

# E-Filing Civil Cases at Montana's Trial Courts

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## General Method

The e-filing system is available for attorney-represented parties.

Trigger fees on DA, DF, DG, DP, DR, DV, CV or SM cases by selecting a specific filing type and subtype. It is incumbent on e-filers to select the filing type/subtype that will trigger a fee when necessary. See appendix B and C.

# Filing a new civil case and paying the filing fee

## Create Filing page

To file a new civil case, select the option Create Filing from the left-hand menu and fill in the fields on the preliminary page. Select:

- Court: under one of the headings with -FCE: [select the court at which you are filing].
- Filing Category: New Case
- Case Category: Civil
- Case Type: select Civil (or Domestic Relations if filing at a district court).
- Case Subtype: select the option that most closely relates to the case you are filing. While district
  court civil cases often make multiple claims in the same case (fraud and breach of contract and
  unfair dealings, etc.), select the major topic from the list. Refer to Appendices A and C for the
  list of all case types/subtypes.
- Filing Type: this will typically be a "Complaint" for DV and CV cases and a "Petition" for DR cases. There are some cases which are opened with a different filing type.
- Filing Subtype: select the option that most closely matches the name of your document. "Complaint" (for District) and "Civil Complaint" (for Justice) are the most common filing subtypes for a new civil case filing.

When you have all the fields filled in, click the "Next" button.

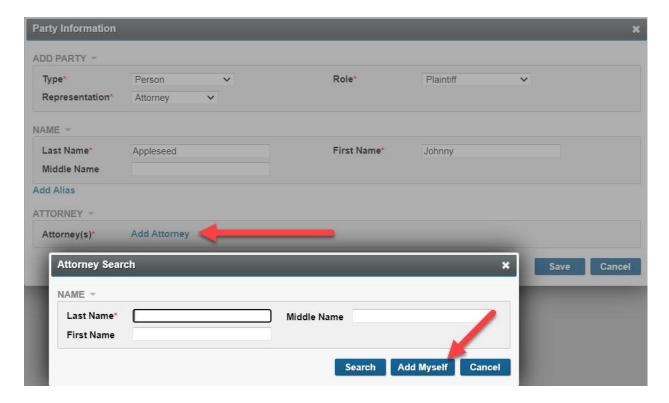


#### **Enter Parties**



From the Party Information page, click the hyperlink "Add Party."

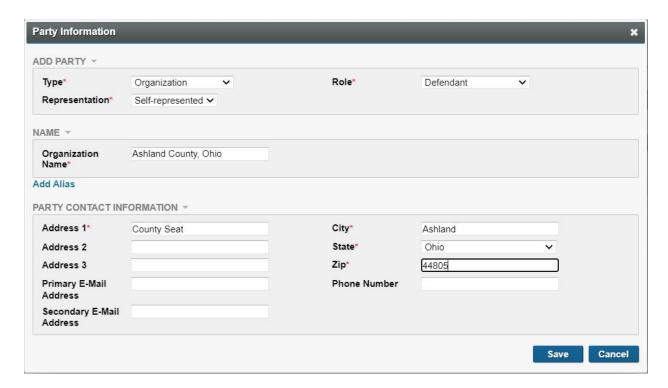
- 1. Start by entering the party(ies) you represent in opening this case. For each party you represent:
  - Designate if the party is a person or organization.
  - Select "Attorney" representation.
  - Fill in the appropriate role (typically Plaintiff or Petitioner).
  - Fill in the name of the person or organization you represent.
  - Click the Add Attorney hyperlink and click the "Add Myself" button.



This will result in the party being added to the case with you as counsel of record.

Repeat this process for every party you represent in this case.

- 2. Next, add the opposing party(ies). Repeat the process as outlined above with these exceptions:
  - Select the appropriate Role (typically Defendant or Respondent).
  - Select "Self-represented" as the Representation value.
  - Add contact information for the party. This must include:
    - o Address 1
    - City
    - o State
    - o Zip
    - (You may add email addresses and phone number if you wish.)
    - If the address of the party is unknown, you may add "unknown" in the Address 1 field, then add a City, State and Zip (even if these are also unknown).



Repeat for every party you are naming in this case.

When complete, click the Next button.

## **Filing Information**

Use the Comment box judiciously. Use this section to impart any "extra" information you might verbally give the clerk if you were filing on paper. Learn from the court clerks if there are specific procedures they would like you to add for any specific types of filings. Following their requests will assure that your case is accurately and timely filed. Comments are only delivered to the clerk and will not be stored as part of the official court case.

