

Appellate ECF Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to do to get an Appellate ECF Filer account?

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 Appellate 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.

Once I have an account, who is eligible to use ECF to file a document in a case?

In order for you to successfully submit a document in a case, you must be on that case's docket as the attorney of record. The Seventh Circuit only allows a single attorney to be the attorney of record, therefore, you must use the credentials of the attorney listed or your filing will not be accepted. (Some exceptions do apply, such as motions to intervene, etc.).

Is the use of ECF mandatory in the Seventh Circuit?

All counsel practicing in the Seventh Circuit are required to use the Appellate CM/ECF system for all filings beginning May 1, 2011. This applies to all pending and newly filed appeals. A motion can be filed showing good cause and requesting an exemption.

Are pro se filers required to file using ECF?

No, pro se filers are not required to file documents using ECF. If a pro se party wishes to file documents using ECF, they may submit a motion requesting permission to file electronically in a specific case. If an order granting ECF status is issued, the pro se party may register and be an active ECF Filer until the case concludes.

Can the court help me if I have forgotten my log in or password?

No, court personnel do not have access to your log in or password information. Help with is available through the PACER Service Center website at: <https://www.pacer.gov/psco/cgi-bin/cmecf/ea-reqpswd.pl> or by phone at: (800) 676-6856 or (210) 301-6440 if you are in the San Antonio, Texas area.

Do I have to re-register if I have a PACER account and a CM/ECF Filer account with another circuit?

Each Appellate CM/ECF Filer account is unique to the circuits you are registered with, upon initial registration you may only register with one circuit, however, if you would like to register with more than one circuit, you will need log in to your existing filer account using this link: <https://www.pacer.gov/psco/cgi-bin/cmecf/ea-login.pl> and select 'Register for Additional Court(s)'. This will allow you to select additional circuits you may wish to register with.

Your PACER account for document access is universal and is not court dependent.

I log in to ECF but I don't see anything. What should I do?

Please be sure that you have JAVA loaded on your system. You may use this link to PACER to see if you have JAVA or a JAVA version that will run CM/ECF: <https://www.pacer.gov/psco/cgi-bin/cmecf/ea-login.pl>. If you do not have JAVA or a current enough version, please go to www.java.com and download the latest version of this software. Also be sure that you have at least Internet Explorer 5.5 or Firefox 1.5. See the Technical FAQ's for more detailed information.

What specific Browser settings do I need to have set?

Your browser must be set to accept cookies and pop-ups for: <https://ecf.ca7.uscourts.gov/>.

Can I submit scanned PDF documents?

You must use PDF files created directly from your word processor (native PDF) unless the material is not available for you to create a native PDF. If it is not, you may scan the material in PDF format with 300 dpi resolution.

What are the files size limitations for uploading to ECF?

File size can be no more than 10 megabytes per attachment or the upload will fail.

What if I have documents that exceed the 10 megabyte limit?

Documents exceeding the 10 megabyte limit must be broken into separate 10 megabyte files with appropriate sequential identifiers used in the file names. Most ECF entries may have multiple attachments made by selecting "Add Another" under the document attachment section.

Is there a limit to the cumulative file sizes per ECF docket submission?

Yes, the total is 50 megabytes per ECF submission - 5 files of 10 megabytes is the maximum. Counsel seeking to submit attachments so large that they cannot meet this

limit must submit a motion prior to submission seeking exemption from the electronic filing requirement and justifying the need to file attachments of this size.

When attaching a document, can I double-check the document right before attaching it?

Yes, when you select 'Browse' and locate the file you believe to be the correct one, under the Windows environment you can right-click on the file and use the 'Open with . . .' option to view it in your .pdf program (usually Acrobat).

Why do I have to provide a certificate of service when the ECF system is providing service in most instances?

[Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 25\(d\)](#) sets out the requirement for certificates of service. Since this rule has not been changed, the requirement stands, regardless of the method of service being utilized. Our website contains a suggested form for certificates of service under '[Forms](#)'.

How do I know if I need to serve someone by means other than the electronic Notice of Docket Activity?

In ECF select 'Reports', and 'Service List' and enter the case number. A report will provide you with a report of the parties and their notice requirements.

How do I submit a motion to file a document under seal and include the document in question without exposing the document to the public?

A special ECF docketing entry has been created for this purpose: '[Motion for leave to file a sealed document](#)'. By using this entry, all items initially submitted will be submitted under seal. If the court subsequently denies the motion, the motion will be unsealed by the court but not the attachments.

For what documents must I provide paper copies to the court?

Paper copies are required for briefs, appendices and petitions for rehearing but not for other documents unless specifically requested by the Court. The number of copies required is contained in [Circuit Rule 31\(b\)](#) for briefs and appendices and [Circuit Rule 40\(b\)](#) for petitions for rehearing. If the petition is for a suggested rehearing en banc, 30 copies are required. The paper copies must be exact copies of the electronic version on file.

How long do I have after my ECF filing to submit required paper copies?

Required paper copies must be received by the court within seven (7) days of the Notice of Docket Activity indicating the acceptance of the electronic filing for all but Petitions for Rehearing which are required within three (3) days.

Why did I receive a second NDA for my filing?

The Clerk's Office reviews attorney filings as part of its quality control procedures. In the event there is an error or there is a need to modify the docket text for the filing, the court may make changes and send a new NDA to the case participants. If you receive a second NDA for a filing and cannot determine the reason for the second NDA, please call the Clerk's Office.

Why am I being prompted to log in when I try to look at the document linked in an NDA?

There are 3 reasons you will be prompted to login after clicking the link:

1. If it is a certain case type (e.g., Social Security or Immigration case) or a restricted document, you will need to enter your CM/ECF filer ID so the system can verify you are an attorney of record.
2. If 15 days have elapsed since the document was filed, the free copy has expired and you will be required to log in. You will be charged for viewing the document.
3. If the link has been previously used by other firm personnel – (those with secondary e-mails associated with your account). You will be charged for viewing the document.

Can I do something to eliminate being prompted for a second log in (PACER log in) when I try to access PACER when I'm only logged in as a Filer?

Yes, you can join your Filer and PACER accounts so that your credentials for both accounts become synchronized. To do this 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.

Why can't I access documents in an immigration or social security case?

Electronic access to documents in Social Security cases and Immigration matters is limited to the attorneys or parties in the case in order to protect the privacy of the individuals involved in those cases. You may be permitted to inspect these files in person in the Clerk's Office. If you are a party or attorney in the case, please note that you can access documents in these cases only through use of your CM/ECF filer ID and password and that you cannot access them with your PACER ID and password.

I accidentally filed a document in the wrong case or I filed the wrong document, what do I do?

You cannot delete or edit filings after they have been submitted through CM/ECF. If you made an error contact the Clerk's Office (312)435-5850 as soon as possible.