

ELECTRONIC CASE FILING SYSTEM USER MANUAL



EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE

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INTRODUCTION

All attorneys practicing in the Eastern District of Tennessee must register as Electronic Filing Users and file their pleadings electronically through the Court's Case Management/Electronic Case Filing ("CM/ECF") system, unless exempted by the presiding judge. E.D. Tenn. L.R. 5.2(b). Additionally, all civil, criminal and miscellaneous cases filed on or after May 17, 2004, as well as any documents filed in cases pending as of that date, are subject to the electronic filing requirements and procedures as set forth in E.D. Tenn. L.R. 5.2 (Filing and Service by Electronic Means), E.D. Tenn. L.R. 7.3 (Redaction of Personal Information from Filed Documents), the Court's Electronic Case Filing Rules and Procedures ("ECF Rules and Procedures"), and this User Manual, unless exempted by the presiding judge.

The CM/ECF system allows attorneys to file documents with the Court electronically, view and retrieve docket sheets and documents online, and receive notice of electronically filed documents by email. This User Manual provides procedures and instructions for using the CM/ECF system to file documents with the Court, and to view and retrieve docket sheets and documents for all civil, criminal, and miscellaneous cases in the system.

Additional information, training material, and contact information is available on the Court's website at: <http://www.tned.uscourts.gov/electronic-case-filing>.

CHAPTER I

GETTING STARTED

A. CM/ECF HELP

For assistance in using CM/ECF, please contact the Clerk's Office by telephone between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. EST, Monday through Friday, at one of the following numbers:

Chattanooga	(423) 752-5200
Greeneville	(423) 639-3105
Knoxville	(865) 545-4228
Winchester	(423) 752-5200

B. CM/ECF SYSTEM CAPABILITIES

- Electronic access to case file documents.
- Ability to file documents/pleadings electronically.
- Automatic email notices of case activity for parties in a case.
- View official docket sheets and other documents associated with cases.
- View reports for cases that were filed electronically.

C. REQUIREMENTS

1. Software Requirements

The following are needed to electronically file, view, and retrieve case documents in CM/ECF:

- Internet access.
- A compatible Internet browser. The Court has verified that its installed version of CM/ECF is compatible with Edge, Chrome, Safari, and Firefox.
- Software capable of reading portable document format (PDF) documents such as Adobe Acrobat Reader.
- Software capable of converting documents from their native format to PDF such as Adobe Acrobat Standard.
- A scanner to convert paper documents that are not in a word processing format to digital format for electronic filing in the Court's CM/ECF system (e.g., medical records filed as exhibits). Use a scanner **ONLY** if you **cannot** electronically prepare your documents with a word processing software package

and convert them to PDF format. When scanning documents for CM/ECF, scan at a resolution of **300 dpi**. All documents should be scanned with a “black and white” setting unless the exhibit is in color.

2. PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records) Account

You must have a PACER account to access the CM/ECF system. You may register for a PACER account online at <https://www.pacer.gov>. The PACER service center assists users with account registration, lost login usernames and passwords, billing questions (including CJA accounts), and maintaining account information (including primary email addresses).

3. CM/ECF Account

Participants will need to request electronic filing access or apply for attorney admission through the PACER website. Instructions are available on the Court’s web site at www.tned.uscourts.gov/electronic-case-filing. To register, you must certify that you have read the Court’s Local Rules, the ECF Rules and Procedures, and this User Manual.

a. *Making Changes to a CM/ECF Account.*

You can update personal information such as address, password, email notification preferences, etc. through the Manage My Account section of the PACER website. <https://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/pscof/manage/maint.jsf>.

b. *Recovering a Forgotten Password.*

You may reset a forgotten password by clicking the *Forgot your password?* link located on the PACER login screen or by clicking the *Password* link at <https://pacer.uscourts.gov/my-account-billing/forgot-username-or-password>.

4. CM/ECF Accounts and PACER Accounts are Different

The Court will grant access to CM/ECF only to members of the bar of this Court, those appearing *pro hac vice*, or those filing *pro se*, with permission of the Court. A CM/ECF account allows you to:

- File documents electronically
- Receive email notification of docket activity in cases in which you are counsel of record and in cases for which you are not counsel of record but have signed up for electronic notification.
- View docket sheets and court documents through the one-time link in the Notification of Electronic Filing.

