

**SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

**STATUTORY INSTRUMENT**

2020 NO. 3

(Gazetted 21st April, 2020)

**IN EXERCISE** of the powers conferred by section 17 of the Supreme Court Order the Chief Justice and two other judges of the Supreme Court makes the following Rules.

**EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT (ELECTRONIC LITIGATION FILING AND SERVICE PROCEDURE) RULES, 2020**

1. (1) These Rules may be cited as the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (Electronic Litigation Filing and Service Procedure) Rules, 2020. **Citation and Commencement**

(2) These rules come into force on 2nd April, 2020.

2. In these Rules – **Interpretation**

“Court” means the High Court situated in each of the Member States and Territories and the Court of Appeal, whichever is applicable in the context;

“Court’s Registry” means the Court Office of the High Court situated in each of the Member States and Territories and of the Court of Appeal situated at the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Headquarters in Saint Lucia, whichever is applicable in the context;

“Court’s website” means the website of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court;

“Electronic Litigation Portal” means the web-based application which has been developed and implemented to offer stakeholders in the judicial system of the Eastern Caribbean a single point of access for the electronic litigation filing and management of documents and case files within the Court’s Registry in the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court in accordance with these Rules;

“electronic mail” means the transmission of messages via an electronic device or an internet communication network; and

“electronic means” means a form of electronic communication of the contents of a document and includes the use of an online application, e-mail, online shared drives, CD ROMs, USB Drives, or Facsimile;

**Application of Rules**

3. (1) These Rules apply to –

- (a) High Court civil proceedings, including commercial, non-contentious probate and administration of estates, family, admiralty and bankruptcy or insolvency proceedings;
- (b) High Court criminal proceedings;
- (c) Court of Appeal criminal and civil proceedings.

(2) Despite sub-rule (1), rule 3.6 (2) of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Civil Procedure Rules 2000 and Parts 5 and 6 of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Civil Procedure Rules 2000 apply to civil proceedings in the High Court and Court of Appeal under these Rules.

(3) These Rules apply to proceedings when made available in the Electronic Litigation Portal and notice is provided by the Chief Registrar as directed by the Chief Justice.

(4) These Rules apply without exception, to new proceedings filed on or after the commencement date of the notice provided under sub-rule (3) and must be used to file a document to commence proceedings before the Court through the Electronic Litigation Portal.

(5) In the case of existing cases, these Rules apply, without exception, if the case is made available in the Electronic Litigation Portal and electronic or other notification is given to the parties by the Court’s Registry.

(6) These Rules apply to procedural rules of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and applicable Practice Directions, subject to any exclusion or revision within these Rules.

**Operation of electronic filing system**

4. (1) These Rules make provision for the electronic litigation filing and service of Court documents through the use of electronic means of communication.

(2) A document must be submitted through, the Electronic Litigation Portal to enable the electronic litigation filing to the Court’s Registry.

Format of documents

7. (1) A document which is submitted for electronic litigation filing must be –

- (a) prepared electronically using Microsoft Word or open office or other Word Processor in .doc, .docx, .txt, .rtf, .pdf formats; and;
- (b) converted into Portable Document Format (PDF) before uploading by –
  - (i) using an Adobe Acrobat software;
  - (ii) using other compatible Portable Document Format converter software; or
  - (iii) scanning hard copies of the document.

(2) If a document is not a text document, it must be scanned using an image resolution of 300 dpi (dots per inch) and saved as a Portable Document Format document.

(3) A document submitted for electronic litigation filing must not –

- (a) exceed the file size as may be set by the Court;
- (b) be encrypted; and
- (c) be password protected.

(4) A document submitted through the Electronic Litigation Portal must comply with the requirements of the applicable procedural rules of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.

(5) There are no limits on the number of documents which can be submitted in the process of electronic filing.

(6) Electronic images of exhibits must be uploaded and submitted as one filing, together with an index of the exhibits and the corresponding principal document.

