

### SRL Electronic Tools: Overview of Guide & File and Fillable Smart Forms

Melissa G., Resource Attorney, SRL Program



4/1/2020

1

SRL Electronic Tools Two electronic tools available for Self Represented Litigants (SRLs) to use:

- MN Guide & File
  - Online interview tool for certain case types
  - Creates forms that can either be electronically filed (eFiled) through Guide & File, or printed

#### Fillable Smart Forms

- Forms with built-in intelligence
- Easily prepares forms to be eFiled through the eFile and eServe (eFS) System

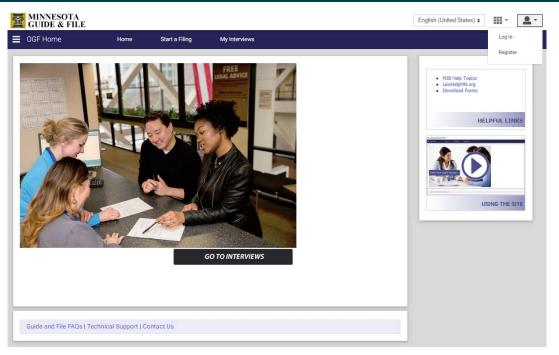
All available on the Minnesota Judicial Branch (MJB) website – <u>www.mncourts.gov</u>

## Minnesota Guide & File



### What is Guide & File?

- A free online interview tool that asks questions and saves the answers, while giving helpful information along the way.
- Available anywhere with internet access, including mobile devices.



- It uses the answers to create forms that can either be eFiled directly through Guide & File at the end of the interview or printed.
- Creating an account allows a user to save work and return to it later. An account can be created at any time during the interview without losing work.
- Use of Guide & File is only <u>one</u> option available to filers, it is not mandatory. Forms to request an Order for Protection (OFP) or (HRO) are also available on the MJB website.

### Advantages of using MN Guide & File

- Uses an "interview" style which asks questions and uses the answers to create all the required court forms. Many questions require an answer in to move forward, which creates more complete court forms for judicial officers.
- Complicated legal terms and concepts are explained within the interview by using "content tags" either on sidebar or info tag. Reduces confusion and mistakes in answers.
- Creating an account allows users to work at their own pace and saves work for later. G&F account also creates an eFS account automatically.
- Depending on situation, there is an option to electronically file at the end of the interview which creates a more streamlined experience for user.

M	MINNESOTA GUIDE & FILE				English (United States) \$	· •		
≡	Start a New Filing Interview	Home	Start a Filing	My Interviews		Log In		
s	elect Interview	Complete Interview	Review	v Summary	Submit Document	Register		
P	lease select the type of filing you would li	ike to complete.						
	Ask for a MN Restraining Order				<ul> <li>LawHelpMN</li> </ul>	MJB Help Topics     LawHelpMN.org     Download Forms		
	Conciliation Court				- Download P	UNB		
	eFiling the Affidavit of Service					HELPFUL LINKS		
	Eviction Action Complaint				An interview for	ALL divorce types,		
	Starting a Divorce with Children in MN				including Joint F	etitions, coming soon!		
						R2160 2 BANK R2160 2 BANK PERSON PE		

- Log In to account to return to any interviews already started in "My Interviews" tab
- If new, register to create an account
  - Account should be created in the name of the Petitioner, not an advocate or advocacy program.
  - The email and password created in G&F will be the same login credentials for eFile and eServe (eFS) System.

# Image: Start a New Filing Interview Home Start a Filing My Interviews Select Interview Complete Interview Review Summary



Ask for a MN Restraining Order
Conciliation Court
eFiling the Affidavit of Service
Eviction Action Complaint
Starting a Divorce with Children in MN

This is a decision tree interview that asks some high level questions (for example – relationship to the Respondent) to help determine which type of restraining order should be requested:

- Order for Protection or
- Harassment Restraining Order.

The user is then directed to the appropriate interview, but can still opt to complete whichever forms they prefer. Once within the specific interview, they will then be asked for more specific details.

