

# MICHELLE R. MILLER CLERK & COMPTROLLER

ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

# **Criminal E-Filing Manual**

Your Guide to E-Filing in St. Lucie County

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# **Criminal E-Filing Business Rules**

To best serve you, please review these requirements prior to e-filing a criminal case with the St. Lucie County Clerk's office. These business rules list pertinent information about system guidelines, items that cannot be e-filed, how to add and manage documents in the ePortal.

#### **General Guidelines**

Paper copies are NOT required to follow electronically filed documents.

The file stamp affixed to your e-filing document reflects the date and time it was received in the ePortal for timeliness.

When a fee is required, acceptable payment types are ACH or Credit Card (service fees apply). The mailing address for the credit card must match the address listed in your attorney profile on the portal.

E-filing by Attorneys Appearing Pro Hac Vice--Contact the Florida Bar for a PHV number to register on the ePortal. The Florida Bar contact number is 850-561-5840.

#### **Formatting Requirements**

- All word processing forms and documents created for e-filing shall allow a standard space for the placement of the electronic date and time file stamp.
- Documents should leave blank a 3 x 3 inch space at the top right-hand corner on the first page, and a 1 x 3 inch space at the top right-hand corner on each subsequent page, to accommodate statewide standard date/time stamps (as defined in RJA 2.520)
- Documents must have a one (1) inch left and right margin.
- Documents must be submitted in a pdf or Word97 or newer format. The preferred format for documents is PDF/A. Storage of documents in PDF/A format is required no later than June 1, 2021.

#### **Items that Cannot Be Filed**

- Documents exceeding 50 pages with extensive graphics or 200 pages with limited graphics (the ePortal has a 25 mg per filing limitation). Please attach only one page with the wording, "Request oversize document filing" and include your email address. Our IT Department will send instructions for filing the actual document.
- Cover letters
- Unsigned orders
- Writs of Garnishment, Writs of Possession, Writs of Replevin
- Original documents such as Wills, Codicils, Deeds, Surety Bonds, Notes and Mortgages, Certified copies of Foreign Judgments, and other verified and sworn documents as outlined in [SC11-399]

#### **How to Add Documents**

Select the most appropriate docket event that best describes your pleading. Modifications may be made by the clerk.

- File Notices of Confidential Filing and Notices of Filing separate from the pleadings they reference. The only exception is when the attachment belongs to a different case or has no case identifying information.
- Leave exhibits of proposed orders and other exhibits attached to the motions
- File supporting affidavits separate from the motion. Each (styled) Affidavit is a separate pleading.
- Documents with multiple case numbers should be filed once for each case number. Example: Filing of Notice of Appearance with a criminal traffic case and civil traffic case. You must file the document twice, once with the criminal traffic case number and once with the traffic case number.
- Filing received the day before court—Written Plea of Not Guilty is filed. The Clerk will process all filings received before 5 pm on the same day. Please call the Clerk's office at 462-6936 to let the Criminal Courts Department know that the Defendant was due in court tomorrow and the written plea of not guilty has been filed. Please have your filing number provided by the ePortal.
- Traffic cases older than 30 days requesting a court hearing requires the payment of a \$23 fee before hearing may be set. Attorneys should contact the Clerk's office to make payment before efiling the hearing request.

E-filed documents will be rejected by the Clerk's Office for any of the following reasons, which will necessitate the filing

#### **Pending Queue**

of an a	amended document:
	Incorrect venue or jurisdiction
	Incorrect or missing case number
	Unsigned Orders
	Multiple documents that are submitted as a single document, unless they are exhibits or attachments to the first document
	Multiple page document filed as separate documents.
	Document illegible/corrupt/blank
	Any original document mandated by statute to be filed with the Clerk must continue to be submitted in paper format (such as wills for deposit, etc)
	eptable cases or pleadings will be moved to a Pending Queue. The clerk will add the reason why it is eptable such as unreadable image, wrong case numbers, or wrong county.
	You will have 5 business days to correct and resubmit your filing. If accepted, it will retain the original file stamp date.
	If you take no action in this time period, the filing will be moved to an abandoned filing queue and will no

longer be available for correction.

#### Introduction

This manual provides you with information necessary to file court case documents via the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, commonly referred to as the portal. This document will step you through the process of registering as a new e-filer, managing your online account, filing documents through the portal, generating reports, and making payments for filings submitted via the portal.

#### **Tutorials & Manuals**

Visit myflcourtaccess.com to view training videos, manuals and frequently asked questions.

