

Maricopa Lawyer
Clerk's Corner
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February a Busy Marriage Month at the Court
Plus, E-Filing Accuracy and Reducing Attempted Service Notice Filings

E-Filing Reminder

Mandatory e-filing through the Supreme Court's AZTurboCourt system is rapidly approaching and the Clerk's Office's review clerks will need to be able to quickly process the increased volume of new filings. There will be little time available for the review clerks to determine if the correct document was uploaded by the filing party.

To improve the timely review and filing-in of e-filed documents, it is critical that the complete document title entered in the e-filing system is exactly the same as it appears on the document being uploaded. Making even minor corrections to document titles often doubles a review clerk's processing time. More importantly to the attorneys and their clients, some electronic filers are uploading documents that do not match the document title the filer enters in the e-filing system. An example of this problem is when an e-filer enters, "Petitioner Smith's Motion in Limine" as the document title in the e-filing system but the uploaded document itself is captioned, "Petitioner Jones's Motion in Limine."

There are two practices recommended to avoid this situation as an e-filer: Open the document being e-filed and copy and paste the complete title from the document into the document title field in the e-filing system; and look for the review clerks' comments on both accepted and rejected filings for important feedback.

Attempted Service

The courts are struggling with a high volume of filings related to attempted service. While this occurs in Superior Court, it occurs more often in the Justice Courts. Process servers often file a notice of attempted service after each individual attempt to serve. The process servers indicate this practice has been at the request of a lawyer or law firm, either in individual cases or as a routine practice based on their client/law firm's direction.

To improve case flow and reduce unnecessary filings, several judges have asked that a notice of attempted service only be filed when requesting an extension of service or a request for alternative service. Multiple attempts at service can also be listed within a single filing to the court, rather than filing a document after each individual attempt to serve a document.

Lighter Side

In addition to court records and financial accounting duties, the issuing of marriage licenses is among the Clerk's responsibilities. Valentine's Day, or the business day before

when Valentine's Day occurs on a weekend, is the office's busiest day issuing licenses and 2011 will be no different.

Valentine's Day occurs on a Monday this year, and the Clerk's Office anticipates serving over 100 couples that day. Many couples are likely planning to get their license issued in February for a wedding ceremony scheduled in September or November of this year. It is common for couples to marry on particularly memorable days, one of those being November 11 this year, which falls on a Friday: 11/11/11. Other couples will purposefully get their license issued on 11/11/11 with plans for a wedding on next year's Valentine's Day which will also be Arizona's Statehood Centennial.

While not all couples are so deliberate, many like to take advantage of unique numerical days of the year, such as January 1 or 11 (1/1/11 and 1/11/11) and September 10 (9/10/11). Others find romance in the federal tax code, as the Clerk's Office receives an annual rush for licenses in the closing weeks of each year. The Clerk's Office issues approximately 24,000 marriage licenses per year, averaging 97 licenses issued each business day. Over the last several years, the Office has issued an average of over 120 licenses on Valentine's Day or the business day before.