

Announcement of New Brief QC Functionality in CM/ECF

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

NOTICE TO COUNSEL

Announcement of New Brief QC Functionality in CM/ECF

Effective Date - Monday, June 2, 2025

The Sixth Circuit Clerk's Office is pleased to announce the implementation of a new service, Brief QC, effective June 2, 2025. This innovative feature is designed to proactively identify potential non-compliance issues in appellate briefs prior to formal filing.

Brief QC automatically assesses submissions for adherence to the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure and the Local Rules of the Sixth Circuit. This functionality enables counsel to address any identified deficiencies, reducing the risk of potential dismissals or other procedural issues.

In the preceding year, the court's issuance of over 700 deficiency notices created a considerable administrative burden for the Clerk's Office and practitioners. To mitigate this, the Sixth Circuit has adopted a customized iteration of a brief quality control program originally developed by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Following a period of internal testing and validation, Brief QC is now available as a final quality assurance tool.

Upon initiating a CM/ECF brief filing event and attaching the relevant document, the system will automatically initiate a review for formatting and other common errors. Upon completion of the review, should any discrepancies be detected, the "Document Check Result" screen will be displayed, detailing the noted errors.

Counsel will have the option to either "Cancel" the docketing event, thereby exiting CM/ECF to facilitate necessary corrections to the brief, or to proceed with filing the brief "as is" by selecting the "Continue" option. Selecting "Cancel" will terminate the docketing process, and no record of the transaction will be entered on the docket sheet. Conversely, selecting "Continue" will finalize the brief's submission.

We encourage practitioners to utilize Brief QC to identify non-compliance issues. While acknowledging that exigent deadlines may require filing briefs with noted issues, please be aware that all submissions will still be thoroughly reviewed by court staff for full rule compliance, and issues beyond Brief QC's detection may still be identified. Therefore, even if a brief successfully passes the Brief QC review, the court retains the discretion to issue a deficiency notice and require subsequent corrections.

For further information, contact: Office of the Clerk, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, 513-564-7000.