

**IN THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER S-2014-011  
(Supersedes Administrative Orders S-1997-039,  
S-1999-030, and S-2007-078)**

**OFFICIAL COURT FILES**

On October 18, 2012, the Florida Supreme Court issued revised Administrative Order SC11-399, which amended Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.525 – *Electronic Filing* – thereby establishing uniform procedures for electronic filing in the Florida trial courts. *In Re: Amendments to the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure, the Florida Probate Rules, the Florida Small Claims Rules, the Florida Rules of Juvenile Procedure, the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure, and the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure— Electronic Filing*, 102 So.3d 451 (Fla. 2012). These e-filing procedures included establishing effective dates for electronic filing in the various divisions, defining the official court file as primarily electronic documents, requiring the Clerk of the Circuit Court (Clerk) to convert paper documents into searchable electronic documents beginning on the effective dates, and permitting (but not requiring) the Clerk to convert paper documents filed before the effective dates to electronic form.

Prior to the issuance of the above-referenced *Electronic Filing* decision and therefore prior to the requirement of converting paper documents into searchable electronic documents, the Clerk reports that she converted in excess of 10 million paper court documents into optical images in Tagged Image File Format (TIFF). These TIFF images are or can be indexed and available to be included as part of the “official court file” as permitted under Rule 2.525(c)(2)(C) but they are not searchable.

Because of the large volume of these existing TIFF images, the Clerk represents that it is not practical for her to convert all TIFF images into a searchable format. But, in limited circumstances, and with adequate prior notice, the Clerk has agreed to convert TIFF images in individual court files into a searchable format by using character recognition software.

The existing TIFF images are either currently included in the existing official court files in those divisions that currently accept electronic filing or they

will be included in the official court files in those divisions that will begin electronic filing later this year. The TIFF images in official court files will eventually be eliminated through adjudication of these cases and application of the applicable records retention schedule.

Therefore, by the power vested in the chief judge under article V, section 2(d), Florida Constitution; section 43.26, Florida Statutes; and Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(2), it is therefore **ORDERED**:

**1. Civil, Probate, Small Claims, Family Law Divisions, and Appeals to the Circuit Courts**

Electronic filing in the civil, probate, small claims and family divisions, as well as for civil and small claims appeals to the circuit court, became effective on April 1, 2013. *Electronic Filing*, 102 So.3d at 461. Any TIFF images created prior to April 1, 2013 in the Civil, Probate, Small Claims, Family Law and the Appeals Divisions are part of the official court file (Rule 2.525(c)(2)(C)), subject to retention schedules associated with each document in accordance with Rule 2.430. The Clerk is authorized to destroy any identical paper documents of the images, as long as the images accurately depict the paper documents being destroyed. Rule 2.525(c)(7).

**2. Baker Act and Jimmy Ryce Act Divisions**

Electronic filing in the Baker Act and Jimmy Ryce Act Divisions became effective on October 1, 2013. *Electronic Filing*, 102 So.3d at 461. Any TIFF images created prior to October 1, 2013 in the Baker Act and Jimmy Ryce Act Divisions are part of the official court file (Rule 2.525(c)(2)(C)), subject to retention schedules associated with each document in accordance with Rule 2.430. The Clerk is authorized to destroy any identical paper documents of the images, as long as the images accurately depict the paper documents being destroyed. Rule 2.525(c)(7).

**3. Criminal and Juvenile Divisions**

In accordance with corrected Administrative Order SC14-1, electronic filing in the criminal and juvenile divisions, as well as for criminal appeals to the circuit court, will become effective on April 14, 2014. Any TIFF images created prior to April 14, 2014 in the Criminal and Juvenile Divisions are part of the official court file (Rule 2.525(c)(2)(C)), subject to retention schedules associated with each document in accordance with Rule 2.430. The Clerk is authorized to destroy any identical paper documents of the images, as long as the images accurately depict the paper documents being destroyed. Rule 2.525(c)(7).

**4. Traffic Division**

In accordance with corrected Administrative Order SC14-1, electronic filing in the traffic division, as well as for traffic appeals to the circuit court, will become effective on July 21, 2014. Any TIFF images created prior to July 21, 2014 in the Traffic Division are part of the official court file (Rule 2.525(c)(2)(C)), subject to retention schedules associated with each document in accordance with Rule 2.430. The Clerk is authorized to destroy any identical paper documents of the images, as long as the images accurately depict the paper documents being destroyed. Rule 2.525(c)(7).

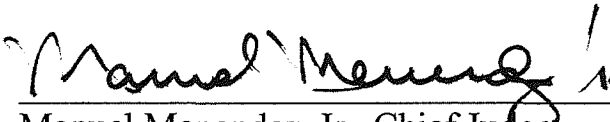
**5. Previous Administrative Orders Superseded**

This administrative order supersedes Administrative Orders S-1997-039 (*Request to Check Out Appellate Court Files*), S-1999-030 (*Request to Check Out Civil Court Files by Public Defender*), and S-2007-078 (*Court Files*).

**6. Effective Date**

This administrative order is effective March 1, 2014.

It is ORDERED in Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida, on this 26<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2014.

  
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Manuel Menendez, Jr., Chief Judge

Original to: Pat Frank, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Copy to: All Judges

Mark Ober, State Attorney

Public Defender, Public Defender

Dale K. Bohner, Legal Counsel to the Clerk of the Circuit Court

Hillsborough County Bar Association