



Small Claims and Conciliation Branch

Electronic Case Files System

The Court's official docket and case records are electronically maintained in Courtview, the case management database system. Any document not electronically filed will be scanned into Courtview where it will be maintained attached to the docket entry as the official record. Since December 2004, the Small Claims and Conciliation Branch's official records have been electronic.

The Branch currently maintains the originals of filed materials in paper file jackets. Those jackets, however, are no longer the official record and the Court has limited space for the storage of redundant files. It is the policy of the Branch to eliminate the need to store such paper materials. At times, however, there may be a need to retrieve a paper filing.

Effective February 25, 2008, the Small Claims and Conciliation Branch will start an electronic case files system. All original documents will be scanned and then returned to the filer prior to him or her leaving the branch. The branch will use its Courtview database system to view documents and conduct courtroom functions virtually paperless. All filers are required to maintain an original or a legible copy or reproduction of all paper documents until their case reaches final resolution (including resolution of any and all appeals) and bring them to all court proceedings. Please refer to Administrative Order 08-01 Maintenance of Electronic Case Files in the Small Claims and Conciliation Branch for further details.

During this time of change and evolution, we ask for your cooperation and patience. The changes are designed to enable better case management and high-level customer service. We welcome any suggestions or ideas to help us improve this new system. Please provide comments and suggestions on comment cards, which can be found in the lobby of the Small Claims Clerk's Office or in an email to: SmallClaimsDocket@dcsc.gov

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW ELECTRONIC CASE FILES SYSTEM

❖ Maintaining Original Documents

- Prior to the electronic case files system, all original documents were kept and maintained by the clerk's office in a paper file jacket.
- **As of February 25, 2008, all documents will be maintained electronically in Courtview and all original documents will be returned to the person filing them.**

❖ Maintaining Quality Customer Service

- Prior to the electronic case files system, a maximum of two clerks serviced the public intake and bulk filing windows.
- **As of February 25, 2008, the clerk's office will increase staff coverage at both windows to ensure quick and efficient service and quality review of processed documents.**

❖ **Acceptable Documents for Filing**

- Prior to the electronic case files system the clerk's office shaded in raised or embossed seals on notarized documents and redacted all personal identifiers (SSN, DOB and last four digits of account numbers) from the original documents prior to filing.
- **As of February 25, 2008, the filer must shade in a raised or embossed seal and redact all personal identifiers from the original documents prior to filing.**

❖ **Copies needed for filing**

- Prior to the electronic case files system, the filer provided the clerk's office with copies of the original documents to be provided to all parties to the case.
- **As of February 25, 2008, the filer will only need to provide the clerk's office with copies for service to all defendants. No copy is needed for the plaintiff because the plaintiff will receive all original documents back. (Additional copies will be needed for any other plaintiffs).**

❖ **Availability of Documents to the Public**

- Prior to the electronic case files system, the Public viewed documents in the file jacket and paid a fee of \$.50 per page for copies.
- **As of February 25, 2008, the public can view and print documents in the public access room and pay a fee of \$.50 per page. The docket, but not documents, may be viewed remotely on the courts website at www.dccourts.gov/pa.**

❖ **Availability of Civil Docket and Documents to Litigants in Court**

- Prior to the electronic case files system, litigants reviewed file jackets or printed documents in the courtroom and copies were distributed in court or mailed to the parties.
- **As of February 25, 2008, all litigants will receive their original documents back after filing and scanning in the courtroom, when feasible and in the future, litigants will review the civil docket and documents on monitors located in the courtroom.**

❖ **Ability to Confirm Service of Documents by Certified Mail**

- Prior to the electronic case files system, litigants contacted the clerk's office to confirm service of documents by certified mail.
- **As of February 25, 2008, the certified mail receipt will be returned to the filer and the filer can confirm service of documents by certified mail at www.usps.com. However, service will not be valid without the return of the properly signed certified mail green card from the post office; filers can confirm that the branch has received this by checking the docket, on-line.**

❖ **Responsibility of Litigants**

- Prior to the electronic case files system, the original documents were filed in file jackets and available to the judge for review.
- **As of February 25, 2008, all litigants must maintain an original or legible copy or reproduction, electronic or otherwise, of all paper documents and exhibits filed through final resolution (including resolution of any and all appeals) and bring them to all court proceedings.**