This manual may be revised periodically to reflect modifications and enhancements to the portal.

# **Registering to E-File**

Prior to using the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, filers must create an account. Visit myflcourtaccess.com and click on E-Filing Portal. The portal is compatible with Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Apple Safari browers.

#### Step 1: Create an Account

To create an account, click on the **Register Now** link. Filers will be directed to a page that provides information on the portal. Click on the link at the bottom to be taken to the Account Registration page.

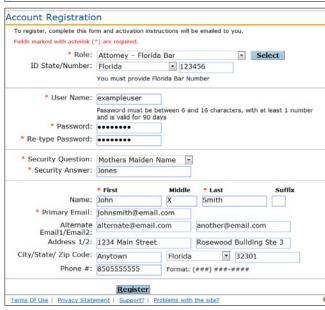
Filers will be prompted to complete all available fields on the screen. Required fields are indicated with an asterisk.

- ☐ From the Role drop down menu, select the Attorney-Florida Bar option. A Florida Bar number is required.
- ☐ Enter a user name and password. The requirements for creating a valid password appear above the password field.
- ☐ Select a security question from the drop down menu and enter your answer.
- Enter your first and last name along with a primary email address. The portal allows for three email addresses to be entered. All filing notifications are sent via email to the addresses listed.
- ☐ A physical address must also be entered. The address is required with processing filing fees with a credit card.

Click on **Register** once all information is entered

Upon successful registration, you will be redirected to the Registration Complete screen.





#### **Step 2: Activate Your Account**

After successfully registering an account, you will receive two emails from the portal. The first email is your confirmation and includes your profile information. If the registration requires review by Portal Support before approval the e-mail notification will indicate that the registration is pending approval. Once approved by Portal Support, the filer will receive the emails regarding approval and activation.

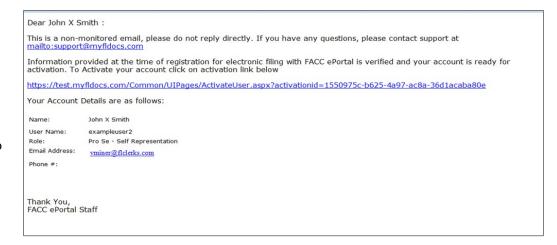
The second email provides you with an activation link that you must click on to complete the registration process.

Click on the link provided in the email to access the User Account Activation screen.

To verify your identity, you will be asked to select the security question and enter the answer that you provided during the registration process.

Once entered, click Activate to complete this step.

You will be notified when your account has been activated.





# **Navigating the Menus**

Once the account is activated, you can return to the portal log-in page at myflcourtaccess.com. You will be prompted to enter your user name and password.

Once logged in, you are taken to the My Filings screen, which presents you with two menus, the Account menu and the Filing Options menu. You may use these menus to make changes to your profile and account.

#### **User Details**

Choosing My Profile from the Account menu allows you to manage account information using the User **Details** and **Change Password** options.

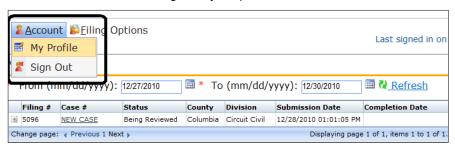
The User Details option allows you to update your profile. You are able to update any profile information present with the exception of Organization, Role and User Name. Click on **Update** at the bottom of the screen to save changes.

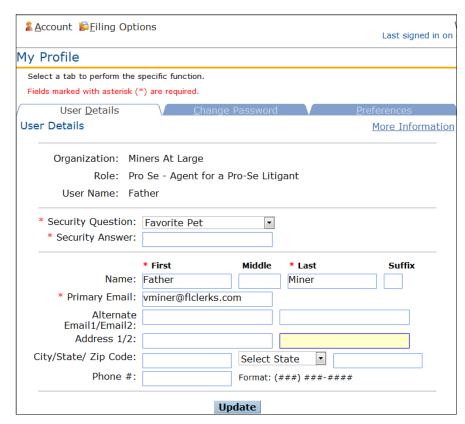
To view the complete user profile, click on More Information located in the upper right side of the screen.

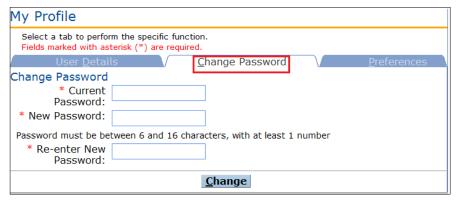
Once expanded, you may enter multiple email addresses, phone numbers and mailing addresses. Email notifications are sent to all email addresses on the account. Only the primary phone number and mailing address are used in the Party Information for the case.

