

PDF Fillable Form Can't Be Saved

A January 2011 discussion on SoloSez, the email listserv for general practice, solo and small firm lawyers

I use a ton of PDF forms that I download from court websites. Unfortunately, it appears the completed forms cannot be saved; I can only save blank copies of the forms. Is there some crafty way I can actually save these forms after I fill them in? I could save huge amounts of time if I could save partially completed forms.

I'd like to know this too. The IT guy at my last job sneered and proclaimed that he could save them. However, he wasn't able to do so. Certain forms on the Virginia courts website certainly lend themselves to saving time if they could be saved and edited later.

Big prize for anybody who can figure it out. If you need a sample, we can provide one to play with!

Marilou Auer, a nonlawyer who could be much more efficient

Some of them can be saved and some can't. The immigration forms can, but you first have to save them on your computer, then fill out the SAVED form. It depends on how you save it. It saves me heaps of time.

Diane Stamler Oraif

I use this website to fill and then save a pdf. I upload the pdf from my computer, fill in the form (I like that the font size is djustable) and when form is filled, click "download" to save the completed form to my computer and then print it. If I make a mistake or info. needs to be revised, I have to start over and fill-out a new blank form.

<https://www.fillanypdf.com/Default.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fUsers%2fHome%2fdefault.aspx%3fr%3d634234651718533689&r=634234651718533689>

sorry for the long link but this the address saved under My Favorites. I created an account but if memory serves me well I think I was allowed to save only 1 form at a time w/ the free version so I just upload, fill, download, save and print each time.

Susan Gregory Liammari, Florida

I can't speak for all PDF forms, but I don't think I've ever had trouble saving the ones from the Virginia courts forms website.

I have Acrobat Standard. I believe you can't save them if you just have the free Acrobat Reader.

If there's a particular form that won't save for you, let me know. I'll give it a go and see if it works for me.

Andrew Flusche, Virginia

I've always started with blank .pdf's that needed to be filled but I bet you could partially complete a form w/ the weblink below and then save the partially completed form to your computer. Then upload your doc to the site to finish as needed. If you try it please let me know.

Susan Gregory Liammari

You can do it with any number of programs, but the work is in setting the forms.

There are some great tricks to do with PDFs, especially with Adobe Acrobat. But they go beyond the scope of this email.

Victor J. Medina, New Jersey

It's all of them for me, the Warrant in Debt in General District Court, the Cover Sheet in Circuit Court....I can't save any of them! Which is a pain because so much of the information is the same!

I'd be interested to know which ones you can save, maybe I have to buy Acrobat Standard!

Marilou, a nonlawyer who always wants to be more efficient!

JACKPOT!!! That did the trick! Thank you all so much!

I think this is going to change my life, just like when I learned how to use mail merge!!!

Thanks again!

Jennifer J. McCoy, Indiana

Yeah, you're going to need at least Acrobat Standard. Reader doesn't support saving.

I have no problems saving the Warrant in Debt form, restricted license application, motion to reopen, etc. It's all about the software.

Or you could try that website tool Susan posted.

Andrew

Andrew Flusche

Great news! Now you got me thinking about what forms I could partially complete and save for later :) and how I would use mail merge to improve my office efficiency. I understand mail merge means importing data to fields into a document when the only info. that changes in the document is the data for a specific field, i.e. Dear [field name]:

When do you use mail merge in your practice for more than the standard letter? TIA

Susan Gregory Liammari

I practice in collections, so I have to send a ton of letters. Mail merge allows me to plug in amounts owed, debtor names, creditor names, etc. It's awesome!

Jennifer J. McCoy

While I know Jennifer McCoy has found a solution for her issue, for those of you who have Acrobat Standard, or higher, you may be interested in something I picked up from an IT guy in Louisiana a number of years ago.

He said the reason so many such files can be filled out, but not saved, is because the forms can be accessed on public computers. Thus, the state adds Javascript to the form. Here are the instructions he gave me for removing the Javascript:

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Instructions for removing the JavaScript to retain data. Note: You will need Acrobat Professional or standard Software. Acrobat Reader will not allow you to remove the script or save the document.

1. Open the PDF
2. Click on the "Pages Tab" (located on left side of page)
3. Highlight all the pages in document by holding down the shift key and individually clicking each page.
4. Click on "Options" at the top of the panel. Then click on page properties (bottom of page).
5. The next screen will show 2 tabs ("Tab Order" and "Actions"). Click on the "Actions" tab.
6. The following screen will have 2 sections, "Add Actions" and "Actions".
7. Under "Actions"

(2nd section), click to highlight "Page Open". 8. Click the "Delete" button then hit "close". 9. Press "X" to close out.

You now should be able to retain the data that you saved.

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I believe this will also permit you to save the form as form-fillable, too, but it's been awhile since I needed to download such forms.

Hope this helps.

Mark

Mark E. Peneguy, Louisiana

Another free suggestion: install PDF creator (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfcreator/>) It will add itself to your printer devices. When you have filled the form out, "print" it as a PDF and save the new PDF to the client file.

Kristina Melomed, Ohio

I'm able to do it.

First, download the form then I open in PDF Converter from Nuance which is an adobe acrobat and fill out the form then save the completed PDF as a different file.

I guess you could do that with Acrobat.

John Davidson, Pennsylvania

Sometimes the problem is that the pdf is password-protected to prevent you from saving it with the information. I have had much better luck getting PDF Converter to override/ignore the password protection than Adobe Acrobat. So I second this suggestion.