to an e-filed document or that the e-filed document would be confusing without the information, the e-filer may submit the information to the court in a reference list that is in paper form and under seal. The reference list must specify an appropriate identifier that corresponds uniquely to each item listed. Any reference in the e-filed document to a listed identifier will be construed to refer to the corresponding item of information. If the e-filer provides a reference list pursuant to this rule, the front page of the e-filed document must indicate that the reference list has been, or will be, provided.

(4) On its own initiative, the court may order a sealed reference list in any case. The court may also order that a document be filed under seal in paper form, without redaction. The court may later unseal the document or order the filer to provide a redacted version of the document for the public record.

(e) Format of e-filed document. An e-filed document must be formatted as follows:

(1) An e-filed document must be formatted in accordance with Texas Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.4(b)–(e). The “paper” requirements in Rule 9.4(b)–(c) apply equally to a “page” of the e-filed document.

(2) An e-filed document must be in text-searchable portable document format (PDF) compatible with the latest version of Adobe Reader. An EFSP will convert each e-filed document from its original form into a PDF file that complies with this rule.

(3) Records filed in original proceedings and appendix materials may be scanned if necessary, but scanning creates larger file sizes with images of lesser quality and should be avoided when possible. An appendix must be combined into one computer file with the document it is associated with, unless the resulting computer file would exceed Texas.gov's size limits for the document. If a record filed in an original proceeding or an appendix contains more than one item, it should include a table of contents and either bookmarks to assist in locating each item or separator pages with the title of the item immediately following and any number or letter associated with the item in the table of contents.

(4) A scanned document must be made searchable using optical-character-recognition software, such as Adobe Acrobat, and have a resolution of 300 dots per inch (dpi).

(5) An e-filed document may contain hyperlinks to another part of the same document, an external source cited in the document, an appendix item associated with the document, an embedded case, or a record cite. Hyperlinks within an appendix item are also permitted.

(6) An e-filed document must not contain a virus or malware. The e-filing of a document constitutes a certification by the e-filer that the document has been checked for viruses and malware.

(7) The court may strike an e-filed document for nonconformance with this rule.

(f) Signatures on e-filed documents.

(1) Except as otherwise provided by this rule, the confidential, secure username and password that the e-filer must use to e-file a document constitute the e-filer's signature on the document, in compliance with signature requirements in the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure. When a signature is provided in this manner, the e-filer must also include either an "/s/" and the e-filer's name typed in the space where the e-filer's signature would otherwise appear or an electronic image of the e-filer's signature, which may take the form of a public key-based digital signature or a scanned image of the e-filer's signature. The e-filer must not allow the e-filer's username or password to be used by anyone other than an agent who is authorized by the e-filer.

(2) If a document must be notarized, sworn to, or made under oath, the e-filer must e-file the document as a scanned image containing the necessary signature(s).

(3) If a document requires the signature of an opposing party, the e-filer must e-file the document as a scanned image containing the opposing party's signature.

(4) When an e-filer e-files a scanned image of a document pursuant to paragraph (2) or (3) of this rule, the e-filer must retain the original document from which the scanned image was made until the case in which the document was filed is resolved. If the original document is in another party's possession, that party must retain the original document until the case in which the document was filed is resolved.

(5) If an e-served document was also e-filed and the person who completes a certificate of service under Texas Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.5(e) is different from the person who e-filed the document, the person who completes the certificate of service must sign the certificate by including either an "/s/" and his or her name typed in the space where his or her signature would otherwise appear or an electronic image of his or her signature.

(g) Time of e-filing. A document will be considered filed timely if it is e-filed at any time before midnight (in the court's time zone) on the date on which the document is due.

(1) An e-filed document is deemed filed when the e-filer transmits the document to the e-filer's EFSP, unless the document is transmitted on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday or requires a motion and an order allowing its filing.

(2) If a document is transmitted on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, it will be deemed filed on the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.

(3) If a document requires a motion and an order allowing its filing, it will be deemed filed on the date the motion is granted.

(4) If an e-filed document is untimely due to a technical failure or a system outage, the e-filer may seek appropriate relief from the court.

(h) Paper copies.

OPTION 1: An e-filer is not required to file any paper copies of an e-filed document, except that paper copies of a petition for discretionary review must still be filed in accordance with Rule 9 of the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure within one business day after the petition is e-filed.

OPTION 2: An e-filer must file 11 paper copies of an e-filed petition for discretionary review and [insert number] paper copies of any other e-filed document in accordance with Rule 9 of the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure within one business day after the document is e-filed.

(i) Email address requirements and communications with the clerk. An e-filed document must include the e-filer's email address, in addition to any other information required by the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure. If the e-filer's email address changes, the e-filer must provide the clerk and the e-filer's EFSP with the new email address within one business day of the change. If there is a change in the email address of a party who has consented to receive e-service, the party must provide Texas.gov or, if applicable, the party's EFSP with the new email address within one business day of the change. The clerk may send notices or other communications about a case to an attorney's email address in lieu of mailing paper documents.

(j) Casemail registration. Lead counsel must register for Casemail and follow the instructions for receiving notices for cases in which they represent a party.

(k) Construction of rules. This rule must be liberally construed so as to avoid undue prejudice to any person who makes a good-faith effort to comply with requirements in this rule.