

**District of Columbia  
Court of Appeals**



**No. M-274-21**

BEFORE: Blackburne-Rigsby, Chief Judge, Beckwith, Easterly, McLeese, Deahl, Howard, AliKhan, and Shanker, Associate Judges.

**A M E N D E D O R D E R**

(FILED—May 02, 2023)

**PUBLIC ACCESS TO CERTAIN BRIEFS AND ORDERS**

In 2022, the court started a pilot project making certain documents filed in the court electronically available to the public. As a first step, the court focused on briefs filed and orders issued in appeals designated by the court as CV appeals. The court has been accepting and posting these documents online since August 2022. As a next phase, the court will expand the pilot project to additional case types in criminal appeals: CF (Criminal Felony), CM (Criminal Misdemeanor), CT (Criminal Traffic), and CO (Criminal Other) subtypes. Although briefs in all such cases must be redacted, the court at least initially will not make briefs available for viewing online in cases with offenses involving domestic violence, sexual abuse, misdemeanor sexual abuse, or child victims. The expanded pilot project will still focus only on briefs filed and orders issued in appeals with the designations noted above. It is therefore

ORDERED that, effective June 1, 2023, each unsealed brief filed in a CF, CM, CT, or CO case appeal shall comply with the following requirements.

1. The party filing the brief must redact all personal identifiers listed in Super. Ct. Crim. R. 49.1 (attached).

2. The party filing the brief must also ensure that the brief (a) does not contain any information revealing the identity of an individual receiving mental-health services; (b) does not contain any information revealing the identity of an individual receiving or under evaluation for substance-use-disorder services; (c) does not contain information about protection orders, restraining orders, and injunctions that “would be likely to publicly reveal the identity or location of the protected party,” 18 U.S.C. § 2265(d)(3) (prohibiting public disclosure on the internet of such information); *see also* 18 U.S.C. § 2266 (defining “protection order” to include, among other things, civil and criminal orders for the purpose of preventing violent or threatening acts, harassment, sexual violence, contact,

communication, or proximity) (both provisions attached); (d) uses initials when referring to victims of sexual offenses; and (e) does not contain any other information required by law to be kept confidential or protected from public disclosure.

3. The following procedural provisions in Super. Ct. Crim. R. 49.1 are also applicable: R. 49.1(b) (exemptions from the redaction requirement), 49.1(c) (filings made under seal), 49.1(d) (protective orders), 49.1(e) (option for additional unredacted filing under seal), 49.1(f) (option for filing a reference list), and 49.1(g) (waiver of protection of identifiers).

4. Where redaction is necessary to comply with the foregoing requirements, the party filing the redacted brief may also file an unredacted brief under seal. Where necessary for the court's understanding of the brief, an unredacted and sealed brief must be filed. The party need not seek leave of the court to file an unredacted brief under seal.

5. All appendixes, including presentence reports, must be filed separately from the brief and need not be redacted. Any brief filed with an attached appendix will be rejected for electronic filing with an instruction to refile the brief and the appendix separately. Appendixes will not be made electronically available during this pilot project.

6. **The filing party must complete and file the Redaction Certificate Disclosure Form (see attached form) indicating that the person has reviewed Super. Ct. Crim. R. 49.1 and this order and that the brief and any accompanying appendix comply with the applicable requirements of those provisions.** The form must be attached to the brief.

7. **Incarcerated individuals ONLY:** incarcerated individuals who are unrepresented by an attorney (meaning they are proceeding "pro se") are strongly encouraged to follow the redaction requirements set forth in this order and the redaction form. However, where it is not reasonably possible to redact, those individuals may initial the redaction form at "G," certifying they are unable to file a redacted brief, and attach the form to the filing. Those briefs will be unavailable for public viewing through online public access but will be available in person in the public office.

8. This order does not apply to sealed cases or to briefs filed entirely under seal.

**PER CURIAM**

### **Rule 49.1. Privacy Protection for Filings Made with the Court**

(a) Redacted Filings. Unless the court orders otherwise, in an electronic or paper filing with the court that contains an individual's social-security number, taxpayer-identification number or driver's license or non-driver's license identification card number, the name of an individual known to be a minor child as that term is defined in D.C. Code § 16-2301 (3), a person's birth date, a debit card, credit card or other a financial-account number, or the home address of an individual, a party or nonparty making the filing may include only:

(1) the acronym "SS#", "TID#", "DL#", or "NDL#" instead of the social-security number, taxpayer-identification number, driver's license number and non-driver's license identification card number, respectively ;

(2) the minor child's initials;

(3) the acronym "DOB" instead of the individual's birth date;

(4) the last four digits of a debit card, credit card, or other financial-account number; and

(5) the city and state of the home address.