In contrast, anyone can sign up for a PACER account. A PACER account allows a user to view docket sheets and documents which have been filed electronically.

CHAPTER II

PREPARATION

A. SETTING UP THE PDF READER

Software capable of viewing PDFs, such as Adobe Acrobat Reader, is required to view documents that have been electronically filed on the system. All documents must be filed in PDF format.

Adobe provides a PDF Reader free of charge on its web site that works for viewing PDF documents. However, to create and subsequently file PDF documents, you will need Adobe Acrobat Standard or a similar conversion program. When installing your chosen PDF reader, please review and follow the software's directions to utilize the PDF reader after installation.

B. PORTABLE DOCUMENT FORMAT (PDF)

Documents filed in CM/ECF must be in PDF format. PDF documents containing editable or fillable elements are rejected by Court policy. Before uploading the file to CM/ECF, users should preview the actual PDF document to ensure it is complete and in the proper format.

CHAPTER III

BASICS

A. HOW TO ACCESS THE SYSTEM

Users can enter the system directly at <http://ecf.tned.uscourts.gov> or through the Court's web site at www.tned.uscourts.gov using the Electronic Case Filing CM/ECF Login link on the "For Attorneys" page.

B. HOW TO LOG IN

To log into the system, you must have a login and password. If you have not received email notification from the PACER Service Center noting that your NextGen CM/ECF electronic filing registration has been processed, you are not yet officially registered in CM/ECF. Please contact the Clerk's Office for assistance.

Enter your login name and password in the appropriate data entry fields. All login names and passwords are case-sensitive. The client code field is provided so that attorneys may track usage by client for billing purposes. You must also check and comply with the redaction rules on the log-in screen to successfully log in.

NOTE: The date and time *that you last logged into the system* appears at the bottom-left corner of the main screen. You should review this information each time you log in and if the date and time of the last log in are not correct, or you suspect an unauthorized party is using your login and password, you should inform the Clerk's Office as soon as possible.

C. SELECTING CM/ECF FEATURES

CM/ECF provides the following features that are accessible from the menu bar at the top of the opening screen:

Civil - Select [**Civil**] to electronically file all civil and miscellaneous case pleadings, motions, and other court documents. If filing in a miscellaneous case be sure to select "mc" as the case type.

Criminal - Select [**Criminal**] to electronically file all criminal case pleadings, motions, and other criminal court documents.

Query - [**Query**] CM/ECF by specific case number or party name to retrieve information and documents that are relevant to the case.

Reports - Choose [**Reports**] to retrieve cases and docket sheets.

Utilities - View your personal CM/ECF transaction log and maintain personal CM/ECF account information in the [**Utilities**] area of CM/ECF.

Search - [**Search**] menus and events by entering a key word or phrase. For example, a search for “amend” finds all menu and event results including the word “amend,” such as “Amended Complaint,” “Amended Judgment,” etc. Clicking on a link in the results page takes you to the linked event or CM/ECF page.

Logout - Provides the means to exit from CM/ECF and prevents further filing until the next time you log in.

D. DOCUMENTS FILED IN ERROR

If you have incorrectly filed a document, you should contact the Clerk’s Office in the division where the document was filed for further instruction. You will need to provide to the Clerk’s Office the case number and document number for the document in question.

E. VIEWING TRANSACTION LOG

This feature, selected from the Utilities feature of the CM/ECF system, allows you to review all the transactions CM/ECF has processed with your login and password.

