



The Digital Appellate Court

Introduction to the eDCA Electronic Portal



First District Court of Appeal -
State of Florida

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The Digital Appellate Court

Introduction to the eDCA Electronic Portal

Introduction

During the 2009 legislative session Senate Bill 1718 was adopted, it gave the First District Court of Appeal an unprecedented opportunity to embrace a technological approach to the appellate workflow. The bill included the following language in Section 17 mandating the development of a pilot electronic filing system.

It is the intent of the Legislature that the First District Court of Appeal, through a pilot project [...] implement an electronic filing system for appeals of workers' compensation cases, in part to reduce costs to the Workers' Compensation Administrative Trust Fund. To the extent feasible, the system the First District Court of Appeal adopts shall use, or be compatible with, the current electronic filing system used by the Office of Judges of Compensation Claims and shall be capable of being used to receive and maintain electronic filings in other cases [...]. (SB 1718, §17.)

Since the bill passed the First District Court of Appeal has worked diligently with other Florida courts and agencies, including the Office of Judges of Compensation Claims (OJCC), to develop and implement a system that meets, and exceeds, the requirements of the legislation.

This document will serve as an overview of the public portion of this system--The eDCA Portal. eDCA is the application through which the attorneys and parties doing business with the court access and file documents in any case in which they are involved. Included is an overview of core functions of the portal and hands on tips about the day to day usage of eDCA.

External District Court of Appeal - eDCA

What is eDCA?

eDCA allows customers of the First District Court of Appeal direct access, via the web, to digital copies of all of the files in any case where they are a party or attorney. Using eDCA an attorney with a computer has access to --every document, everyday, everywhere, in every case that is pending with our court.

eDCA requires users to register for secure access to the server. Once registered, and approved by the 1DCA Clerk's office, a user has easy access to his account from any internet connected computer. This access allows the user to electronically file documents of any type with the Court. Additionally, it provides access to the complete digital repository of documents for any of the users' associated cases.

Beyond the core functions of document filing and document viewing, eDCA registration provides additional benefits. Two of the most used benefits are CaseMail and Brief search. CaseMail provides immediate notice of any filings or actions in every associated case. Brief Search provides attorneys access to any brief filed in any case permitted by law or Rule.



How do I register for eDCA?

The registration process is simple and straightforward. A user seeking access may simply click on the “Registration” link on the eDCA webpage at <http://edca.1dca.org>. The following screen will then be presented. The

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Registration - Windows Internet Explorer" with the address bar displaying "http://edca.1dca.org/Registration.aspx". The page content is titled "First District Court of Appeal Electronic Filing Registration". The form includes the following fields: Name (Prefix, First, Middle, Last, Suffix), Firm/Company, Title, Address, City/State/Zip, Phone No., Fax No., Email, Bar No., DC No., Password, and Re-Enter Password. Below the form, there is a checkbox for "I would like to receive email notification (eService) of Court Orders" which is checked. A password reminder section asks "What is the name of your high school?" with an "Answer:" field. At the bottom, there is a "Submit" button and a statement: "I hereby submit my registration application for electronic access to eDCA."

user simply fills out all the required information noting that the e-mail address and password they provide will be login credentials for all future access to the site.

After submitting all the information the registration will not become active until it has been reviewed by the Court. Upon full activation an e-mail is sent to the address used to register. The user

will then have access to the docket documents for any case where he or she is listed as a party. Additionally, the registered user will be able to file documents those cases.

Basic Functionality

After registration has been approved the user will be able to login to the portal for the first time.

The following two pages give a new eDCA user detailed screen overviews for each of the main eDCA functions.



