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Important Tips for Paper Filings

Since 2002, the Clerk's Office has electronically scanned the image of adult court documents that are filed on paper and placed those images into the Electronic Court Record, which currently holds over 25 million documents. With mandatory e-filing under way now in the Superior Court in Maricopa County, there will be fewer paper documents filed with the Clerk; however, the following tips are recommended for those documents still filed on paper:

- Ensure pleadings have the correct case number to prevent delays in processing. When using templates, make sure the party names and case number match before filing.
- Avoid attaching pleadings which are already in the court file. (A copy of a previously filed document may be attached to the judge's copy of the pleading if necessary.)
- Avoid colored paper, color printing, photographs, and highlighted text when filing paper documents: these may create images which are difficult or impossible to view after going through the Clerk's black-and-white scanners. In some cases highlighting actually redacts (blacks out) the text underneath during scanning.
- Use only black ink for all signatures to avoid the same problems as above associated with scanning color images through black-and-white scanners.
- Avoid using pencil whenever possible. If pencil cannot be avoided, press hard to make the writing as dark as possible.
- Avoid using legal size paper (larger than 8½ x 11). Large attachments should be reduced in size before filing.
- Avoid using tabs on divider sheets - they cannot be scanned. If tabbed dividers are preferred, use only on the copy sent to the judge.
- Avoid using blank pages as dividers. Instead of tabs or blank pages, insert a page with text, such as, "Exhibit A".
- File each document separately; do not staple multiple documents together. Clerk staff must remove staples before scanning. Binder clips may keep documents together and are easily removed.
- The upper right corner of documents must remain blank to allow for the Clerk's filing stamp. All other document stamps, captions, letterhead, etc. must be placed elsewhere on the document. Documents with anything in the upper right corner that interferes with the filing stamp may be rejected by the Clerk.
- Avoid placing text, stamps or other information on the back side of papers whenever possible. The Clerk's scanning equipment is set to image the back side of pages, however, if the amount of information on the back side is too small and most of the back side of the page is blank, the information may not be detected and scanned. Also, extraneous information, such as received stamps and other notations on the back side of a document not meant to be part of the document sometimes are picked up by the scanning equipment and are made part of the permanent record.

- Do not include non-standard items with paper filings, such as CD/DVDs or other items that cannot be scanned into the electronic case file. The content of non-standard items should be filed electronically if appropriate, or be submitted in their physical format as a courtroom exhibit, depending on the item and situation.

As e-filing expands, there will continue to be exceptions that require certain documents to be filed on paper. Following these practical tips will ensure that your clients' records are maintained in the most legible format as they enter the official record, which is created by the Clerk's Office scanning the paper originals into the Electronic Court Record.