



Florida Courts E-Filing Portal  
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# PDF/A Change Order

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*Checking documents for submitted through the Portal  
for preferred PDF/A format*

FCTC Motion approved at 2nd Reading: Motion to recommend the Portal, for those documents not filed as PDF/A, begin the process to ultimately convert received documents to PDF/A, understanding that the Portal will continue to provide the documents to each individual clerk in the format that the clerk can process. In support of this process, the Portal will educate the filers as to the requirement of filing documents in PDF/A format.

# Florida Courts E-Filing Portal

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<b>Application Version</b>	Release 2018.02	<b>HEAT Ticket</b>	1093675
<b>Functional Area</b>	Filer's Interface	<b>Environment</b>	Production
<b>Date</b>	01/02/2018		
<b>Short Description:</b>	Check documents submitted through the Portal to ensure the documents are in PDF/A format		

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### Scope

The scope of this document includes defining a process whereby the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal (Portal) will check each document submitted to the Portal for the required PDF/A format. Documents filed through the Portal will be provided to the clerk in PDF/A format when the clerk is able to receive and store a PDF/A document as follows:

- Documents filed in an approved PDF/A format will be provided to the clerk as originally filed.
- Documents filed in a word processing format will be converted to an approved PDF/A format.
- Documents filed in other searchable PDF formats will be converted to an approved PDF/A format.
- Documents filed in other non-searchable PDF formats will be rasterized (*i.e.* converted into bitmap file format) as an approved PDF/A format.
- Digital signatures and digital notarizations will not be passed or maintained by the Portal.

### Approved PDF/A Format

The preferred format for document submission is PDF/A (or current equivalent), although the Portal currently allows and will continue to allow documents to be filed in Word, WordPerfect and other PDF formats. Filers are recommended to convert their documents to the latest supported PDF/A format prior to filing.

**Adoption of PDF/A Format.** The PDF/A format currently has three versions: (-1, -2 and -3). The Florida Courts encourage the use of PDF/A-2 (or the latest version of PDF/A in place) in part due to increased security of that format. Because tools to generate PDF/A-2 are not generally available, filing in the PDF/A-1 format will be accepted until PDF/A-2 is more generally adopted. References to PDF/A-2 in this document include the use of PDF/A-1 and PDF/A.

**PDF/A-2 Subtypes.** The PDF/A-2 format has two relevant subtypes:

- PDF/A-2a (accessible). This subtype allows document intelligence to be “accessible.” Normally, full accessibility can only be met by converting born-digital documents. PDF/A-2a documents retain document intelligence, are searchable, and are generally screen reader friendly.
- PDF/A-2b (basic). When the filer is unable to create a born-digital document, the document may be scanned, and the filer should use the PDF/A-2b format. PDF/A-2b provides minimal compliance to ensure that the rendered visual appearance of a conforming document can be preserved and reproduced over the long-term. PDF/A-2b documents can be made searchable using OCR tools.

### Business Rules

- The Portal will check the documents as they are submitted to the Portal for the proper PDF/A format.
- The clerks will be able to phase in this functionality when they are ready to store PDF/A documents in their Case Maintenance System.
- The clerks will be continue to receive documents in the format they can receive and process until they are able to accept a PDF/A document.

### Business Requirements

- The Portal will check each document submitted for PDF/A format.
- The Portal will provide feedback to the filer if the document is not in the proper PDF/A format.
- The Portal will provide a link to an online video explaining how to convert a document to the PDF/A format in the message returned to the filer when a document is submitted in another format.
- The Portal will provide the clerk with the document in the format the clerk is presently able to receive, process and store.

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### Functional Requirements

- The Portal will continue to receive Word, WordPerfect or PDF file formats.
- The Portal will continue to provide the clerk with the documents in the file format they are able to receive, process and store.
- The Portal will not convert a document to PDF/A until the clerk receiving the document is able to store in PDF/A format. This will be configurable by the clerk.
- The Portal will not pass digital signatures and digital notarizations which require an encryption key.
- The Portal will provide feedback to the filer of the impending requirement that all documents are to be submitted in PDF/A format as well as a link to an online video that explains how to save a document to PDF/A.

### Definitions

**Bookmark.** A link connecting to a specific target (e.g. a page, paragraph, or word) in a PDF document. Bookmarks usually indicate the document structure, but may also include sensitive words and phrases.

**Born-Digital.** Refers to materials that originate in digital form. For purposes of the Florida Court System, it means that a filer creates documents using an electronic document authoring tool (e.g., Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect) and thus containing desired “document intelligence” that is to be retained throughout the document’s lifecycle.

**Document Intelligence.** Information and metadata created during the lifecycle of a document. The original document-authoring tool (e.g., Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect) creates some of this information and metadata. The author may use other applications (e.g., Adobe Acrobat or Nuance PDF Converter) to add information and metadata. Document intelligence includes the viewable text, appearance, and hidden information such as document identifiers, tags such as those used to make the document compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other metadata.

**Introduced Metadata.** Additional metadata added to a document as it flows through the document workflow process. For example, Time Stamps, Case Number stamps, seals, etc. added after filing are metadata “introduced” by the clerk.