Case List

Case No.	Appellant	Appellee	Date Disposed
08-2520	City of Casselberry and Florida Municipal, etc.	Randy L. Voss	02/23/2009
09-4258	Daniel Murtz	Volusia County Fire Services et al.	03/17/2010
08-3288	Escambia County Sheriff's Department and PGCS	Mark Stephen Aldridge	03/30/2009
08-3299	Escambia County Sheriff's Department and PGCS	Randall K. Murph	03/26/2009
08-6324	Escambia County Sheriff's Department and PGCS	Thomas Edwin Lee	08/16/2009
08-3035	Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office et al.	Michael Waldman	01/21/2009
09-5961	Israel Davila	Osceola County Sheriff's Office/North etc.	04/13/2010
08-1992	John Siskik	Orange County Fire Rescue & Alternative Serv., etc.	10/23/2008
10-1749	Seminole County Government, et al.	Craig Klamm	06/09/2010
07-5699	Volusia County Fire Services and County etc.	Patrick Taaffe	12/15/2009
08-1853	Volusia County Sheriff's Dept. and et al.	Patrick Green	11/25/2008
08-4110	William Fuller	Okaloosa Correctional Institution/Division etc.	08/04/2009
09-1166	William Fuller	Okaloosa Correctional Institution/Division etc.	11/24/2009

The Case List shows a registered eDCA a list of any case in which they are listed as an attorney or party.

Case Page

09-1166
William Fuller
vs
Okaloosa Correctional Institution/Division etc.

Date Filed: 03/12/2009 Status: Closed Proceeding: Appeal
Type: Workers' Comp 2 Category: Circuit: (Unknown)

Parties:
AS - FULLER, WILLIAM
AE - DIVISION OF RISK MANAGEMENT,
AE - OKALOOSA CORRECTIONAL
INSTITUTION,

Additional Parties:
VS
AS - HINE, ROLAN
ALADO, CLEER, CLAUDIA
MCALL, CYNTHIA

Attorneys:
AS - MCCABE, BILL
AA - PYLE, STEVEN
AE - BODENSO, J I I I, FRANK
AE - ORTIZ, COLLEEN

Date	Disposition	Manner	Note
11/24/2009	Reversed	Per Curiam Opinion	remand for modification

The Case Info page shows information optimized to meet the needs of attorneys.

Docket

View	Date	Type	Pleading
	01/21/2010	Brief	Returned Records
	01/21/2010	Event	Case Permanent
	12/10/2009	Event	West Publishing
	12/10/2009	Event	Case Closed
	12/10/2009	Letter	Worker's Comp. Mandate Cover Letter
	12/10/2009	Mandate	Worker's Compensation - Mandate
	11/24/2009	Order	Grant Att Fees&Costs-Remand to JCC 60d fr Mand-68C
	11/24/2009	Disposition	Reversed
	09/23/2009	Event	Civil Argument Date Set
	08/13/2009	Order	OA Granted-Tallahassee-80A
	07/29/2009	Brief	Appellant's Reply Brief
	06/23/2009	Brief	Appellee's Answer Brief
	06/13/2009	Event	CASE SCANNED
	05/29/2009	Brief	Initial Brief on Merits
	05/29/2009	Motion	Motion For Attorney's Fees
	05/29/2009	Motion	Motion For Civil Argument
	05/04/2009	Brief	Received Records
	04/02/2009	Event	Docketing Statement
	04/02/2009	Notice	Notice of Appearance
	03/13/2009	Letter	Worker's Compensation / Acknowledgement letter
	03/12/2009	Notice	Notice of Appeal Filed

The eDCA Docket gives quick, easy access to all docket documents. Documents can be easily viewed and printed.

File Document

I have a case number
 Don't know the case number/Know case number but have not yet entered an appearance in the case
 It's a new case

The File Document tab takes you into the e-filing system where documents can be filed with the court electronically.



Pending Filings

View	Filed	Document	Rejected On Reason	Case	Appellant	Appellee
	06/22/2010	Docketing Statement	06/24/2010 Duplicate Filing Rejected	Unknown		
	06/22/2010	Amended Answer Brief	06/22/2010 EFiled Document Rejected Per Filer's Request	Unknown	test	test
	12/17/2009	Other	12/17/2009 Duplicate Filing Rejected	09-3960	Thomas Westmoreland	Polk County School Board,

The Pending Filings tab shows all documents that have been filed but not yet accepted by the Court.

Rejected Filings

View	Filed	Document	Rejected On Reason	Case	Appellant	Appellee
	06/22/2010	Docketing Statement	06/24/2010 Duplicate Filing Rejected	Unknown		
	06/22/2010	Amended Answer Brief	06/22/2010 EFiled Document Rejected Per Filer's Request	Unknown	test	test
	12/17/2009	Other	12/17/2009 Duplicate Filing Rejected	09-3960	Thomas Westmoreland	Polk County School Board,

The Rejected Filings tab shows all e-filed documents that have been rejected by the court, and the reason for rejection.

