



**United States Court of Appeals  
for the Seventh Circuit**

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**Electronic Case Filing User Manual**

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## Common Terms

*Electronic Filing:* Uploading document(s) using the court's internet-based Appellate Case Management/Electronic Case Filing System (CM/ECF) in order to file/submit the document(s).

*Filing User:* Any person who has an active login and password to file documents using the Appellate CM/ECF System. The terms Appellate Filer and Appellate ECF Filer are also used.

*PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records):* The system that allows subscribers to view, print and download docket information and documents. Access to the docket through PACER will be billed by the PACER Service Center at \$0.08/page with a maximum charge of \$2.40 per document.

*NDA (Notice of Docket Activity):* An e-mail notice that is generated when a docket transaction is designed to send notice to attorneys, case participants, or court personnel. NDA's can be generated when a party or attorney files a document with the Clerk's Office or when the court enters an order or takes other public action in a case. As a CM/ECF participant, receipt of an NDA constitutes service of that document or order pursuant to the terms agreed upon when registering for the CM/ECF system. Generally, an NDA contains a hyperlink to the court's docket sheet (the case number in blue) and the document (the word 'Document' in blue). Upon receipt of an NDA the 'Document' link will provide one "free look" at the document, after this "free look," regular PACER fees will apply. In the trial court systems the NDA is called a Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF). Parties should save and/or print the NDA's generated by their filings as evidence of service.

*PDF (Portable Document Format):* A file format used for open document exchange. PDF documents are device, resolution, and wordprocessor independent. WordPerfect 9, Word 2010 and subsequent releases of this software include the capability to convert documents to PDF by clicking "File" on the toolbar, then selecting the option to publish to PDF. Microsoft Word 2003 does not include free PDF conversion software. You may also use Adobe Acrobat or download free

PDF conversion software from any source of your choosing to convert documents to PDF. Microsoft Word 2007 has the ability to convert documents to PDF if you download and install an add-in that is free from Microsoft and available on their web site. Interactive on-line training on converting Word or WordPerfect documents to PDF is available at <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/ecfcbt/dc/cccnvtpdf/>.

There are two types of PDF files. Whenever possible, native PDF or files created directly from a word processor must be used. The Court requires that all pleadings be submitted in native PDF. Attachments to pleadings may be submitted in scanned PDF if native format is not available. A maximum of 10 megabytes (regardless of format) may be uploaded per PDF file.

*Native PDF* (non-scanned): Electronically converted PDF documents created directly from word processing documents. Native PDF documents are text searchable and generally have a small file size. Native PDF documents up to 10 megabytes may be uploaded as a single file; documents exceeding those limits should be split into separate files with appropriate identification.

*Scanned PDF*: Scanned PDF documents are created by putting paper documents through an optical scanner. Scanned image PDF documents are not text searchable and have a large file size. Scanned PDF's up to 10 megabytes may be uploaded as one file; documents exceeding those limits should be split into separate files with appropriate identification. There is a total limit of 50 megabytes per docket transaction.

*Pay.gov*: Pay.gov is used to make secure electronic payments to Federal Government Agencies. Many common forms of payment are accepted, including credit cards, debit cards, and direct debit.

### Hardware and Software Requirements

The following hardware and software are needed in order to use Appellate CM/ECF:

*Personal Computer*: You will need a personal computer running Windows, and equipped with Java 1.6 (or higher). Mac users will need the 64-bit Macintosh with

OS X Leopard 10.5 with the Apple-supplied Java for Mac. Mac users with an older 32-bit OS will need additional software such as Fusion, Parallels, or Bootcamp to allow the Mac to emulate a Windows environment.

*Word Processing Software:* For the purposes of CM/ECF – WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, or any other word processing software that will permit you to convert text documents to PDF.

*Internet Service Provider:* A company who provides access services to the Internet

*Web Browser:* Software that can interpret pages published on the Internet. CM/ECF has currently been certified to work with Mozilla Firefox versions 1.5 or higher and Internet Explorer versions 5.5 or higher.

*E-mail Account:* An account that allows you to receive electronic mail over the Internet. CM/ECF allows you to register more than one email address for receipt of Notices of Docket Activity (NDA's). The address(es) must be regularly monitored, as your only notification of case activity will be via e-mail once you register. Counsel must ensure that the spam filter operation on the network and the computer receiving the e-mail are set to allow notices from @ca7.uscourts.gov. The size limitations of your e-mail account must also be kept sufficient to receive NDA's from the ECF system. In general, an account with storage space of at least 100 megabytes is sufficient.