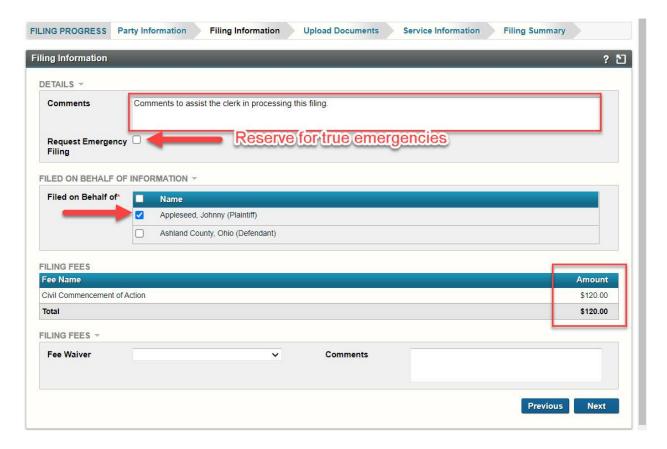
Use the "Request Emergency Filing" checkbox with utmost reluctance. Confer with the court clerks to determine when it is appropriate to use this checkbox. Sometimes a last-minute filing prior to a hearing may warrant you using the Request Emergency checkbox. Do not use this checkbox routinely for all your filings.

Filed on Behalf of Information must be filled in. Select all parties you represent in this case.

The filing fee will be displayed. In our example graphic below, \$120.00 automatically displays. You will pay this amount via credit card or e-wallet when you submit the filing.

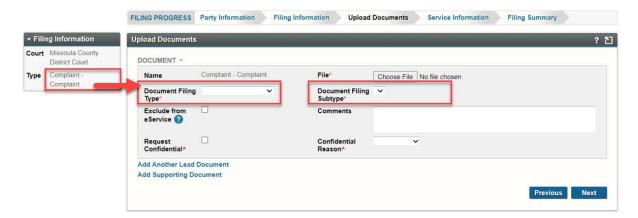
Filings with Fee Waivers are discussed in another portion of this document <u>Filing with a Fee Waiver (new or existing case)</u>.

When complete, click the Next button.

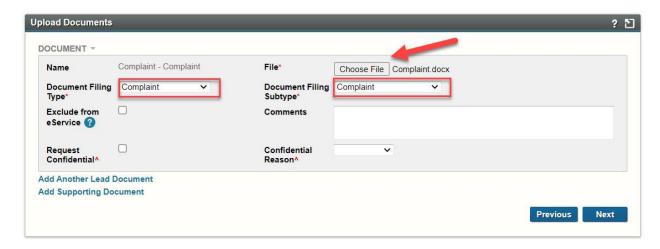


# **Upload Documents**

It is necessary to select the Document Filing Type and Subtype once again. Use the drop-down menus to do so. Make sure that your selection matches the Filing Information box in the left-hand column.



Upload your document by clicking on the Choose File button and navigating to the document location. If you are using Internet Explorer, your button will say "Browse" rather than "Choose File."

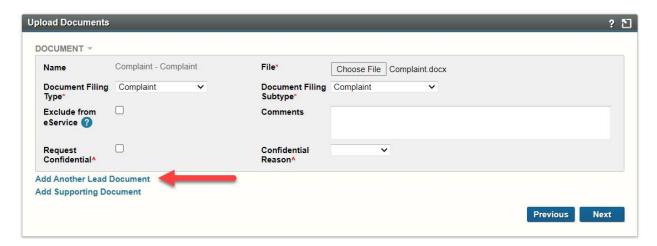


For each document, there are other fields that you can fill in to exclude the document from eService, to add a comment relevant to the specific document, and to request that the document be sealed. Note that if you request the document to be sealed, you must also give a confidential reason.

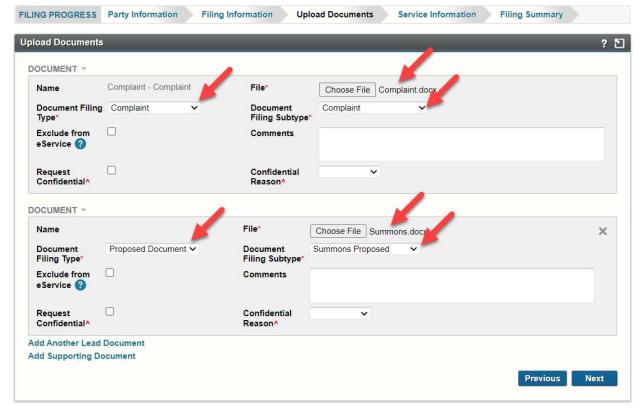
#### Add the Summons as a Lead Document

There are two links on the document upload page that allow you to add additional documents:

- Add Another Lead Document (This is the better option.)
- Add Supporting Document (This option is very rarely used. Use the "Lead Document" link instead.)



