



**RHODE ISLAND
JUDICIARY
USER GUIDE FOR
ELECTRONIC FILING**

EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 5, 2014

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1. Mandatory Electronic Filing

- 1.1 Overview - Pursuant to Article X of the Rhode Island Supreme Court Rules Governing Electronic Filing, electronic filing (efiling) shall be mandatory for all parties except for incarcerated individuals or where a waiver is granted in accordance with Article X, Rule 3(c). Self-represented litigants may electronically file documents in accordance with Article X, Rule 3(b) but are not required to do so. If there are any conflicts between Article X and the Rhode Island Judiciary User Guide for Electronic Filing, Article X shall control.

2. Electronic Filing System

- 2.1 Overview - The Rhode Island Judiciary's (Judiciary) electronic filing system (EFS) is called Odyssey File and Serve, a product of Tyler Technologies, Inc. Access to the EFS is located on the Judiciary's website at www.courts.ri.gov under the heading of Electronic Filing or the Registered User may go directly to <https://rhodeisland.tylerhost.net/>.

2.2 Registration Requirements

- 2.2.1 Registered User – A Registered User is an individual or entity with an assigned username and password authorized by the Judiciary to access and utilize the EFS.
- 2.2.2 Non-registered User – A Non-registered User is an incarcerated individual, an attorney who has been granted a waiver of the mandatory efile requirements, or a self-represented litigant who has chosen not to use efile.
- 2.2.3 Overview – To become a Registered User of the EFS, an individual or entity shall be responsible for the following:

- 2.2.3.1 Email Address - Maintain an email address where notice and service can be made. An attorney shall register the attorney's email address with the Supreme Court through the Rhode Island Supreme Court Attorney Portal, Attorney Registration.

Every Registered User is responsible to have a valid, working email address. The Judiciary assumes no responsibility for inoperable email addresses or unread email.

The case management system (CMS) can currently store only one (1) email address per attorney, which shall be the one on file with the Supreme Court. Attorneys may want to configure their own email systems to forward any emails from the court to the appropriate staff within their office.

2.2.3.2 Usage Agreement - Sign a Usage Agreement that establishes the obligations and responsibilities of the Registered User and provides guidelines for the use of the EFS.

2.2.3.3 Credit Card - Provide and maintain a valid credit card for billing purposes.

2.2.4 Training – Registered Users are strongly encouraged to participate in a training session conducted by staff of Tyler Technologies, Inc. via live webinars through the Internet. If you are an attorney, the training session will qualify for one (1) Rhode Island mandatory continuing legal education (MCLE) credit.

As the taped training sessions are available online (video replay) on the Judiciary’s website, anyone can view them as needed. MCLE credit will not be offered for the self-study taped sessions online. You may register for the webinar training or view the taped sessions on the Judiciary’s website at www.courts.ri.gov under the heading of Electronic Filing, Training or go directly to <https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/4639626073634874625>.

2.3 Odyssey File and Serve User Guide - Tyler Technologies, Inc. provides a user guide for Odyssey File and Serve. The user guide is located on the Judiciary’s website at www.courts.ri.gov under the heading of Electronic Filing.

2.4 Usernames and Passwords

2.4.1 Usage – A username and password may be used only by the individual or attorney to whom the username and password were issued, by an attorney’s law firm or office, or by another person authorized by an attorney to use the username and password.

2.4.2 Security – If an individual or attorney is no longer authorized to use a username and password or if there is reason to believe the security of a username and password has been compromised, it is the responsibility of the Registered User to change the password.

2.5 Case Service Contacts

2.5.1 Registered Users – **There are two (2) separate requirements that need to be performed by each Registered User:**

(A) File an Entry of Appearance (see Section 4.9 within these guidelines) in each case if the Registered User is an attorney; and

(B) Register their contact information in each case on the EFS.

A Registered User is required to enter the Registered User's own contact information in the "Case Service Contacts" list in the EFS in each individual case to ensure receipt of service of any documents. The "Case Service Contacts" list is different from the "Firm Service Contacts" list which allows a law firm to maintain a list of attorneys registered for efilings but does not attach listed attorneys to any specific case.