#### **Change Password**

The Change Password tab under My Profile allows you to update your password. The new password must meet the criteria for the password stated on the screen under the New Password input box.



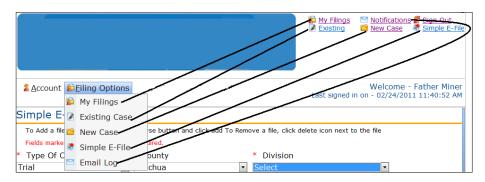




#### Filing Options/Links

The portal filing management links are located under the Filing Options menu. These links are also located in the upper right corner of the screen.

- Filing #: The portal assigned reference number for your filing.
- Case #: The Case Number assigned to the filing. When the filer submits a new case this column will read **NEW CASE** until the case number is assigned

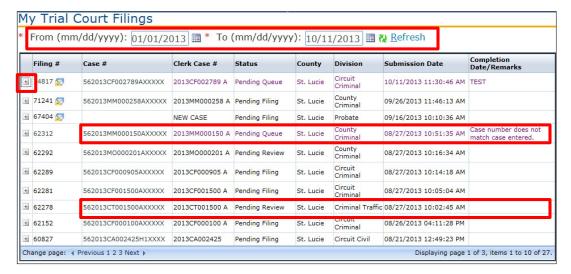


by the clerk; once the Clerk assigns a Case Number it will display.

- Status: The status will reflect one the document is Pending Review, Being Reviewed, Filed, Pending Queue, or Filed for Judicial Review.
- **County**: The name of the county the case is filed in.
- **Division**: The court division the case is filed in.
- Submission Date: Date the filer submitted the filing on the portal.
- Completion Date: Date the filing was processed by the Clerk's office.

To expand each filing for more details, click the + box to the left of each filing.

The My Filings list defaults to filings within the current week. To expand or narrow the list, change the From and To dates and click Refresh to generate the list for the new date range.



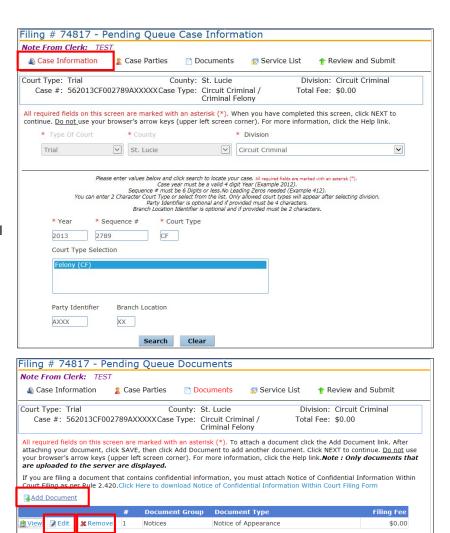
# **Pending Queue**

When a filing requires a correction, it is moved to the Pending Queue by the Clerk's office and the filer is notified of the specific issue. You may click on the hyperlink to open the filing and make corrections. In accordance with Administrative Order 0930, all filings sent to the Pending Queue for correction must be corrected by the filer and resubmitted to the Clerk's office within five business days.

If you edit the document, the timestamp will remain the same as when originally filed. If you remove or add documents to the filing, you will receive a new timestamp for the filing.

If your filing is a new case, you will have to resubmit your payment. Your first payment will not be charged to your account. It will authorize but not settle.

After the document has been updated and is ready for resubmission, check your filing on the review and submit page.

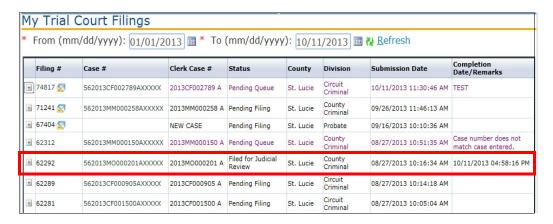


Back

Next Save

# Filed to Abandoned Filing Queue

If a document was moved to Pending Queue and has not been corrected within five business days, it may be moved to abandoned filing queue. Once a document has been moved to abandoned queue, no updates or corrections can be made on the portal.