Use "Add Another Lead Document" to upload the summons. Select "Proposed Document" from the Document Filing Type drop-down menu and select "Summons Proposed" from the Document Filing Subtype menu. Click on the Choose File button to add the summons.



Attach additional documents by clicking "Add Another Lead Document" again.

Click the Next button to move to the Service Information page.

#### **Service Information**

This page allows you to create an automatic Certificate of Service to be appended to each lead document. Certificates of Service will never be appended to any document with the filing type "Proposed Document."

This is largely irrelevant to new civil cases as service is typically done via summons. The exceptions to this may be when filing on certain types of cases such as Judicial Review, Habeas Corpus, Release of Excess Proceeds, Writ of Mandate, Writ of Prohibition.

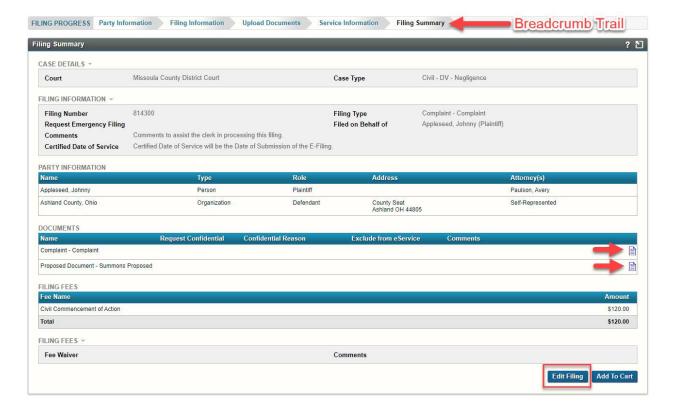
If you do not want to add a Certificate of Service, click the Next button.

## Filing Summary

This page provides you with an opportunity to review the filing that you are submitting.

This is the perfect time to double-check your work, including the correct spelling of the names of the parties and that you have uploaded the correct documents, signed if needed.

If you need to make changes, you can use the Edit Filing button or any of the "breadcrumb trail" page markers near the top of the window. Make the necessary changes, check your work on the Filing Summary page one last time and then click "Add to Cart."



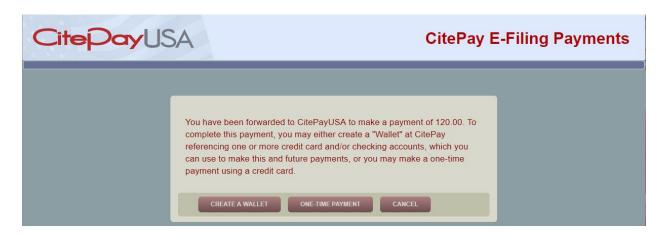
#### Cart

If there are filing fees on any of the submissions in the cart, filings must be made to one court at a time.



Click Submit Filings. Because filing fees are required, you will be automatically redirected to a secure payment processor (CitePayUSA) to enter credit card information (or to use an e-wallet containing credit card information you have previously entered and stored).

The payment transaction will look something like this:





Fields with an asterisk are required fields. Note that a credit card processing fee is due to the payment processor.

After clicking on Process Payment, there may be a slight delay as the payment is processed. The following message warns you not to leave or try to resubmit.

We're processing your payment!
Please wait while we process your payment. This might take a minute or more.
Attempting to close or refresh this page might cause an error in processing your filing.

When the process is complete, the E-Filing system gives submission details and payment receipt information.

- This information can be printed using the Print button.
- A receipt will be sent to the email address given in the credit card payment form.
- Submission details (without payment information) will also be available from the system notification window.

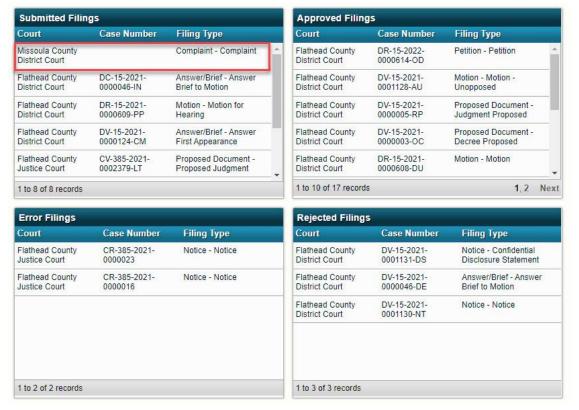
# Retrieving the Issued Summons

It is your responsibility to retrieve the summons from the E-Filing system after it is issued. You can track your submitted filing in several ways. Upon submission the filing can be identified in the filer's submitted filings, which can be viewed from the home page widget or from the filings list.