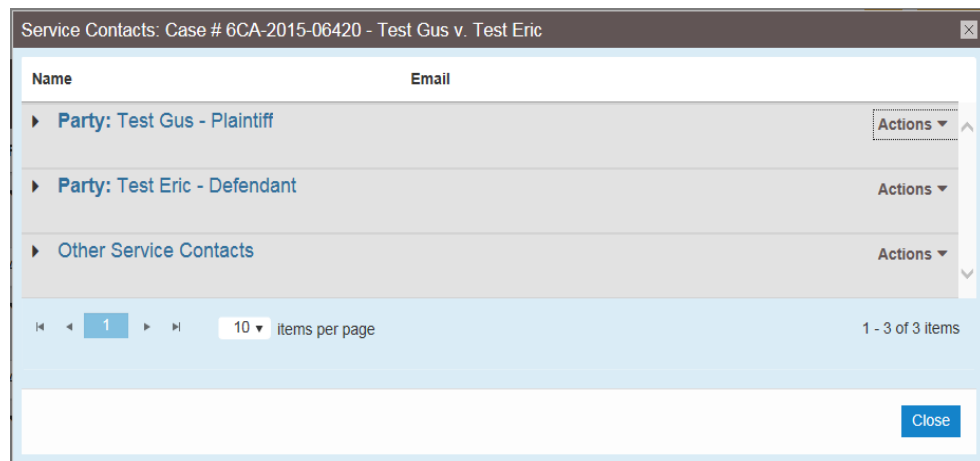
Registered Users should not enter contact information for opposing Registered Users on the case in the EFS. If a Registered User should enter the incorrect contact information for an opposing Registered User, only the Registered User who originally entered the incorrect contact information can edit that information in the "Case Service Contacts." For this reason, if an opposing Registered User has not entered the contact information in the EFS on a case, the opposing Registered User should be contacted and asked to do so. The "Case Service Contacts" is a requirement for proper service through the EFS.

2.5.2 Adding Service Contacts to a Case - Firms

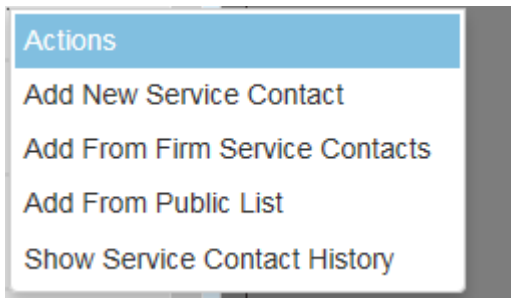
From the Filing History page, locate the case to which you want to add a service contact. From the "Actions" drop-down list for the specified case, select "View Service Contacts."



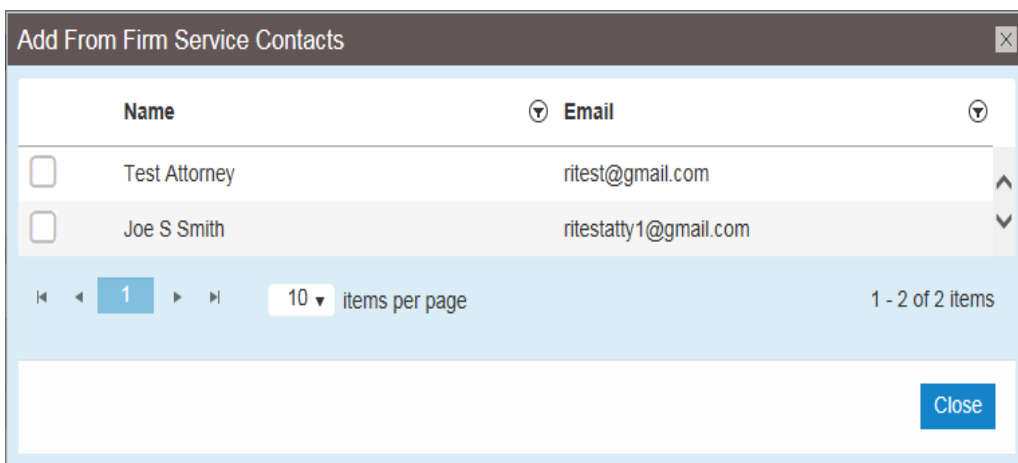
The "Service Contacts" page opens.



