Lehigh County eFiling FAQs

General

Where/what can I e-file in Lehigh County?

The Lehigh County e-filing site, **File & Serve**, is https://efilepa.tylertech.cloud/OfsEfsp.

Civil – Effective March 19, 2018, except as specifically exempted by the Court, electronic filing is mandatory in all new and pending Civil case types and liens.

Family Court – Effective January 1, 2020, except as specifically exempted by the Court, electronic filing is mandatory in all new and pending Family Court case types. **This does not include Protection from Abuse cases**.

Register of Wills – Effective February 15, 2023, except as specifically exempted by the Court, electronic filing is mandatory in all new and pending Register of Wills case types.

Orphans' Court – Effective April 1, 2023, except as specifically exempted by the Court, electronic filing is mandatory in all new and pending Orphans' Court case types. Effective Tuesday, January 16, 2024, Adoption Petitions, Termination of Parental Rights Petitions, Assisted Conception Birth Registration Petitions (select Adoption as case type in OFS) and ECT Petitions must be e-filed.

Are filing/registration instructions available online?

On the home page of https://efilepa.tylertech.cloud/OfsEfsp, at the top right, click on the question mark to access the Support section. From this section, you can browse help articles and/or contact technical support.

In addition, when signed on to https://efilepa.tylertech.cloud/OfsEfsp, you may select the Support icon at the lower right to access the support chat.

Can I view the Court dockets through File & Serve?

The Court dockets are viewed through https://publicaccess.lehighcounty.org. An Attorney Docket Access or Online Records account is required to view the dockets. This account is separate from File & Serve.

How do I obtain an Attorney Docket Access account?

Active members of the Pennsylvania Bar Association are entitled to apply for an Attorney Docket Access account at no charge. Attorney Docket Access accounts allow viewing of the Court dockets but do not include Tax or Assessment records. Please visit the Attorney Docket Access page at https://www.lehighcounty.org to register.

How do I obtain a paid subscription to Online Records Access?

One-year subscriptions to Online Records Access which includes Court dockets, judgments, Taxes, and Assessment records, are available. The yearly subscription cost is $300.00. To create an account, please visit the Online Records Access page at https://www.lehighcounty.org. You may access the dockets through ORA. For more information regarding paid subscriptions, please contact the Lehigh County Fiscal Office at 610-782-3112.

When a document is e-filed in Lehigh County, are all parties to the case automatically notified?

File & Serve only sends submission/acceptance/rejection notifications to the filer who submitted the documents. Any docketable filings may be viewed on the case through https://publicaccess.lehighcounty.org.

Service according to the rules of Civil procedure still applies to all filings. When using E-file & Serve, all service contacts on the case which have been enabled will receive a service e-mail after the filing has been accepted. See the next question for more information regarding electronic service through File & Serve.

What is the procedure for electronic service (E-file & Serve)?

When e-filing any document other than original process in Civil or Family cases, the following procedures shall be followed commencing October 1, 2022:
When attorneys or pro se parties e-file a document, the Odyssey system will default to "e-file and serve" rather than to "e-file." This will constitute good service under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure and the Lehigh County Rules of Procedure.

Attorneys and parties must keep their email addresses up to date with the Clerk of Judicial Records ("COJR") and will be e-served at that email address. If their email address changes, they must file a Change Of Address form with COJR. The email address on record with COJR are that attorney or party's record address for service purposes. Neither a Judge, nor Court Administration, nor Family Court Administration can change the record address of an attorney or party. In addition to the above, attorneys and parties must keep their regular mailing addresses up to date with COJR as their record mailing addresses.

Is there a fee to use File & Serve?

If your filing does not have a filing fee, there is no additional fee to use File & Serve. If you are paying with a credit/debit card, Section 5.1 of the Terms of Services lists the credit card convenience fee per transaction for any filings with filing fees. If you are paying by eCheck, there is a $0.25 service fee per envelope.

- Civil/Family Court Fee Schedule
- Register of Wills Fee Schedule
- Orphans' Court Fee Schedule

What payment types are accepted?

