Lehigh County Clerk of Judicial Records

Register of Wills Division
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Guidelines for E-Filing through Odyssey File & Serve (OFS)

February 15, 2023

The below listed guidelines will assist the Clerk of Judicial Records to process your electronic filings in a timely manner. In the event your filing is rejected, it will be mandatory for the filer to make the necessary changes and resubmit. The official date and time will be the date and time of a correct resubmission, not the date and time of the earlier rejected submission. These guidelines are merely to simplify the E-filing process and do not cover every possible filing scenario.

If you are in need of additional assistance on submitting Electronic Filings please review the E-File User Guide at https://pennsylvania.tylertech.cloud/ofsweb or contact filing support at OFSWillsSupport@lehighcounty.org

---------IMPORTANT----------

Prior to Opening a NEW Case it is necessary to verify that a case for the decedent does not already exist. You can search Odyssey Case Manager using Attorney Docket Access or you can search Odyssey File & Serve (OFS). To search OFS from the home screen of the Filer Dashboard select Filing into Existing Case. You can then search by Case Number or Party Name. If a case is found with the location of Register of Wills, click on the Actions button and file into case. If no case is found please refer to the below case type instructions.

1. When filing a document in OFS, please verify the following information:
    - Case number
    - Caption (the caption on your document should match the caption as it appears in Odyssey Case Manager System - Case Summary)
    - Document must be titled listing the nature of the document (Petition, Will, Affidavit etc.)
    - Document must contain a digitized signature or the name of the filer proceeded by /s/ accompanied by the attorneys printed name.
    - Image submitted is required to have a 3-inch margin at the top of the page for timestamp and other official use.
    - Image submitted by filer must be in PDF format and legible.
    - Do not add AKA or FKA as its own party name.
    - If using a fillable PDF form, you need to “flatten or remove hyperlinks” before submitting or it could return an error message

2. When entering party Information/ party address Information use upper- and lower-case letters. **Do not** use any punctuation (e.g., periods, hyphens, apostrophe, etc.).

3. When filing multiple documents, each document should be filed as a Lead Document but should be filed in **ONE** envelope. For example, when filing a New Testate case, Estate Information Sheet, Death Certificate, Will/Codicil, Petition for Grant of Letters, Oath of Personal Representative, Short Certificate Quantity, the

documents are filed in **ONE** envelope, but as 6 separate Lead Documents. Every Lead Document appears as its own event in Odyssey Case Manager.

4. When scanning documents to file, make sure the documents are clear and do not appear upside down. If this happens, the document may be rejected.

5. When filing into an Existing Case you are not able to modify Party Information. The Register of Wills staff will modify Party Information when applicable.

6. Inheritance Tax documents and subsequent filings must be filed electronically or they will be subject to a $1.00 per page conversion fee. See Leh. O. C. Rule 4.7-1 (a) 3 (2)

7. Additional Probate fees may be due at the time of filing an Inheritance Tax Return or Supplemental Tax Return. Fees may be due if lines 1-5 on the tax return total a higher amount than the Estimated Value of the Estate calculated at time of probate. To calculate Additional Probate fees, you would select Optional Services after you have added and uploaded your filing event. In the Optional Services selection box, you would select "Amount of Additional Probate Fees @ $50.00". Additional Probate Fees are calculated in increments of $50.00. For example, if an additional $100.00 is due you would select (2) Quantity. The system will calculate the additional probate fees due and also the filing fee for the tax return.

Examples of types of Filings:

How to E-File a NEW Testate

1. Select -Start a New Case

- Location = Register of Wills
- Category = Probate
- Case Type = Select Testate (There IS a Will)

2. Party Information

- Enter all Party Information including address
- Enter Attorney Information if applicable

3. Filings

- Filing Type- E-File
- Filing Code – Estimated Value of Estate
- Lead Document – Attach completed Estate Information Sheet
- Optional Services **–** From the Drop-Down Menu -Select the Estimated Value Amount of the Estate

Select "Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code – Death Certificate
- Lead Document- Attach Death Certificate of Decedent **PLUS** any other records necessary for Probate For Example: Marriage Certificate, Certified Divorce Decrees

Select "Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code- Will
- Lead Document- Attach Will

Select "Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code- Codicil (If Applicable)
- Lead Document- Attach Codicil (If Applicable)

Select "Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code- Petition for Grant of Letters
- Lead Document- Attach Petition for Grant of Letters

Select "Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code- Oath of Personal Representative
- Lead Document- Attach **Signed** Oath of Personal Representative

Select "Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code- Short Certificate Quantity
- Lead Document- Attach Cover Letter or Request for Short Certificate Form Located at lccpa.org, Forms & Applications, Register of Wills Forms
- Optional Services- From the Drop-Down Menu- Select the Quantity of Short Certificates

