



The Court of Appeal of Alberta

Notice to the Profession

March 20, 2017

Alberta Court of Appeal's e-Filing Initiative

The Court of Appeal of Alberta is pleased to announce that it will be adopting an e-filing system to better serve the administration of justice, litigants, the Bar and the public at large. This initiative involves significant progress in the area of electronic access to Court information and electronic proceedings before the Court. Registered users will be able to initiate an appeal, file materials and pay applicable fees electronically. In addition to e-filing, the program will include comprehensive case and document management systems.

Advantages of the Court's New e-Filing System

This e-filing system will provide advantages for the Court, litigants and the Bar. For the Court, a more efficient workflow with easier file management and storage will be in place. For litigants and the Bar, the benefits include:

- an increased accessibility to the Court;
- the ability to file documents remotely from the office or from home at any time of the day without worrying about postage, courier or messenger fees, parking fees or traffic congestion;
- the reduction of paper resulting in cost, time and resource savings;
- the ability to access full case information at any time via the internet and view the full text of all filed documents; and
- the ability to electronically receive notices, correspondence and judgments from the Court.

Progress to Date

The design of the system is nearing completion. The project team is currently testing and refining the system before it is introduced externally. During this time, the Registry is scanning and uploading documents into the system as they are filed.

To assist in this initial stage, the Court is asking lawyers and self-represented litigants, when filing their multiple copies of bound documents, to ensure that one of those copies remains unbound or, alternatively, provide an electronic copy in advance to:

- Edmonton.Registry@albertacourts.ca in Edmonton; or
- Calgary.Registry@albertacourts.ca in Calgary.

Next Steps

It is anticipated that e-filing will officially be introduced next year. A “public portal” will be in place for lawyers and self-represented parties to upload their documents electronically. When documents are uploaded, the Registry will receive an alert. Once the document is officially filed, an email notification will be sent to the filing party who will be given a unique code which will allow them to view their electronic file and all relevant filed documents. No special software will be necessary to access the new system. A computer with a standard operating system, a scanner and an internet connection will be all that is required.

Policy Considerations

E-filing raises many policy questions. The Court intends that:

- The official court record will be electronic.
- A “paper on demand” approach will be adopted. Lawyers and litigants will not be required to file paper copies of their materials, unless the Court specifically requires them to do so.
- E-filing will become mandatory only after an appropriate transition period.
- Email will become the default communication method. Thus, parties will be required to provide the Court with their valid and current email address.

A Practice Direction will be issued prior to implementation to address more specific details and requirements.

Feedback Requested

The Court intends e-filing to bring positive change to lawyers, litigants and the Bar. The Court invites feedback on its e-filing initiative. Comments can be provided to Bobbi Jo McDevitt by email at bobbi.mcdevitt@albertacourts.ca by April 15, 2017.

“Catherine A. Fraser”
Fraser, C.J.A.

NOTE: A copy of the Consolidated Practice Directions and Practice Notes can be found on the Alberta Courts’ website at <http://albertacourts.ca> under “Court of Appeal” and “Court of Appeal Rules, Practice Directions & Notices.”

Certain precedents, checklists and forms can also be found on the Alberta Courts’ website. As these documents are revised from time to time, please refer to the website for the most recent version.