

# Electronic Online Filing Service Definitions

## 1) Introduction

Electronic online filing (eOLF) as provided by the Intellectual Property Office utilises EPO Online Services, the European Patent Office's (EPO) package of software for secure online services. The EPO software enables customers to electronically file national (GB), European (EP) and international (PCT) patent applications at the Intellectual Property Office. It also allows certain forms and documents to be electronically filed for pending national (GB) applications. Security is ensured by a Public Key Infrastructure environment provided by the EPO.

This document describes the non-technical issues of eOLF.

## 2) Intellectual Property Office Support for eOLF

### a) Overview

The Intellectual Property Office IT Helpdesk is the first point of contact for all online filing customers. Email [eolf.support@ipo.gov.uk](mailto:eolf.support@ipo.gov.uk) or telephone +44 (0)1633 813500.

The Helpdesk will provide an initial analysis of your enquiry and, where possible, a resolution. They may need to seek advice from technical support or the relevant business area before providing you with a full answer. In the event that the problem you identify requires liaison with the EPO Online Services team we will let you know and keep you informed as we progress the issue.

### b) Service hours

The UK eOLF service is normally available at all times except from 01:00 to 02:00 hours (UK time). However the service has no support outside the IT Helpdesk support hours.

### c) Support hours

The IT Helpdesk is able to provide support between 07:30 and 17:30 hours (UK time) Monday to Friday excluding UK Public Holidays. Phone messages outside these hours are recorded and e-mails are stored. They are attended to on the next working day.

### d) Planned server maintenance

Every effort is made to keep disruptions to normal service to a minimum. The IT Helpdesk will post warning notices on the Intellectual Property Office website and, wherever possible, will give at least 48 hours notice to customers before any maintenance occurs.

### e) Distribution of hardware, software and Intellectual Property Office customer support

The required hardware and software will be provided by the EPO, including the UK client software. However, it is recommended that customers check that the latest version of the UK client software is being used. This can be downloaded via [www.ipo.gov.uk/download](http://www.ipo.gov.uk/download). All communication between customers and the Intellectual Property Office should be initiated via the Intellectual Property Office IT Helpdesk.

### **3) Customer Registration Procedures**

#### **a) Overview**

UK eOLF enables you to file patent applications at the Intellectual Property Office of the following types (note that a sub form can only be filed with its root form):

- GB (national) – Form 1 and sub forms 3, 7, 8A, 9A, 10 & 23
- PCT (national phase) – Form NP1 and sub forms 3, 7, 9A, 10 & 52
- PCT (international phase) – Form PCT/RO/101
- EP (European) – Form EP1001

It also allows you to file the following forms and documents for a pending GB (national) application:

- Forms – AF1, 7, 9A, 10 & 52
- Documents – claims, abstract, replacement pages, amended pages, sequence listing, translation of priority document, search reports from other patent offices, covering letter

Before filing, you will need to have:

- enrolled with the EPO and received a smart card and PIN number
- enrolled with the Intellectual Property Office
- installed the client software and card reader on your PC
- established a finance account within the Intellectual Property Office and received a corresponding customer ID

Existing EPO customers can continue to use their current smart card and PIN number. If you did not advise the EPO during enrolment that you wish to file to the Intellectual Property Office, we will need to share your data with the EPO to ensure secure filing.

#### **b) Service Trial**

We recommend that you conduct a service trial before filing any 'live' applications. This demonstrates that the system is working correctly and gives you and us confidence in each other.

### **4) Contingency Filing Arrangements**

This section describes the alternative filing arrangements that are available in the event there is:

- a failure in any component of the system at the Intellectual Property Office (server) end which prevents successful completion of filing
- a failure in any component of the system at the customer (client) end which prevents successful completion of filing
- a data communications failure

#### **a) Filing on Compact Disk**

The system has the facility to write the completed documents to a compact disk, allowing them to be filed using the methods set out in (b) below (except for filing by fax) and, upon receipt at the Intellectual Property Office, processed using the system. The filing date for applications filed in this way is awarded in the same way as for applications on paper.

#### **b) Filing on Paper**

If you are able to print out a completed hard copy of the documents which have been compiled using the system, or you can generate an equivalent hard copy by other means, you can file the hard copy using the following methods:

- filing by fax
- filing by post
- filing by special courier
- filing by hand delivery to the Newport Office of the Intellectual Property Office
- filing by hand delivery to the London Front Office of the Intellectual Property Office
- outside normal hours, security guards at the London and Newport offices will accept filings and provide a date and time stamped receipt

#### **c) Web Filing**

Applications, forms and documents may be submitted online using the Intellectual Property Office's web filing system at [www.ipo.gov.uk/p-apply-online-uk-filingsystem.htm](http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-apply-online-uk-filingsystem.htm) (although note that the information contained in any forms generated using the eOLF system will need to be re-entered via the web filing interface).

#### **d) Later Submission using eOLF**

Where an eOLF transmission to the Intellectual Property Office was completed successfully but the receipt could not be returned, typically due to a dropped connection, a later identical submission will be linked to the earlier hash code, awarded the earlier date of filing and the original receipt returned. It is essential that the later submission is identical to the earlier one – even minor changes such as re-signing the submission must not be made – so you should simply resend the earlier application.

### **5) National Security**

Applications which contain information the publication of which might be prejudicial to national security or to the safety of the public should **not** be filed electronically and should be filed on paper. Nevertheless, all applications will be subjected to an inspection and any which are considered to fall into this category will be withheld under Section 22 of the Patents Act 1977.