Locate the party in which you want to add a service contact. From the “Actions” drop-down list for the specified party, select “Add From Firm Service Contacts,” or select “Add New Service Contact (for non-attorneys)” to add a new contact to the respective case only.

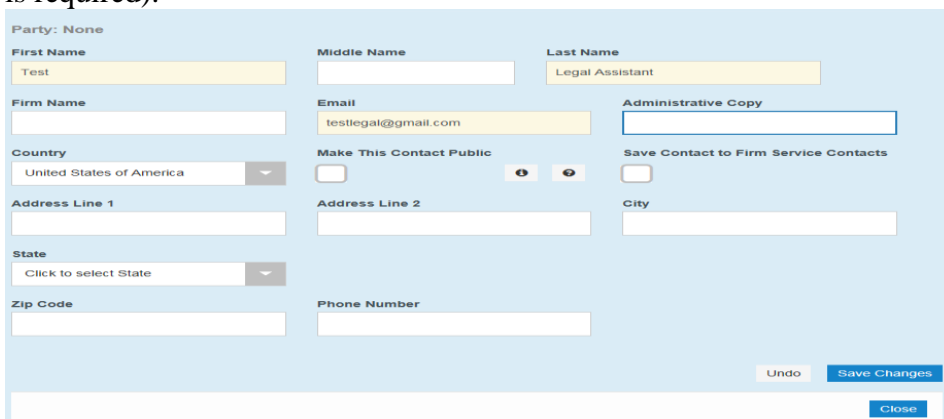


Select the check box next to the service contacts that you want to add to the case. After selecting the new service contacts, click close. The new service contacts are now displayed on the “Service Contacts” page under the party to which the service contact has been added.

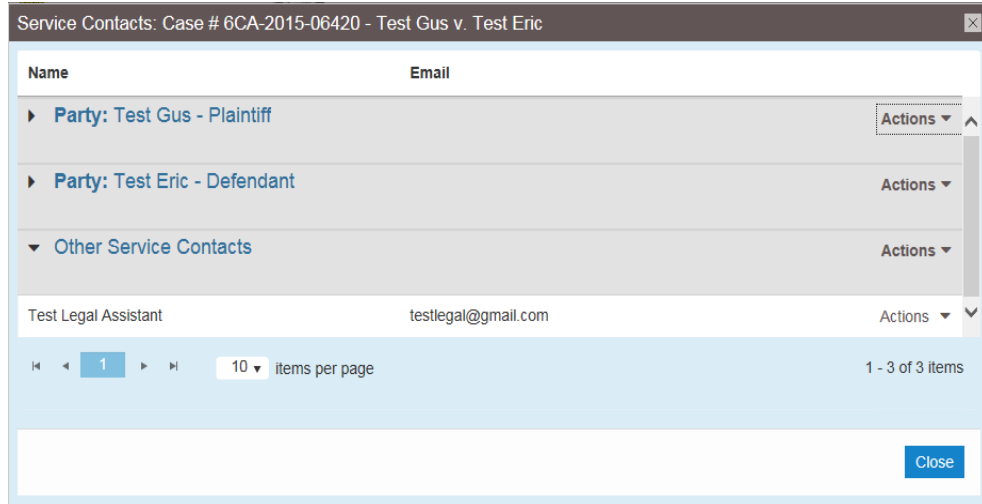


Click close to return to the Filing History page.

If you need to add a new service contact (not part of the Firm Service Contact list), please select “Add New Service Contact” and fill in the fields below (email is required):

A screenshot of a form titled "Add New Service Contact". The form is for a "Party: None". It has several fields: "First Name" (Test), "Middle Name", "Last Name" (Legal Assistant), "Firm Name", "Email" (testlegal@gmail.com), "Administrative Copy", "Country" (United States of America), "Make This Contact Public" (checkbox), "Save Contact to Firm Service Contacts" (checkbox), "Address Line 1", "Address Line 2", "City", "State" (Click to select State), "Zip Code", and "Phone Number". There are "Undo", "Save Changes", and "Close" buttons at the bottom right.

