


HOW TO **SECURE LEGAL** DOCUMENTS



Every year there are over 15 million legal cases filed in the U.S. alone. Each case filed requires extensive reading, writing, and paperwork resulting in countless hours spent creating reports and documents. Both lawyers and paralegals devote a great deal of time gathering information in order to build a successful case. Highly classified documents are inevitably the target of many breaches, and with the amount of time and resources spent per case, securing documents in every way possible is vital. With this in mind, Soda PDF Anywhere has incorporated new features specifically designed to secure and protect all legal documents so lawyers and paralegals can feel comfortable creating, editing, storing, and securing their most important files.

SODA E-SIGN

Prior to the E-SIGN Act was the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA) which asserts that where any law that requires a signature to be considered valid, an electronic signature can be used in place as long as both parties agree to proceed electronically. Both the E-SIGN Act in conjunction with the UETA have cemented the legal scope for the use of electronic records and signatures as both laws include that: no document or signature be negated in a court of law solely on the premise that it was in electronic form, and no contract relating to a transaction be negated in a court of law solely because an electronic signature was used in validation. This establishes that electronic signatures, documents, and records are just as valid in a court of law as traditional hand-signed contracts and/or documents.



**COURTS WILL IN FACT
RECOGNIZE THREE TYPES
OF E-SIGNATURES:**

- 1 *A standard e-signature (a typed name or copy of handwritten signature)*
- 2 *An advanced electronic signature (AES)*
- 3 *A qualified electronic signature (QES)*

The only difference between these three types of signatures is what evidence they require to prove their validity and authenticity. For example, since a standard e-signature can be forged more easily, it would require further proof that the individual who signed the document was the actual signer. Thus, any situation where the law does not require a signature to give it legal effect, a standard e-signature would suffice. In comparison, due to additional requirements that constitute an AES signature, significantly less evidence would be required to prove its validity. These additional requirements include that the electronic signature must be uniquely linked to the signer, it must identify the signer, it must be under sole control of the signer, and it must detect changes to the document after the application of AES. Lastly, QES signatures require no additional proof to demonstrate their validity as the courts are mandated to recognize them as equivalent to handwritten signatures (granted they meets QES conditions). These conditions include that the signature must be created using a QES creation device and that it is supported by a qualified certificate.

Any circumstance where a signature has legal effect to bind the signatory, an AES and QES would be used. Soda PDF uses the eSignLive solution which meets all requirements for electronic signatures, including AES and QES.

The integrated Soda E-Sign application offers a fast and reliable way to get your electronic documents signed effortlessly. With the use of E-Sign, getting documents signed online is easy for both parties involved. To ensure the authenticity of signed documents, audit trails of the entire e-signing process are embedded automatically. The intuitive nature of this service allows for users to feel comfortable using it with no training required while alleviating the burden of tedious paperwork. From a legal perspective, the use of E-Sign is imperative as it reduces potential delays in the legal process. Now, instead of waiting for documents to be signed in-person, they can be sent and signed in a matter of minutes. With E-Sign, legal professionals can track a document's progress and save it in real time for future reference.

WHITEOUT & REDACTION

Upon distributing a PDF, it is integral that legal professionals examine the document for sensitive and/or confidential information. The result of making a simple mistake in leaving classified information unsecured can be disastrous to any case. Redaction is the process of permanently removing visible text and graphics from a document to limit the likelihood of this happening. A common mistake when redacting information is to apply a blur filter to the sensitive text using photo editing software. This method has proven to be faulty as security experts have demonstrated ways to recover this blurred, sensitive information. Law firms around the world rely on the ability to securely and permanently remove sensitive data from documents, and with Soda PDF's built-in whiteout and redaction features, masking confidential information is effortless in helping to (irreversibly) remove content that was not intended for others to see.



PASSWORD PROTECTION

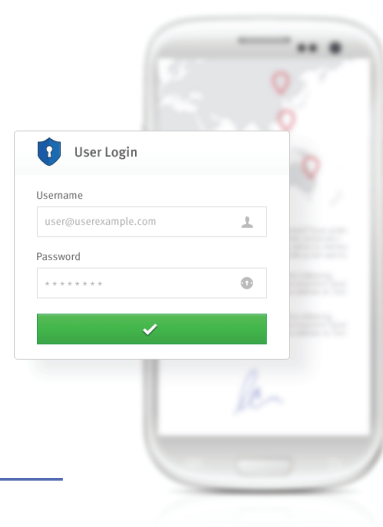
PDF/A is a version of PDF designed specifically for archiving and preserving electronic documents. It was a project formulated by the Association for Suppliers of Printing, Publishing and Converting Technologies (NPES) and the Association for Information and Image Management in the hopes of creating an international standard that defines the use of PDF in relation to archiving files.

Soda PDF allows you to restrict access to PDF files by creating passwords and editing specific features in the settings. Using the password protection feature can help minimize the risks of malicious activity from outside sources. Creating a password-protected encryption restricts who can access the file, keeping information secure within files. Evidently, the more sophisticated the user is with their security settings, the less susceptible they are to breaches or tampering. Soda PDF's 256-bit AES encryption level passwords limit who can view, modify, and edit documents.

The encryption level is at the heart of password protection security: the higher the level, the more complex the algorithm used to alter the information. Without the proper encryption key, the end user can't decipher the encrypted information, which renders the document unreadable. This adds to the security of files saved on a server or sent online via e-mail or other file transferring methods. Soda PDF's 256-bit AES encryption level, combined with a strong password, will make common password cracking tools next to impossible.

WHAT IS AES ENCRYPTION?

AES (acronym of Advanced Encryption Standard) is a symmetric encryption algorithm. The algorithm was developed by two Belgian cryptographers Joan Daemen and Vincent Rijmen. It is used by the U.S. government to protect classified information and is implemented in software and hardware throughout the world to encrypt sensitive data.



In conclusion, legal matters are often synonymous to private matters, therefore keeping documents secure and protected is crucial. After spending copious amounts of time and effort on legal cases, the last of any legal professional's worries should be figuring out how to secure their documents from breaches or misconduct. Soda PDF makes protecting files effortless by having state-of-the-art built-in features geared specifically toward the legal profession.

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