

# **Office of Hearing Examiner e-Filing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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## **General Questions**

### **1. What is e-Filing?**

e-Filing refers to the electronic or online filing and storage of information made up of electronic bits and bytes, not paper, which are created and submitted by the completion of forms made available online by the Office of Hearing Examiner. It also refers to the electronic filing of uploaded supplemental documents in a case.

### **2. Is there a fee to e-File documents?**

Appeals and other filings are subject to the standard [fee schedule](#), as set by Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 3.02.125). The Office of Hearing Examiner accepts cash, checks, and credit/debit cards (Visa and MasterCard only). Credit/debit card payments can be made in-person or over-the-phone. And, keep in mind that: (1) any hearing request that requires a filing fee will not be considered filed until the date the Office of Hearing Examiner receives the filing fee; and (2) the filing fee must be paid prior to the expiration of the appeal period.

### **3. Who is required to e-File?**

No one is required to e-File an appeal or other case type. E-Filing is encouraged, but it is not mandatory. It is still acceptable to file your appeal or other case type, or supplemental documents, via US mail or in-person.

### **4. How quickly can I set up an e-Filing account and begin e-Filing?**

Setting up an e-Filing account with the Office of Hearing Examiner is easy and takes only a few minutes. Once you have set up an account you may begin to e-File immediately. For more detailed information about setting up and using an e-File account, visit the Office of Hearing Examiner's [e-File page](#).

### **5. May I submit all my documents electronically?**

All documents with .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, and .pdf file extensions may be filed electronically. However, the examiners have the discretion to require that any document be provided in hard copy.

### **6. Are there any documents that I cannot file electronically?**

Yes. If documents cannot be accurately scaled down to allow for e-Filing, they must be submitted in hard copy format.

### **7. Can I use the e-Filing application to initiate a new case?**

Yes, for most cases. For example, the following types of cases can be initiated electronically: all appeals (tax, citation, dangerous animal, land-use-related, SEPA, relocation assistance, etc.); discrimination cases; third-party utility billing complaints; and floating home cases. If your case type is not listed, you may contact the Office of Hearing Examiner about e-Filing other types of cases.

### **8. Can I e-File anytime, including weekends and holidays?**

Yes. The e-File application is available any time on any day. However, documents submitted after 5:00 pm Monday through Friday, or on weekends and holidays, will not be filed until the next business day.

**9. How do I sign e-Filed documents?**

The Office of Hearing Examiner will accept e-Filed documents in a case from an email address for a party who has established an e-Filing account with the Office. A digital signature is not required. An electronic document that requires a signature should be signed as follows:

By an Attorney

Attorney name, WSBA number  
Law Firm name  
Address  
Telephone number  
Fax Number  
Email address

By a Non-attorney

Name  
Address  
Telephone number  
Fax Number  
Email address

Any concern about the legitimacy or origin of an e-Filed document may be raised by motion in accordance with the Hearing Examiner Rules of Practice and Procedure.

**10. Can I serve other parties and/or their attorneys electronically?**

Under the Hearing Examiner Rules of Practice and Procedure, electronic service is authorized only if provided by law, allowed by the examiner in a specific case (for example, in a prehearing order), or by agreement of the parties. Electronic service is always at the parties' own risk, and it is a good idea to confirm receipt of attachments to electronic mail.

**11. Are all of my filed documents available for public disclosure?**

Yes. All documents filed in any format with the Office of Hearing Examiner are available to the public.

**12. Can I still fax my documents to the Office of Hearing Examiner for filing?**

Yes, but you should keep in mind that: (1) any hearing request that requires a filing fee will not be considered filed until the date the Office of Hearing Examiner receives the filing fee; (2) the filing fee also must be paid prior to the expiration of the appeal period; and (3) under the Hearing Examiner Rules of Practice and Procedure, no more than 15 pages may be faxed to the Office of Hearing Examiner without the permission of the Hearing Examiner.