*Scanner:* A scanner will only be necessary if you have attachments to documents that are not available in Native PDF. Paper documents should be scanned into PDF format at 300dpi.

*JRE (Java Runtime Environment):* Currently, Java 1.6 is required for CM/ECF to operate on your computer. It is available at [www.java.com](http://www.java.com). Select "Do I Have Java" on the main screen to verify which version you currently have on your computer. If you do not have Java 1.6, you will be prompted to download it. Mac users will need the 64-bit Macintosh with OS X Leopard 10.5 with the Apple-supplied Java

1.6.

### Document Policies

*Required Documents:* All documents filed by counsel as of May 1, 2011 must be filed electronically in native PDF format (see definition above) using the Appellate CM/ECF System except:

- Case initiating documents such as petitions for review and petitions for permission to appeal. These may be submitted via e-mail at USCA7\_Clerk@ca7.uscourts.gov. All associated fees are due and owed.
- CJA and other payment vouchers (filed in paper format only).

*File Size Limitations:* More than one file may be uploaded to a particular ECF entry, provided that the total file size does not exceed 50 megabytes. Any attachment exceeding 50 megabytes may not be submitted electronically. Counsel seeking to submit attachments so large they cannot be filed via ECF must submit a motion prior to submission seeking exemption from the electronic filing requirements and justifying the need to submit attachments of this size.

### Eligibility, Registration and Passwords

*Pro Se Filers:* Pro Se Litigants can achieve ECF eligibility by having the Court grant a motion for ECF filing privileges. If such a motion is granted you must register with PACER as a pro se appellate filer. The court will terminate the pro se litigant's filing user status upon the termination of the case, termination of the litigant's pro se status or for any abuse of their filing privileges.

*Registration Steps:*

- Register for a PACER account: If you or your law firm have not previously obtained a PACER account, you must obtain a PACER account. Register for a

PACER account at <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov>.

- Register with PACER for Appellate Filer Account: An appellate filer account is required to file documents through CM/ECF. It is also required to view documents in social security and immigration cases, and other restricted cases in which you are participating. Register for an appellate filer account at <https://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/psco/cgi-bin/cmecf/ea-regform.pl>. The registration process takes approximately five minutes.

After you have registered, PACER will submit your information to the court for approval. Registration requests are generally processed by the next business day. You will receive notice via e-mail of your approval. If your registration is rejected, you will be notified via e-mail what step(s) need to be taken to achieve registration.

*Consent to Electronic Service:* Completion of the appellate filer registration requires that you consent to electronic service of documents via CM/ECF Notices of Docket Activity (NDA's).

*Passwords:* Filing users agree to protect their passwords. Contact the PACER Service Center and the Clerk's Office immediately if you learn that your password has been compromised.

*Changing Your Password:* To change your password log in to:  
<https://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/psco/cgi-bin/cmecf/ea-login.pl>.

*Forgotten Password:* If you forget your password, you can retrieve it electronically through <https://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/psco/cgi-bin/reqpswd.pl>. You will need your account ID, security question answer, and the e-mail address and telephone number associated with your account.

*Delegation of Authority - Login and Password:* You may allow a secretary, paralegal, or other authorized person to use your login and password to file documents on

your behalf. Remember that use of your login and password constitutes compliance with all rules and regulations governing use of the system.

*Revoking E-Filer Privileges:* The court reserves the right to revoke ECF Filer privileges for good cause.

### Implications of Electronic Filing

*Filing Complete at Date and Time Shown on NDA:* Transmission of a document to CM/ECF, together with the generation of the Notice of Docket Activity from the court, constitutes a filing unless it is subsequently cited as deficient under the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure and/or Circuit Rules, or unless hard copy follow-up is required. Paper copies are required for briefs, appendices and petitions for rehearing but not for other documents unless specifically requested by the Court (see Circuit Rules for the number of copies). Electronic filing must be completed on the due date before midnight, Central Time, to be considered timely filed, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

*Official Record:* The official document of record is the CM/ECF document stored by the court. Counsel must take care to verify the accuracy of the electronic document before committing the transaction to the docket.