**** If Applicable attach any additional documents necessary by following the above steps ****

4. **Fees**
   - Payment Account- Select Payment Account
   - Party Responsible for Fees- Select Party Responsible for Fees
   - Filing Attorney- Select Filing Attorney or Independent Filer (If Applicable)
   - Click Summary (Review Draft filing for completeness)
   - Submit

Original Will and Codicil (if applicable) must be presented to the Register of Wills Division before Letters are Granted

<u>How to E-File a NEW Intestate</u>

1. **Select -Start a New Case**
   - Location = Register of Wills
   - Category = Probate
   - Case Type = Select Intestate (There IS NOT a Will)

2. **Party Information**
   - Enter all Party Information including address
   - Enter Attorney Information if applicable

3. **Filings**
   - + Add Filing
   - Select Filing Type
   - Filing Code – Estimated Value of Estate
   - Optional Services- From the Drop-Down Menu -Select the Estimated Value Amount of the Estate
   - Upload Document – Attach completed Estate Information Sheet

Select "+ Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code – Death Certificate
- Upload Document- Attach Death Certificate of Decedent **PLUS** any other records necessary for Probate for Example: Marriage Certificate, Certified Divorce Decrees

Select "+ Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code- Affidavit of Relationship
- Upload Document- Attach Affidavit of Relationship

Select "+ Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code- Petition for Grant of Letters
- Upload Document- Attach Petition for Grant of Letters

Select "+ Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code- Oath of Personal Representative
- Upload Document- Attach **Signed** Oath of Personal Representative

Select "+ Add Another Filing"

- Filing Code- Short Certificate Quantity
- Lead Document- Attach Cover Letter or Request for Short Certificate form
  The Form can be located at lccpa.org, Forms & Applications, Register of Wills Forms
- Optional Services- From the Drop-Down Menu- Select the quantity of Short Certificates

**** If Applicable attach any additional filings necessary by following the above steps ****

4. Service

- Add Service Contacts if applicable

5. Fees

- Payment Account- Select Payment Account
- Party Responsible for Fees- Select Party Responsible for Fees
- Filing Attorney- Select Filing Attorney or Independent Filer (If Applicable)
- Click Summary (Review Draft filing for completeness)
- Submit

<u>How to E-File a NEW Contested Probate Case</u>

1. Select -Start a New Case

- Location = Register of Wills
- Category = Probate
- Case Type = Select Contested Probate

2. Party Information

- Enter all Party Information including address
- Enter Attorney Information if applicable

3. Filings

- + Add Filings
- Select Filing Type
- Filing Code – Informal Caveat or Citation (Selection depends on your filing needs)

- Lead Document – Attach Informal Caveat or Petition for Citation
  The Informal Caveat Form can be located at lccpa.org, Forms & Applications, Register of Wills Forms
- Optional Services – **(Applies only to the Filing of a Citation)**
  Select the Number of Respondents to be Served

4. Service

- Add Service Contacts if applicable

5. Fees

- Payment Account- Select Payment Account
- Party Responsible for Fees- Select Party Responsible for Fees
- Filing Attorney- Select Filing Attorney or Independent Filer (If Applicable)
- Save Changes
- Click Summary (Review Draft filing for completeness)
- Submit

<u>How to E-File a NEW Miscellaneous Case</u>

1. Select -Start a New Case

- Location = Register of Wills
- Category = Probate
- Case Type = Select Miscellaneous

2. Party Information

- Enter all Party Information including address
- Enter Attorney Information if applicable

3. Filings

- + Add Filing
- Select Filing Type
- Filing Code – Affidavit of Death (Misc. Case Type)
- Upload Document – Attach Affidavit of Death

4. Service

- Add Service Contacts if applicable

5. Fees

- Payment Account- Select Payment Account
- Party Responsible for Fees- Select Party Responsible for Fees
- Filing Attorney- Select Filing Attorney or Independent Filer (If Applicable)
- Save Changes
- Click Summary (Review Draft filing for completeness)
- Submit

<u>How to E-File a NEW Ancillary Letters</u>

1. Select -Start a New Case

- Location = Register of Wills

- Category = Probate
- Case Type = Select Ancillary

2. Party Information
- Enter all Party Information including address
- Enter Attorney Information if applicable

3. Filings
- + Add Filing
- Select Filing Type
- Filing Code – Petition for Ancillary Letters
- Upload Document – Attach Petition for Ancillary Letters
  The Form can be located at lccpa.org, Forms & Applications, Register of Wills Forms

Select "Add Another Filing"
- Filing Code- Exemplification (Ancillary Letters)
- Upload Document- Attach Exemplification

**** If Applicable attach any additional documents necessary by following the above steps ****

4. Service
- Add Service Contacts if applicable

5. Fees
- Payment Account- Select Payment Account
- Party Responsible for Fees- Select Party Responsible for Fees
- Filing Attorney- Select Filing Attorney or Independent Filer (If Applicable)
- Click Summary (Review Draft filing for completeness)
- Submit

<u>How to E-File a NEW Inheritance Tax Case – Payment on Account</u>

Reminder- The decedent must have resided in Lehigh County for the Register of Wills to process the Inheritance Tax Payment. The death certificate must reflect Lehigh County. All non-resident Inheritance Taxes must be sent directly to Department of Revenue.

