

**Electronic Filing with the Courts of British Columbia;
Progress to Date.
October 31, 2006**

e-file will enable external clients to submit documents electronically for filing with the court. e-file will be available to law firms, registry agents and self represented litigants

e-services

One of the strategic goals of the BC Government is the provision of electronic web-based transactions to facilitate the interaction of the public and businesses with government services and court services. Court Services Online (CSO) is part of an electronic court services project designed to develop web-based services to facilitate interaction with the court registries across our province. The key products of Court Services Online are the electronic civil search service (e-search), the filing assistant, and the electronic filing service (e-filing) which is currently successfully being piloted at 6 locations.

The benefits of the e-filing service will include:

- The ability to file court documents to any court registry in the province from anywhere in the province.
- Improved access to the court registries
- Increased efficiency and timelines of registry services

e-file pilot

The legislative rules to facilitate e-filing came into effect July 1, 2005. The e-file pilot will be held in 7 locations throughout the province (see details below) the first location was implemented in October 2005 and continuing through to September/October 2006. Once provincially implemented, the e-filing service will allow registered users of Court Services Online to submit electronic court documents to the Civil Supreme and Provincial Court registries.

During the pilot phase of e-filing to the Civil Supreme Court and Provincial Court, a number of law firms have been identified and have volunteered to participate in the pilot. The firms participating in the pilot are able to electronically file to court registries participating in the pilot and are testing the system and new business processes that have been developed to support e-filing. BC will be the first province in Canada to introduce a comprehensive e-filing system that includes the filing service and the storage and maintenance of court files in an electronic format. The systematic approach to the implementation of the service in the initial phase will ensure the efficiency of the system in addition to continuing to meet the dynamic needs of our clients.

Provincial implementation of the e-filing service to the Supreme Court and Provincial Court is currently scheduled for the fall of 2006 upon completion of the pilot. At that time, the e-filing service will be available to all registered users and documents may be submitted electronically to all registries throughout the province. The electronic services agreement will be available from the Court Services Online website. Law

firms can obtain further information on registering to become a user of Court Services Online at the website: <https://webapps.ag.gov.bc.ca/cso/index.do>
Under the Related Links section click **Registration Guide**.

If you are a law firm interested in participating, contact Courts.CSO@gov.bc.ca for more information.

Pilot Locations

e-filing will initially be limited to pilot participants at the following pilot sites:

- Kelowna & Vernon Law Courts
 - October 2005
- Abbotsford & Chilliwack Law Courts
 - December 2005
- Victoria Law Courts
 - January 2005
- Prince Rupert Law Courts
 - February 2006
- Vancouver Law Courts
 - June 2006

Provincial implementation of electronic filing, currently scheduled for the spring of 2007, will follow the end of the pilot project.

Pilot Status

- ◆ To date, the pilot locations have successfully filed over 2800 documents electronically in 7 court locations across the province.
- ◆ Vancouver Law Courts, the last location to join the pilot, was successfully implemented June 26, 2006 and has e-filed over 400 documents to date.
- ◆ 50+ law firms and registry agents are currently participating in the pilot across the seven locations.
- ◆ Each pilot participant is able to e-file to each court location participating in the pilot as the locations are implemented.
- ◆ Several of the pilot participants are filing 100% of their documents electronically.
- ◆ Feedback from the firms currently participating in the pilot has been very positive and has resulted in new efficiencies and reduced costs to their clients.
- ◆ Feedback from firms has resulted in several system enhancements and business processes re-design.
- ◆ Length of pilot period to be based on confirming the ability to:
 - e-file effectively
 - e-register effectively
- ◆ Participants do not pay service fees during the pilot period, only the statutory filing fees associated to a document. Service fees will be initiated at the end of the pilot period.

Last Updated: October 31, 2006

For further details, contact the CSO Support Centre at Courts.CSO@gov.bc.ca