

# CM/ECF FILING BASICS

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## I. LOGIN AND PASSWORD

### A. Obtaining a Login and Password

To view federal court records and search for parties and cases, you must have a PACER account. PACER stands for Public Access to Court Electronic Records. To apply, visit [www.pacer.gov](http://www.pacer.gov) and click on Register on the top menu bar.

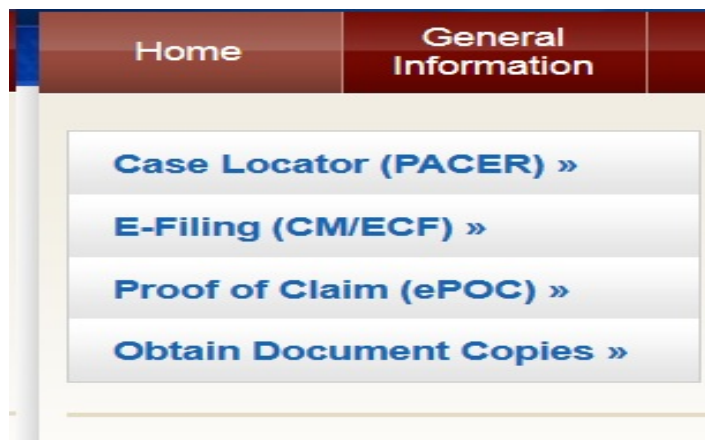
To electronically file with a federal court, you must first apply for a PACER account if you don't already have one, then apply for a CM/ECF account through the PACER website. Click on **Manage My Account**, go to the **Maintenance** tab, and click on the appropriate registration link on the right.



### B. Accessing the CM/ECF System and Logging In

You can access the court's CM/ECF Live database in the following ways:

- By clicking directly on this hyperlink: [ecf.orb.uscourts.gov](http://ecf.orb.uscourts.gov)
- From the Court's website ([www.orb.uscourts.gov](http://www.orb.uscourts.gov)), clicking on the **E-Filing (CM/ECF)** button on the left side of the home page



- From the PACER website ([www.pacer.gov](http://www.pacer.gov)), clicking on Efile and Court Links.

**TIP:** Before logging into CM/ECF, read the court home page, especially **News and Announcements**, and CM/ECF login screen for any important messages or updates. You may also subscribe to email announcements from the court via the Email Subscription feature on the bottom right of the home page.

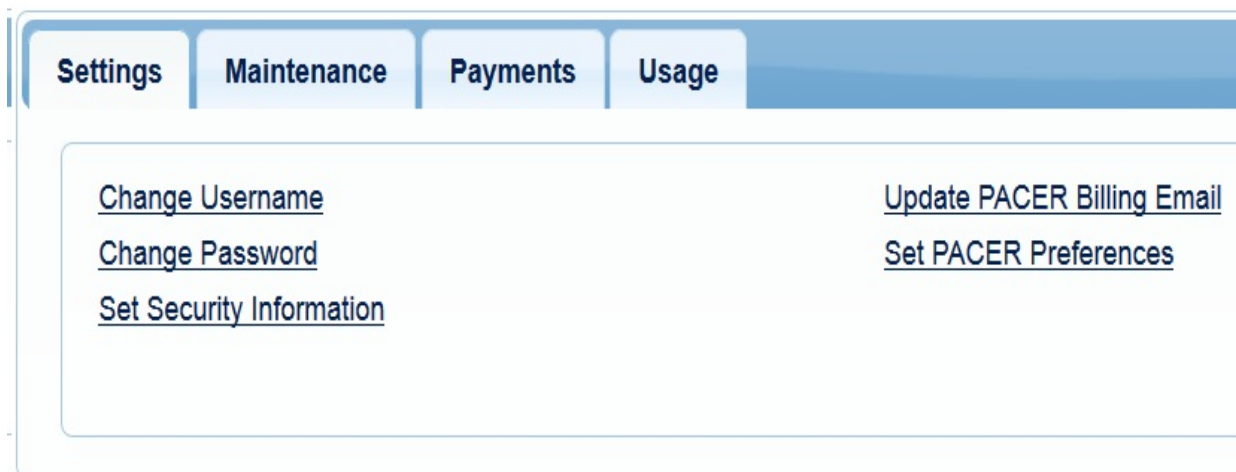
Log in by entering your PACER username and password. You do not need to enter a client code. You must read and check the box concerning redaction in order to complete the login process.