My Profile

Electronic Filing Profile

First	Middle	Last	Suffix
Name: User	Of	Thecourt	
Firm/Company: fdcA			
Title: IT			
Address: 301 MLK			
City/State/Zip: Tallahassee	FL	32301	
Phone:	Fax:		
E-Mail:			
Bar No:	DC No.:		
Password:	Confirm:		

In the future, the First District Court of Appeal will have the capacity to service documents to you electronically using eDCA. We must have your authorization to allow documents to be serviced to you electronically. Check the box below if you authorize.

The My Profile tab allows users a quick and easy way to keep contact information up to date with the court.

File Document

Pursuant to the requirements of Administrative Orders 07-1, 09-3 and 10-3, most briefs filed by attorneys are available in electronic format in case numbers 1007-3000 and higher. As well, most briefs filed by non-attorneys since December 2009 have been converted into and are available in electronic format. Electronic briefs are not publicly available in cases which are restricted due to statute, court rule, or court order, but can be accessed through eDCA by registered parties and attorneys in the case. Briefs which have not been captured in electronic format are also not available online but may be requested in paper format by contacting the clerk's office. The clerk's office is required by statute to charge \$1 per page for paper copies of briefs.

Enter the Case Number for which you wish to review briefs. If the number is not known you may search by Appellant and/or Appellee. Searching by Appellant and/or Appellee will return any records where the Appellant/Appellee starts with the search string entered. You may use a wildcard (%) at the start of your search string to include all records where the search string is found anywhere in the name.

Case No.	Appellant	Appellee
	Smith	

Search

vs

Case No.	Appellant	Appellee
09-4227	Smith Paget	State of Florida
09-6271	Smith Paget	State of Florida
09-6081	Smith Xavier Jackson	State of Florida, And Jacksonville etc.

The Briefs in Other Cases allows attorneys to read briefs from any case available as determined by statute and appellate rules.

E-Filing Overview

Document Filing - User Uploaded Document

As of August 9, 2010 the First District Court of Appeal accepts electronic filing for any document type. Beginning September 1, 2010 the Court will require all attorneys to file all documents electronically. Paper documents will not be accepted from attorneys doing business with the court. The following is an example of how an eDCA user uploads and files a document with the court.

An eDCA user, once logged in, can click the “File a Document” link. They are presented with the following options at right:

I have a case number
 I don't know the case number
 It's a new case

Next

The user selects the option that best applies. Then from the resulting screen (below) they choose “Docketing Statement” from the “Document Type” menu.

Case No: Search
 08-2520
 City of Casselberry and Florida Municipal, etc.
 vs
 Randy L. Vess

Emergency
 Document Type: Notices of Appeal
 Document:
 Title (if Other selected above):
 Filed on behalf of:
 of:
 PDF File to Upload: Browse
 Note to Clerk (optional):

[Expanded E-Filing Guide with Document Category Reference Sheet.](#)
 All documents uploaded to the system must be in Adobe PDF Format. [For help meeting this requirement click here.](#)
 By clicking "upload" you intend for the First District Court of Appeal to accept the document described above to be filed. You also acknowledge that this electronic filing is the same content and you have the same "good faith" obligations as you would on a signed paper document.

Upload

The user is then presented with the document filing screen. There are two main choices that must be made prior to uploading and submitting a document. These are: document type, and document subtype selection. Documents are organized into umbrella

document type sections. Once the document type is selected, the specific document subtype field is populated and the specific document to be filed can be selected.

Any PDF file can be uploaded to eDCA and an optional field for a note to the Clerk office is provided. When the user is satisfied with the filing they simply click “upload” they they immediately receive a message confirming receipt of the document by the court. They will also receive a message via e-mail when the document has been reviewed and approved (or rejected) by the clerk’s office.

Document Filing - Docketing Statement

One of the benefits of an e-filing system is the ability to rethink and simplify common forms. This was especially true of the 1DCA Docketing Statement known fondly as the “pink sheet.” The following is an easy description of the new eDCA filing process for docketing statements.