Once completed, you will see the email listed with the existing service contacts on the case.

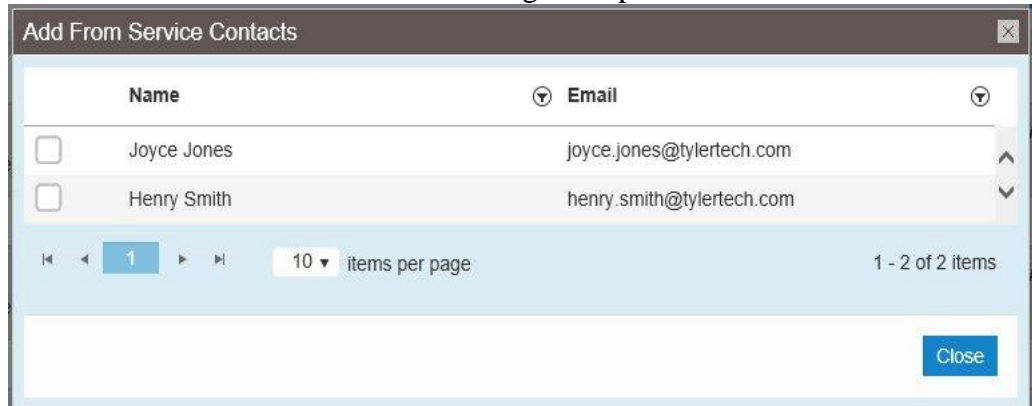


2.5.3 Adding Service Contacts to a Case – Individual Attorneys

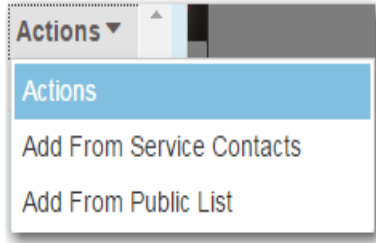
From the “Filing History” page, locate the case to which you want to add a service contact. From the “Actions” drop-down list for the specified case, select “View Service Contacts.”



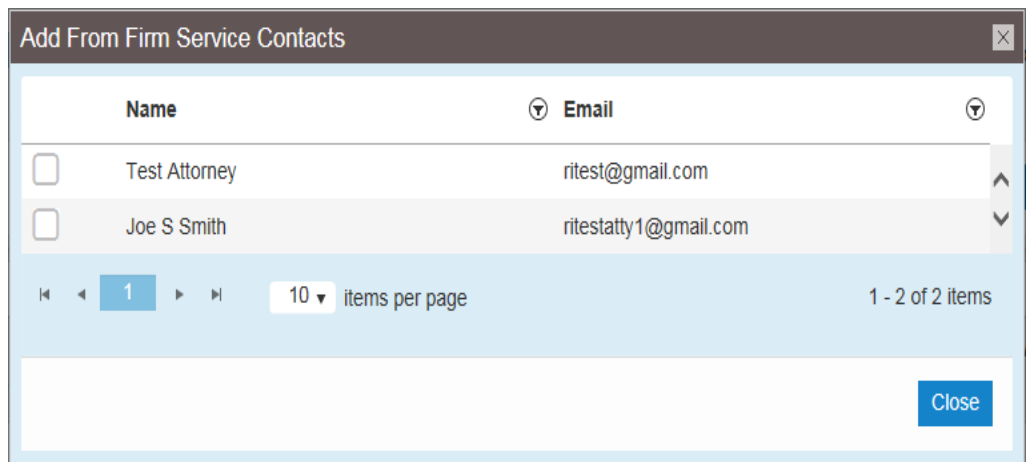
The “Add From Service Contacts” dialog box opens.



Locate the party to which you want to add a service contact. From the “Actions” drop-down list for the specified party, select “Add From Service Contacts.”



Select the check box next to the service contacts that you want to add to the case. After selecting the new service contacts, click close. The new service contacts are now displayed on the “Service Contacts” page under the party to which the service contact has been added.