Credit/Debit cards are accepted for all filings. Section 5.1 of the Terms of Services lists the credit card convenience fee per transaction.

Effective August 17, 2023, eCheck will be available as an additional form of payment for all e-filers in the Register of Wills Division of the Clerk of Judicial Records. Payment by eCheck is available to attorney/agency e-filers in Orphans' Court Division, but not to non-lawyer individual e-filers. The convenience fee for payment by eCheck is .25/envelope.

Registration/Accounts

I need assistance with my Attorney Docket Access account

For password resets/forgotten credentials – please visit the Attorney Docket Access page at http://www.lehighcounty.org and select the **Password Reset** option. From this page you may reset your password or retrieve your username. A link to reset your password will be sent to e-mail address associated with your attorney record in the Courts' Case Management system. For further assistance, please contact attorneydocketaccess@lehighcounty.org.

How do I obtain an account for File & Serve?

Attorneys

If you are an attorney, and your firm already has an account, your firm administrator can send you an e-mail with a link to join the firm.

If your firm does not have an account, please select **Register for a Firm Account** on the home page. Solo practitioners also register as a firm account so that you may link your attorney record. An activation e-mail will be sent from no-reply@efilingmail.tylertech.cloud. If you do not receive this e-mail, please check spam/junk mail folders or contact File & Serve support at 1-800-297-5377 to determine why the e-mail was not received. Some firms need to have their IT support whitelist no-reply@efilingmail.tylertech.cloud to receive the e-mail.

Independent Filers/Pro Se/Self-Represented

If you are self-represented, pro se, or an independent filer, please select **Register for an Individual Account** on the home page. An activation e-mail will be sent from no-reply@efilingmail.tylertech.cloud. If you do not receive this e-mail, please check spam/junk mail folders or contact File & Serve support at 1-800-297-5377 to determine why the e-mail was not received.

Are there password requirements for File & Serve?

Passwords must be 8 characters in length and must contain at least one upper-case character, one lower-case character, and one number.

When registering an attorney, I receive a message stating that the attorney is not found or that the Bar ID is invalid.

Please verify that you are entering the PA Bar ID in a seven-digit format (ex: 0123456) with leading zeros. If you still receive this message it is likely that the attorney record is not present in the Courts' case management system. Please contact the Clerk of Judicial Records – Civil Division at 610-782-3148 to have the attorney record added. You may also choose to e-mail at OFSCivilSupport@lehighcounty.org. Civil Division will need the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- E-mail address
- PA Bar ID

I have forgotten my password.

Select the **Reset Password** button. You will be asked to provide the e-mail address associated with your account and also complete the reCAPTCHA. A reset password e-mail will be sent to you. If you do not receive the reset password e-mail, or if you receive a message that your account has been locked due to unsuccessful login attempts, please contact File & Serve support at 1-800-297-5377.

Firm Management Functions

I need to add/remove a firm payment account.

Select **Payment Accounts** from the Firm Management menu. To add a new credit/debit card or a checking account select **Add Account**. You may add multiple cards and/or checking accounts to a firm. Visa, Master Card, Discover, and American Express are accepted. To remove an expired credit/debit card or a checking account, highlight the payment account and choose **Delete** from the Actions menu.

I need to remove a user who is no longer with our firm.

Select **Users** from the Firm Management menu. Click on the trash can icon next to the user you wish to remove. Select OK to confirm.

I need to remove an attorney who is no longer with our firm.

Select **Attorneys** from the Firm Management menu. Click on the trash can icon next to the attorney you wish to remove. Select OK to confirm.

How do I transfer an attorney's e-filing account to a new firm in OFS?

As File & Serve uses the e-mail address as an account, you would register as a new filer/attorney in the new firm. The previous firm should delete the prior registration. If you encounter issues, please contact File & Serve support at 1-800-297-5377.

How do we change/remove/add firm administrators?

If you wish to change and/or add a firm admin, the user who is currently firm admin should log on to https://efilepa.tylertech.cloud/OfsEfsp and do the following:

- To grant firm admin permissions to another user – Select **Users** from the Firm Management menu. Select the pencil icon to edit the user. Under user role, select Firm Admin and select Save. The next time this user logs on, he/she will now have firm admin permissions.