Widgets can be managed by using the gear icon on the right side of the homepage.



The display below shows the filing that was submitted in the example above. There is no case number because it is a filing on a new case.)

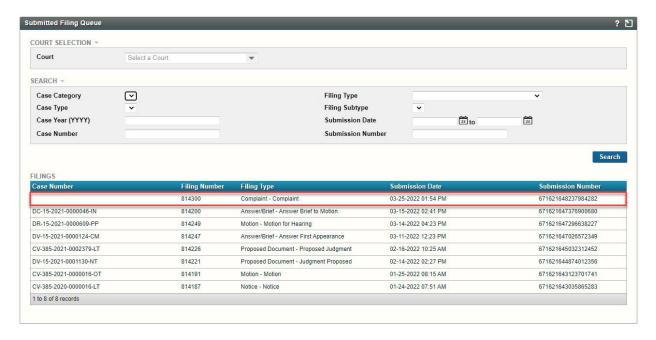


Clicking on a submitted filing will display the filing summary of that submission.

Another way to track a submitted filing is by using the filings list. Select the "Filings" option on the left-hand menu, and then "Submitted."



The submitted filings will be listed. Clicking on a submitted filing will display the filing summary of that submission.



Submitted filings will move from the Submitted list to one of three other lists:

- **Error Filings:** This indicates that the filing never made it to the clerk of court due to a technical problem. You have the option to resubmit a filing if you have one that has errored so you do not have to start your filing from scratch.
- **Rejected Filings:** This indicates that the filing arrived at the court clerk's office, was evaluated by a clerk, and was rejected for a specific reason. The reason will be included in the rejection notice. You have the option to resubmit a filing if you have one that is rejected.

- Approved Filings: this indicates that the filing arrived at the court clerk's office, was processed and filed in the official court record. Success!
  - O It also means that your issued summons(es) are available to you to retrieve and serve. Go to the case view page by clicking on the hyperlinked case number- the case number was assigned when the clerks accepted the initial filing. Alternatively, access the case view page by utilizing the main menu "Case Search" tab. On the case view page, select the document icon associated with the "Summons Issued" ROA and display the document. Download it and serve the summons outside of the E-Filing system.
  - Please note that if you have a single summons to be issued, it will be available to you shortly after you observe the filing move from Submitted to Approved. It does take the clerk additional time to issue each summons, so if you have submitted a few of them, it will take proportionally longer for them to be issued and available to you.

# Filing on an existing case (paying Appearance or other fees)

Please reference documentation at this link <u>Filing on an Existing Case - Trial Courts (Attorneys)</u> for basic system navigation or to file on an existing case for which no statutory filing fees are required.

## **Create Filing Page**

Select the option to Create Filing from the left-hand menu and fill in the fields on the preliminary page. Select:

- Court: Select court at which you are filing.
- Filing Category: Existing Case
- Case Number: Use the following format: Case type-Court ID- Four Digit Year- Ending Case Number (DV-15-2018-840)
- Filing Type/Filing Subtype **District Court** 
  - For filings that require statutory filing fees, you will need to select a filing type that will trigger the appropriate fee. See the appendix of this document for a full list.
     Examples:
    - Filing type: Answer/Brief, Filing subtype: Answer First Appearance (or Answer and Counterclaim)
    - Filing type: Notice, Filing subtype: Notice of Appearance with Fee. The filing type "Notice of Appearance" will not trigger the fee.
  - Select the appropriate option even if you are going to request a fee waiver.
- Filing Type/Filing Subtype Limited Jurisdiction Court
  - For filings that require statutory filing fees, you will need to select a filing type that will trigger the appropriate fee. See the appendix of this document for a full list.
     Example:

Filing type: Answer

- Filing subtype: Answer
- Select the appropriate option even if you are going to request a fee waiver.

Note that if you select a type/subtype that does not trigger a fee when a fee is required, there
will be no availability for you to pay or request a fee waiver and your submission will be rejected
by the clerk of court. Only one fee can be paid per filing.

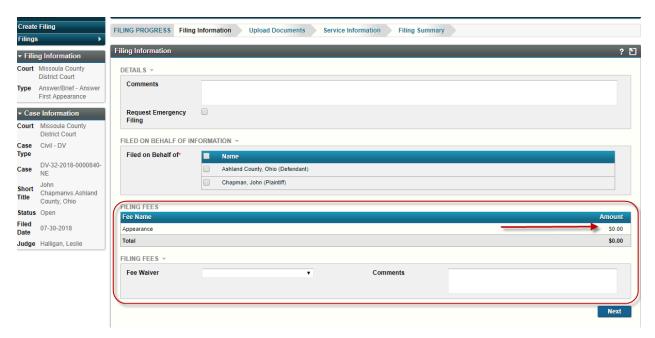


Click on the "Next" button.