### C. **Forgot Your Login or Password?**

The PACER login page has a link to help you reset a forgotten username or password.

### D. **Changing Your PACER Login or Password**

At the PACER website ([www.pacer.gov](http://www.pacer.gov)), select **Manage My Account** and click on the **Settings** tab. A link to this tab is also available in CM/CM/ECF by clicking on **Utilities - Maintain Your Login/Password**.



## II. **AVOID PROBLEMS BY CLEARING YOUR CACHE**

Pages you view on the internet (including CM/ECF screens and documents) are stored in temporary files for quick viewing. If these temporary files are not deleted on a regular basis, they can create problems including old versions of updated CM/ECF screens and documents being displayed. Therefore, it is recommended that you regularly clear your browser cache and the temporary storage area on your hard drive. You may want to

confer with your information technology resource person about the best way to accomplish this.

### **III. PDF DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS**

All documents other than creditor lists filed in CM/ECF are required to be in PDF (Portable Document Format). Any document created by the filer must be a text-based PDF, as opposed to an image (scanned) PDF. A text-based PDF version has a smaller file size, and is quicker to upload, than its imaged version. Text-based PDF documents are also searchable.

#### **A. Breaking a Large PDF into Smaller Documents**

Any document to be filed as part of one event that exceeds 50,000 KB (50 MB) must be broken up for filing into a primary document with one or more attachments. Attachments are smaller PDFs created for any portion of a document which is over 50 MB. Each attachment must also be no larger than 50 MB, and there cannot be more than 15 attachments per primary document. If there are more than 15 attachments, the document must be filed as multiple documents. The certificate of service filed with the document showing service on interested parties must never be an attachment by itself; it must always be the last page of the pleading portion of the Primary Document.

- To determine the size of your document, while you have the document displayed in Adobe Acrobat, click on **File** and **Properties** or right click and select **Document Properties**.
- Adobe Acrobat has various options to break a document into smaller segments. Be sure to give each section of the document a different name (e.g., document1.pdf, document2.pdf, etc.)

#### **B. Combining PDF's into One Document**

Any documents to be filed with a docket entry that total 50,000 KB (50 MB) or less make up a primary document which is to be filed as a single PDF. Any required local bankruptcy forms must be the first pages of the primary document (except petitions). Affidavits, declarations, certifications, and briefs/memoranda are also considered part of the primary document, and are not considered attachments, unless the entire PDF would exceed 50 MB. Briefs and memoranda may be separately filed. The certificate of service filed with the document showing service on interested parties must always be the last page of the primary document. Adobe Acrobat has options for combining multiple documents into one document.

#### **C. Checking the Dimensions of a Converted or Scanned PDF Document**

Any document which will be served by the court through the Bankruptcy Noticing Center (BNC) must not exceed 8.5 x 11 inches, or it will be rejected by the BNC

and stricken by the court. It is important to ensure that your PDF conversion software and scanner are producing PDF's which do not exceed 8.5 x 11 inches. When the document is open in Adobe, mouse over the bottom left of the screen and the dimensions will appear.