- To remove firm admin permissions from a user – Select **Users** from the Firm Management menu. Select the pencil icon to edit the user. Under user role, uncheck Firm Admin and select Save.

If you encounter issues with any of the above, please contact File & Serve support at 1-800-297-5377.

Filing

I am unsure which case type/filing code I should use.

When filing a new Civil case, please select the same case type you would choose on the Civil coversheet. The **OFS Guidelines** documents in Pennsylvania's State Specific help provide instructions for various filings for Civil, Family Court, Orphans' Court and Register of Wills.

For questions regarding **Civil** filings, please contact OFSCivilSupport@lehighcounty.org.
For questions regarding **Family Court** filings, please contact OFSFamilySupport@lehighcounty.org.
For questions regarding **Orphans' Court** filings, please contact OFSOrphansCourtSupport@lehighcounty.org.
For questions regarding **Register of Wills** filings, please contact OFSWillsSupport@lehighcounty.org.

When I search for my case, I see it is unavailable for e-filing.

If your case or lien displays that it is unavailable for e-filing and is not a Protection Order case, please contact the appropriate support e-mail for assistance. Please include the case number in the e-mail.

Are there filing requirements/exceptions?

The **OFS Guidelines** documents in Pennsylvania's State Specific help provide instructions for various filings for Civil, Family Court, Orphans' Court and Register of Wills.

The Courts' website, https://www.lccpa.org, has a Self Help Center. This site provides answers to some commonly asked questions concerning legal procedures in Pennsylvania, including Child Custody, Divorce, Name Changes and other general information for pro se parties. This site does not provide legal advice. Court staff cannot provide legal advice. Any forms provided in the Self-Help Center are specific to Lehigh County.

For questions regarding **Civil** filings, please contact OFSCivilSupport@lehighcounty.org.
For questions regarding **Family Court** filings, please contact OFSFamilySupport@lehighcounty.org.
For questions regarding **Orphans' Court** filings, please contact OFSOrphansCourtSupport@lehighcounty.org.
For questions regarding **Register of Wills** filings, please contact OFSWillsSupport@lehighcounty.org.

What is the difference between the filing types?

- **EFileAndServe** - The document will be submitted to the review queues for electronic filing. After acceptance, the timestamped document will be electronically served to any service parties which have been added to the case and have been selected for service. EfileAndServe is the default filing type for subsequent filings as of 10/1/2022.
- **EFile** – The document will be submitted to the review queues for electronic filing. No electronic service will be performed after acceptance. Efile is the default filing type for initiating actions.
- **Serve** – With the Serve option, the document will only be electronically served to any service parties which have been added to the case and have been selected for service. The document will not go to the review queues and will not be timestamped or electronically filed to the case. **This is a service only option; not a filing option**.

Is there a recommended size limit for filings in the envelope?

For optimal manageability, the court recommends that document size for filings does not exceed 25 MB per document and 35 MB per envelope.

Are there any requirements for naming the File Description of uploaded documents?

The file description for uploaded documents must be less than 25 characters in length and may not contain any special characters.

How can I view a time-stamped copy of the document which was e-filed?

Effective January 7, 2024, an additional step has been added to provide an enhanced level of protection for document viewing. When attempting to download and view a document from a link within an e-mail notification (submitted, accepted, service, courtesy copy, etc.) or from within an electronic filing service provide, users will now see a screen asking them to enter their e-mail address. When you encounter this screen, please enter your e-mail address and click the “Validate” button. The system will confirm your e-mail address before allowing you to download and view the document.

File & Serve Filing History

Time-stamped copies of filed documents are available from your **Filing History** for 120 days. Select **View Envelope Details** from the Actions menu from the envelope you wish to view. Scroll down to the Filings section and select File Stamped Copy to download.

From E-mail Notifications

Click the document link from the e-mail notification (submitted, accepted, service, courtesy copy, etc.). Enter your e-mail address and click the validate button.