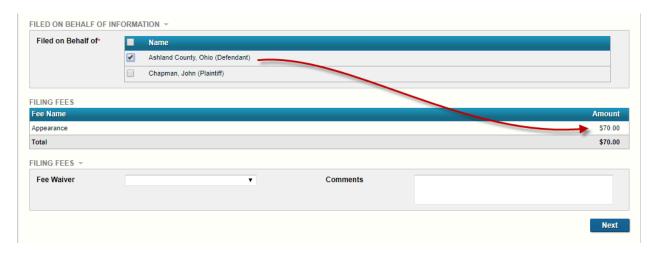
# Filing Information Page

This page contains the filing fee information. If this page does not contain filing fee information, you have made an inappropriate selection of Filing Type/Subtype on the previous page. (**Start over**.)

Filing fee information is contained in two information "bundles" at the bottom of the page, as shown below. To begin, the Appearance fee will show an amount of \$0.00.



As you select the parties on whose behalf you are making an initial appearance, the filing fee amount will increase.

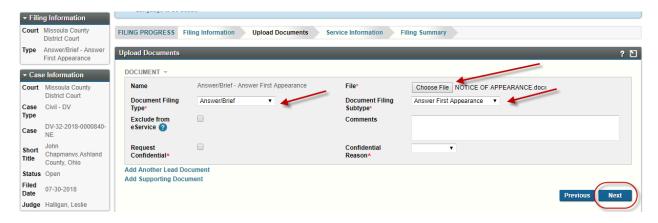


In this example, one defendant has been selected and \$70.00 is assessed. Note that if we were filing on behalf of multiple defendants, the amount would increase by \$70 for each party selected. (If at a limited jurisdiction court, the fee is \$30.00.)

Leave the Fee Waiver information fields blank. Click "Next."

#### **Upload Document Page**

Upload the document(s) you wish to submit. To upload more than one document, click Add Another Lead Document. Almost all documents at trial courts should be added as additional lead documents, including proposed orders. (Montana Vital Statistic Reporting forms should be uploaded as Supporting Documents.) Click "Next."

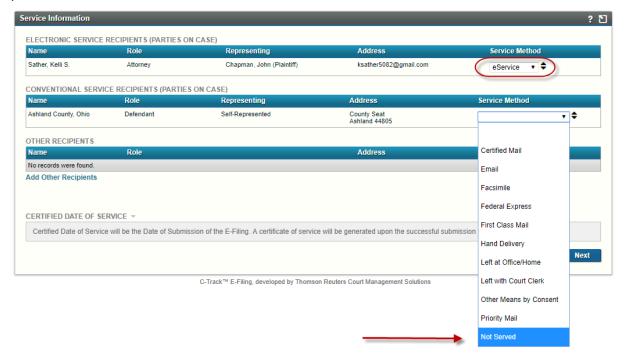


### Service Information Page

Use the information on this page to prepare the automatic Certificate of Service (COS) which will be appended to lead documents, except documents with the filing type "Proposed Document."

In this instance, since "you," the answering attorney, are not yet counsel of record on the case, the defendant is displayed as if needing to be served (as all other parties will appear, whether you are representing them or not). Since in this case, you do not need to serve your client, you can select "Not served" as the Service Method.

Note that in this example opposing counsel will be automatically served via eService when you submit this filing. The date on the COS will be the date you submit this filing. eService is performed at the time you click on the Submit button.



When you have the service information prepared accurately, click "Next."

#### Filing Summary Page

Check your work as described in the previous Filing Summary section.

#### Cart

"Submit Filings" from the cart and pay the statutory filing fees as described in the previous Cart section.

# Filing with a Fee Waiver (new or existing case)

Follow the instructions above for filing on a new or existing case. Be sure that you are selecting the right Filing Types/Subtypes to display the filing fee bundles on the Filing Information Page. If the filing fee bundles are not displayed, start over with the filing and select the appropriate Filing Types/Subtypes. It is important that appropriate filing types are used, even if a fee is waived.

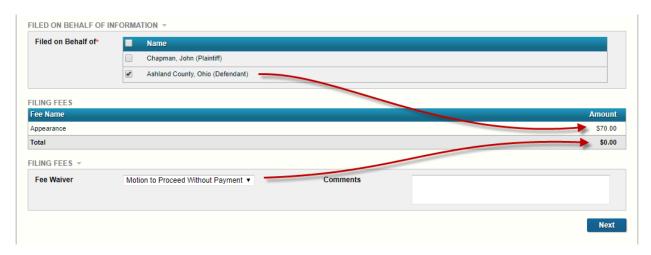
On the Filing Information Page, be certain to select the party(ies) on whose behalf you are filing. At first, as you select the parties, fees will be assessed. Then, when you fill in the fee waiver bundle, the total fees assessed will change to \$0.00.