1. Select -Start a New Case
- Location = Register of Wills
- Category = Probate
- Case Type = Select Inheritance Tax

2. Party Information
- Enter all Party Information including addresses
- Enter Attorney Information if applicable

3. Filings
- + Add Filing
- Select Filing Type
- Filing Code – Payment on Account
- Lead Document – Attach Payment on Account Form
  Located at lccpa.org, Forms & Applications, Register of Wills Forms

Select "Add Another Filing"
- Filing Code- Death Certificate
- Upload Document- Attach Death Certificate

4. Service
- Add Service Contacts if applicable

5. Fees
- **There are no filing fees associated with this filing but it is necessary to enter all Payment Account Information in order to proceed.**
- Payment Account- Select Payment Account
- Party Responsible for Fees- Select Party Responsible for Fees
- Filing Attorney- Select Filing Attorney or Independent Filer (If Applicable)
- Click Summary (Review Draft filing for completeness)
- Submit

6. Mail or Deliver to the Register of Wills the filed copy of the Payment on Account form and check for payment of Inheritance Tax. The Official Receipt will be prepared once the tax payment is received.

<u>How to E-File a NEW Inheritance Tax Case – When not making a payment</u>

1. Select -Start a New Case
- Location = Register of Wills
- Category = Probate
- Case Type = Select Inheritance Tax

2. Party Information
- Enter all Party Information including addresses
- Enter Attorney Information if applicable

3. Filings
- + Add Filings
- Select Filing Type
- Filing Code – Select Applicable filing code (Ex: Joint Assessment, Notice of Appraisement or any other Department of Revenue document.) **** If your tax return exceeds 300 pages, please contact the Register of Wills before submitting.**
- Upload Document – Attach Applicable Form (Ex. Signed Joint Assessment, Notice of Appraisement, etc.)

4. Fees
- **There are no filing fees associated with this filing but it is necessary to enter all Payment Account Information in order to proceed.**
- Payment Account- Select Payment Account
- Party Responsible for Fees- Select Party Responsible for Fees
- Filing Attorney- Select Filing Attorney or Independent Filer (If Applicable)
- Click Summary (Review Draft filing for completeness)
- Submit

5. **No physical documents are required to be Mailed/ Delivered to the Register of Wills. However, if the Electronically filed document exceeds 300 pages please contact the Register of Wills for information on how to proceed.**

<u>How to E-File a Non-Probate Inheritance Tax Return</u>

1. **Select -Start a New Case**
   - Location = Register of Wills
   - Category = Probate
   - Case Type = Select Inheritance Tax

2. **Party Information**
   - Enter all Party Information including addresses
   - Enter Attorney Information if applicable

3. **Filings**
   - + Add Filing
   - Select Filing Type
   - Filing Code – Inheritance Tax Return Non-Probate ($35.00) ** **If your tax return exceeds 300 pages, please contact the Register of Wills before submitting.**
   - Upload Document – Attach Inheritance Tax Return Non-Probate

4. **Service**
   - Add Service Contacts if applicable

5. **Fees**
   - Payment Account- Select Payment Account
   - Party Responsible for Fees- Select Party Responsible for Fees
   - Filing Attorney- Select Filing Attorney or Independent Filer (If Applicable)
   - Click Summary (Review Draft filing for completeness)
   - Submit

6. **Mail or Deliver to the Register of Wills the filed copy of the Inheritance Tax Return and check for payment of Inheritance Tax. The Official Receipt will be prepared once the tax payment is received. If NOT making a tax payment you do not need to provide the Register of Wills with the filed copy of the Inheritance Tax Return. However, if your filed document exceeds 300 pages, please contact the Register of Wills Division for information on how to proceed.**

<u>How to E-File into an Existing Case</u>

1. **Select -File into Existing Case**
   - Click on File into Existing Case
   - Search for Decedent by Case Number or Name
   - If case name is located with the location "Register of Wills" click on the Actions button
     Please note that Party Names cannot be edited by the filer
   - + Add Filing
   - Filing Code- Select Filing Code
   - Lead Document- Attach Document

- Save Changes
- If Filing Multiple Documents, Select Add Another Filing and Follow above listed steps
- If filing an Inheritance Tax Return on a case number prior to 2023, select the event code "Inheritance Tax Return Case Number Prior 2023", by selecting this event code you will not be charged a filing fee. The Inheritance Tax Return filing fee was collected when the Probate was opened.

2. Fees

- It is necessary to Select a Payment Account even if the event you selected does not have a filing fee.
- Select- Party Responsible for Fees
- Select- Filing Attorney (If Applicable)
- Save Changes
- Select- Summary
- Review and Submit your Envelope