



Supreme Court of Illinois

December 13, 2017

SUPREME COURT AMENDS RULE ON E-FILING TO ALLOW GOOD CAUSE EXEMPTION FOR SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

The Illinois Supreme Court today announced changes to a rule regarding the requirements for electronic filing (e-filing) of documents for self-represented litigants (SRLs).

Amended Illinois Supreme Court Rule 9(c)(4) defines the good cause exemption and specifies the procedures to allow a SRL to obtain the good cause exemption. The good cause exemption is a certification which is to be filed before or contemporaneously with an initial pleading which, upon proper filing, exempts the party from the e-filing requirement. Certificates for the trial, appellate and supreme courts will be available on the courts website at www.illinoiscourts.gov.

The rule change is effective immediately. For proceedings in the circuit courts, Amended Rule 9 is effective January 1, 2018. The updated rule is available at http://illinoiscourts.gov/SupremeCourt/Rules/Art_I/ArtI.htm#9

"As the Illinois Courts approach the deadline for statewide mandatory e-filing in civil cases, it is important to ensure access to justice for our most vulnerable self-represented litigants," said Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas L. Kilbride, who serves as liaison to the Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission. "The Illinois Supreme Court is committed to ensuring access to justice for all and this good cause exemption to e-filing will allow these litigants to continue filing documents successfully."

Good cause exists where a self-represented litigant is not able to e-file documents for the following reasons: no computer or Internet access in the home and travel represents a hardship; a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, that prevents e-filing; or a language barrier or low literacy (difficulty reading, writing, or speaking in English). Good cause also exists if the pleading is of a sensitive nature, such as a petition for an order of protection or civil no contact/stalking order.

Judges retain discretion to determine whether good cause is shown. They additionally retain discretion to determine whether, under particular circumstances, good cause exists without the filing of a certificate, and the court shall enter an order to that effect.

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