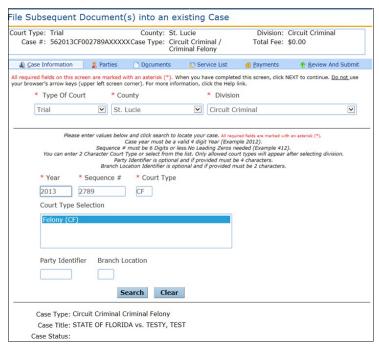
# **E-Filing to an Existing Case**

To file subsequent documents into a case that has already been filed, select Existing Case from the Filing Options menu.

To perform this feature, you must know the case number. Select the court type, county and division from the dropdown list provided. Items are added to the dropdown when they become available for efiling. If the dropdown does not contain the court type, county or division for your filing, e-filing is not available.

Enter the case number and click search. The portal will search for the case record.

If the county's case management system is not linked to the portal, the search for case information will not be initiated and no case information will be displayed to the filer.



- If the case record is located, the case type and title are displayed. Please verify that you have the case for your filing before proceeding.
- If the case record is not located, a message will be presented. Please verify your case number entry.
  - If entered incorrectly, click the cancel button on the message to re-enter the case number.
  - If entered correctly, click the OK button on the message to continue processing.
- If the case privacy is confidential or higher, case information will not be returned from CCIS and may not be returned from the county case management system.

Complete all required fields and click Next. The filer may move through the process by clicking on the Next button when each screen is complete or by clicking on the tabs (Case Information, Parties, Documents, Payments, Review And Submit.

Note: Items listed in the drop down menus are dependent on what is available on the portal and by the county. The Type of Court drop down list only contains trial court. When other court types and counties begin e-filing, they will be added. If the county is not displayed in the dropdown, they are not participating in e-filing. Each county determines the divisions participating in e-filing. Not all divisions in a county may participate in e-filing. As a county brings up a new division, it will be listed in the dropdown for the county.

# **Adding or Editing Party Information**

To add a new party, select a Current Party, or under the New Parties section, select Add Party.

When adding a party, you have three options:

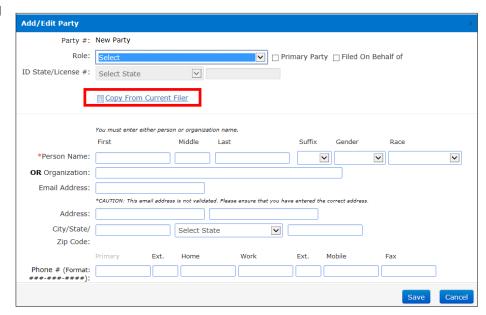
- 1. Copy your account information into the party fields by selecting the Copy from Current Filer option.
- 2. Search registered users and copy their information into the party fields by pressing on the Search Registered Filers option



Enter party information directly into the fields available.

In some cases, the party may need to be served with documents. Service options are provided to identify the type of service to be used to serve the documents. If electronic is chosen, then an email is sent to the party email address with documents attached when the filing is submitted.

Click the **Save** button when entries are complete. The pre-existing parties and the new parties will be displayed. In the listing of the new party records, the filer has the option to edit or remove a party they have entered on the case.



Parties previously existing on the case cannot be edited or removed. Clicking Add Party again allows the filer to add another party to the case.

When the filer has completed adding or editing all necessary party information, click the Next button.

# **Adding Documents**

After adding a new party, you may add a document by clicking Add Document on the next screen.

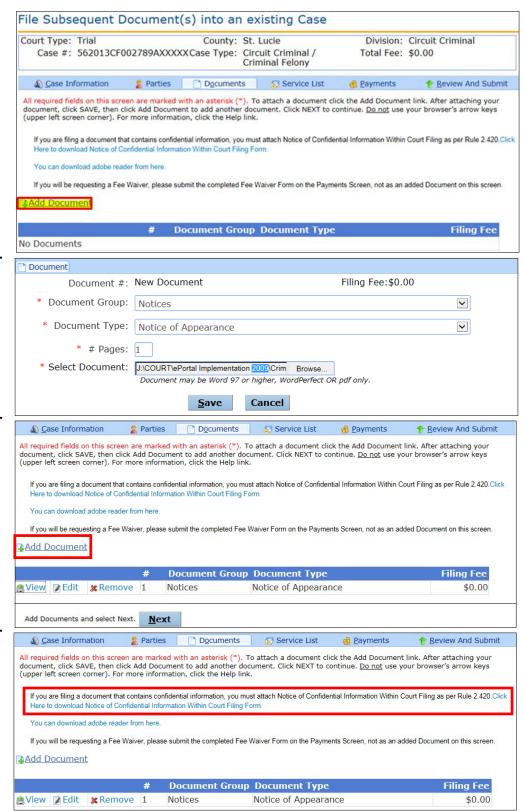
On existing cases, there may or may not be a file based on the type of document and the codes available from the clerk.