**Link/Hyperlink.** The connection that links selected content to a specific target within (internal) or outside (external) a document. If you remove the link, the linked text or object remains but the PDF no longer performs the action to take the user to the linked content. A link that is associated with selected text in a document is referred to as an embedded hyperlink. The target location, whether internal to the document or associated with an external location such as a URL on the Internet, is programmatically tied to selected text and embedded in the document as metadata. A persistent link is a link that is judged to be trustworthy and stable over long periods of time whereas a non-persistent link is likely to change or to not survive over long periods of time.

**Metadata.** Data that describes or gives information about other data. Document metadata may be structural or descriptive. It is information within the file that might identify the document or provide other details about the document (e.g., title, subject, author, typeface or font, enhancements, size, searchable indices, ADA related tags, security, or other identifying file characteristics). Other than a pure text file, an intelligent document cannot exist without some level of metadata to identify the structure and describe certain document content.

**PDF Metadata.** Information about a PDF document such as author, subject, keywords, date, copyright information, etc. Metadata can be searched using PDF search utilities.

**Rasterize.** Rasterization converts an image into pixels in order to print, display, or store the image in a bitmap file format.

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### Document Creation and Formatting

Documents are usually created using a readily available word processing application. It is preferred that documents filed with the Florida Court system be saved in the latest supported PDF/A format prior to filing. When the PDF/A format is mandated, the Portal will continue to accept filings in the Word, WordPerfect, and PDF formats, and the Portal will convert filings to PDF/A as appropriate when the clerk is able to receive and process the PDF/A format.

### Document Creation Guidelines

#### Allowable Formatting

These formatting features will be passed on to the clerk.

**Document Formatting.** Born-digital documents must be created using the US Letter (8.5" x 11") page size and font types and sizes as specified in the Rules of Judicial Administration.

**Protection of Sensitive Information.** A filer must follow the guidelines found in Rule 2.425, RJA – Minimization of the Filing of Sensitive Information.

**Electronic Signatures.** The use of electronic signatures is permitted consistent with Rule 2.515(c)(1)(A)(B) and (C). This includes the use of /s signatures, images of signatures, or signatures that are added to a document using a signature pad.

**Supported PDF/A Document Intelligence Elements.** The following PDF/A document intelligence elements are permitted in documents submitted to the Florida Courts: bookmarks, electronic signatures, attachments created by using the Insert feature to append pages to a document, internal links, embedded internal hyperlinks, embedded persistent external hyperlinks, and embedded images. Guidelines for hyperlinks are found in Section 3.1.12.1, Standards for Electronic Access to the Courts.

#### Prohibited Formatting

These formatting features will not be passed on to the clerk.

**Prohibited PDF/A Document Intelligence Elements.** The following elements must not be used in PDF/A documents submitted to the Florida Courts: digital signatures, digital notarizations, embedded attachments, comments, annotations, hidden deleted item (these should be purged), embedded non-persistent external hyperlinks, embedded thumbnails, form fields and actions, JavaScript, and embedded non-display data.

**Encryption Prohibited.** A compliant PDF/A file must be open and available to anyone or any software that processes the file. User IDs and passwords may not be embedded.

### Document Filing

Document Filing will be conducted in accordance with 3.0 Electronic Transmission and Filing of Document of the Standards for Electronic Access to the Courts.

### Enhancement Description

The first reading of requiring PDF/A to be the required document format for documents submitted through the Portal was held October 26, 2017. It has been requested by the FCTC that beginning the second half of this year the Portal check each document as it is submitted to the Portal for the required PDF/A format. If the documents are not in the PDF/A format, the Portal will provide the filer with a message advising them of the date that the required PDF/A

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document format will be in place, and a link to an online video that explains the PDF conversion process. The Portal will continue to provide the clerk the documents submitted through the Portal in the format they are presently able to receive, process and store. At the time the clerk is ready to receive and store PDF/A documents, the Portal will provide those PDF/A documents to the clerk. This will be a clerk configurable option in the Portal. The second reading was held and passed on February 9, 2018

## E-Filing Portal Software Modifications

### Request E-Filing Support

The transition to requiring filers to submit documents in the PDF/A format will greatly impact the Service Desk especially with the Pro Se filers.

What additional information needs to be included on the request help screen to handle PDF/A inquiries?

### Add/Edit Documents Tab

When the filer uploads the document to the Portal, the file format of that document is displayed on the Add/Edit Document page.

Add/Edit Document

Document #: New Document Filing Fee: \$0.00 Clear

Search:  **WARNING:** Removal of document metadata is the responsibility of the filer. Any document metadata remaining may become part of the public record. [Click here to see a video on how to Remove Metadata from Word Document.](#)  
*Enter Search criteria and tab or hit enter to filter the list*

**Frequently Filed Documents**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Affidavit	<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit of Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit of Costs	<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit of Counsel
<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Deposit	<input type="checkbox"/> Counter Claim/Petition	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed Summons to be Issued by Clerk	

**Acceptance**

<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance of Service			
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**Affidavits and Oaths**

<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit	<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit in Opposition	<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit in Opposition to Claim of Exemption	<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit in Support
<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit of Amount Due	<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit of Attorney's Fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit of Claim	<input type="checkbox"/> Affidavit of Compliance

1 - 5 of 115 items

\* # Pages:  \* Upload:  ACoverLetter.docx Save Cancel

When the document file format is displayed, if it is not in PDF/A format, the Portal will display a message to the filer (the language in this message may be changed).