Public Access

The full case with all docketable filings may be viewed on the case through https://publicaccess.lehighcounty.org. An Attorney Docket Access account or Online Records Access account is required.

When filing into an existing case, the Parties section is locked. How would a new attorney or case party be added to the case docket in the Courts' case management system?

Submit your filing which would add the attorney or case party (examples: Prae for Appearance; Petition to Intervene). You may mention the new attorney or case party in the Filing Comments in the Filings section. After the filing has been accepted, the Clerk of Judicial Records – Civil or Register of Wills Division, or Orphans' Court, will add the new case party or attorney to the case docket in the Courts' case management system. NOTE: The addition of case parties or attorneys to the case will not automatically add service contacts to File & Serve. You must maintain your service contact(s) on your case(s) to be able to receive electronic service, of documents filed by opposing counsel, from File & Serve.

What are Additional Services and Fees on filing codes?

Additional Services and Fees are used on filing codes which allow you to make a choice such as:

- Divorce/Custody counts, which allows you to add one or more counts
- Requests for Subpoenas, Certifications and/or other documents, which allow you to select how many of each document you are requesting
- Estimated Value of Estates or Formal Accounts, which allows you to select the value which corresponds to your filing

Additional Service fees are calculated along with the filing fees and can be viewed in the Fees total for your envelope.

Rejected Filings

How can I determine why my filing was rejected?

In the rejected filing notification received, you will see Returned Comments from the reviewer. The comments will provide the reason.

How do I resubmit my filing?

If your envelope was returned because you submitted a new case filing but you have an existing case number, you will need to start a new subsequent filing into the existing case number. Otherwise, you can copy your returned envelope.

Copying the Envelope

In your **Filing History**, select **Copy Envelope** from the Actions menu of the rejected envelope. Copying the envelope will give you a new envelope number but will retain all of the information previously entered. You can then modify the portion of the envelope which needs correction. For example, if a filing code needs to be changed, you can click on the Filings section, select the filing code which needs to be edited and select the new one from the drop-down. Save any changes and submit the envelope when finished. Your new filing date and time will be the submission date/time. NOTE: An envelope can only be copied once. If the copied envelope is reviewed and returned, you will need to start a new envelope.

Submit a New Envelope

If your envelope was returned because you submitted a new case filing but you have an existing case number, you will not be able to submit a copied envelope. You will need to start a new subsequent filing into the existing case number. You will also need to submit a new envelope if a copied envelope was returned after resubmission.

Will I keep my original filing date/time if my envelope was rejected?

If your envelope was rejected, the original filing date and time will not be retained. You will receive a new filing date/time when you submit your copied envelope or a new envelope.

Electronic Service (E-file & Serve)

What is the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas procedure for electronic service (E-file & Serve)?

When e-filing any document other than original process in Civil or Family cases, the following procedures shall be followed commencing October 1, 2022:
When attorneys or pro se parties e-file a document, the Odyssey system will default to "e-file and serve" rather than to "e-file." This will constitute good service under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure and the Lehigh County Rules of Procedure.

Attorneys and parties must keep their email addresses up to date with the Clerk of Judicial Records ("COJR") and will be e-served at that email address. If their email address changes, they must file a Change Of Address form with COJR. The email address on record with COJR are that attorney or party's record address for service purposes. Neither a Judge, nor Court Administration, nor Family Court Administration can change the record address of an attorney or party. In addition to the above, attorneys and parties must keep their regular mailing addresses up to date with COJR as their record mailing addresses.

What is E-File & Serve?

For subsequent filings, the filing type of E-File & Serve is automatically selected as the default filing type. After filings have been accepted in the review queue, the document(s) will be electronically served to any service parties which have been added to the case. To ensure that you receive service for your cases, add the appropriate service contact(s) to each case and verify that the e-mail address(es) used for your service contact(s) are kept current.

Are service contacts automatically added to cases in File & Serve when the case is created or when new attorneys and/or case parties have been added to the case docket as a result of a subsequent filing?

No. Service contacts are never automatically added in File & Serve. You must maintain your service contact(s) on your case(s) to be able to receive electronic service, of documents filed by opposing counsel, from File & Serve.