Select the document group and type, and enter the number of pages. If the group or type is not listed, contact the Clerk's office. To attach a document, click **Browse**, and find it on your computer. Click Save. The document displays in the list.

The document screen also allows you to edit or remove a document. Clicking Add **Document** allows you to add another document to the case.

When you are done adding or editing documents, click the Next button.

For confidential documents, the filer must attach the Notice of Confidential Information Within Court Filing as per Rule 2.420.



### **Review and Submit**

Once you select Submit, all information is final and can no longer be edited.

If you need to apply edits or changes, click on the Case Information, Parties, Documents, and/or Payments tab(s) to make the changes and re-save the information.

Once any edits to information have been made, click Submit.

You will receive a Filing Received Confirmation.

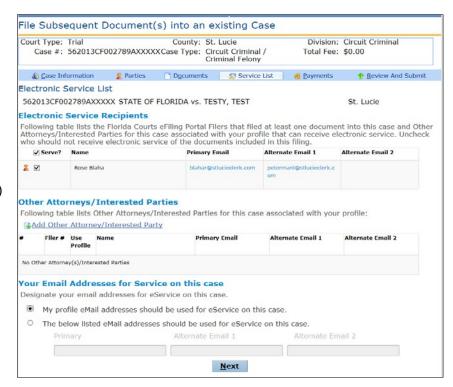


#### **About E-Service**

#### E-Service provides:

- pre-populated lists on first day of eservice on the portal;
- email service of documents filed electronically through the Portal to all counsel of record and interested parties to the case;
- up to three email addresses per case, per attorney to receive the electronic notifications;
- emailed PDF copies of document(s) filed electronically
- the ability to edit attorney email addresses linked to a specific case;
- the ability to remove attorneys from receiving emailed notifications or documents;
- notifications when an email bounced and was not received.

E-filed cases have at least one document that appears on the Maintain My Cases



page, found under the Account tab. Attorneys that file at least one document in a case are added to the case's eservice list. By default, the attorney's profile email addresses is listed as the e-service addresses for each case. An attorney's e-service email list may be updated at any time.

If it is the first time you've e-filed a document in a case, your e-service page will not have anyone listed yet.

#### **Creating an E-Service List**

You may create the e-service list for a case using:

- Your profile email addresses
- New email addresses (for those who should receive e-service for this case only)

#### **Selecting Email Addresses**

Select the first option if the email addresses you wish to be used for e-service are listed in your profile.

If you'd like to designate new email addresses to this case, select the second option and enter the addresses in the fields.



#### **Populate E-Service List**

When you click on **Next**, the email addresses you selected will appear in the Electronic Service List at the top of the E-Service page.

#### **Deselect Attorney to Receive Service**

As new attorneys electronically file to this case, they will be added to the Electronic Service List

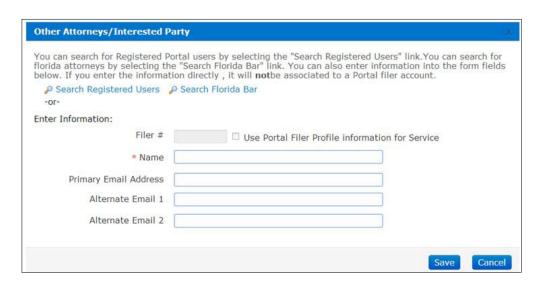


and be selected to receive service. The Serve column on the left contains a checkbox to customize which addresses you'd like to include on e-service. If you wish to not serve a particular attorney, remove the check mark in the appropriate box in the Serve column and the Notification of Electronic Filing will not be sent.

#### Locating Attorneys to add to E-Service List

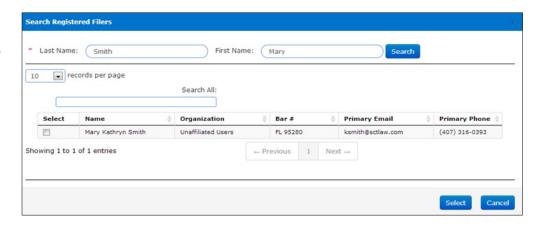
To locate an attorney's email address:

- Search registered users of the portal
- Search the Florida Bar database
- Enter the name and email address manually



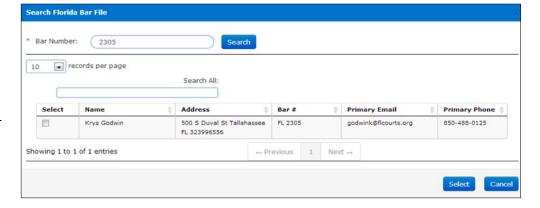
#### **Search Registered Users**

The Search Registered Users page will allow you to search the list of registered users in the portal. You may then select that user and the default email addresses listed in the Portal for that user will be added to the eservice list.