### Service of Documents by Electronic Means

*Preparing the Certificate of Service:* A certificate of service must be attached as the final page to all documents filed with the court in accordance with FRAP 25(d).

To determine whether case participants are registered to receive Notices of Docket Activity service, and to confirm how service should be effected on each party, please sign into your ECF account and select 'Report' and 'Service List'.

Conventional service is required for those not registered as CM/ECF Users. Participants in a case not able to be served through CM/ECF must be served conventionally.

*Conventional Service Required for Paper Filings:* Documents filed in paper form must be served conventionally. For example:

- Case Initiating Documents: Can be submitted to the Clerk at USCA7\_Clerk @ca7.uscourts.gov and serve copies in paper form. All associated fees are due and owed.

*Service of Court-Issued Documents:* Court orders, opinions, judgments, and other court generated documents are placed on the docket and provided to parties via an NDA (Notice of Docket Activity) unless a party does not have an e-mail address available to the court; in that case U.S. Mail will be used. It is the parties responsibility to be sure e-mail addresses on file are accurate.

*Attachments and Exhibits to Pleadings:* All attachments and exhibits to pleadings must be filed in electronic form unless otherwise directed by the Court. If attachments are not available in native PDF, they may be submitted in scanned PDF. Documents filed with the court electronically are limited to 10 megabytes per uploaded file. More than one file may be uploaded to a particular entry, provided that the total file size does not exceed 50 megabytes.

*Multiple Attachments/Exhibits:* Multiple attachments/exhibits to a document should be merged into a single PDF, not to exceed 10 megabytes; if the size limit would be exceeded by merging into a single PDF, the attachments may be divided into two (or more, if size warrants) separate PDF's. Each PDF may be uploaded using the "Add Another" button within a docket entry. After uploading each file, use the text box to properly describe each file. The total size limit is 50 megabytes.

Large PDF's may be reduced in size by using Adobe Acrobat's built-in "Reduce

File Size" option.

### Sealed Documents

Counsel are responsible for ensuring that sealed materials are filed using the document categories specifically designated for this purpose. In addition, please note that if you are submitting a motion to seal materials simultaneously with the proposed sealed materials themselves you should use the ECF docketing entry specifically designed for this purpose 'Motion for leave to file a sealed document'. This entry will place all items under seal upon the initial filing. Motions subsequently denied will only result in the motion being un-sealed by the court.

### Signatures

*Use of Digital Signature:* The name of the filing user under whose login and password the document is filed must be preceded by an "s/" and typed in the space where the signature would otherwise appear.

*Documents Requiring Multiple Signatures:* Documents requiring the signature of more than one party may be completed, with the consent of all parties, via the use of digital signature (name of party preceded by an "s/" and typed in the space where the signature would otherwise appear).

### Technical Failures

A party or attorney adversely affected by a technical failure in connection with filing or receipt of an electronic document may seek relief by appropriate motion. Notices of planned outages will be posted on [www.ca7.uscourts.gov](http://www.ca7.uscourts.gov) as far in advance as possible.

### Public Access

*Information Available on Internet:* Counsel should exercise caution with regard to any sensitive personal data in filings. It is counsel's responsibility to redact documents as required by FRAP 25(a)(5). The Clerk's Office will not review documents for the need for redaction or sealing.

*Immigration, Social Security and Sealed Cases:* Remote public access to documents in immigration and social security cases is limited to orders, opinions, and documents issued by the Court. Remote access to other documents in immigration and social security cases is available only to the parties and attorneys in the case who have registered through CM/ECF. Remote electronic access to all documents in sealed cases is available only to parties and attorneys in the case who have registered through CM/ECF.

*Linking ECF and PACER Accounts:* After your ECF registration has been approved by the court, you will need to link your ECF account to your PACER account.

PLEASE NOTE: This is quite important, as it will be the only way you will be able to view sealed pleadings in a case if you are counsel of record. You will only need to do this once. To link your accounts, please do the following:

Go to <https://www.pacer.gov/psco/cgi-bin/cmecf/ea-menu.pl> – login with your Filer credentials then select – Personal Info/Address/ECF Filing Status Updates – Sync Username/Password – Submit. If CM/ECF was open while you did this, you must log out and log back into CM/ECF in order for the change to take effect.