CHAPTER IV

FILING DOCUMENTS IN CM/ECF

A. FILING STEPS

To file a document electronically:

- 1) Select the Case Type from the menu bar at the top of the screen (Civil or Criminal).
 - For example, select **[CIVIL]** from the menu bar.
- 2) Select the type of document to file (e.g., answer, motion, etc.).
 - For example, select **[Motions]** under **[Motions and Related Filings]**.
- 3) Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed.
 - NOTE: CM/ECF defaults to the last case in which you worked. **Ensure the proper number is entered in this field to avoid filing the document in the wrong case.**
- 4) Select the Defendant (in criminal filings only).
- 5) Select the party or parties for whom the pleading or document is being filed.
 - Select the party for whom the document is being filed by pointing and clicking on the name of the party. If the document is being filed for more than one defendant or plaintiff, hold down the **CTRL KEY** while pointing and clicking on each party, then click on the **[Next]** button.
- 6) Associate attorney and party.
 - Select the filer (new party that was just added). Click **[Next]**. If this is the first filing in the case on CM/ECF, you will need to make an attorney/party association by leaving the box on the left checked if you represent the party and clicking **[Next]**.
- 7) Select the PDF document to be filed.
 - All documents that you intend to file **MUST** be in **PDF** format. Otherwise, CM/ECF will not accept the document.
- 8) Add attachments, if any, to the document being filed.
 - You must submit in electronic format all documents referenced as exhibits or attachments in accordance with the Court's ECF Rules and Procedures, unless otherwise ordered by the Court.
- 9) Modify docket text as necessary.
- 10) Submit the document to CM/ECF.
 - After entering docket text, click on the final approval screen. Review the docket text and correct any errors. If data on a previous screen needs to be modified, click the **[Back]** button on the browser toolbar to find the appropriate screen and correct

the data. If the text is correct, click on the **[Next]** button to file the document.

11) Retain the Notification of Electronic Filing (NEF).

12) Mail paper copies of the document and NEF to any non-registered party.

B. ENTERING THE CASE NUMBER

The case number can be entered in two different formats:

1) If the entire case number is known, it may be entered in the following format:

<office>:<case year>-<case type>-<case number> (i.e., 3:03-CV-33)

Office: 1 = Chattanooga
 2 = Greeneville
 3 = Knoxville
 4 = Winchester

Case Type: cv = civil cases
 mc = miscellaneous cases
 cr = criminal cases
 mj = magistrate cases
 po = petty offense cases
 md = multi-district litigation

2) If you do not know the entire case number, enter the case year-case number (i.e., 03-33) and select the appropriate case by clicking on the box next to the case number. You should take care to select the correct case, as the system may identify more than one case with that number.

NOTE: If you submit a case number that is formatted incorrectly, CM/ECF will prompt an error message advising you of the correct format for entering the case number. Click **[OK]** to acknowledge and close the error message. Click the **[Clear]** button on the screen and re-enter the case number in the correct format. Click on the **[Next]** button.

C. SELECTING DEFENDANT IN CRIMINAL CASE

Very Important: If there is more than one defendant in a criminal case, the system will display a Select Defendant screen. Select the defendant for whom the motion applies.

D. ADDING A PARTY

To add a party to the CM/ECF system, click on **[New Filer]**. A search must be performed to see if the party is already entered on the CM/ECF system. Type the first few letters of the party's last name for an individual, or the first few letters of the company name. Click

[Search].

If a match is found, CM/ECF will display a list of party names. If the name of the party appears in the list, click on it and then click **[Select Party]**. Review the party information and select the party's role in this filing. Click **[Submit]**.

If a match is not found or the party does not appear in the list, click **[Create New Party]**.

- For a company, enter the entire company name in the **Last Name** field. Choose the appropriate **Role** from the drop-down list. If a corporation, change to yes at the bottom of the screen. Click **[Add Party]**.
- For an individual, fill out the **Last Name, First Name, Middle Name, Generation** and **Title** fields as appropriate. Leave all other fields blank. Choose the appropriate **Role** from the drop-down list. Click **[Add Party]**.

E. SELECTING PDF DOCUMENT TO FILE

CM/ECF displays a field for locating and entering the PDF file of the document you are filing.

NOTE: All documents filed in CM/ECF MUST be in PDF format. Otherwise, CM/ECF will not accept the document and filing.

Click on the **[Browse]** button. CM/ECF opens a window to access your files on your computer or network. If necessary, change the type of files to All Files. Navigate to the appropriate directory and file name to select the PDF document to be filed. Highlight the file to upload to CM/ECF.