### Moving through Guide & File

### Shows status in interview

**Complete Interview** 

Review Summary

Creating an account (with

Petitioner's email/password)

interview, as well as eFile at

the end of the interview.

allows user to log in and out of

\* = required field

Please read through the steps and notices below for using Minnesota Guide & File.

#### 1. Create an account in order to save your work

If you are not already logged in to your account, then on the right side of the screen, you will see two options:

- Choose "Save your work. Sign up" if you do not already have an account and want to create one.
- Choose "Already signed up? Log in" to log into an account you have already created.
- Click the box for more information on creating an account

#### 2. Instructions for using Minnesota Guide & File

Click the box to see the instructions on how to move through Minnesota Guide & File

3. Internet Safety - Keeping your private information is important.

If you need to exit the interview immediately, click the X in the top right corner of the browser. Your answers will not be saved unless you created an account and are logged in.

Check the box to read how to protect the information you're sharing in this program.

#### 4. Understanding Self-Representation.

Check the box to read important information about representing yourself.

#### You must check the box below to state that you have read the above information.\*

I have reviewed and understand all the information provided above. I understand that I am using this program for the purpose of self-representation.

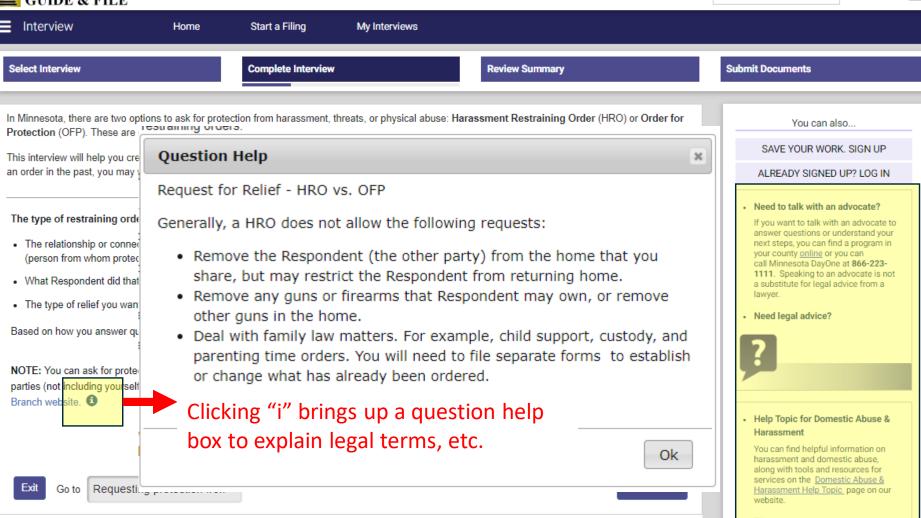
Clicking "next" saves answers



Exit

Go to Using Minnesota Guide &

#### MINNESOTA GUIDE & FILE



Sidebar help content that provides information to find an advocate and other helpful resources on every page in interview

English (United States) \$

#### Information about Yourself

The person filing for a Harassment Restraining Order is called the Petitioner. The person you are filing against is called the Respondent.

Minnesota Guide & File puts your information into the forms exactly the way you enter it. Please be sure to use proper capitalization.

#### What is your full legal name?

Type your full legal name. Do not use initials or a nickname. If you do not have a middle name, leave that line blank. Capitalize the first letters. Example: John Smith. Do not enter JOHN SMITH or john smith.

First * Wilma	Middle Middle	Last * Flintstone		Suffix [Select] •
What is your date of birth? *          04/20/1993       Many questions require an answer to move forward to the next page. This creates more complete forms.				
How do you know Betty and ("Betty is") *	what is your rela	tionship?		
*This question is mandatory.				
	-			dd up to 6 additional protected parties (minor children or wards that you

Are you applying f ● Yes ◎ No	for protection for yourself? *	
How do you knov ("Betty is Betty is my nei	Incidents of Harassment - Physical or Sexual Assault Impact of Harassment Where Betty can be found - Current Location Where Betty can be found - Employment Where can be found - Other Home Law Enforcement Information - Description of Betty Law Enforcement Information - Description of Betty continued	
Token 'Petitioner.	Request for relief: Stay away from home Request for relief: Stay away from my workplace Request for relief: Other	ditional protected parties (minor children or wards that you or more than 6 other people, you will not be able to use this here to get the forms.
25	Length of Restraining Order Important Next Steps eFile and eService Notice Filing Fee eFile Signature Page End Page	
Exit Go to	Information about yourself <	Previous Next

As you move through the interview you can use the drop-down menu at the bottom of the screen to move to different pages if you need to review or change an answer. Another standard page within each interview is the "Important Next Steps."