(b) Exemptions from the Redaction Requirement. The redaction requirement does not apply to the following:

(1) a financial-account number or real property address that identifies the property allegedly subject to forfeiture in a forfeiture proceeding;

(2) the record of an administrative or agency proceeding;

(3) the official record of a state-court proceeding;

(4) the record of a court or tribunal, if that record was not subject to the redaction requirement when originally filed;

(5) a filing covered by Rule 49.1(c)(d);

(6) a pro se filing in an action brought under D.C. Code §§ 22-4135 or 23-110

(7) a court filing that is related to a criminal matter or investigation and that is prepared before the filing of a criminal charge or is not filed as part of any docketed criminal case;

(8) an arrest or search warrant; and

(9) a charging document and an affidavit filed in support of any charging document.

(c) Filings Made Under Seal. The court may order that a filing be made under seal without redaction. The court may later unseal the filing or order the person who made the filing to file a redacted version for the public record.

(d) Protective Orders. For good cause, the court may by order in a case:

(1) require redaction of additional information; or

(2) limit or prohibit a nonparty's remote electronic access to a document filed with the court.

(e) Option for Additional Unredacted Filing Under Seal. A person making a redacted filing may also file an unredacted copy under seal. The court must retain the unredacted copy as part of the record.

(f) Option for Filing a Reference List. A filing that contains redacted information may be filed together with a reference list that identifies each item of redacted information and specifies an appropriate identifier that uniquely corresponds to each item listed. The list must be filed under seal and may be amended as of right. Any reference in the case to a listed identifier will be construed to refer to the corresponding item of information.

(g) Waiver of Protection of Identifiers. A person waives the protection of Rule 49.1(a) as to the person's own information by filing it without redaction and not under seal.

#### COMMENT TO THE 2009 AMENDMENT

This Rule is identical to the Federal Rule with the following exceptions.

Paragraph (a) of this Rule requires redaction of several categories of information not covered by the Federal Rule: driver's license and non-driver's license identification card numbers, and credit and debit card numbers. See D.C. Code § 28-3851 (3)(A) (defining "Personal information" for purposes of the Consumer Personal Information Security Breach Notification Act of 2006, D.C. Code § 28-3851 *et seq.*) Paragraph (a) also substitutes the term "child" for the term "minor" and refers to a locally applicable definition of that term.

Subparagraph (a)(3) differs from the Federal Rule, which requires redaction of the month and date of birth, but not the year of birth. This Rule requires redaction of the entire date of birth and use of the acronym "DOB" in its place.

Subparagraph (b)(6) refers to post-conviction proceedings under local, rather than federal, law.

Paragraph (c) of the Federal Rule ("Immigration Cases") is omitted from this Rule as locally inapplicable.

## **18 U.S.C. § 2265. Full faith and credit given to protection orders**

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(d) Notification and Registration.—

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(3) Limits on internet publication of registration information.—A State, Indian tribe, or territory shall not make available publicly on the Internet any information regarding the registration, filing of a petition for, or issuance of a protection order, restraining order or injunction, restraining order, or injunction in either the issuing or enforcing State, tribal or territorial jurisdiction, if such publication would be likely to publicly reveal the identity or location of the party protected under such order. A State, Indian tribe, or territory may share court generated and law enforcement-generated information contained in secure, governmental registries for protection order enforcement purposes.

## **18 U.S.C. § 2266. Definitions**

In this chapter:

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(5) Protection Order.—The term “protection order” includes—

(A) any injunction, restraining order, or any other order issued by a civil or criminal court for the purpose of preventing violent or threatening acts or harassment against, sexual violence, or contact or communication with or physical proximity to, another person, including any temporary or final order issued by a civil or criminal court whether obtained by filing an independent action or as a pendente lite order in another proceeding so long as any civil or criminal order was issued in response to a complaint, petition, or motion filed by or on behalf of a person seeking protection; and

(B) any support, child custody or visitation provisions, orders, remedies or relief issued as part of a protection order, restraining order, or injunction pursuant to State, tribal, territorial, or local law authorizing the issuance of protection orders, restraining orders, or injunctions for the protection of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking.