



# District Clerk Newsletter

## Thomas A. Wilder, District Clerk



### DISTRICT CLERK CORNER

Dear Legal Professional:

This newsletter is the first of what will be a quarterly publication. We have had many questions from attorneys and paralegals about e-filing issues so this first newsletter will focus on e-filing and will likely be a substantial part of future ones as well.

In addition, I think you will find that the articles from my section managers, lead clerks and others will be useful for your office staff so feel free to pass it around. Our e-mail addresses are mixed between attorneys and your office staff so more than one person in your office may receive the newsletter.

With the ever changing rules and statutes, we hope you find our newsletter a useful tool. If you have suggestions or comments please forward them to me and we will try to be responsive.

Please keep in mind that the newsletter is being produced with existing staff at no additional cost. Phone traffic has picked up substantially since the beginning of e-Filing so it is to be hoped that the newsletter will cut down on some of that.

We think our customer service is meeting your expectations as well as our own high standards. I know that many compliments have come our way about our quick turnaround on approvals for e-Filed documents as compared to other counties. As always, please inform me of any complaints directly if you wish but my deputies can usually resolve your issue quicker as I have a number of county committees I sit on and have 148 full-time deputies stationed in eight buildings. With 61,000 new cases filed each year. I always have my managers copy me on any substantial issues and we meet together face-to-face every Monday to discuss policies, procedures, legislation and other matters.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Wishes,

Tom Wilder

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to apply today!



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## FAMILY E-FILING ASSISTANCE



### Tim Curry Criminal Justice Center

401 W Belknap Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76196



### Family Law Center

200 E Weatherford Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76196



## E-filing Questions?

Call for assistance: 

**Family: 817-212-6954**

**Civil: 817-212-6953**

**Felony/Civil: 817-884-2508**

Cheryl Ginunas / Patricia Mosca  
Lead Clerk, Family / 360<sup>th</sup> Associate Clerk

- There is a common misunderstanding when requesting multiple service papers in e-filing. Filers sometimes choose multiple “citations” when in fact they meant to choose, for example, one Citation and one Notice TRO or one Citation and one Notice Show Cause. Please ensure that you are choosing the appropriate document type from Optional Services box.
- Once a pleading/document is e-filed, what we receive and print out becomes the original. We continue to encounter issues with duplicate paperwork because attorneys take their accepted copy to the courtroom and present it as an original.
- If an order is e-filed (i.e. TRO) and someone would like to walk it through to get it signed, the individual will need to obtain the original from the clerks. Otherwise, it will be sent up to the court for signature as soon as it’s processed.
- When returned citations/show cause documents are e-filed, it is necessary to scan the front and back for both the citation **AND** TRO/show cause. The Tarrant County District Clerk’s office continues to receive one or the other and not both sides. This helps to ensure that it is checked-in correctly for the individual being served.
- The Tarrant County District Clerk’s Office is not set-up for e-filing service papers (i.e. Citations) back to the e-filer. If a service paper is requested, it will need to be picked up at our office or it may be mailed if a self-addressed stamped envelope is provided.
- Expedite service by paying for a copy of pleadings to be served when requesting service papers to be issued; choose Copies per Page (\$0.35) located under Optional Services (for new case under “Petition”/existing case look under “Request”).
- The Service Request Form is available for your convenience when requesting service papers to be issued through the Tarrant County District Clerks Office – Document Production. This form can be found on our website:  
<http://www.tarrantcounty.com/eDistrictClerk/site/default.asp>
- Do not select the OAG Initial or OAG Subsequent Queues - **these are only for use by OAG filers.**
- Create a “Waiver” account for e-filing this can easily be done by the administrator in your office. Reasons for the account:
  - “Waiver” accounts are used when filing an Application or Petition for a Protective Order
  - “Waiver” accounts are used when filing a Pauper’s Affidavit
- Due to some instances of envelopes being “stuck in processing” in the e-File Texas system, if you notice a longer than usual time to receive an accept/reject notice from our office, please feel free to follow up with the appropriate section of our office.

# CIVIL E-FILING ASSISTANCE

## Sharon M. Byrd

Lead Clerk, Civil

- There are several ways to select a Citation:
  - ◇ Subsequent Filing: Use the filing code, "Request" and then upload your letter requesting a citation or the service request form. Then you will choose the type of citation you want from the Optional Services box.
  - ◇ Initial Case Filing: You will either attach the letter or form to the Original Petition or you may choose, "Petition" again and upload the letter or form as a separate lead document.
- The Civil Information Sheet can be scanned in behind your petition or filed as an attachment to the Original Petition.
- You may file an Affidavit or a pleading that's not on the filing code list by selecting, "No Fee Documents".
- To file an Amended Petition and request a citation, you will use the filing code, "Request" and upload your Amended Petition as the lead document and then select the type of citation you are requesting from the Optional Services box.
- The citations are usually issued within 24-48 hours. You may call before arriving to make sure the citations are ready for pickup.
- If you can not get the Cause Number to pull up correctly, make sure you enter the entire Cause Number, including 0's, dashes, and spaces.
- There are few subsequent filings that have fees;
  - ◇ \$30 Interpleader
  - ◇ \$65 Counter-Actions, Cross-Actions, Interventions, 3rd Party Actions, Motion for Contempt, Motion for New Trial, and Jury Demand