### eFiling notices in Guide & File

#### Thinking About eFiling? Keep these things in mind:

- · Once you eFile, you must keep eFiling for the rest of the case (you cannot switch to filing papers at the courthouse);
- · You will need your own email address, access to a computer, and access to the Internet for the entire case;
- · You will need to add yourself as a service contact within eFS System after your case is accepted;
- · You will be required to accept service of forms electronically from the court and other parties who have signed up for eService;
- · You will receive an email when the court or a party has served you electronically;
- · You will be required to eServe any other party who has signed up for eService; and
- All of your court documents must be in PDF format (not Word).
- · See Minn. Gen. R. Prac. 14 for definitions, requirements, and rules for eFiling and eService in Minnesota.

#### What Do I Need to Know About Guide & File and the eFS System?

- They are two separate web-based programs.
- . Guide & File has interviews that help you create certain court forms, and then allows you to print the forms or eFile them at the end of the interview.
- The eFS System is used to file and serve documents electronically in Minnesota district and conciliation courts (it does not help you create forms).
- · Guide & File connects to the eFS System when you eFile at the end of the Guide & File interview.
- After you eFile your forms through Guide & File, then for all other eFiling and eServing, you have to use the eFS System.
- · Your log-in information to the eFS System is the same as what you created for Guide & File.
- Internet Explorer (IE), version 9 or higher, is the recommended internet browser for using the eFS System. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Safari no longer support websites that use Silverlight, including the current eFS System website.
- · Fast Facts about the eFS System are available on the MJB website.

#### I read and understand the information about eFiling through Guide & File.

Note: You must check, even if you do not plan to electronically file at the end of this interview. \*

I understand that if I eFile in a case, I must continue to eFile and eServe (and accept service electronically) for the rest of the case. Read the "Next Steps" at the end of the interview for signing up for eService in eFS.

#### Having read the information about eFiling, do you want to file your forms electronically ("eFile")?\*

🖲 Yes 🛛 🔍 No

\* = required field

### **Considerations for eFiling**

- Once a party chooses to eFile in a case, they must continue to eFile for the rest of the case, unless otherwise ordered.
- Must have access to email and internet access for eService of notices, Orders, etc.
- Must add Petitioner as service contact, in eFS System, after case is accepted for eService.
- Creating a G&F account creates an eFS account with the same email and password. This is why it's important to create the G&F account in Petitioner's name.

### eFiling Signature Page

By typing your full legal name in below, you are electronically signing your claim form.	* = required field				
You must always tell the truth in court. You are promising that all of the information you included in this interview is true and correct, as far as you know. If you provide wrong information on purpose, there could be serious legal consequences for you.					
Type your full legal name below to serve as your electronic signature to the oath above. *					
Signature Date: *       State where signing *       County where signing *         Minnesota       •       [Select]       •					

If a party decides to eFile, the Petitioner must type their full legal name agreeing that their answers within the interview is true and correct.

Survey Help us improve this interview: Please fill out this short survey to give us your feedback on using Guide and File to produce your case forms. You have not completed this interview until you receive your forms on the Summary Page. Help us improve this interview by filling out this short, optional survey. 1. Fill out the survey. Scroll to see all the questions. 2. Click Save Survey at the bottom of the survey.	
Help us improve this interview: Please fill out this short survey to give us your feedback on using Guide and File to produce your case forms. You have not completed this interview until you receive your forms on the Summary Page. Help us improve this interview by filling out this short, optional survey. 1. Fill out the survey. Scroll to see all the questions.	
3. Click Next at the bottom of this page.	
Minnesota Guide & File Survey         This survey is not required, but your answers will help improve the interview process.         Your answers are completely anonymous and cannot be associated with your name or case.         1. Which Interview did you use?	
	•
Click Save Survey on your survey before clicking Next below. To proceed, please click Submit on your survey before clicking Next below.	Yowious Next

Survey available within the interview to be completed by Petitioner. Survey is built in to page to help eliminate confusion with a note that you are not done with the interview until you get to the Summary Page.

