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Unsigned, Sealed, Delivered: PTO Eliminates Handwritten Signatures for Certain OED Correspondence and Credit Card Payments

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The US Patent & Trademark Office (PTO) eliminated the requirement for original handwritten signatures on certain correspondence with the Office of Enrollment and Discipline (OED) and on certain payments made to the PTO by credit card. The handwritten signature requirements of 37 CFR § 1.4(e) were deleted effective July 2, 2021.

37 CFR § 1.4(e)(1) previously required correspondence related to registration to practice before the PTO in patent cases, enrollment and disciplinary investigations, and disciplinary proceedings to be submitted with an original handwritten signature personally signed in permanent dark ink or its equivalent. 37 CFR § 1.4(e)(2) required the same for payments by credit cards where the payment was not made via the electronic filing system. Elimination of the entirety of § 1.4(e) allows the use of facsimile transmissions and S-signatures in enrollment and disciplinary matters before the OED, and for payments by credit card.

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