Click close to return to the “Filing History” page.

3. Rhode Island Judiciary Public Portal (Public Portal)

3.1 Public Portal – The Public Portal is an online service provided and maintained by the Judiciary which is the point of entry for electronic access to case information from the Judiciary’s database whether at the courthouse or remotely. The database is an electronic collection of court records displayed as a register of actions or docket sheet. The register of actions or docket sheet lists parties, case events, document filings, or other activities in a case set forth in chronological order.

Courthouse and remote access to case information is set forth in the Rhode Island Judiciary Rules of Practice Governing Public Access to Electronic Case Information.

4. Technical Requirements for Using the EFS

4.1 Document Type - Documents filed in the EFS shall be in a searchable portable document format (PDF or PDF-A). Fillable PDFs will not be accepted as the EFS does not support them. The best way to file a PDF form is to fill it out, save it, print it as a standard PDF, and then file the standard PDF.

- 4.2 Electronic Filing of Documents – When using the EFS:
 - 4.2.1 Case Initiating Document(s) - The first document(s) filed in a case. All Case Initiating Document(s), including any required documents, attachments, or exhibits, shall be submitted individually as separate files within the same initial submission or filing;
 - 4.2.2 All Other Pleadings - All subsequent pleadings, motions, and other papers, shall be submitted individually with related documents submitted as separate files within the same submission or filing (for example, a motion and memorandum or other supporting attachments or exhibits filed in support of a motion); and
 - 4.2.3 Categories of Items - Categories of items such as bills, receipts, invoices, photographs, etc. may be submitted in one attachment.
- 4.3 Document Format - Documents filed electronically shall comply with the following format requirements:
 - 4.3.1 Size – 8½” x 11” or 8½” x 14” sizes with portrait orientation.
 - 4.3.2 Resolution - At least 200 dot-per-inch (DPI) resolution.
 - 4.3.3 Unintelligible Images - No unintelligible images (e.g., no all-black images).
 - 4.3.4 Access - Documents may not be secured, password-protected, or have other features limiting access.
 - 4.3.5 Black and White Images - Only black and white images shall be submitted. Color documents submitted via the EFS are transformed into black and white images.
 - 4.3.6 Optical Character Recognition (OCR) - No OCR data shall be contained in or associated with the document.
 - 4.3.7 Content - Only readable words, viewable pictures, or images and valid, non-corrupted tables shall be included.
 - 4.3.8 No Corrupt Files - Documents shall not be corrupted (e.g., a corrupt file having 1 byte of data).
 - 4.3.9 Complete Images or Files - Documents must comprise the complete image or file. A file that experiences an upload issue or time out on file transfer from a submitting party usually appears as an incomplete image or file when opened.
- 4.4 Document Size - A single filing should not be greater than 25 megabytes. Larger documents or filings may be filed in several parts.

- 4.5 Character Length Restrictions – Filing submissions will error out when using the EFS if the filer exceeds certain character length restrictions on some of the fields. First and last name fields are each limited in length to forty (40) characters. The business name field is limited in length to eighty (80) characters. The address lines 1 and 2 fields are each limited in length to 60 characters. The description names of PDF files are limited in length to 100 characters.
- 4.6 Documents Shall be Self-contained - All electronic documents shall be self-contained and must not contain hyperlinks or shortcuts to external documents or websites.
- 4.7 Video Files – Video files cannot be efiled through Odyssey File and Serve. However, if filed by compact disc (CD) or universal serial bus (USB) with the clerk, the video can be accessed by a judicial officer or a clerk’s office upon request and with approval of the court.
- 4.8 System Compatibility and Requirements
- 4.8.1 Software and Equipment – To run Odyssey File and Serve, a Registered User must have a computer with Internet access and permissions to download or install Microsoft Silverlight. Registered Users will also need a mechanism to create PDF files and may need a scanner to copy and transmit documents to the courts. Redaction software should also be considered for filing documents.
- 4.8.2 Browser/Cloud Based Solution - Odyssey File and Serve is a browser/cloud based solution. The HTML5 version of File and Serve will run on any operating system and browser. As the EFS currently Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Safari, and Mozilla Firefox are recommended browsers.
- 4.8.3 Macintosh Compatibility - Safari is not compatible with Microsoft Silverlight. Macintosh users should download Firefox. The EFS is currently being programmed in HTML5. Once this programming is complete, Odyssey File and Serve will run on any operating system and browser.
- 4.8.4 Confidentiality of the Data – All filings are sent via HTTPS/SSL. The databank facility which hosts Odyssey File and Serve is SSAE16 compliant. A Registered User may only view documents that he or she files directly or those filed by someone else within the same firm.