FILED ON BEHALF OF I	FORMATION ~		
Filed on Behalf of*	■ Name		
	Chapman, John (Plaintiff)		
	Ashland County, Ohio (Defendant)		
FILING FEES			
Fee Name			Amount
Appearance			\$70.00
Total			\$70.00
FILING FEES *			
Fee Waiver	*	Comments	
			Next

Select the most appropriate Fee Waiver description:

- Not Required by Statute
- Motion to Proceed Without Payment (attach the motion on the document upload page)
- Court Order
- Government Agency
- Already Paid (see additional information in next section)

Use the Comments box to further describe your fee waiver. For instance, if you select "Not Required by Statute," list the statute in the Comments field. It will assist the clerk in making the appropriate decision to accept or reject the filing.



#### Special Instructions for resubmitting a filing that has already been paid

On occasion, you will submit and pay filing fees and the clerk will reject your filing for some critical reason (such as a missing signature). The clerk may instruct you to enter specific information (such as a receipt number or date of previous submission) when you resubmit your filing. You must do so, or risk having your filing rejected again.

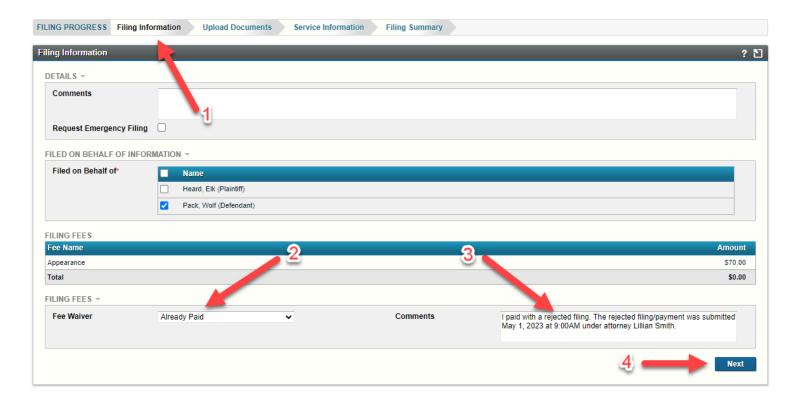
If this happens, locate your submission in the rejected list and use the grey resubmit arrow.





**Be certain to correct the fault that caused the submission to be rejected.** For document issues this is done on the Upload Document page. After correcting the issue, click the "next" button as it acts as a save button.

To add a fee waiver, navigate to the Filing Information page and select the fee waiver Already Paid, then fill out the comment field. State that you previously paid with a rejected filing. Listing the filing attorney's name, and the date and time of previous filing will help the clerk find your last receipt. After making all necessary changes, click next. Finally, add the filing to your cart and resubmit.



# **Appendices**

## Appendix A - Civil Cases Enabled

#### **General Civil and Domestic Relation cases enabled (July 2019)**

#### Civil - DV

Agreement Suit Amount Due Asbestos

Bad Faith/Unfair Dealings
\*Bond to Polosce Machanics

\*Bond to Release Mechanics

Lien

Breach of Contract
\*City Court Appeal

Civil Rights
Civil-Other

Claim and Delivery Compromise Settlement

Condemnation

Confession of Judgment Confirm Arbitration Award

Conversion Damages Debt

**Declaratory Judgment** 

Defamation Discrimination

Dissolution of Partnership

Emancipation Eviction

Expunge Record Foreclosure Foreign Judgment Forfeiture Fraud

Fraudulent Conveyance

Good Faith/Fair Dealing Habeas Corpus Harassment

Identity Theft Injunction Interpleader

Judgment Renewal
Judicial Review

Judicial Waiver of Consent
\*Justice Court Appeal
Lien Enforcement
Malicious Prosecution

Mechanics Lien

Miscellaneous Petitions
\*Municipal Court Appeal

Name Change

Name Change - Minor

Negligence

Negligent Trespass

Out of State Subpoena

Partition

Personal Injury/Death Post Conviction Relief

**Product Liability** 

Professional Malpractice

Property Damage

**Quiet Title** 

**Real Property Other** 

Reinstatement Driver License Release of Excess Proceeds Restricted-Use Driving

**Permit** 

\*Small Claims Appeal

Subrogation
Suit on Judgment
\*Suit on Note
Surrogate Parent
Tax Protest
Tort Other