You may obtain a list of Civil Filing Fees on our website at [www.tarrantcounty.com](http://www.tarrantcounty.com). Click "Departments" then "District Clerk" then "Fees".

- TRO cases will need to be e-filed. Upon acceptance, the file is created and sent directly to the Court in which it was assigned. You will need to see the Court Clerk upon arrival.
- When filing exhibits to any Motion, and other pleading, they should be as an attachment and not as a "Lead Document". If you are filing exhibits at a later date, you should have a letter as your Lead Document and the exhibits as an attachment.

## E-Filing Tips



- \* Provide an email address
- \* Keep your email address and/or mailing address updated
- \* Use full names instead of the parties' initials and make sure to leave out punctuation (i.e. Doe, John L.)
- \* Do not put address information in the INRE party information.
- \* When filing Pleadings, please include the cause number and style of the case on the pleadings.
- \* When filing returns of service (citations/show cause, etc.) and you have multiples, please file each one as a lead document.
- \* When requesting a citation, please use the Service Request Form. Do not add the Original/Amended Petition as an attachment. You may pay for copies of the petition or provide a file marked copy of the petition for the citation to be issued.
- \* Due to some instances of envelopes being "stuck in processing" in the e-File Texas system, if you notice a longer than usual time to receive an accept/reject notice from our office, please feel free to follow up with the appropriate section of our office.

Visit Our  
Website

## Criminal & Felony/Civil



### Employee Spotlight

#### Outstanding Criminal Clerk of the Year 2014

Congratulations to Stephane Rhodes Reese for being a recipient of the Outstanding Criminal Clerk of the Year for 2014. This is awarded by the Tarrant County Bar Association. Stephane has been a District Clerk employee since March 2006. Stephane is presently the Lead Clerk for Criminal District Court No.3 but has experience in several district courts. Ms. Rhodes-Reese has recently obtained her Masters Degree in Criminal Justice. Stephane was in the court that began the pilot program of direct scanning and offered helpful insight as we expanded into the other district courts.

### Felony/Civil

The Felony/Civil section of the District Clerk's office handles Expunctions, Non-Disclosures, Occupational Driver's License, Seizures and Bond Forfeiture cases.

It is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Tim Curry Justice Center. The Felony/Civil section began accepting electronically filed documents for Expunctions, Non-Disclosures, Felony Occupational Drivers Licenses and Seizure cases only on July 7, 2014.

For filing fee information please refer to the District Clerk website for the most current fees.

#### [Felony/Civil Fees](#)

Our business hours are Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm. During these hours you can reach the felony/civil clerks for assistance

#### **Rosalinda Mendoza-Lead Felony/Civil Clerk**

Lead Clerk – 817-884-2507

#### **Michelle Farrell –Auxiliary**

Lead Auxiliary Clerk – 817-884-2514

#### **Maray Elliot -Expunctions**

Associate Clerk – 817-884-1231

#### **Nellie Herrera -Seizures**

Associate Clerk – 817-884-1156

### CRIMINAL FELONY BEGINS TRANSACTION SCANNING OF FELONY FILES



In an effort to provide attorneys the most current information Criminal has been direct scanning all documents. What does this mean for you? It means quick access for immediate look up and printing. Our images are conformed to PDF nightly which allows easy upload/access into your system. If you are a web subscriber then from your office or your mobile device you can easily obtain what you need. If you are not a web subscriber and would like to learn more about our Web Access services please call 817-884-1574 or visit our website at [www.tarrantcounty.com](http://www.tarrantcounty.com)

## Documents Containing Sensitive Data

*Rules of Civil Procedures, Rule 21c*

**Sylvia Medrano**  
Supervisor, Family



Filing documents containing sensitive data is prohibited. Unless the inclusion of sensitive data is specifically required by a statute, court rule, or administrative regulation, an electronic or paper document, containing sensitive data may not be filed with a court unless the sensitive data is redacted.

Sensitive data prohibited for filing consists of:

- 1) A driver's license number, passport number, social security number, tax identification number, or similar government-issued personal identification number
- 2) A bank account number, credit card number or other financial account number
- 3) A birth date, home address, and the name of any person who was a minor when the underlying suit was filed

If a document contains sensitive data the filer must notify the clerk by designating the document as sensitive when e-filing. The clerk may not refuse to file a document that contains sensitive data in violation of this rule. But the clerk may identify the error to be corrected and ask the filer to resubmit a redacted, substitute document.

