

## OEB Digitization Project – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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### **1. What type of digital document should I file with the OEB?**

The OEB standard format for digital records is PDF/A, a version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for archiving and the long-term preservation of electronic records.

### **2. What is the difference between PDF and PDF/A?**

PDF/A complies with international standards (ISO 19005) and it does not have embedded features that are in standard PDF documents that may corrupt a file over the long-term.

### **3. How can I view PDF or PDF/A documents?**

The Adobe Acrobat Reader DC is free software that you can download directly from the Adobe website. The reader allows you to view all PDF documents.

### **4. The digital file says it is corrupted or does not open?**

If you cannot download or open a record from RDS, please contact [ithelp@oeb.ca](mailto:ithelp@oeb.ca) for assistance in this matter.

### **5. Can I submit any other types of digital files to the OEB?**

A searchable (OCR) PDF or TIFF file is also acceptable. And, for certain OEB proceedings, Microsoft Excel documents can be filed. If you have a questions about filing other documents types, please contact us at [registrar@oeb.ca](mailto:registrar@oeb.ca).

### **6. What are the technical requirements for scanning?**

The minimum technical requirements for scanning a document are:

- 300 PPI (pixels per inch)
- Acceptable formats: PDF/A (preferred), PDF or TIFF
- Photographs: JPEG

### **7. How can I submit regulatory documents to the OEB?**

All registered parties in a proceeding can file their official electronic documents through the OEB [Regulatory Electronic Submission System \(RESS\)](#). This is a secure, password-protected file transfer protocol (FTP) application.

## **8. How do I get access to Regulatory Electronic Submission System (RESS)?**

If you do not have access to RESS, you can obtain a User ID by [filling in this form](#) and submitting it by email to [registrar@oeb.ca](mailto:registrar@oeb.ca) for processing. This information can be found on the OEB [Filing systems](#) web page.

## **9. Can I submit an electronic document using a USB flash drive?**

No, for cybersecurity reasons, USB flash drives or any other type of portable storage device are no longer supported by the OEB.

## **10. How can I submit a signed, original document electronically?**

You can submit signed, original documents using the RESS system.

## **11. What are the acceptable formats to sign an electronic document?**

Acceptable formats for electronic signatures include certificate-based signatures in Adobe and/or scanning a wet signature.

A certificate-based signature has encrypted information that is unique to its user and identifies the person signing the document. Users can sign a PDF document with a password-protected, certificate-based signature, by creating a digital ID in Adobe Acrobat or Adobe Reader.

For further information on certificate-based signatures in Adobe Acrobat, please refer to the following link: <https://helpx.adobe.com/ca/acrobat/kb/certificate-signatures.html>.

The other option is scanning a wet signature. This is an acceptable format for an electronic signature but please ensure that the document is searchable by using the OCR function on the scanner.

Please contact [registrar@oeb.ca](mailto:registrar@oeb.ca) if you have any questions about electronic signatures.

## **12. How do I submit confidential documents?**

Confidential documents must be filed with the OEB through the RESS system, and the submitter must password-protect the confidential documents before uploading them. OEB staff will treat the files in confidence and will store them in a secure electronic environment. The password must be included in the Application Description field of the RESS upload and CONFIDENTIAL marked in all-caps in that field as well. When submitting the files, the submitter must include the word "CONFIDENTIAL" at the beginning of the file name for each document. The confidential documents must be uploaded in a separate RESS filing from other, non-confidential documents. See the OEB's [Practice Direction on Confidential Filings](#) and the [RESS Document Guidelines](#) for more information.

**NOTE:** Parties are responsible for ensuring that any documents they file with the OEB **do not include personal information** (as that phrase is defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*), unless filed in accordance with rule 9A of the OEB's [Rules of Practice and Procedure](#). Among other things, rule 9A indicates where a document that includes personal information of another person who is not a party to the proceeding is filed with the OEB, the document is to be marked "CONFIDENTIAL – PERSONAL INFORMATION". "CONFIDENTIAL – PERSONAL INFORMATION" should also appear at the beginning of the file name for the document and the file should be password protected.

### **13. Do all records I submit need to be digital? What about maps?**

Yes, all records submitted to the OEB need to be in a digital format, including maps. If the OEB requires a copy of a large map, such as mylar maps used in expropriation proceedings, this will be communicated to the applicant on a case-by-case basis. However, a reasonable facsimile of this document should be provided in an electronic format whenever possible – even if it is a confidential document.

### **14. How can I access files dated before 2007?**

Records from cases prior to 2007 are excluded from this digitization project. If you unable to locate an older proceeding through the [Advanced Regulatory Document Search \(RDS\)](#), send in a request to [registrar@oeb.ca](mailto:registrar@oeb.ca) and we will retrieve the file for you. All records from cases opened from 2007 onwards will be digitized and available to view online.

### **15. Why am I required to file hard copies with certain proceedings?**

Although the OEB endeavours to work in a digital environment, our case teams do require working hard copies for some of the larger, more complex proceedings. This will be communicated to the applicant on a case-by-case basis.

### **16. Can I obtain a hard copy of a digital record?**

With the digitization project, the OEB no longer requires paper copies of filings. The original, authoritative copy is now the electronic version. The OEB is also in the process of scanning all records dating back to 2007. Once scanned and online, that there will no longer be paper records for these files. If you require a physical copy of the digital file, please print them from the online record available through the OEB's [Advanced Regulatory Document Search \(RDS\)](#).

### **17. What will happen to the official paper records after digitization?**

Once the paper records are digitized/scanned, the OEB will destroy those records after a mandatory one month waiting period from the time the digital scan is verified and securely stored online.

### **18. How can I access OEB files dated before 2007?**

Some records of cases prior to 2007 are available to view online even though they are excluded from this digitization project. However, if you are unable to locate an older proceeding through the [Advanced Regulatory Document Search \(RDS\)](#), send in a request to [registrar@oeb.ca](mailto:registrar@oeb.ca) and we will retrieve the file for you.

### **19. How does the OEB digitize its records?**

When OEB staff scans physical records from past proceedings, they follow a digitization process approved by the Archives of Ontario with guidance from the OEB Legal and IT departments. This process consists of seven steps:

1. Preparation of Physical Records
2. Digitization of Records
3. Quality Control
4. Re-Digitize (if required)
5. Quality Assurance
6. Secure Storage
7. Destruction of Physical Records

Any further questions about our digitization process can be directed to [registrar@oeb.ca](mailto:registrar@oeb.ca).

### **20. Which digitization standards does the OEB follow?**

The OEB digitization process is compliant with the Canadian standard “Electronic Records as Documentary Evidence” (CAN/CGSB-72.34-2017).