Transcript of Judgment
\*Transfer from Justice Court

Unfair Trade Practice
Unlawful Detainer

**Unlocatable Mineral Owners** 

Wage Claim Water Right

Writ of Attachment

Writ of Certiorari/Review

Writ of Mandate
Writ of Prohibition

Writ of Restitution Wrongful Death Wrongful Discharge

Domestic Relations - DR

Abstract Final Administrative Invalid Marriage

Abstract Temporary Administrative Order Joint Petition for Dissolution
Caretaker/Relative \*Justice Court Appeal - DR

\*Change of Venue Legal Separation

Custody \*Municipal Court Appeal – DR

Dissolution of Marriage Parenting Plan

Domestic Relations-Other

Foreign Judgment-DR

Government Interference

Summary Dissolution Marriage
Termination Parental Rights
Transcript of Judgment-DR

**Grandparent Visitation** 

#### Adoption, Paternity, Guardianship/Conservatorship/Trust, Probate cases enabled (January 2024)

Adoption – DA

Adoption Adoption-Other Termination Parental Rights

Paternity - DF

Paternity-Other Paternity
Guardianship/Conservatorship/Trust – DG

Conservatorship Guardianship

Compromise Settlement Limited Guardianship

Guardianship/Conservatorship Trust

Guardian-Other Probate – DP

Ancillary Probate-Other

Domiciliary Foreign Probate Guardianship Opened as Probate – JCMS

Demand for Notice Special Administrator

Formal Intestate

Formal Testate

Will (Only)

Informal Intestate

Wills on Deposit

Informal Testate

<sup>\*</sup>These cases are not opened via E-Filing, but once the case exists, subsequent filings on the case are enabled for E-Filing.

# Appendix B – Filing Types that require payment or waiver (**District Court**)

The following are the only valid filing types that will allow you to pay the statutory filing fees on civil cases. These must be used even if you are requesting a fee waiver.

Filing Type	Filing Subtype	Fee	Valid Cases	New/Existing
	District Courts			
Answer/Brief	Answer First Appearance	70.00	DA, DF, DG,	Existing
			DP, DR, DV	
Answer/Brief	Answer and Counterclaim	70.00	DR, DV	Existing
Answer/Brief	Response First Appearance	70.00	DA, DF, DG,	Existing
			DP, DR, DV	
Application	Application for Appointment of Special Administrator	100.00	DP	New
Application	Application for Appointment of Successor PR (Existing Case)	100.00	DP	Existing
Application	Application for Formal Probate Intestate	100.00	DP	New
Application	Application for Formal Probate Testate	100.00	DP	New
Application	Application for Informal Probate Testate	100.00	DP	New
Application	Application for Informal Probate of Will	100.00	DP	New
Application	Application for Informal Probate Intestate	100.00	DP	New
Application	Application for Foreign Probate with Certificate	85.00	DP	New
Complaint	Complaint	120.00	DV	New
Complaint	Complaint in Intervention	80.00	DA, DG, DP,	Existing
			DR, DV	
Foreign Capital Depository Judgment	Foreign Capital Depository Judgment	2500.00	DV	New
Judgment	Confession of Judgment	50.00	DV	Both
_	Foreign Judgment	90.00	DR-JR, DV-FJ	New
	Transcribe Judgment	50.00	DR-JT, DV-TJ	New
	Motion for Substitution of Judge	100.00	DA, DF, DG,	Existing
Motion - Unopposed	<b>G</b>		DP, DR, DV	
Motion Motion - Unopposed	Motion to Dismiss First Appearance	70.00	DR, DV	Existing
	Motion to Intervene	80.00	DA, DF, DG,	Existing
Motion - Unopposed			DP, DR, DV	
Notice	Notice of Appearance with Fee	70.00	DA, DF, DG,	Existing
			DP, DR, DV	_
Notice	Notice of Removal	5.00	DV	Existing
Petition	Joint Petition for Dissolution	200.00	DR	Both
Petition	Petition	120.00	DR, DV	New
Petition	Petition for Adoption	105.00	DA	New
Petition	Petition for Appointment of Guardian(s)	100.00	DG	New
Petition	Petition for Appointment of Special Administrator	100.00	DP	New
Petition	Petition for Appointment of Successor PR (Existing Case)	100.00	DP	Existing
Petition	Petition for Co-Guardianship of a Minor	100.00	DG	New
Petition	Petition for Compromise Settlement	100.00	DG	New
	Petition for Conservatorship	100.00	DG	New
	Petition for Contested Amendments to Parenting Plan	120.00	DR	Existing
	Petition for Custody	120.00	DR	Both
Petition	Petition for Dissolution of Marriage	200.00	DR	Both
	Petition for Emancipation	120.00	DV-EM	Both
retition	retition for emancipation	120.00	D V = IV.	Docti
	Petition for Establishment of Grandparent-Grandchild Contact	120.00	DR-GV	Both