Electronic signature

8. (1) A filed document which is submitted for electronic litigation filing is not required to bear the electronic image of the handwritten (physical) signature of the party that is filing.

(2) A party may insert a signature on a document for electronic litigation filing through the Electronic Litigation Portal.

(3) If a party files a document using the Electronic Litigation Portal, scanned original documents that are signed with a physical signature

must be made available for inspection if required by another party to the proceedings or by order of the Court.

9. (1) The hours of business for electronic litigation filing are from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. from Monday to Friday, excluding weekends and public holidays.

**Filing within  
and outside  
hours of  
business**

(2) A document to which the Court's stamp and the date of filing information has been applied by the Electronic Litigation Portal is deemed to be filed on the date and time that the document was submitted to the Electronic Litigation Portal, if the date and time of filing is within the hours of business for electronic filing.

(3) A document submitted through the Electronic Litigation Portal for filing outside the hours of business for electronic filing or on a weekend, or public holiday, is deemed to have an effective filing date as being the date when the Court's Registry is next open.

(4) Rules made by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court relating to holidays and computation of time apply to documents filed using the Electronic Litigation Portal.

(5) Notwithstanding sub-rule (4), a period during which the service is not available through the facility hosting the Electronic Litigation Portal will be excluded from the computation of time.

10. The fees payable in respect of a document for electronic litigation filing are –

**Fees**

(a) the fee set out in the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (Court Proceedings Fees) Rules 2017 ; and

**S.R.O. 3 of 2017**

(b) the fee specified in the Schedule 1.

11. (1) The Court's Registry, through the Electronic Litigation Portal, shall accept a document submitted for electronic filing.

**Processing by  
the Court's  
Registry**

(2) If a document is submitted using the Electronic Litigation Portal –

(a) an automated notification is generated in the notifications section of the Electronic Litigation Portal and shall be available to the party once the party has logged into the system; and

(b) the notification under paragraph (a) shall be sent by electronic mail to the registered electronic mail address

of the person filing and other parties who are already a part of the case on the Electronic Litigation Portal.

(3) A filed document must be stamped and dated and by electronic means linked to the associated case by the Electronic Litigation Portal.

(4) The Court's stamp and date of filing information must be applied to an electronically filed document by the Electronic Litigation Portal, validating the authenticity of the document as being filed in the Court's Registry.

(5) On payment of the fees using the payment facility provided by the Electronic Litigation Portal a stamp denoting payment must be applied to the document and the electronic litigation filing fees paid under rule 10 must be printed on the document.

Electronic  
compilation of  
trial bundle,  
core bundle and  
record of appeal

12. (1) A party shall, provide an index of the documents filed which forms the electronic compilation to be used as –

- (a) the trial bundle and core bundle for trial; or
- (b) the record of appeal and core bundle for an appeal.

(2) An electronic compilation under sub-rule (1) is deemed to be the trial bundle for the purposes of Part 39 or the Record of Appeal for the purposes of Part 62 of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Civil Procedure Rules or other applicable rules.

Service of  
documents by  
electronic  
means

13. (1) Unless a rule of the Court or an order provides otherwise, a document that is required to be served whether personally or by other means may be served by electronic means.

(2) Unless the Court or an enactment requires otherwise, a document filed using the Electronic Litigation Portal that is required to be served must be served by the relevant party and not the Court.

(3) If proceedings have been commenced–

- (a) service must be effected in accordance with the applicable rules of Court; and
- (b) the filing party must at the same time serve the authorisation code generated by the Electronic Litigation Portal in Form 1 in Schedule 2 to these rules.

(4) If the authorisation code generated by the Electronic Litigation Portal is not served on a party in accordance with sub-rule (3), service shall be deemed not to have been effected, except if service is effected in accordance with directions given by the Court in respect of an order permitting substituted service.

(5) Service by electronic means must be effected through the electronic mail address of a party which was provided during the registration process on the Electronic Litigation Portal.

(6) A party who furnishes an electronic mail address under rule 5 consents to accept service by electronic means through the electronic mail address provided.

(7) An electronic mail address is presumed valid for a party if the party has not filed with the Court's Registry notice that the address is no longer valid and at the time that the notice is filed provided an alternative electronic mail address.

(8) A party that receives a document served by electronic means and is unable to view or download the document shall immediately notify the serving party and the serving party shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the document can be viewed and downloaded.

(9) A document to which the Court's stamp and date of filing information has been applied by the Electronic Litigation Portal is deemed to be served on the date and time that the document was submitted to the Electronic Litigation Portal, if the date and time of submission is within business hours.

(10) A document submitted through the Electronic Litigation Portal for service –

- (a) outside the hours set by law for service or if not applicable, outside of the business hours of the Court's Registry;
- (b) on a weekend; or
- (c) on a public holiday,

is deemed to have an effective service date as the date when the Court's Registry is next open.

(11) Rules made by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court relating to holidays and computation of time apply to documents served using the Electronic Litigation Portal.

(12) Despite sub-rule (11) a period during which the service is not available through the facility hosting the Electronic Litigation Portal is excluded from the computation of time.”

**Proof of service  
by electronic  
means**

14. (1) An electronic confirmation of delivery serves as proof of service of a document which has been served by electronic means, but if a dispute arises as to whether service occurred, it shall be resolved by the Chief Registrar, the Registrar of the High Court or a single Judge of the Court of Appeal or High Court.

(2) An electronic confirmation of delivery under sub-rule (1) includes:

- (a) electronic mail delivery or read receipt;
- (b) confirmation from an electronic legal service provider that the document was delivered to the recipient party's account by that service provider;
- (c) confirmation that the notification or an imbedded hyperlink in the notifications section of the Electronic Litigation Portal was accessed;
- (d) acknowledgement of receipt by the recipient party, counsel or paralegal; or
- (e) other means sufficient to satisfy the Court that the document came to the notice of the recipient party.

**Service by  
electronic  
means by or on  
the Court**

15. (1) The Court may, by electronic means, serve a notice, order, judgment, or other document issued by the Court on a party to proceedings by delivering the document to the electronic mail address of that party.

(2) A party may serve a document by electronic means on the Court by filing the document through the Electronic Litigation Portal.

**Practice  
Directions and  
Practice Guides**

16. (1) The Chief Justice may issue Practice Directions and Practice Guides under these rules to supplement the rules in relation to the practice and procedure to be followed.

(2) A Practice Direction and Practice Guide must be --

- (a) published in the Gazette; and
- (b) displayed and made available at each Court Office.

(3) A party must comply with a Practice Direction and Practice Guide unless there is good reason for not doing so.

(4) If the provisions of a Practice Direction and Practice Guide conflict with these rules, these rules prevail.

**SCHEDULE 1**

(rule 10)

**User Fees for Electronic Litigation Filing**

<i>Description</i>	<i>Fees</i>
Facilitation	\$2.00 per filing




## SCHEDULE 2


(rule 13)


## Form 1: Authorisation Code

The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court	
In the High Court of Justice / Court of Appeal	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines SVGHC...	
Between	A.B.
Claimant / appellant / applicant	
and	
CD	
Defendant / respondent	
TAKE NOTICE that the claimant / appellant / applicant has filed the attached proceedings on The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Electronic Litigation Portal. The authorisation code to access these proceedings is <i>[insert authorisation code]</i> .	
These proceedings can only be accessed through the Electronic Litigation Portal. If you do not have an attorney-at-law and need assistance in accessing the Electronic Litigation Portal, please contact the Service Bureau at the High Court office.	
Dated	
The Court office is at [xxx xxx xxx] telephone number xx-xxxx, FAX xxx.xxxx. The office is open between [ ..... am.] and [ ..... p.m.] ..... to ..... except public holidays.”	

Made this 2nd day of April, 2020.

  
CHIEF JUSTICE

  
JUSTICE OF APPEAL

  
HIGH COURT JUDGE

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