How to manage Service Contacts in File & Serve:

Adding a New Service Contact

Select **Service Contacts**. If the service contact is also a firm user, select **From Firm Users**. If the service contact is not a firm user, select **Add Contact** and complete all information. The e-mail address will be the one used to receive any service e-mails. Enable Add to Public List if you wish to have this service contact appear in the public list.

Deleting a Service Contact

Select **Service Contacts**. Next to the name of the contact you wish to delete, select the trash can icon. Confirm you wish to delete.

Editing a Service Contact

Select Service Contacts. Next to the name of the contact you wish to edit, select the pencil icon.

Adding a Service Contact to a case for the first time

To add a Service Contact to a case, choose **File Into Existing Case** to find the case number. When your case is returned, select the Actions menu next to the case and choose **View Service Contacts**. Any existing Service Contacts on this case will appear. Select Add to add a new service contact to the case. You can also edit service contacts and view the Service Contact History.

Will updating a Service Contact in File & Serve also update my contact information with the Courts?

No. Please see the following procedure dated October 1, 2022: **Attorneys and parties must keep their email addresses up to date with the Clerk of Judicial Records** ("COJR") and will be e-served at that email address. If their email address changes, they must file a Change Of Address form with COJR. The email address on record with COJR are that attorney or party's record address for service purposes. Neither a Judge, nor Court Administration, nor Family Court Administration can change the record address of an attorney or party. In addition to the above, attorneys and parties must keep their regular mailing addresses up to date with COJR as their record mailing addresses.

Am I able to view the status/details of electronic service in File & Serve?

In your Filing History, click on the Actions menu next to the envelope. Select to view Envelope Details. The Service Contacts section will show the status of the service. You can choose to print or save the receipt as proof of electronic service.

What is my proof of electronic service?

In your Filing History, click on the Actions menu next to the envelope. Select to view Envelope Details. The Service Contacts section will show the status of the service. You can choose to print or save the receipt as proof of electronic service.

What is a preliminary copy?

When submitting a filing, entering e-mail address(es) in the Preliminary Copies field will send a copy of the filing to all addresses listed as soon as it has been submitted to the Court. If you are entering multiple addresses in Courtesy Copies, please separate them with a comma. NOTE: The Preliminary Copy is not a timestamped copy, is not service and is not tracked as service. You will not be able to determine if preliminary copies were delivered successfully.

What is a courtesy copy?

When submitting a filing, entering e-mail address(es) in the Courtesy Copies field will send a timestamped copy of the filing after it has been accepted to all addresses listed. If you are entering multiple addresses in Courtesy Copies, please separate them with a comma. NOTE: The Courtesy Copy is not service and is not tracked as service. You will not be able to determine if courtesy copies were delivered successfully. Courtesy copies DO NOT need to be sent to the Court as a copy of the accepted filing is already transmitted to the Court as part of the process.

Do courtesy copies need to be sent to the Court?

Courtesy copies do not need to be sent to the Court as a copy of the accepted filing is already transmitted to the Court as part of the process.

Are courtesy copies and E-file & Serve the same?

Courtesy copies and E-file & Serve are not the same. Unlike E-file & Serve, delivery of courtesy copies are not tracked within File & Serve and you will not be able to determine if courtesy copies were delivered successfully. Sending a courtesy copy is not considered service.

As of the procedures dated 10/1/2022, using E-file & Serve will constitute good service under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure and the Lehigh County Rules of Procedure.

Troubleshooting

Error messages: "Firm does not have a payment account" or "Firm does not have a filing attorney"

A payment account and filing attorney must be configured prior to e-filing. If these messages are encountered and you are not a firm admin, please contact your firm admin for assistance. If you are a firm admin, entering at least one payment account and attorney will allow filing.

I am unable to enter a payment account

When you select the button titled Enter Account Information, a new window should open. Sometimes pop-up blocker will not allow the new window to open. Please check if pop-up blocker is not allowing the window to open.

