

Don't Miss a Complex Case Deadline Due to LASC eFiling Changes

By Audrey Priolo, Litigation Review Attorney

Los Angeles Superior Court changed the deadline for mandatory eFiling in complex civil matters from July 1, 2019 to January 1, 2020. Unlike limited and unlimited civil, there is only a mandatory phase for Complex Civil eFiling. Until January 1, 2020, documents should still be filed at the clerk's office or via fax filing. On January 1, 2020, complex documents must be electronically filed.

Unlimited civil matters have been under mandated eFiling since January 2, 2019. Originally, the Court set the eFiling deadline for complex civil cases on the same date as unlimited civil cases. However, the Court previously extended the deadline to July 1, 2019, and now to January 1, 2020.

Accordingly, law firms are forced to navigate calendaring differences between complex and unlimited civil cases until 2020. While this may seem simple, there is potential for calendaring disasters. I am sure that you and your firm have never had a last-minute pleading where someone eFiled past the 4:30 p.m. fax filing cutoff. Certainly, all attorneys in your firm prepare their pleadings at least one court day before the filing deadline, so any last-minute details like a table of authorities may be prepared. Just in case you know an attorney that procrastinates or is the type to submit an eFiling at 11:59 p.m., it is important to remember complex matters cannot be eFiled. There is more than a seven-hour disparity between the deadline for a fax filing (4:30 p.m.) and an eFiling (11:59 p.m.). If a pleading is too large for fax filing, the differential becomes even greater and depends upon your firm's filing practices. If firms do not identify complex cases and create different policies and practices for complex cases, there will come a time where a deadline is missed because someone assumed they had until the stroke of midnight.

Additionally, there is potential for firms to waste time and resources if complex cases are not designated. If a complex case is not treated different from unlimited matters, there could be significant time spent creating unnecessary hyperlinks in pleadings that are not transmitted electronically. This is time that could be spent fine tuning the brief or finding another case to bolster an argument.

Consequently, it is critical for law firms to create safeguards to ensure complex cases are not handled the same as unlimited civil cases. Further, firms should ensure that all attorneys and staff are aware that all deadlines uniform to provide a safeguard against missed deadlines.

Audrey L. Priolo is a licensed California attorney with over 13 years of litigation and trial experience, who now works at American LegalNet as a Litigation Review Attorney. Questions may be directed to apriolo@alncorp.com