Select Inter	view	Complete Interview	Review Summary	Submit Documents
STEP 1: Re forms. Form as copy for STEP 2: If	ns will open in a new window. You will not be yourself. needed - make changes to forms - If any of yo	or Harassment Restraining Order interview. e section below, use the drop-down arrow under Actions to <b>View</b> able to print or eFile your forms until you have you reviewed ther our answers need to be changed, click the <b>Return to Interview</b> bu in the interview, use the <b>Go to</b> drop-down to choose the page wi	m. If no changes are needed, <b>Print</b> your forms to keep utton at the bottom of this page, which will bring you	MJB Help Topics     LawHelpMN.org     Download Forms
the Summa	view your forms after making changes - After ary Page where your forms will be available to r ad Next Steps - After you have reviewed your f Documents	forms and are rea forward. This is to	RM must be reviewed in o provide an opportunity ny mistakes before printii	order to move to review answers to
Name	Document Name		Actions	Reviewed
Wilm: Betty	Petition for Harassment Restraining	g Order	Select Select View	÷
	Law Enforcement Information Shee		Download Select	-
	Confidential Address Phone Reque	51	Select	•
			Return to the interview	*
	EXIT RETURN TO INTERVIEW		change any answers. L drop-down menu to re	
	Guide and File FAQs   Technic	al Support   Contact Us	relevant page	

The following fees will be due if you electronically submit your documents:

Description	Amount
Total Fees:	\$0.00

In order to continue with this electronic filing, a credit card payment must be collected to pay for the required fees for this filing. If you have questions about fees or credit card payments, contact the court.

Once you have reviewed all of the information, click the 'Submit Now' button below to electronically submit your documents:

BACK	СК			SUBMIT NOW

All filing fees for OFPs and HROs are automatically waived when eFiling through Guide & File.

If a judicial officer determines that a filing fee IS required for a HRO, Petitioner will be notified. Information is included in the *Next Steps*, as well as within the interview.

Fees -					
The following fees will be due if you electronically submit your documents:	Description	Amount			
	Total Fees:	Waived			
Contact Us					
If you have questions about Minnesota Guide & File, you can get help from the St	atewide Self-Help Center by:				
• Phone: 651-435-6535 (M-F, 8:30 a.m 4:00 p.m.)					
• Email: Contact Us Form (replies within 2-3 business days)					
Please note that Self-Help Center staff cannot give legal advice, opinions, or strat courts, and answer questions on Guide & File.	tegy but CAN point people to legal resource	es, explain procedures for Minnesota			
Other tools and resources on Minnesota Guide & File are also available in the Guide & File Help Topic on the Minnesota Judicial Branch website.					
SUBMIT NOW					
Guide and File FAQs   Technical Support   Contact Us					

Information is available for help from the Statewide Self-Help Center is available throughout the interview.



#### MINNESOTA GUIDE & FILE NEXT STEPS: Harassment Restraining Order (eFiling)

Write down the email and username you used for your Guide & File account. You will need this information later to go back to your Guide & File account or to go to the eFS System (Minnesota Judicial Branch's web-based system that allows you to eFile documents in Minnesota district and conciliation courts).

Email:			
Password:			

What you have chosen to eFile, you must file all other documents using the eFS System for the rest of this case. See Minn. Gen. R. Prac. 14.01(b)(5)(i) (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/court\_rules/gp/id/14/).

These are your **Next Steps** after you have started a Harassment Restraining Order case electronically ("eFiled") at the end of the Minnesota Guide & File interview:

#### STEP 1: Add yourself as a service contact in eFS once case is accepted

Once you decide to eFile, you must accept any documents or notices from the court or the other party
electronically through the eFS System. Because you have filed electronically, you must now sign up for
electronic service.