You will now be able to access PACER from your ECF account without a separate log in.

SEALED DOCUMENT NOTE: If you are counsel of record in a case, this is the only way you will be able to view sealed documents in the case. You will not be able to view sealed documents in your case if you access the docket via the PACER site; you must access via your ECF account.

#### Address, E-Mail, Telephone Number Changes

ECF users must update personal and address changes with the PACER Service Center using the Appellate CM/ECF Filer Account Update option

<https://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/psco/cgi-bin/cmecf/ea-login.pl>. The court's records will usually be updated within one business day after PACER's receipt of the updated

information.

PLEASE NOTE: A change of address form submitted to the court ECF system will be insufficient to update personal information and address changes in PACER or your Filer Account.

#### Review of Electronically Filed Pleadings

The Clerk's Office will review all pleadings to ensure compliance with appropriate appellate and circuit rules, and to ensure that each pleading was filed correctly. Should a pleading be deemed noncompliant, counsel will be contacted and instructed to re-file the pleading.

You may also notice that a second NDA may issue for your filing due to some corrections or additions deemed necessary by the Clerk's Office. If the change or addition did not require any action on your part you will not necessarily be contacted.

#### Interested Parties to an Appeal

Individuals wishing to register as interested parties for particular cases may do so via the PACER site (registering as an interested party allows the registrant to receive public NDA's issued in a particular case). Attorneys who are registered with ECF may add themselves to the notice list for cases in which they are not involved. Interested parties are not considered "of record". Interested parties will not be able to file in cases they follow, nor will they have the "free look" available in the NDA's for actual parties. Likewise, viewing sealed materials will not be allowed. Individuals registered as pro se filers will not be able to add themselves as interested parties to other cases.

#### Commercial URL's

You may not be able to upload a PDF to ECF if the PDF contains an active link to a commercial URL. Please prepare accordingly. In addition, do not include links to PDF's unless the subsequent PDF's is/are attached to the docket or found elsewhere on PACER.

#### CJA Attorneys With Two or More PACER Accounts

CM/ECF allows a filing attorney to permanently associate a PACER login with an ECF

filing login. The ECF filing login and PACER login became associated by checking the box "Make this my default PACER login" during a previous session. When they are associated, each time the attorney logs in to file a document the system also logs the attorney in as a PACER customer. This is a problem for those customers that must switch between PACER accounts based on the type of work being performed.

Once logged in as a CM/ECF filer, click on "Utility" in the menu and select "Update My Account". Check the box next to "Remove the Default PACER Login". This option is used to indicate that a PACER login is associated with your ECF login, so that when you login to ECF and access PACER using the Reports menu, you do not need to login to PACER again. To remove the default login for your PACER account, click the "Remove the default PACER login" checkbox and click the Apply button.

#### Electronic Fee Payments using Pay.gov

*Filing Fee Payments:* As of March 2, 2015, the Clerk's Office will take electronic filing fee payments using Pay.gov. These filing fee payments are for original case filings such as Petitions for Review and Petitions for Writ of Mandamus. Electronic payments can only be made via ECF and will **not** be accepted in the Clerk's Office. Please note, all filing fee payments for a Notice of Appeal must be made in the District Court or Tax Court.

The payment of these fees is accomplished by the attorney of record using the Electronic Case Filing system (ECF), which will interface with Pay.gov and then enter the fee payment on the court's docket. For detailed instructions on making a fee payment to an existing appeal, see the document *Pay.gov: How to pay a fee electronically* on the court's website under the section **ECF Training Area**.

#### Refund Policy

If the Clerk's Office has been notified of an erroneously paid fee, the Clerk of Court, after review, may refund the fee. Any request for a refund must be set forth in writing and include all relevant information, reason for the refund request, the name, address & telephone number of the party requesting the refund. Supporting documentation should include the electronic payment receipt, agency tracking number & amount of

refund request. This request should be emailed to [USCA7\\_Clerk@ca7.uscourts.gov](mailto:USCA7_Clerk@ca7.uscourts.gov). Note, mere abandonment of or termination of an appeal is not the sort of error which would cause the return of funds.

All refunds for credit card transactions will be made as credits to the original card account. For funds received by an ACH debit transaction, the refund must be made by U.S. Treasury Check.