Format Errors

I am receiving "Format Errors." What does this mean?

When a filing is not successfully processed and identified as having a "Format Error," this indicates that the filing has one or more document files that are not valid for filing document conversion. The underlying cause of the issue is typically either that the document was not successfully uploaded or the document has a characteristic that prevents the standard processing of the file.

What are the standard document specifications for e-filing cases?

The standard document specifications for e-filing cases are as follows:

- Use 8.5" X 11" paper with portrait orientation.
- Set the DPI resolution higher than 200 DPI.
- No unintelligible images (i.e., all-black images).
- Use non-secured document properties (i.e., not password-protected).
- Use black and white images (no color).
- Remove external references in the documents (URLs, shortcuts, etc.).

What typically causes format errors?

Format errors are typically caused by the following submissions:

- Corrupt files (i.e., files with 0 bytes of data).
- Secured or password-protected PDFs.
- Color images.
- File types other than Word, WordPerfect, PDF, or Tiff.
- Files containing a non-standard font (CID).
- Files with non-standard image compression. (Standard is CCIT; this is usually a scanner setting.)
- A document that has Optical Character Recognition (OCR) associated with it, usually determined by a larger file size.
- Any file that experienced an upload issue or time out on the file transfer on behalf of the filing party (usually appearing as an incomplete image or file when opened).
- A document scan that is in landscape orientation, noticeably off-center, or of an irregular size.
- Any scan (PDF or TIFF) that is unreadable or has large black images in the document where pictures may have been.
- A file that contains an invalid table or macros (usually a result of importing or pasting table data into a word processing application). See below for examples.

Identifying Format Issues

There are several ways to identify format issues within documents filed. This section will help identify documents with formatting issues.

Check the Filing Queue

The first action is to determine whether the document uploaded successfully.

To determine this, do the following:

1. Open the document files using the **Filing Queue** link on the left menu.
2. Click the 🔍 icon under the **Details** column for your case.
3. Scroll down to the **Documents** section of the **Filing Details of Service** page to locate the document uploaded.
4. Click on the document link under the **File Name** column to open the document.

Note: If the file does not open using the original authoring tool, cancel this filing and create a new filing.
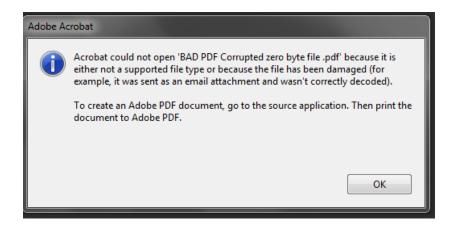
Prior to uploading documents for new filings, confirm the document files will open successfully from their original source.
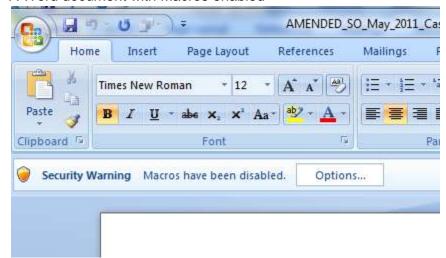
Corrupt Files

Corrupt files, e.g., files with zero (0) bytes of data, are one of the many reasons a filing has format errors.

Below are examples of corrupt file errors messages:

- A corrupted PDF document with zero byte file.
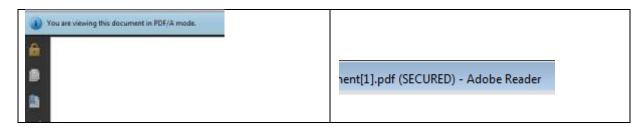
- A Word document with Macros enabled

- A Word document corrupted with an invalid table.

Document Security

PDF files have security settings that can prevent documents from being e-filed. A file with document security has a padlock icon on the document and/or has "SECURED" shown in the file name.

The document security can include a number of different options, any of which will prevent the document file from being processed. To ensure successful document processing, recreate the PDF with no security options.

Unsupported Fonts

Font resources are included in newly created documents. This is a standard with PDF/A files. Document generating tools utilize fonts not supported when creating documents, which results in the inability to convert the document into the standard e-filing format.

There are multiple ways to examine the fonts embedded in the file. PDF viewers can show the fonts utilized in the filing, or the file editors can allow you view the fonts utilized.

Fonts that are not supported include CID and JBig.

The following is an example of a PDF viewer identifying the fonts used by a PDF file: