

Guide to using the Commonwealth Courts Portal

Step 1: register

- » To file or gain access to specific family and federal law files, you need to register at www.comcourts.gov.au.
- » Solicitors, law firms and their support staff must register as individuals with their own username and password.

Step 2: access your files

- » After registering the homepage will display options for file access on the right hand side.
- » If you are a solicitor you need to select *'Request access to your organisation'*. This function can also be accessed by selecting *'Your profile'* at the top right of your screen, once logged in. The person listed as the Portal Administrator in your law firm will be notified by email that access has been requested and requires approval. If your law firm is not on the list, you will need to register the organisation. The Portal support team will then contact you to confirm registration.
- » If you are a party to a file you will need to link to your file. Select *'Request access to your file'* and enter your Client ID and file number. If you do not know your Client ID call 1300 352 000 or email your full name, other parties name, date of birth and address to support@comcourts.gov.au
- » If you are self-represented (i.e you do not have a lawyer) and this is the first time you've filed in the Family Law Courts, you need to select *'Start a new file'*.
- » If you are a barrister and have been briefed by a law firm, you can request access to the law firm's files by selecting *'Request access to another organisation's files'*. Type the name of the law firm you require access to, select the organisation and select *'Request access'*. If you are unable to find the law firm's name this means they are not registered with the Portal. Contact them and ask them to register.
- » Filing on general federal law files is available after selecting *'Federal Law eLodgment'*.

Now that you have registered, you can ...

View your files

All family and federal law files that you are linked to can be viewed as a list in the *'Available Files'* tab or by typing the file number or matter name into the *'Go to File'* field.

Organise your files

Keep track of your *'Available Files'* by selecting the star feature. This file will then be displayed in the *'Starred'* sub tab.

View recent activity on your starred files

Once starred, files with recent activity, such as a document being lodged by another party, will appear in the *'Recent Activity'* section of the homepage. If you select this menu you can also see how many court events are happening for you in the coming week.

View a court diary of your files

In the *'Court Diary'* tab select a date and view court events up to 14 days from that date. In this section you can focus on starred or all available files.

View subpoena permissions and a list of documents

Each file has a subpoena link. If subpoenas have been issued, information about production and permissions will display here. Each file has a link to view a list of documents filed in chronological order for the whole file.

View court events, orders and documents filed on a specific file

- » Select a file number in the *Available Files* tab to display each application on that file. Each application displays information in the following categories: Court Events and Orders, Documents Filed, and Parties.
- » Select the *'plus'* tab to maximise further information in each category and *'minus'* tab to minimize.
- » Each document filed is represented in chronological order, displaying the form name and person filing. Documents that have been eFiled can be viewed by selecting the PDF icon on the right.

eFile supplementary documents

Select your file, then application, then *Add Document* to eFile supplementary documents. Select the *Document Type* drop down arrow for a full list of all supplementary forms currently accepted for eFiling. Check the menu on the right hand side after selecting *Add Document* for further information on acceptable file formats, size limits and a PDF converter.

Opt-in to activity notifications via email

- » After selecting a file you will notice an option to *'Notify me by email of activity on this application'*.
- » Divorce applications also provide an option to *'Notify me by email after the divorce is granted'*.

eFile applications

The following applications can be filed on the Commonwealth Courts Portal:

- » Application for divorce
- » Initiating application for final and interim
- » Response to an initiating application
- » Applications in a case on active final orders applications
- » Response to an application in a case

Save an application

If you save and log out, your application will be preserved for 60 days. The Court will not have access to your application until it is submitted. Select the *'partly completed'* applications link on the homepage to go back to your partially completed application.

Current restrictions

Some restrictions may prevent you being able to eFile. If the following circumstances apply to your situation, you will need to file in person or by post. Forms can be downloaded from the Family Law Courts website.

- » Clients requiring a waiver on the basis of financial hardship
- » Clients seeking to defer the payment of a filing fee
- » Clients filing for divorce who have been married less than two years
- » Clients filing for parenting orders that do not have a section 60i certificate. See Compulsory Family Dispute Resolution – court procedures and requirements
- » Clients seeking financial orders arising from a de facto relationship that ended prior to March 2009
- » Clients seeking financial orders arising from a marriage in which a divorce was granted more than 12 months ago or your de facto relationship ended more than two years ago
- » Clients seeking permission from the Court to file as there is an existing order in place that prevents you from filing such an application
- » Clients seeking an earlier hearing date. The earliest date allocated for hearing or conference if filing electronically is 28 days from the date of filing but more likely to be 42 days from the date of filing.

eFiling on your available files

Start a new application on an existing file by selecting *'Electronically file on an existing family law file'* on the homepage or by selecting the file from the *'Available Files'* tab.

eFile on an existing File

Solicitors can eFile a new application, response or notice of address for service on a family law file that is not in their *'Available Files'*.

- » Select the *'file a new application, response or supporting document on a family law file that is not in your available files'* link on the homepage.
- » Follow the prompts to enter the file number and select *search*.
- » Choose one of three options:
 1. Add a new application – this option is also for new applications in a case
 2. Add a supporting document – Notice of Address for Service
 3. Add a response to an initiating application.

Tip: You need to keep the originals for up to 28 days after the matter is finalised and then standard rules for archiving apply.

CONTACT DETAILS

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