An eDCA user, once logged in, can click the “File a Document” link. They are presented with the following options below:

I have a case number
 I don't know the case number
 It's a new case

Next

Then The user selects the option that best applies. Then from the resulting screen (below) they choose “Docketing Statement” from the “Document Type” menu.

Emergency

Document Type:

Document:

Title (if Other selected above):

Filed on behalf of:

PDF File to Upload:

Note to Clerk (optional):

All documents uploaded to the system must be in Adobe PDF Format. [For help meeting this requirement click here.](#)

By clicking "upload" you intend for the First District Court of Appeal to accept the document described above to be filed. You also acknowledge that this electronic filing is the same content and you have the same "good faith" obligations as you would on a signed paper document.

The signed paper version and all requisite copies are still required and must be delivered/mailed to the court.

Upload

The user is now directed to an online version of the traditional “pink sheet” Docketing Statement. They work through each question, closely following the instructive language of the form. If they cannot complete the form in a single session they may scroll to the bottom of the page and choose “Save” which will allow a user to log back in later and resume the form.

When satisfied the user clicks the “Submit” option at the bottom of the page. The completed Docketing Statement will be submitted to the clerk’s office for review and acceptance. Prior to acceptance the completed form can be viewed in the

“Pending Filings” section of eDCA. Then, after acceptance it will be viewable by all registered attorneys and any registered party to the case from the docket page.

**IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL
FIRST DISTRICT, STATE OF FLORIDA**

**DOCKETING STATEMENT AND
NOTICE OF APPEARANCE OF COUNSEL**

APPELLANT/PETITIONER: If this case involves an original writ, is an appeal of a non-final order, or is a "child" case (as defined in paragraph 13 below), this Docketing Statement must be completed and submitted immediately. In all other cases, counsel for the appellants or the appellants, if not represented by counsel, must complete and submit the Docketing Statement within 20 days from the date of the court's acknowledgment notice accepting this case and assigning a case number.

APPELLEE/RESPONDENT (AND AMICUS CURIAE): Are not required to file a Docketing Statement unless there are amendments, corrections, or additions to the Docketing Statement filed by appellants. Appellees and Amici are only required to file the notice of appearance if counsel's name does not already appear on the certificate of service. Appellee's Docketing Statement and notice of appearance are due no later than the answer brief.

Note: Electronic completion and submission of this Docketing Statement is required for attorneys in all cases 1D10-X and higher and is encouraged for others registered with eDCA. Electronic completion and submission of the Docketing Statement through eDCA is in lieu of completion and filing with the court of a paper copy. Users who have electronically completed and submitted their Docketing Statement through eDCA are not required or permitted to file a paper version of the docketing statement. As all attorneys in case number 1D10-X and higher are required to electronically complete and submit their Docketing Statement, they should not file a paper version of the docketing statement with the court unless it is accompanied by a motion for hardship exception to this Court's Administrative Order 10-1, requiring electronic completion and submission of the Docketing Statement through eDCA.

Service of the Docketing Statement is still required to be made by the filer on the opposing side, either by printing and mailing a copy of this Docketing Statement to all Parties of Record or their attorneys or, if permission has been received from the other side to provide service by electronic means, by providing an electronic copy of the Docketing Statement to all Parties of Record or their attorneys.

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

1. **NAME OF CASE:** _____ **DCA CASE NUMBER:** _____

2. **NOTICE OF APPEARANCE OF COUNSEL**
ATTORNEY FOR (LIST CLIENT BY NAME) _____
ATTORNEY'S NAME: Russ Vaughn
BAR NO.: 0123456
ADDRESS: 123 N main St Tallahassee, FL 32303
Phone No.: 850-222-1234
Email Address: rvaughn@comcast.net

Docketing statement of Appellant/Petitioner
 Appellee/Responder
 Amicus

All correspondence and orders will be sent to counsel as specified above unless the court allows withdrawal or substitution of counsel.