**13. Is there training available to learn how to use the e-File application?**

No. The e-File application is easy to use and there are procedures available online, via the Hearing Examiner's [e-File page](#).

## **Processing Questions**

**14. Can I view my documents after filing?**

Yes. Once the Office of Hearing Examiner assigns a case number to the filing, you can view your recently e-Filed documents through the e-Filing page.

Case documents are also accessible via the Office of Hearing Examiner's public access application, [Internet Records Information System](#) (IRIS), available from the Office of Hearing Examiner's website. Case documents are available for review through IRIS 24/7 and will be removed only when the records retention period has expired (usually in 6 years).

**15. Can I delete my e-Filed/uploaded documents after I submit my hearing request?**

You can only delete uploaded documents **prior** to submitting them with your initial e-Filed hearing request.

**16. Can I e-File/upload additional documents after I submit my hearing request?**

You cannot e-File/upload any additional documents until a case number has been assigned. Once a case number is assigned, you will be able to upload additional documents from the e-Filing home page.

**17. How long will it take for my document to be processed?**

Generally, documents are processed and visible through the [Internet Records Information System](#) (IRIS) application, available from the Office of Hearing Examiner's website, within one business day of the date they are e-Filed.

**18. Can my e-Filed documents be rejected for filing? How will I know?**

Yes, your e-Filed documents can be rejected for filing if they are filed after the appeal period has expired, if the Hearing Examiner does not have jurisdiction to hear the case, or if other reasons exist for rejecting the filing. If your documents are rejected for filing, you will usually receive an emailed notice within 3 business days of the date you filed them.

## **Technical Questions**

**19. What document file formats will the e-Filing application accept?**

The e-File application will accept documents with the following extensions: .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, and .pdf.

**20. Do I need any special computer hardware or software to e-File?**

To use the e-File application you will need an internet connection and an active email account.

**21. Are there file size limits for e-Filed documents?**

Yes. The total size of all documents to be submitted in a single e-File session cannot exceed 100 pages.

**22. What do I do if the document I want to e-File exceeds the file size limit and the e-File application won't accept it?**

You can break the individual document into separate files. Those separate files can then be uploaded as attachments. After processing by the clerk, all separately uploaded attachments will be merged with the "lead" document and will from that point forward appear as a single document.

**23. How do I e-File large-sized or bulky documents, such as maps?**

Unless you are able to shrink and re-size the document into an acceptable physical size for e-Filing without distortion, a hard (paper) copy of the document should be submitted to the Office of Hearing Examiner via US mail or in person.

**24. How do I get technical support if I have a problem with the e-File application?**

If you experience technical problems with the e-File application, you may contact the Office of Hearing Examiner at 206-684-0521 on business days from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. (The Office of Hearing Examiner can only assist with questions relating to the e-Filing application and cannot address questions relating to your hardware or software systems or your internet connectivity.)

**25. What if my internet connection is down?**

It is your responsibility to obtain access to a working internet connection. There are numerous locations that offer free internet access to the public, including public libraries.

**26. What do I do if the e-File application is down?**

In the unlikely event that the e-File application is down unexpectedly, you may call the Office of Hearing Examiner at 206-684-0521 on business days from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm for help and information.

**27. What if the City of Seattle website is down and I cannot access the e-Filing application?**

In the unlikely event that the City of Seattle network is down, you may call the Office of Hearing Examiner at 206-684-0521 on business days from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm for instructions on how to file your documents.

**28. Will I be notified if the e-Filing application will be taken down for system maintenance?**

Yes. Periodically the system will be off-line to perform routine maintenance, generally after regular business hours or on weekends. During these times, we will provide notice on our e-File application sign-on page.

**29. Which browsers are the most compatible with the e-Filing application?**

Internet Explorer 7 and above; Firefox 3.6 and above; Chrome 13.0.782 and above; and Safari 5 and above.