Petition	Petition for Formal Probate Intestate	100.00	DP	New
Filing Type	Filing Subtype	Fee	Valid Cases	New/Existing
Petition	Petition for Formal Probate Testate	100.00	DP	New
Petition	Petition for Guardianship	100.00	DG	New
Petition	Petition for Guardianship and Conservatorship	100.00	DG	New
Petition	Petition for Guardianship as a Minor	100.00	DG	New
Petition	Petition for Informal Probate Intestate	100.00	DP	New
Petition	Petition for Informal Probate of Will	100.00	DP	New
Petition	Petition for Informal Probate Testate	100.00	DP	New
Petition	Petition for Invalid Marriage	120.00	DR	New
Petition	Petition for Legal Separation	180.00	DR	Both
Petition	Petition for Name Change (Adult)	120.00	DR, DV	Both
Petition	Petition for Name Change (Minor)	120.00	DR, DV	Both
Petition	Petition for Parenting Plan	120.00	DR	Both
Petition	Petition for Paternity	120.00	DF	New
Petition	Petition for Reinstatement of Driver's License	120.00	DV-RL	New
Petition	Petition for Release of Excess Proceeds	120.00	DV-RE	Both
Petition	Petition for Relief from Registration	120.00	DV-OF	New
Petition	Petition for Summary Dissolution	200.00	DR	Both
Petition	Petition for Writ of Certiorari	120.00	DV-WE	New
Petition	Petition to Amend Trust	100.00	DG	New
Petition	Petition to Discharge Trust	100.00	DG	New
Petition	Petition to Establish Trust/Appoint Trustee	100.00	DP, DG	New
Petition	Petition to Intervene	80.00	DR, DV	Existing
Petition	Petition to Restrict Government Interference	126.00	DV-GV	New
Proposed Document	Decree Proposed	50.00	DR, DV	Existing
Proposed Document	Judgment Proposed	50.00	DP, DR, DV	Existing
Proposed Document	Writ of Assistance Proposed	5.00	DR, DV	Existing
Proposed Document	Writ of Attachment Proposed	5.00	DR, DV	Existing
Proposed Document	Writ of Execution Proposed	5.00	DP, DR, DV	Existing
Proposed Document	Writ of Mandamus Proposed	5.00	DR, DV	Existing

<sup>\*&</sup>quot;Transcribe Judgment" is the correct selection to open a Transcript of Judgment case. To file a returned writ at a district court use the Filing Type/Subtype: "Notice/Return of Service." Please note that if you are filing a generic Petition on an existing case that does not require you to pay a fee, you should use the Filing Type/Subtype: Petition/Petition (No Fee).

# Appendix C – Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

#### **Civil Cases Enabled**

- Civil CV
  - Credit Agency Debt
  - o Contract
  - Landlord/Tenant
  - Order of Protection
  - Other
- Small Claims SM

#### Filing Types that require payments or waivers

Filing Type	Filing Subtype	Fee	Valid Cases	New or Existing
Answer	Answer	30.00	CV	Existing
Answer, Motion	Answer/Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Jurisdiction	30.00	CV	Existing
or				
Motion - Unopposed				
Answer, Motion	Small Claims Appearance/Motion to Dismiss for Lack	20.00	SM	Existing
or	of Jurisdiction			
Motion - Unopposed				
Complaint	Civil Complaint	50.00	CV	New
Judgment	Confession Judgment	20.00	CV	Existing
Proposed	Proposed Judgment	20.00	CV	Existing
Document				

## Appendix D – Resources

Montana Court E-Filing webpage is found here: https://courts.mt.gov/courts/efile

**Temporary Electronic Filing Rules** can be found here:

https://courts.mt.gov/portals/189/efile/rules/tempefilerules.pdf

**The Technical Operations Manual** can be found here:

https://courts.mt.gov/Portals/189/efile/docs/operations-manual.pdf

E-Filing FAQs are found here: <a href="https://courts.mt.gov/Portals/189/efile/docs/faqs.pdf">https://courts.mt.gov/Portals/189/efile/docs/faqs.pdf</a>

**E-Filing Registration Instructions** can be found here:

https://courts.mt.gov/portals/189/efile/instructions/registration.pdf

Instructions for an attorney to file on existing cases at Montana trial courts is here:

https://courts.mt.gov/portals/189/efile/instructions/file-existingcase.pdf

#### Contact:

- <u>efilingtechsupport@mt.gov</u> This is the fastest way to receive assistance.
- Judicial Branch IT support desk: 1.800.284.6017