Documents filed electronically are held for thirty (30) days in Odyssey File and Serve and are then purged. Once purged from Odyssey File and Serve, the documents are only accessible through the Public Portal. Access to case information is outlined on the Judiciary’s website at www.courts.ri.gov.

5. Payment

- 5.1 Method of Payment – Only credit cards shall be accepted through the EFS.

- 5.2 Rejection of Credit Card – If a credit card is declined, the transaction will not be submitted for efilng.
- 5.3 Fees - In addition to the filing fees of the respective courts, there will be an additional **one-time** fee that shall be assessed on all civil cases when using Odyssey File and Serve. The additional fee is broken down as follows: \$17.50 electronic filing fee to be remitted to Tyler Technologies; \$3.25 technology surcharge to be remitted to the Judiciary; and a convenience (credit card) fee which is 3.25% of the amount of the transaction, which includes the filing fee, civil case processing fee to Tyler Technologies, and the technology surcharge.
- 5.4 Refunds
- 5.4.1 Error - No refunds shall be processed unless the party submitting payment can demonstrate that the payment was erroneously made or if the payment made was in excess of the amount due. As a result, you must print and retain a copy of your payment receipt for your records. Should there be a discrepancy, malfunction, or interruption of service related to the use of this service, you may be required to present your receipt as proof of payment.
- 5.4.2 Refund Request - If you believe that you are entitled to a refund of your payment, you must submit your request for a refund in writing to the Rhode Island Supreme Court Finance Office, Attention: Online Refund Request, 670 New London Avenue, Cranston, RI 02920. You must include your name and current address, telephone number, email address, the date of the payment, the approximate time payment was made, the summons/case number, the amount paid, the amount of the requested refund, and the reason for the refund. If this information is incomplete or incorrect, the Judiciary may not be able to process your request.
- 5.4.3 Non-refundable Fees - The civil case processing fee, technology fee, and convenience (credit card) fee are non-refundable.
- 5.4.4 Processing - Refund checks will be processed within five (5) business days after verification by the Rhode Island Supreme Court Finance Office which may take up to thirty (30) days to complete the processing and to be mailed to the paying party.
- 5.5 Waiver of Fees – Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis
- 5.5.1 Attorneys and Self-represented Litigants - Whether the attorney or the self-represented litigant is a Registered User or not, if the attorney or the self-represented litigant seeks to have the court waive the cost of service of process and filing fees, the attorney or the self-represented litigant must file a Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis, Order, and Affidavit in Support of Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis at the respective clerk’s office. The form for a Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis, Order, and Affidavit in Support of Motion

to Proceed in Forma Pauperis is located on the Judiciary’s website at www.courts.ri.gov under the heading of Public Resources, Forms.

5.5.2 Judicial Officer - A judicial officer designated in each court shall grant or deny the motion. Whether or not the court grants or denies the motion, the court shall file the Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis, Order, and Affidavit in Support of Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis in the CMS.

5.5.3 Motion Granted - If the Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis is granted, the cost of service of process and filing fees shall be waived and attorneys or self-represented litigants shall file the Complaint or Petition, the in forma pauperis pleadings and order, and any other required documents with the clerk.

5.5.4 Motion Denied – If the Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis is denied, proper payment shall be made and the Registered User or self-represented litigant shall file the Complaint or Petition, the in forma pauperis pleadings and order, and any other required documents with the clerk.

5.5.5 State Agencies, Rhode Island Legal Services, and Other Entities – State agencies, Rhode Island Legal Services, and other entities that are authorized to waive all fees associated with electronic filing shall be listed in the respective electronic filing guidelines for the court.