To verify that the correct document has been selected, right mouse click on the highlighted file name to open a **quick menu** and left mouse click on **[Open]**. Once it has been verified that the correct document has been uploaded, close Adobe Acrobat and click the **[Open]** button from the screen above. CM/ECF closes the **File Upload** screen and inserts the PDF file name and location in the **Motions** screen.

If there are attachments to the motion, select **[Yes]** on the **Motions** screen. Click **[Next]** and then click on the **[Browse]** button. CM/ECF will again open a window to access the files on your computer or network.

F. ADDING ATTACHMENTS TO FILINGS AND EXHIBITS

You must submit in electronic form all documents referenced as exhibits or attachments in accordance with the Court's ECF Rules and Procedures, unless otherwise ordered by the Court.

Each referenced attachment or exhibit must be labeled with a proper attachment/exhibit marking and be filed as a separate attachment. You can choose a category and/or description.

- To choose a category, click on the arrow and CM/ECF opens a drop-down screen. Highlight the type of attachment from the displayed selection.
- To describe the attachment more fully, click in the description box and type a clear and concise description of the attachment.
- Click on [Next].

Please do not to attach a document that has already been filed with the Court. Instead, please reference the document ID number and page ID number.

Non-scanned Exhibits

All attachments and exhibits that are referenced in a document and are filed with the Clerk’s Office (i.e., videotapes, demonstratives, pre-trial hearing exhibits, large documents, etc.) must have notice of their filing recorded in CM/ECF.

You must create a “Notice of Manual Filing” that contains the name and a description of the attachment/exhibit. (*See Appendix A*). During the filing of the referencing document, answer “yes” to the attachment question and upload the “Notice of Manual Filing.”

If there are multiple non-scanned exhibits, you may include them all in a single descriptor PDF format.

G. DOCUMENT SIZE

Filed documents, including attachments and exhibits, cannot be greater than 50 MB in size. Documents greater than 50 MB in size must be divided into separate documents less than 50 MB in size. ECF Rules and Procedures, at ¶4.2. If you attempt to file a document greater than 50 MB the system will reject it.

NOTE: To check your file size, the document must be closed. Using Windows Explorer, locate the document on your network, right click on it and select Properties. That will show you the size. (1MB=1000KB).

H. RETAIN NOTIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC FILING (NEF)

CM/ECF opens a new window displaying the CM/ECF filing receipt, known as the Notice of Electronic Filing, which provides confirmation that CM/ECF has registered the transaction and the document is now an official court record. It also displays the date and time of the transaction and the number that was assigned to the document.

To ensure the documents transmitted arrived in their entirety, it is important to read the documents after they are received by the Court. You should note this document number for your file.

All individuals designated to receive email notification of electronic filings in the User Account are permitted one “free look” at the document by clicking on the associated hyperlinked document number embedded in the NEF. The hyperlink to access the document will expire after the earlier of these two events: **the first use or 15 days**. Any time that same hyperlink is accessed after it has expired, the user will be asked for a PACER login and will be charged to view the document. Viewing attachments and subsequent retrieval of the case docket sheet or document from CM/ECF must be made through a PACER account and is subject to regular PACER fees.

If prompted to enter a login or password, the system thinks the viewer has already used their one free look. To avoid this, do not forward an email notification to another email address, and do not open the NEF and close it without using the link to view, download, or print the document. All additional email addresses entered in your account, under Maintain User’s Account, will be given one free look.

Individuals with CM/ECF or PACER accounts will have access to criminal cases whether or not they are a participant in the cases. However, documents filed prior to November 1, 2004, will continue to be restricted to court and counsel in the case.

I. LINKING DOCUMENTS (REFER TO EXISTING EVENT)

Some pleadings, such as motions, responses, and briefs, should be “linked” to related documents in the case. To link the document, check the box in front of the “Refer to existing event(s)?” and enter the docket number(s) of the related document(s) in the case.

J. APPEALS

To file a Notice of Appeal in CM/ECF, you must pay the fee by credit card, unless you represent the federal government or are a party proceeding *in forma pauperis*.

