



With e-filing rapidly rolling out across Massachusetts, there couldn't be a better time to grab some tips on how to e-file like a pro. As with anything new, getting started can be intimidating, especially when it comes to technology. These tips come from the more than 520,000 registered filers already using the Odyssey® system to e-file in 18 other states. [Odyssey eFileMA™](#) uses the same platform by Tyler Technologies that will process more than 40 million electronic filings in 2017, saving pallets of paper every day.

Here's what has made other filers successful.

1. Get ahead of the curve — e-filing is the new norm.

E-filing is here. Hit the ground running before it's mandatory in your jurisdiction and the pressure increases. It only takes five minutes to register on [Odyssey eFileMA](#).

2. Start simple.

One way to start simple is to do your first e-filing on an existing case.

3. Be prepared.

Ready, get set, go! It's always good to do a little preparation before you dive in. If you are reading this, you've already taken the first step. Additional preparation tips include:

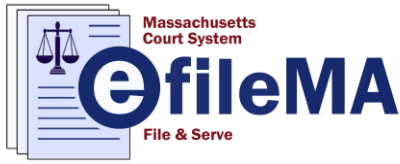
- a. Sign up for free on-line training webinars on the [Odyssey eFileMA website](#).
- b. Rely on the [Odyssey eFileMA Self Help](#) to get help when you need it.
- c. Familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures of the court where you are filing.
- d. Depending on the court, formatting matters. You can improve your acceptance rates by making sure your documents are formatted correctly by checking the font sizes, margins and color for consistency.
- e. Documents should be created with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) enabled when possible.
- f. Standardize the document creation process and ensure that you have the right tools and software in place to make creating a PDF document simple.

4. Understand how eFileMA works.

- a. Filer creates the documents.
- b. Filer goes to [Odyssey eFileMA](#) and selects the correct jurisdiction.
- c. Filer files the documents.
- d. eFileMA system prepares the documents for the appropriate court.
- e. System routes filing to the correct queue at the chosen court.
- f. Clerk reviews filing for court rules and approves or returns for corrections (and happily note that nationwide trends show that 85-90 percent of all filings are accepted without the need for correction).
- g. Filer is notified via email of filing status.
- h. Filer returns to eFileMA to adjust document if needed, and resubmits.
- i. Once accepted, the filer receives an official electronically file-stamped copy for their records.
- j. Once you register with Odyssey eFileMA, you can file into all the courts accepting e-filing without having different usernames and passwords.

5. Make billing easier.

Create multiple payment accounts, including by client if desired.



6. Filings can be easily corrected.

The filer can copy a rejected filing and resubmit it with corrections without having to start from scratch. You will not be charged for the original rejected filing.

7. Sensitive data must be redacted.

Information that is sensitive must be redacted from documents before they are e-filed. Data that must be redacted, unless the inclusion of that data is specifically required by statute, court rule or administrative regulation includes:

- Social security number
- Mother's birth name
- Credit and debit card information
- Financial data and information
- Insurance and medical information in all records
- Unlisted phone number
- Cell phone numbers
- Day and month of birth

8. Take advantage of the power behind Odyssey eService™!

The powerful tracking capabilities of Odyssey eService provided by eFileMA not only expedites service delivery, but also provides you with confirmation of receipt, along with a time and date stamp of when the email was delivered and opened. This can save filers a great deal of time and money, and assist with challenges regarding proper service. It's important to note that if eService is included during the time of filing, it's free; otherwise, eService is an additional cost of \$3 per service only filing, if used alone. Please note that if you are representing a party in one of the courts using Odyssey eFileMA, we highly recommend that you go into the case and add yourself as a service contact on the case so that you are notified of new activity.

For more information on how to perform Odyssey eService, [click here](#).

9. Troubleshooting common filing glitches.

The two most common messages that appear when e-filing are:

- a. **Case not found:** When e-filing cases, the system may sometimes respond with "case not found." The solution is to make certain you have entered the case number exactly as it is listed, including dashes and leading zeroes.
- b. **Missing filing types:** Sometimes users click on "New Case" when they intend to e-file to an existing case. The items you e-file to start a case are different than those you would e-file later in the case. If your preferred filing type isn't shown, make sure that you are filing the correct document at the correct stage of the proceeding.

10. Additional tips for success.

- a. Use credit cards rather than debit cards. Think free cash flow — the system will place a hold on funds until the court reviews the filing, but credit cards provide a great buffer since you don't have to pay the credit card company until the court actually accepts the filing.
- b. Be patient with the courts and clerks, as some will be accepting e-filed documents for the first time. Understand that they are learning a new process, and their business processes will evolve over time.
- c. Check to see if the court has designated certain documents that cannot be e-filed.
- d. If your firm has multiple Odyssey eFileMA users, select one or two people to administer all of your accounts and provide service contact information.