#### MINNESOTA GUIDE & FILE

NEXT STEPS: Harassment Restraining Order (Paper Filing)

Below are the next steps for filing a Harassment Restraining Order when you have chosen to print your forms at the end of the Minnesota Guide & File interview.

#### STEP 1: Review the completed forms



- Are your forms complete? Is the information accurate and true? If you find any errors, go back into the interview (https://minnesota.tylerhost.net/SRL) and make changes.
- Print all of the forms that you see listed on the Summary Page in the interview.

#### STEP 2: Sign the completed forms

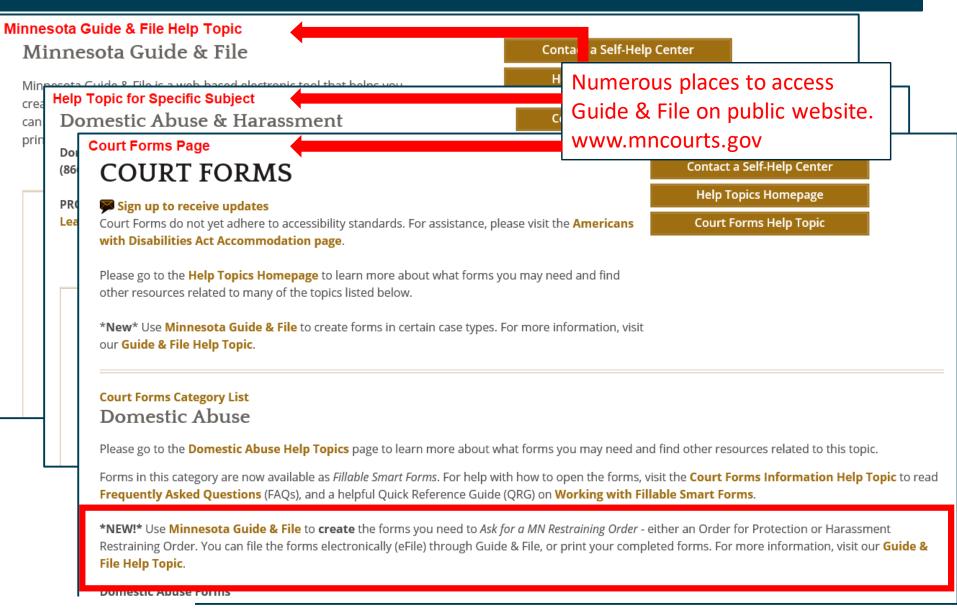
Sign Petitioner's Affidavit and Petition for Harassment Restraining Order form under penalty of perjury. This
means you are saying that everything in the form is true; if you know something in the form is not true when you
sign it, you could be found guilty of the crime of perjury (see Minn. Stat. § 609.48,
https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=609.48).

*Next Steps* are available for each interview and give step-bystep instructions based on the case type and whether the person decided to eFile or print their forms. Included are steps to add themselves as service contact in eFS.

The *Next Steps* can be found at:

- On Summary Page within G&F Interview, and
- Guide & File Help Topic <u>Tools & Resources Tab</u>.

### Where to find Guide & File?



#### HOW CAN I FIND GUIDE & FILE?

Find a link to the Minnesota Guide & File interviews on the Minnesota Judicial Branch website at: www.mncourts.gov/guide-and-file

Court form packets also have a link to Guide & File when there is an interview available. Find forms online at: www.mncourts.gov/forms





#### nter

#### REPRESENTING YOURSELF IN COURT AND NEED HELP?

Find helpful information and services about your legal issue on our website. Legal information includes court forms and tools to assist in completing the forms, answers to general questions about court process or procedure, and help preparing for your day in court. You'll find support on things like:

- Criminal Divorce, expungement custody, and
- Car title child support
- problemsConciliationLandlord orCourt claims
- tenant issues

The internet

A printer (if printing your forms)

Computer workstations are available at your local county courthouse or your public library.

Need to file court forms? Minnesota Guide & File Can Help!