CHAPTER V

QUERY FEATURE

Registered participants should use this feature to query the CM/ECF system for specific case information. To enter the Query mode, click on [**Query**] from the menu bar.

NOTE: Electronic access to any case document, docket sheet, or case-specific report via PACER will incur a charges pursuant to the Electronic Public Access Fee Schedule.

Enter the number that the Court has assigned to the case, if known, in the **Case Number** field and click on the [**Run Query**] button. If the case number is not known, you may also query the CM/ECF database by the name of a party or attorney, or by the nature of the suit.

You may enter a date range for either the file date or the last entry date. To search for all cases of a certain type, use the date 1/1/1970 as the “beginning time.” If there is more than one case that meets the chosen criteria when the query is run, the system will provide a list of multiple case numbers.

CHAPTER VI

REPORTS FEATURE

The Reports feature of CM/ECF provides the user with report options for civil cases, criminal cases, and docket sheets.

A. DOCKET SHEET REPORT

This is the same query window that CM/ECF displays when [**Docket Report**] is selected from the Query feature. Enter the case number for the docket sheet in the Case Number field. Select parameters for the remainder of the data entry fields and click on the [**Run Report**] button. CM/ECF display a full docket sheet for the case selected. If a complete docket sheet is not needed, the query can be narrowed using the date filed/entered fields. CM/ECF also offers various sorting options from the Docket Sheet query screen.

B. CIVIL CASES REPORT AND CRIMINAL CASES REPORT

These reports provide you with the ability to locate cases electronically filed within a specific date range, or by Nature of Suit and Cause Code.

The far-left column of the Cases Filed report contains hyperlinked case numbers. Once a particular case number is clicked, CM/ECF opens the Docket Sheet report window from which the docket sheet for the selected case can be retrieved.

Follow the instructions in the previous section for a Docket Sheet report.

C. DOCKET ACTIVITY REPORT

This report will allow you to query the system for filings using a number of selection criteria including: party name, case number, division, event and filing date.

CHAPTER VII

UTILITIES FEATURE

The Utilities feature allows users to maintain their account in CM/ECF and to view all of their CM/ECF transactions.

A. YOUR ACCOUNT

This section allows you to maintain certain aspects of your CM/ECF account with the Court and to view a log of all of your transactions within CM/ECF.

1) Maintain Your Account:

This screen displays all of the registration information that is contained within the CM/ECF database. This includes BPR# and Bar status. Clicking on Edit Name and Address Information will redirect the browser to the PACER Manage My Account page. Personal information can be updated through the Maintenance tab of the PACER Manage My Account page.

2) Maintain Your Email:

This screen allows you to add secondary email addresses to receive Notices of Electronic Filings (NEFs) and to configure how NEFs are received.

As a safeguard to ensure that nothing is missed, the Court recommends that you set up a secondary email address that is either (1) a central repository address that several people have access to, and/or (2) the email address of someone who works closely with you in your cases such as a secretary, legal assistant, or paralegal.

B. YOUR TRANSACTION LOG

From the Utilities screen, click on the **[View your Transaction Log]** button. CM/ECF opens a screen with two fields for entering the Date Selection Criteria for a Transaction Log Report. Enter the date range for the report and click on the **[Submit]** button. CM/ECF displays a report of all of your transactions in CM/ECF within the date range specified for Date Selection Criteria.

Use this feature of CM/ECF to review transactions and to verify that:

1. All of the transactions entered are reflected in the Transaction Log
2. No unauthorized individuals have entered transactions into CM/ECF using your login name and password.

APPENDIX A

Notice of Manual Filing

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
at _____

)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
v.)	[Case Number]
)	[Judge]
Defendant.)	

NOTICE OF MANUAL FILING

Please take notice that [Plaintiff/Defendant, Name of Party] has manually filed the following document/thing:

[Title of Document/Thing]

This document/thing has not been filed electronically because [insert reason, *e.g.*, it cannot be converted to an electronic document; the Court’s ECF Rules and Procedures provide such documents are to be filed manually; the Court has ordered that the document/thing be filed manually; etc.]

Respectfully submitted,

s/ [Name of Attorney] Name of Attorney
TN BPR #
Address
Phone number