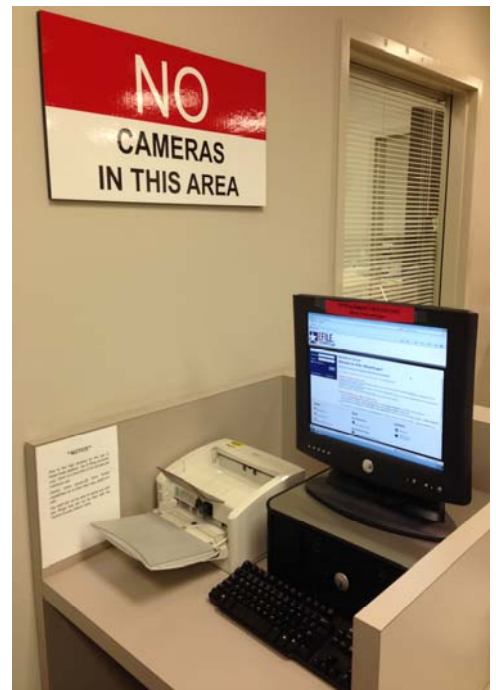
## Convenient Guest E-filing Stations

**Paula Ford**  
Manager, Records

If you find yourself in a crunch to e-file a document while at the courthouse, the Tarrant County District Clerk has provided three e-filing stations for public use. They are located on the 3rd floor of the Family Law Center at 200 E Weatherford Street, Fort Worth, TX 76196 in the Records Department.

All three e-filing stations are equipped with access to eFileTexas.gov and a scanner. Please note that we do not have any other internet access available, so you will need to have the physical document in order to utilize this service. In addition, you will need your eFileTexas.gov user id and password. You can login, scan the document to be filed, pay the required fees, upload and e-file directly from any of these three stations.

Our friendly and knowledgeable staff can assist with the equipment, imaging, saving, and the uploading process. However, they are not allowed to assist with the actual e-filing process of selecting codes, service issues, payment of fees, or adding attorneys/clients. The attorney or filer must have a general knowledge of the e-filing process prior to attempting to use the e-filing stations.



For your convenience, there is also an e-filing user station available at the Tim Curry Justice Center in the Civil section.



# Planning To Travel Outside of The United States? First, Plan To Get Your Passport!

**Jessica Gray**  
Manager, Passport

The Tarrant County District Clerk's Passport Section specializes in helping members of our community obtain U.S. Passports. U.S. citizens must present a passport book, passport card, or other travel documents approved by the U.S. government to enter the United States from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda at land borders and sea ports of entry. The District Clerk's Passport Section is a full-service operation. Photos are available for \$12.00 (tax included). The District Clerk's office offers Passport Services at 6 convenient locations in Tarrant County (see below). For added convenience, Group Passport Processing is also available on-site for groups of 15 or more. For information on applying for a Passport please visit [www.tarrantcounty.com](http://www.tarrantcounty.com) and click on **Departments, District Clerk**, and then click on **Passport Information**. There you will find information regarding the requirements for a passport, the application, fees, hours and locations, and a link to the Official State Department website to check the status of your passport application.



## Court Document Look-up is Also Available!

The Tarrant County District Clerk's office offers members of the community the opportunity to view and obtain copies of documents from cases filed with the Tarrant County District Clerk's office. These cases include Civil, Family, and Criminal (Felony) cases. This service is available in each of the District Clerk's Passport locations as well as in the records section of the Family Law Center. Multiple locations are an added convenience to citizens, allowing easy access to view and obtain copies of records such as criminal background checks, divorce decrees, and other court documents.

Highlights of this service are as follows:

- ◇ FREE document look-up (self service)
- ◇ \$5.00 basic records search (performed by clerk)
- ◇ Advanced records search is also available
- ◇ Standard copy fees (\$.35 per page non certified copies/ \$1.00 per page certified copies.)



## Tarrant County Passport Office Locations

### Justice Center

401 W. Belknap, 3rd Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76196  
Mon-Fri, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM  
817-884-2520

### Southlake Sub-Courthouse

1400 Main St., Suite 340  
Southlake, Texas 76092  
Mon-Fri, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM  
817-481-8190

### Southwest Sub-Courthouse

6551 Granbury Road  
Fort Worth, Texas 76133  
Mon-Fri, 9:00 AM-4:30 PM  
817-370-4570

### Northwest Sub-Courthouse

6713 Telephone Road  
Lake Worth, Texas 76135  
Mon-Fri, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM  
817-238-4457

### Arlington Sub-Courthouse

700 E. Abram St., Suite 204  
Arlington, Texas 76010  
Mon-Fri, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM  
817-548-3963

### Mansfield Sub-Courthouse

1100 East Broad St., Suite 102  
Mansfield, Texas 76063  
Mon-Fri, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM  
817-473-5113



## Questions and Answers



### CIVIL

**Q: Will you e-mail me the citation so I can have it served?**

A: The Tarrant County District Clerk's office is not e-mailing citations at this time. You may send in a self addressed stamped envelope for us to mail it back in or you may pick it up in person.