5.6 Reconciliation of Credit Card Statements - Under the “Filings” tab in the EFS, there is an “Export” button on the top right-hand side of the screen. By clicking on “Export,” your filings and the itemized fees paid on the case will be exported to a Microsoft Office XML file. The file will assist attorneys in reconciling credit card statements with the attorney’s client files.

6. Pleadings, Service, and Notice

6.1 Labeling of PDF Files and Filing Description – Label the PDF pleading file with specificity. For example, Plaintiff [Name]’s Motion for Summary Judgment Against Defendant [Name]. Use the “Filing Description” to further describe the pleading to be filed.

The screenshot shows the 'Filings' form in the EFS system. The form is titled 'Enter the details for this filing' and includes several sections: 'Filing Type' (set to 'EFile'), 'Filing Code' (set to 'Account Filed'), 'Filing Description' (with a placeholder text: 'Further description of pleading if necessary - Appears in CMS for court view only'), 'Client Reference Number' (set to '1234'), 'Comments to Court' (empty), 'Courtesy Copies' (set to 'Not available for service only filings'), and 'Lead Document' (Required). The 'Lead Document' section shows a file named 'MST2857.pdf' (79.55 KB) with a 'Description' field containing the text 'Name document with specificity - Appears on Public Portal'. A blue arrow points from the 'Filing Description' field to the 'Description' field of the 'Lead Document' section. A blue callout box with a white border and a pointer to the 'Description' field contains the text: 'PDF files are limited to 100 characters.'

- 6.2 Case Initiating Document(s) – Registered Users shall submit all filings, including case initiating documents, through the EFS. Case initiating document(s) such as subpoenas and summonses with complaints, petitions, or other documents that are required by statute or court rule to be hand-delivered, delivered in person, or mailed cannot be electronically served. A Registered User can only check “EFile” (this will file the document with the court without service or notice to any party).
- 6.3 All Other Documents – Documents that are not required by statute or court rule to be hand-delivered or delivered in person shall be electronically served through the EFS. Registered Users have the following options:
- 6.3.1 Efile – By checking “EFile” only, the document will be filed with the court without service or notice to any party;
- 6.3.2 Service – By checking “Serve” only, the document will be served on the selected parties listed in the “Case Service Contacts” attached to the case but the document will not be efiled with the court; or
- 6.3.3 Efile and Service – By checking both “EFileAndServe,” the document will be filed with the court and served on the parties selected from the “Case Service Contacts” attached to the case.
- 6.4 Consent to Electronic Service – In accordance with Article X, Rules 3(a) and 6(b) of the Rhode Island Supreme Court Rules Governing Electronic Filing, upon the initiation of a case and/or upon submission of an entry of appearance in a matter, Registered Users are deemed to consent to receive electronic service of all documents through the EFS.
- 6.4.1 Attorneys Waived From Using the EFS – Attorneys that are granted a waiver in accordance with Article X, Rule 3(c) shall file a copy of the Order with the filing of all pleadings.
- 6.5 Notice Received by the Registered User
- 6.5.1 Efile Only - Whenever a pleading or other document is efiled and accepted by the court, the EFS will generate a Notice of Electronic Filing. The Notice of Electronic Filing is an email verification (**sent to the email address on file with the Supreme Court (see section 2.2.3.1 within these guidelines)**) that the court received the efiled document. The Notice of Electronic Filing will include the text of the docket entry, the link to the stamped document, and whether a document is “confidential.”

As noted in section 4.8.4 within these guidelines, stamped documents are stored in the “Filings” list in the EFS for thirty (30) days. However, the “Filings” history, which includes details such as case information, fees, payment, and service information, will remain permanently on the EFS. Registered Users must download the document to the Registered User’s computer or access case information through the Public Portal.