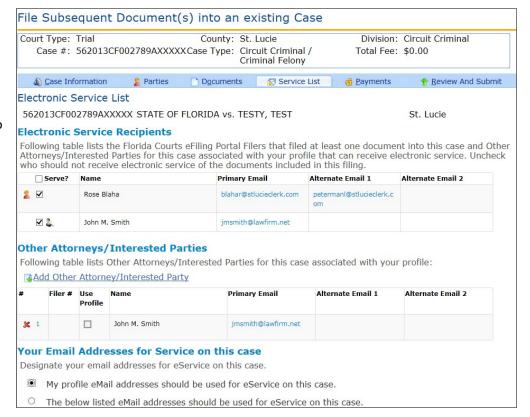
#### Search the Florida Bar

The portal allows you to search for an attorney through the Florida Bar database. The email address on file with the Bar may be added to the e- service list for the case.



#### View the Service List

You may remove any party from receiving e-service on the case by unchecking the box listed by their name. Only the filer has the option to not serve that party or to remove that party from the eservice list for this case.



# **Maintain My Cases**

The Maintain My Cases option listed under the Account menu allows you to:

- view case information by selecting the linked full case number,
- view the E-Service List for the case by selecting the Clerk Case #,
- change your email addresses for E-Service on a specific case,
- remove yourself from the E-Service List for a case, and
- mark a case inactive.



#### **View Case Information**

To view case information. docket sheets and documents, select the Case Number in the first column on the page.

This will open a new page and display the docket sheet and provide access to the documents in the case.



#### **Email Notifications**

The Email Log stores a record of your emails sorted in date order. This allows you to view all your emails generated by the portal without having to access an email client.



#### Notifications sent by the portal include:

- Initial notification of registration
- Notification to activate your account
- Notification of password change
- Notification of document moved to pending queue
- Notification of processed filing
- Notification of moved to judicial review

If a filer deletes an email from their email client, the email still remains in this Email Log.

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### 1. Why does my county not appear in the dropdown list forfiling?

As a county begins participation in e-filing, it will be added to the county dropdown.

#### 2. Why does my filing division for the county not appear in the dropdown list for filing?

Each county determines the divisions that are accepting e-filed cases. Not all divisions in a county may initially participate in e-filing. As a county brings up a new division, it will be listed in the dropdown for the county.

#### 3. Why does my document type not appear in the dropdown list forfiling?

Each county determines the documents they will accept via e-filing. As a county accepts a new document type, it will be listed in the dropdown for the county. Contact the county in which you are filing regarding your document type.

#### 4. Why is the existing case information not displaying? I have verified the case number.

Existing case information is displayed if the county's case management system is linked to the portal for case retrieval. Not all counties have or will initiate this link. If the link is not active, the existing case information will not be displayed. Information on a case that has the privacy level of confidential or higher will not be retrieved from CCIS, and it may not be retrieved from the county case management system.

#### 5. How are electronic signatures used?

The portal system operates in accordance with the Supreme Court's Administrative Order (AO 09-30) for the use of "/s" in lieu of electronic signatures. A pleading or other document is not required to bear the electronic image of the handwritten signature or an encrypted signature of the attorney. However, it may be signed in the following manner when electronically filed through an attorney's login and password:

s/ John Doe

John Doe's (e-mail address)

Bar Number 12345

Attorney for (Plaintiff/Defendant) XYZ Company ABC Law Firm

123 South Street

Orlando, FL 32800

Telephone: (407) 123-4567

#### 6. I received an email that my registration was pending approval. Who can assist me in getting my account activated?

Email <a href="mailto:support@flclerks.com">support@flclerks.com</a>. An administrator can activate a portal registration.

#### 7. Who can assist me with a filing that was moved to the Pending Queue?

For assistance with St. Lucie County filings in the Pending Queue, call the Clerk's office at (772) 462-6900. If the case was filed in another county, you may contact the respective Clerk's office.