My filing was rejected but I see a temporary authorization on my credit/debit card/checking account

Please note: Filing fee totals will be held if a filing(s) is rejected. These funds will be released, however, the length of time to reprocess varies based upon your financial institution or credit card company. If the filing is rejected and you would like to know when the funds will be deposited back into your account, please contact your financial institution or credit card company directly.

I did not receive submission/acceptance notifications.

If you are the filer who submitted the filings

Please verify that the notifications are not in your spam/junk mail folder. The notifications arrive from no-reply@efilingmail.tylertech.cloud, which may need to be whitelisted by your firm's IT support. If the notifications have not arrived and are not present in your spam/junk mail folder, please contact File & Serve support at 1-800-297-5377 for further assistance.

If you are not the filer who submitted the filings

File & Serve only sends submission/acceptance/rejection notifications via e-mail to the filer who submitted the documents. Service according to the rules of Civil procedure still applies to all filings. Any docketable filings may be viewed on the case through https://publicaccess.lehighcounty.org.

I am a party or attorney on a case and I am not receiving any electronic service

Service contacts are not automatically added to a case. If you are not receiving electronic service, please check the case to verify that your appropriate service contact(s) are added to this case. If the service contact(s) are added to the case, please verify that the e-mail address is correct.

My filing is too large to submit

For optimal manageability, the court recommends that document size for filings does not exceed 25 MB per document and 35 MB per envelope.

I am encountering issues with the File Description of uploaded documents

The File Description for uploaded documents must be less than 25 characters in length and may not contain any special characters.

I received a PDF error when attempting to upload a document.

OFS does not allow editable PDFs or PDFs with document security. Errors of this type will be minimized if they comply with a standard format that includes the following. For further assistance, please contact Odyssey File & Serve support at 1-800-297-5377.

- Use 8.5 x 11-inch paper with portrait orientation
- Set the DPI resolution lower than 300
- Do not use unintelligible images (i.e. all-black images)
- Use non-secured document properties (i.e. not password protected)
- Remove external references in the documents, such as URLs and shortcuts

How to “flatten” a fillable PDF

When using a PDF fillable form, such as the Coversheet, the form must lock or “flatten” the document after all fields have been completed to ensure the document can be viewed on all devices and to prevent other users from editing the information. To complete and “flatten” the form:

1) Open the fillable form
2) Complete all appropriate fields
3) Select File → Print
4) Select the PDF printer (NOTE: The Adobe PDF printer is installed automatically with Adobe Acrobat. If you do not use Adobe Acrobat, and you are unable to locate your PDF printer, please contact your firm’s IT support for assistance)
5) Select OK
6) Specify the location to save the “flattened” version of the form
7) Select Save
8) When uploading your form to OFS, choose the “flattened” version of the form

How to adjust a Bar ID in File & Serve to seven digits

If you have received notification from the Courts that one of the attorneys in your firm needs to have their Bar ID adjusted to be seven digits, please have your firm admin follow the below steps:

1) Log on to https://efilepa.tylertech.cloud/OfsEfsp
2) Under the orange Actions menu, please choose **Firm Attorneys** under the Firm Admin section
3) Highlight the record for Attorney _____

4) In the Attorney Number section, please re-enter the Bar ID in a seven-digit format such as 0123456
5) Select Verify
6) Save Changes

Contact Information

For account and technical assistance for **https://pennsylvania.tylertech.cloud/ofsweb**:

Phone: File & Serve Support – 1-800-297-5377
Email – support@odysseyfileandserve.zendesk.com

For questions regarding Lehigh County Civil e-filing procedures:

Email – OFSCivilSupport@lehighcounty.org

For questions regarding Lehigh County Family e-filing procedures:

Email – OFSFamilySupport@lehighcounty.org

For questions regarding Lehigh County Orphans' Court e-filing procedures:

Email – OFSOrphansCourtSupport@lehighcounty.org

For questions regarding Lehigh County Register of Wills e-filing procedures:

Email – OFSWillsSupport@lehighcounty.org

For questions and assistance regarding Attorney Docket Access:

Email – AttorneyDocketAccess@lehighcounty.org