Your document is not in a [PDF/A](#) format pursuant the current Florida Supreme Court Standards. To learn how to create a PDF/A document click [here](#).

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If the filer continues on the Add/Edit Documents page to save the improperly formatted document, the message box will be displayed again to the filer (the message in this language may be changed).

Your document is not in a [PDF/A](#) format pursuant to the current Florida Supreme Court Standards. To learn how to create a PDF/A document, click [here](#)




Pleading on Existing Case Help   

Type: Trial      County: Marion      Division: County Criminal      Total Fee: \$0.00

Case #: 422017MM000123MMAXXX      Type: MISDEMEANOR      Status: MENTAL PHASE 1

Case Title: STATE OF FLORIDA VS FORT, SHANIA

[Case Information](#)   [Case Parties](#)   **Documents**   [ServiceList](#)   [Fees and Payments](#)   [Review and Submit](#)

Document	Document Group/Type	Fee	Pages	File	Size(MB)
 Remove	Replace  Acceptance of Service	\$0.00	1	<a href="#">View</a>  C:\fakepath\ACoverLetter.docx	0.02
<a href="#">Add</a>					
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 Documents</b>	<b>0.02</b>

**WARNING:** As an attorney or self-represented filer, you are responsible to protect confidential information under Florida Rules of Judicial Administration 2.420 and 2.425. Before you file, please ensure that you have complied with these rules, including the need to complete a Notice of Confidential Information form or motion required under 2.420 regarding confidential information.  
Your failure to comply with these rules may subject you to sanctions.

[Back](#)   [Next](#)   [Save to Workbench](#)

The Portal will continue to check the file format every time a new document is uploaded to the Documents tab to ensure that the PDF/A document format requirement is met.

### Portal/Local Review

Documents filed through the Portal will be provided to the Clerk as a PDF/A

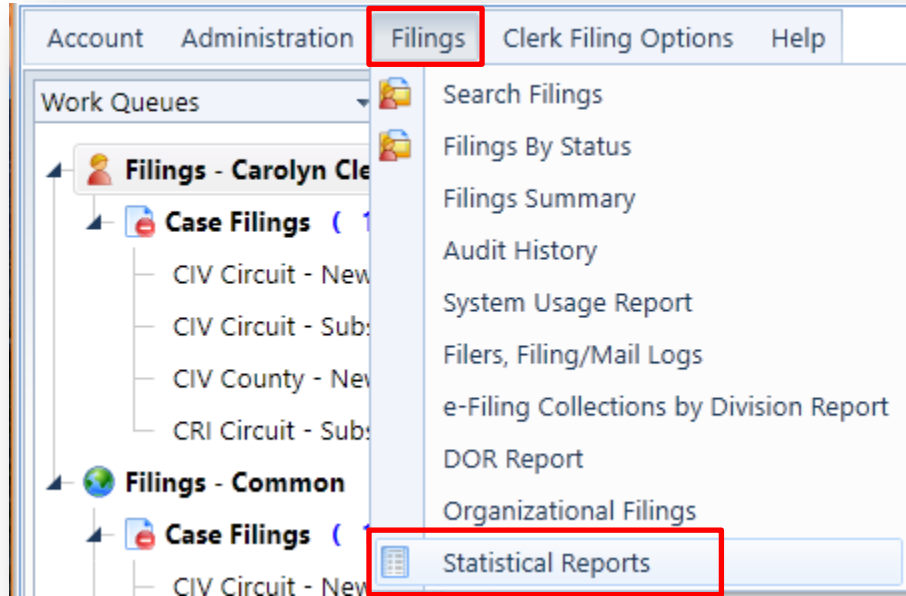
- Documents filed in an approved PDF/A format will be provided to the Clerk as filed.
- Documents filed in a word processing format will be converted to an approved PDF/A format.
- Documents filed in other searchable PDF formats will be converted to an approved PDF/A format.
- Documents filed in other non-searchable PDF formats will be rasterized (*i.e.*, converted into bitmap file format) as an approved PDF/A format.
- Digital signatures and digital notarizations will not be passed or maintained by the Portal.

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### Statistical Reports

The Portal will add the ability for the clerks to see and save statistics regarding how documents are filed to their county. This will show if the documents are filed as a Word, Word Perfect or PDF/A format. This functionality will be added to the already available Statistical Reports sections in Clerk Review under the Filings tab.



### Optional Functionality

As an additional service to filers, the Portal could be programmed to convert their documents to the required PDF/A format if submitted in another format. This option would be a fee based option similar to the U.S. Federal Courts viewing requirement [10 cents a page]. This fee would be used to fund the Portal with all further enhancements.

### Online Help

Update Portal User Manual

Create online videos on converting document format to PDF/A

FAQ page to link to Portal application page