3. **TYPE OF CASE:** Select the most appropriate type of case. Civil Appeals
 Criminal, Collateral Criminal, and Juvenile Delinquency Appeals
 Administrative Appeals
 Workers' Compensation Appeals or Original Petition in Workers' Compensation

Extended Functionality

eDCA is not just for document filing and viewing. It has always been the Court’s intention to add as much value as possible for the court’s customers who use the eDCA application. Wherever possible we have answered the demands of our users by adding extended features to enhance the eDCA experience.

CaseMail

One of the most popular advanced features of eDCA is the CaseMail function. CaseMail provides electronic notification to registered eDCA users (via e-mail) informing them when documents are filed in any case that the user is a party to. These notifications range from alerts regarding approval of electronically filed documents to the following court issued documents: opinions, orders and mandates. When any of these documents are added to the docket, an e-mail with a link to the electronic document will be sent to any eDCA registered party or attorney on the case. This e-mail may be forwarded to anyone the recipient wishes, in accordance with state law, whether or not that individual is a registered eDCA user. This feature gives attorneys unprecedented ease and efficiency in keeping aware of events occurring in cases and making that information rapidly available to clients.

Briefs in Other Cases Search Engine

Early in the eDCA development process a survey of active eDCA users revealed that the single most requested new feature important to attorneys was the ability to search and view briefs from other First DCA cases. We listened! The eDCA portal now includes this feature for registered attorneys. From the “Briefs in other Cases” tab a registered attorney can search and view any of the briefs which are allowed for public viewing under current statutory and court rules.

Document Acquisition - Will the document I need be available?

Many new electronic systems suffer from an initial lack of available documents. While developing our system it became clear that the digitization of documents needed to be a major priority. Moving forward, the Court has been dedicated to rapidly populating our system with digital versions of every document from each active case currently before the Court. The Court has used two main methods for acquiring these documents.

Document Scanning Department

A digital document system without documents offers no benefits. While we realized that the future of the system would allow for filing of electronic documents directly by attorneys, and lower tribunals without the need for in-court scanning, the early reality was that the project would face difficulty winning acceptance if it contained only limited documents. In order to obtain acceptance and become legitimately useful our digital document system needed to contain a critical mass of documents on day-one of deployment. Recognizing this fact, we decided to utilize scanning hardware that had been provided to us during the previous fiscal year by the Appellate Court Technology Committee, to build a fully operational in-house scanning department.

“In order to obtain acceptance and become legitimately useful our digital document system needed to contain a critical mass of documents on day one of deployment.”



In parallel with our database development and programming efforts we assembled a team of scanning personnel to begin scanning all case documents in the court’s active case load. Conceived out of both necessity and an ongoing commitment to project frugality we retrofitted space in the court’s library and even a little-used portion of the court’s kitchen for use in a dedicated scanning operation. This scanning operation has to-date scanned over 210,000 documents representing in excess of 3.9 million pages of court documents. In addition to scanning the documents we recognized the need to add-value to the scanned documents over and beyond the paper counterparts. To achieve this, each document is

made searchable using optical character recognition (OCR) technology and is also made easily navigable using internal linking tied to the documents printed index. Adding these two steps to the scanning process makes working with documents much easier for those viewing them. In the past, finding a specific portion of a lengthy record could mean spending precious time searching through volume after volume of printed record, by utilizing OCR and internal linking the same passage can be found within seconds and with only a few clicks of the mouse.

Administrative Agency and Lower Court Portal

SB1718 was specifically created to allow for worker's compensation records to be electronically transferred to our "compatible system." We took this direction a step further and created a system that can accept electronic records from any administrative agency or lower tribunal. We have created a separate portal which allows easy electronic transfer of records originating from any number of diverse systems.

With the goal of receiving as many documents as possible in electronic form we have made contact with all the administrative agencies and lower courts from whom we routinely receive records. We are actively encouraging the electronic transfer of records from each of them, with good results. Presently, in excess of 80 percent of low court records are provided to us electronically.

The Future

The First District Court of Appeal is truly within grasp of the goal of becoming Florida's first completely-digital, appellate, "paper-on-demand," Court. We continue to develop a system that evolves to meet the changing demands of our customers. This project would never have reached this level of success without the feedback from the people who use it. If you have a suggestion or comment please let us know by emailing us at: ecourt@1dca.org.

First District Court of Appeal – A Paper On-Demand Court