MINNESOTA GUIDE & FILE

#### GUIDE & FILE WALKS YOU THROUGH CREATING COMPLETE, ACCURATE, AND NEATLY PREPARED COURT FORMS.

Brochures available on Guide & File Help Topic

& File is a free, online t helps you prepare ts you questions and to create documents documents can be or printed and filed depending on the

on is available

u're done.

terview if you have

xt Steps, available at

erview, explain what

IDE & FILE WORK?

For more information, visit the Minnesota Judicial Branch website:

**NEED HELP?** 

www.mncourts.gov/guide-and-file

#### **Questions?**

STATEWIDE SELF-HELP CENTER Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CALL: (651) 435-6535

#### EMAIL: gfhelp@courts.state.mn.us

Create a Guide & File account to save your work and return to it later. You can create an account any time during the interview without losing what you've done. To get back to your interview, you'll need your email address and password.



### **Helpful Resources**

- Guide & File Help Topic page at <u>mncourts.gov/guide-and-file</u>
  - Overview of available Guide & File interviews
  - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS)
  - Tools & Resources
    - Next Steps for each case
    - Guide & File Brochure
- Send an email to <u>gfhelp@courts.state.mn.us</u>.
- Direct link to Guide & File -<u>https://minnesota.tylerhost.net/SRL/SRL</u>



# Fillable Smart Forms



### How will I know if it's a Fillable Smart Form?

#### Fillable Smart Forms The forms in this category have been updated to *Fillable Smart Forms*. Some helpful tips on using the forms: • The forms may not open correctly in some browsers (for example, Chrome and Safari) even if you have the most current version of Adobe. Visit our FAQs section for steps on changing your browser settings. • To save to your computer or flash drive and open with Adobe Reader, right click on the link to the form to choose the "save as" option for your browser. Visit the Court Forms Information Help Topic for more information on how to use the forms, prepare for electronic filing, and more! Be sure you are using the most current version of Adobe. You can find it online at https://get.adobe.com/reader Please note: In order to file your forms electronically through the eFS System, you MUST use the "Prepare for eFile" button to create a flattened PDF that cannot be edited. Read the "Working with Fillable Smart Forms" Quick Reference Guide for more information. **Close Notification Window**

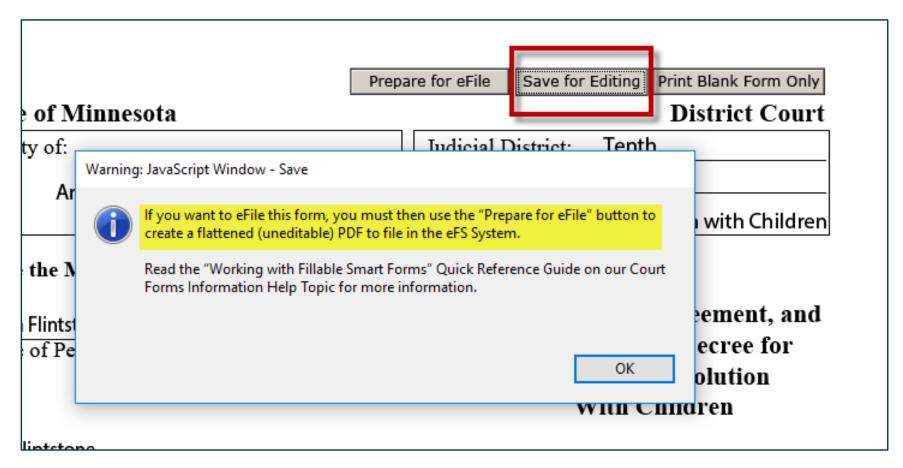
#### Court Forms Category List > Domestic Abuse Form: OFP105 Law Enforcement Information Sheet

Form Number	Form Name	District	Download
OFP105	Law Enforcement Information Sheet	Statewide	PDF Fillable Smart Form