**Q: How do I find forms on the website?**

A: Go to [www.tarrantcounty.com](http://www.tarrantcounty.com). Click on the "Departments" icon on the left hand side. Scroll down and select "District Clerk." Click on the "Forms" icon on the left hand side. You will find several different forms that are available for your use.

**Q: How do I file a Rule 106?**

A: You will e-file this as a subsequent filing. Unless you are a process server then you may file that in person or by e-file.

**Q: How do I file a new Civil case?**

A: All attorneys must e-file their petition. You may go to [www.efiletexas.gov](http://www.efiletexas.gov) for more information on service and providers. If you are not an attorney you may file in person, by mail, or e-file.

**Q: How do I check on service of a defendant?**

A: You may call the clerk assigned to the court that your case is assigned in or you may call Document Production at 817-884-1591.

### Family

**Q: Why can I not find the fees associated with the pleading being filed?**

A: Petition to Modify in an existing case can be found under the Select Filing Code: Motion to Modify and under Optional Services: Modification-Other \$30 or Modification-Custody \$30.

**Q: Where can I find the Petition for Divorce selection?**

A: Choose Petition and under Optional Services you will find Divorce (no child) \$279 or Divorce (w/child) \$330. (all new case types with fees, service paper requests, copies can be found in this section)

**Q: Why am I unable to bring up an existing case number to e-file in?**

A: Make sure you are placing the dashes in-between the numbers (i.e. 231-111111-14). Also make sure you are choosing the right county: Tarrant County District Clerk. (The clerk can look up the case number to ensure that the case number is not sealed or marked confidential, etc)

**Q: Where do I go online to view a case file?**

A: You can view files on Web Access. If you are not a Web Access subscriber, please visit our web site [www.tarrantcounty.com](http://www.tarrantcounty.com) click on Departments-District Clerk-Services- and click on Web Based Access Service



## Questions and Answers



### FELONY/CIVIL

**Q: Who is the Plaintiff in a Felony/Civil case?**

A: The Plaintiff in a Felony/Civil case is the State of Texas.

**Q: When filing a Petition/Motion for Non-Disclosure why does the attorney not see a selection for the \$302.00 filing fee?**

A: The attorney will need to select the following under Optional Services.

Civil Filing fee \$274.00	Quantity 1
Petition/Motion Non-Disclosure \$28.00	Quantity 1

**Q: When the order is signed for an Occupational Driver's License how does the clerk receive the signed order?**

A: Once an attorney has presented an order granting Occupational Driver's License and the judge has signed it, the attorney will then need to e-file the signed order with the clerk. At which time the attorney can also pay for the certified copies of the order if they so choose.

**Q: When filing a Petition for Expunction which agencies have a fee associated to them?**

A: The District Clerk charges a \$15.00 fee for all agencies except the District Clerk's office and the FBI.

### RECORDS

**Q: How do I find out if a case has been filed by someone?**

A: You may contact Records to research, however if a case number is not provided, there is a \$5.00 research fee. If an attorney wants to file a case and does not want to duplicate the file when the other party has already filed, they may e-mail DClerk with specifics of their request. We will look it up and e-mail a reply.

**Q: Where can I locate information regarding fees?**

A: Fees can be located on the District Clerk page of the County website: [www.tarrantcounty.com](http://www.tarrantcounty.com) or you may contact the file desk clerk for assistance.

**Q: In a consolidated case, is it necessary to take both case folders to see the judge?**

A: Yes, typically the judges want to see both files.

### ACCOUNTING

**Q: What is a convenience fee?**

A: A convenience fee is assessed to cover the credit card processing fees.

**Q: What is an EFSP?**

A: Electronic Filing Service Provider; required in order to electronically file documents

**Q: Is it better to pay with a "debit" or "credit" card when e-filing?**

A: Credit card

**Q: Why are e-filing charges still "pending" on my credit card?**

A: The charges associated with your e-filing will be in pending status until your filing is either "Accepted", "Returned for Correction", or "Cancelled". Once you submit an e-filing, the eFileTexas.gov system will authorize the cost of the filing on your credit card. This is to ensure that the payment can be processed if your filing is "Accepted". If your filing is "Returned for Correction" or "Cancelled" the authorized amount will be reversed. It may take 7-14 business days for the funds to become available.

