

Redacting Sensitive Information

Documents are redacted to remove confidential and sensitive information that should not be publicly available, online, before filing.

Pursuant to Administrative Order M-274-21 and Super. Ct. Civ. R. 5.2(a), effective August 1, 2021, you must redact the following information from civil case briefs you file with the Court of Appeals. Civil case types include: Civil I, Collections, Contracts, General Civil, Landlord and Tenant, Liens, Malpractice, Merit Personnel, Other Civil, Property, Real Property, Torts and Vehicle Cases.

1. All information listed in Super. Ct. Civ. R. 5.2(a):
 - a) Social-security number (may use “SS#” instead)
 - b) Taxpayer-identification number (may use “TID#” instead)
 - c) Driver’s license or non-driver’s license identification card number (may use “DL#” or “NDL#” instead)
 - d) Birth date (may use the birth year)
 - e) Name of an individual known to be a minor (may use initials)
 - f) Financial account numbers (may use the last four digits).
2. Identity of an individual receiving mental-health services (including any information that would reveal that identity).
3. Identity of an individual receiving or under evaluation for substance-use-disorder services (including information that would reveal that identity).
4. Identity or location of the protected party in protection orders, restraining orders, and injunctions; *see* 18 U.S.C. § 2265(d)(3) (prohibiting public disclosure on the internet of information that “would be likely to publicly reveal the identity or location of the protected party,”); *see also* 18 U.S.C. § 2266(5) (defining “protection order” to include, among other things, civil and criminal orders for the purpose of preventing violent or threatening acts, harassment, sexual violence, contact, communication, or proximity).

5. Identity of victims of sexual offenses (may use initials).
6. Any other information required by law to be kept confidential or protected from public disclosure

The court requires parties to both redact the correct information AND use effective redaction procedures to ensure sensitive text has been removed, including any metadata that should not be made public. (See below for guidance on removal of metadata).

Tips on Redacting

(For an in-depth guide to redacting, refer to the [U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit's guidance on redacting files for ECF filing.](#))

Redacting a document with software:

Current versions of Adobe Acrobat Professional (not standard) allow you to redact PDF documents using built-in redaction tools.

Visit ADOBE and review the links below for more information on these tools:

[ADOBE help with removing sensitive information](#)





[Redaction file tutorial](#)

[Blog article on redacting a PDF](#)

Redacting a document in a Word-Processing File: (Tips from [Guide](#) above)

1. Start by XXXX out names or identification numbers. For example, Witness John Q. Public, change to “witness, xxxxxxxx” or “NAME REDACTED” or “JQP”.
2. Be sure to do a “Find a Replace” for all text you are redacting.
3. When you convert your Word document into a PDF for filing, use the PROTECT option, choose “remove all hidden information” (scan will run), choose “Remove,” and save as a new file.

Incorrect ways to redact:

-  1. **Do *not* just change the font color to white.**
 - Changing the font color only allows you to not see the text; when the file is downloaded by another user, they can insert color back into the font and now the hidden text is viewable.
-  2. **Do *not* cover up or black out with comment tools.**
 - These tools allow you to no longer see the text on your screen but another viewer can simply highlight the blacked out section/text and can see the hidden text.
-  3. **Do *not* delete without removing metadata.**
 - Even if you delete an address, or a witness’s name, if you don’t use a tool to remove all metadata, that text is still viewable by another user.
-  4. **Do *not* cover with black marker or tape.**
 - While these methods no longer allow you to see the text, sometimes the text is still viewable and can be picked up by a scanner.