- 6.5.2 Service Only – Whenever a document is served only, the Notice of Electronic Filing will contain the same information as outlined in 6.5.1 above. The Notice of Electronic Filing is the official service or notice of the filing to the parties the Registered User selected from the “Case Service Contacts” list for that individual case (see 2.5 herein). The Notice of Electronic Filing will contain a list of the individuals served with the filing.
- 6.5.3 Efile and Service – The Notice of Electronic Filing contains the same information as outlined in 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 above.
- 6.6 Certificate of Service – All documents filed using the EFS shall include a certificate of service, when applicable, in accordance with Article X, Rule 6(e) of the Rhode Island Supreme Court Rules Governing Electronic Filing.

7. Status of Filings in the EFS

- 7.1 Accepted – The court has reviewed and accepted the filing from the Registered User.
- 7.2 Cancelled – The Registered User cancelled the filing. The Registered User may cancel any submitted filing prior to the “submitted” filing reaching “under review” status by the court.
- 7.3 Draft – The Registered User has entered full or partial information but has not yet submitted the filing to the court.
- 7.4 Rejected – The court has reviewed the filing and rejected the filing for a specific reason sent to the Registered User’s **email address on file with the Supreme Court (see section 2.2.3.1 within these guidelines)**.
- 7.5 Received – The court has received and reviewed a proposed order or motion requesting from the Registered User.
- 7.6 Served – When using the “Service” function only, served status means service has been completed to the selected parties on the “Case Service Contacts” list.
- 7.7 Submitted – The document file format and payment information have been verified and received through the EFS, but the filing has not yet entered the review queue of the court.
- 7.8 Submitting – The Registered User has submitted the filing but the document file format and payment information have not been verified through the EFS.
- 7.9 Submission Failed – A file format or billing error has occurred in connection with the Registered User’s submitted filing. The specifics as to why the submission failed are available on the “Details” screen, and the Registered User is notified of the specifics through **the email address on file with the Supreme Court (see section 2.2.3.1 within these guidelines)**.

7.10 Under Review – The court has selected the filing from a queue.

8. Rejected Filings

8.1 Rule for Resubmission of Rejected Filing - Pursuant to Article X, Rule 5 of the Supreme Court Rules Governing Electronic Filing, “[a] rejected filing shall be promptly corrected and resubmitted and shall be deemed to have been submitted and filed on the initial filing date for purposes of any statutory or rule-based deadline.”

8.2 Statute of Limitations – **When the resubmission is filed after the statute of limitations because of a court rejection, the Registered User shall submit a new filing, type “Envelope [put in number] resubmission” (indicating the filing which was previously rejected by the court) in the “Filing Comments,” and attach a copy of the previously rejected submission details.** Once confirmed, the administrator or a designee of each court shall change the event date in the CMS and ensure that both the original (rejected) document and the submitted accepted document are attached to the event for judicial review.

The screenshot shows a web-based filing system interface. At the top, there's a header with 'Filings' and 'Need Help?'. Below that, a section titled 'Enter the details for this filing' contains several input fields: 'Filing Type' (dropdown menu with 'EFile' selected), 'Filing Code' (dropdown menu with 'Complaint Filed' selected), 'Filing Description' (empty text box), 'Client Reference Number' (text box with '1234'), and 'Comments to Court' (text box with 'Envelope 3257 Resubmission'). Below these are 'Courtesy Copies' (text box with 'Not available for service only filings.') and 'Lead Document' (Required) section, which includes a table with columns for 'Description' and 'Security'. The 'Lead Document' table has one row: 'Complaint Test.docx' with 'Public' security. Below that is an 'Attachments' section with a table for 'Envelope 3257 Resubmission Test.docx' with 'Public' security. At the bottom, there's a 'Computer' section with an upload icon and a help icon. Two large blue arrows point to the 'Comments to Court' and 'Attachments' text boxes.

9. Non-public Documents

9.1 Requirement – Non-public documents are to be filed with the court in accordance with Article X, Rule 8(a) and (b) of the Rhode Island Supreme Court Rules Governing Electronic Filing.

10. Sealed Cases

- 10.1 Requirement – Any pleadings that are to be filed into a sealed case shall be filed directly with the court and not through the EFS.

11. Original Documents

- 11.1 Requirement – Any document that is required by federal or state law, court rule, court order, or case law to be submitted to the court as an original is not subject to the EFS rule. The document shall be filed manually with the court clerk.