

ARIZONA CODE OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

Part 1: Judicial Branch Administration

Chapter 5: Automation

Section 1-50X: Storage and Presentation of Electronic Documents in Court Cases

A. Definitions. In this section, the following definitions apply:

“Aggregation” is the act of combining individual electronic case documents into a larger file that contains metadata at the file level, but not at the individual document level.

“Inactive” means that point in the electronic document management process when the case with which a document is associated has been fully adjudicated and all obligations have been met. When a case becomes inactive, the long-term or permanent record of the document is created and maintained so as to reasonably ensure its preservation according to approved records retention schedules. In addition, for general jurisdiction courts, related documents are purged. The use of the term in relation to document management has no implications on the use of the same term for statistical purposes.

“Electronic Document Management System” (EDMS) means a collection of computer software application programs and hardware devices that provide a means of organizing and controlling the creation, management and retrieval of documents through their life cycle. It may include workflow software which enables organizations to define routing and processing schemes to automate the business processes for document handling. It may also include imaging and optical character recognition (OCR) software and devices to support the capture, storage, and retrieval of document images from paper (“imaging”).

"Imaging" means the process of digitizing a page, document, photograph, color slide or other two-dimensional material using a scanner.

“Index” means descriptive locator information about a digital document that allows the user to accurately identify it on electronic storage media. An index in an EDMS is an electronic file distinct from the collection of documents it catalogues. The act of providing the descriptive locator information is referred to as “indexing.” For example, a document might be “indexed” by its case number, party names, document type and date filed.

“Metadata” means descriptive information about a document that is not displayed within the viewable content of the document but is an inherent part of the document. Document management systems rely on metadata for search indexes.

B. Applicability. These standards shall apply to all electronic case documents maintained by courts, including images of paper filings and digital documents delivered through electronic filing.

These policies support consistency with electronic filing as well as appropriate security and transparency for remote public access.

C. General Requirements

1. Courts performing imaging or accepting electronic filings shall use an EDMS that complies with ACJA § 1-505 or be granted an exception by the Commission on Technology to use a non-conforming system.
2. Courts shall comply with requirements of ACJA §§ 1-504 and 1-506 before accepting and storing electronic documents.
3. Courts shall meet the requirements of ACJA § 1-507 prior to destroying any paper document associated with an image.

D. Requirements for Documents in Active Cases

1. Courts shall store individual documents received via electronic filing as individual files in the EDMS regardless of the level of detail at which the events to which the documents relate are entered in the case management system or what aggregation will be performed later in the lifecycle of any document.

For example, a related attachment, exhibit, and motion all submitted together via e-filing shall be stored as three individual files even if the attachment and exhibit do not have their own event codes for entry in the case management system.

2. Courts shall store individual documents filed on paper at no less level of detail within the EDMS than their related event(s) in the case management system, regardless of what aggregation will be performed later in the lifecycle of any document.

For example, a related attachment, exhibit, and motion all submitted together over the counter need not be stored as three individual files in the EDMS if the attachment and exhibit do not have their own relevant event codes for entry in the case management system.

3. Individual documents shall have individual metadata and individual quality assurance performed in accordance with ACJA § 1-504 (D)(6) and (7). Illegible documents (as a result of the scanning process) or irretrievable documents shall be re-scanned and/or re-indexed immediately.
4. To prevent inappropriate access to electronic documents, courts shall enter applicable security restrictions in the case management system for the document, event, and case with which each electronic document is associated.

5. Courts shall preserve documents they generate or receive in accordance with the applicable records retention schedules and security requirements, regardless of case status or how they are preserved.

E. Requirements for Limited Jurisdiction Court Cases Changing from Active to Inactive Status

1. Limited jurisdiction courts shall change the case status indicator for each active case that becomes fully adjudicated and for which all obligations have been met to “Completed” within the case management system that is integrated with the EDMS storing the documents.
2. No civil case shall be placed in “Completed” status (for document management purposes) until a satisfaction of judgment exists or the time limit for obtaining a renewal of judgment has passed. Other case status codes shall be used.

F. Special Requirements for Bulk Scanning of Documents within a Single Case

1. When paper documents for a completed, ageing, or inactive case within the approved retention period are scanned in bulk for the sole purpose of archival, courts shall use the case management system event code indicating “Completed Case Back Scan,” “Archival Case Scanning,” or equivalent, in each applicable case to indicate bulk scanning activity.
2. All documents associated with a specific case being bulk scanned may be aggregated when the above event code has been used to indicate bulk scanning. The court shall apply to the event description in the case management system the most restrictive security designation associated with any individual document contained within the bulk scanned file.
3. General jurisdiction court processes shall also identify documents which are subject to approved criteria for purging prior to scanning for archiving.

Adopted by Administrative Order 2012-XX effective Month XX, 2012.