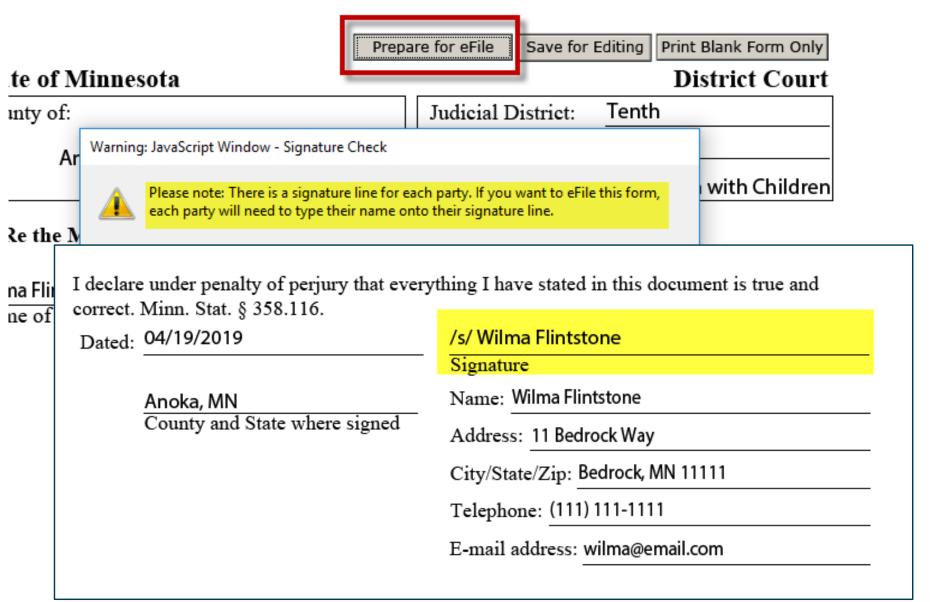
### Advantages of Fillable Smart Forms

- Answers can auto-populate to fields that ask for the same information. Eliminates the risk of having different answers or spelling of names.
- Answer fields expand to allow for longer answers. Eliminates the need for attachments.
- Questions on the form that do not apply will stay hidden when answering "no" to a question. Eliminates extra pages.
- Forms can be "flattened" and prepared for eFiling with a "typographical signature" applied. Eliminates the need to print, sign, and potentially re-scan the completed document.

Form can be saved to complete later and to share with others. Eliminates the need to have ALL information to complete a form at once or be in the same place at the same time.



Forms can be "flattened" and allows for an typographical signature that filer types in stating that everything is true and correct. Eliminates the need to print, sign, and potentially re-scan the completed document.



P State of Minnesota	repare for eFile Save for Editing Print Blank Form Only
Warning: JavaScript Window - Printing a Blank Form	×
Printing a blank form will erase all previously ente	ered information. nt
To print this form with all entered information clivand click the Print Form button. To continue printing a blank form click "OK" below Using "Print Blank Form Only" allows form to be printed with all questions visible and lines present for paragraph answers.	ck "Cancel" below and then select
	dialdenas ladim pikers in kalansenda of sandžar skalad Coverāja, 13 1922., dar rasos inda C14232 ikula 1940 iku 1988 rasos manasada professo ikapali ad sk

### **Fillable Smart Forms Resources**

#### **Court Forms Information**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Tools & Resources available in Court Forms Information Help Topic

Overview

Tools & Resouces

**Opening Fillable Smart Forms** 

**FAQs** 

- > 1. What do I need to open the Fillable Smart Forms?
- > 2. How do I know if I have Adobe installed on my computer?
- > 3. How do I open the forms using a Mac?

Court Forms Category List > Domestic AbuseHelp Topic and FAQs linked in CourtForms Packet: Filing an Order for ProtectionForms Categories and Forms Packets

Forms in this category are now available as Fillable Smart Forms. For help with how to open the forms, visit the **Court Forms** Information Help Topic to read Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and a helpful Quick Reference Guide (QRG) on Working with Fillable Smart Forms.

\*NEW!\* Use Minnesota Guide & File to create the forms you need to *Ask for a MN Restraining Order* - either an Order for Protection or Harassment Restraining Order. You can file the forms electronically (eFile) through Guide & File, or print your completed forms. For more information, visit our **Guide & File Help Topic**.