#### IV. FILING A DOCUMENT IN CM/ECF

##### A. Finding the Correct Menu Item for the Document to Be Filed

CM/ECF is organized as follows:

- The major Headings, which appear across the top banner at all times, are **Bankruptcy, Adversary, Query, Reports, Utilities, Search Events, Help, and Logout**.
- Within each heading, there are several Categories. For example, under the Bankruptcy Heading, some of the categories are **Answer/Response, File Claims, Motions/Applications and Open a BK Case**.
- After selecting the correct Heading and Category, and in some instances entering a case number, you will often be presented with a list of Events. For example, under Motions/Applications, some of the Events are **Avoid Lien, Relief from Stay, and Reopen Chapter 13 Case**.
- If you know the name of the event, to find it in a long list, start typing a keyword in the text box above the event list. The Available Events list will narrow to those which include the keyword and you can click to select the correct one. The event will then appear in the Selected Event list and you can click Next to proceed.
- If you do not know the name of an event, you can find it in Search Events by using a key word (e.g., Stay), LBF number (e.g., 720), or word fragment.
- To select more than one event (e.g., Motion for Relief from Stay and Motion for Relief from Co-Debtor Stay), after the first event has been added to the Selected Event list, locate the second event in the Available Events list (using the keyword search if desired), press the <Ctrl> button, and click on it. Both event names should now appear in the Selected Event list.

In general, with the exception of Motion for Relief from Stay and Motion for Relief from Co-Debtor Stay, do not select multiple event names to file a single document. Instead, file the same document more than once under each applicable event name.

**TIPS:** To search all of CM/ECF for a particular event or menu item, click on the Search Events header. In the popup window, type one or more keywords (including form numbers) or word fragments and click on the magnifying glass or press <Enter>. From the list of search results, click on the appropriate hyperlink to proceed with the event or menu item.

If unsure about which event to use to file a document, contact the court. Do not guess! [For example, do not use the “Miscellaneous Motion” event if there is a more specific motion event to choose from.]

## **B. Entering the Case Number**

All case numbers are entered in the following format:

- YY-NNNNN for Bankruptcy cases

Examples: 17-34582, 18-60187

- YY-NNNN for Adversary Proceeding cases

Examples: 18-3157, 16-6294

It is not necessary to click Find this Case, as CM/ECF will automatically locate the case and reformat the case number for its use. After the case number is entered, CM/ECF will present the case number along with the case name. **Always confirm the case name is correct before proceeding.**

## **C. Selecting the Party**

The **Select the Party** screen prompts you for the party filing the document. If you are an attorney, you will usually select your client. If you are a trustee, you will usually select yourself unless you are filing an Application for Compensation on behalf of another professional. If you are a creditor or represent a creditor, you will select your company or your client. [Be aware that a “(T)” at the end of the name signifies that the party has been terminated from the case and is no longer receiving notices.]

If the party filing the document is listed on this screen, click on the party’s name in the list and click **Next**.

If the individual or entity filing the document is not a party to the case, you will need to add them as follows:

**STEP 1** Click **Add/Create New Party**.

**STEP 2** Enter the appropriate information in the **Last/Business Name** field and click **Search**.

**TIP:** When searching for a party, you may use asterisks as wildcards in positions other than the last position. An asterisk is implied in the last position. For example, to find ABC Corp, you may enter A\*C, ABC, etc.

- If a matching party is found, one or more Party Search Results will display. If one of them is an **exact match**, click on the name and click **Select from List**.

**TIP:** If the party is represented by an attorney, choose a record for the party **without** an address unless filing a bankruptcy petition, adversary proceeding, or claim.

- If no exact matches are found, click **Add/Create New Party**.

**TIP:** Do NOT add an address if the party is represented by an attorney unless filing a bankruptcy petition, adversary proceeding, or claim.

**STEP 3** The **Party Information** screen displays.

**STEP 4** Change the **Role** to the correct option.

**STEP 5** Click **Submit**.

**STEP 6** The **Select the Party** screen displays. Click on the party's name in the list and click **Next**.

#### **D. Referencing an Existing Event**

When filing a document such as an objection, response, answer, hearing notice, certificate of service, or affidavit, you are required to associate your document with the underlying motion or document to which it is related. For example, a Response and Notice of Hearing must be associated with the Motion for Relief from Stay. This allows anyone reading the docket to easily ascertain the connections between documents and to access related documents without searching the entire docket. It also allows the documents related to a hearing to be quickly accessed on the Calendar Events Report.

To associate a document you are filing with a previously filed document:

**STEP 1** Click to select **Refer to existing event(s)?** and click **Next**.

**STEP 2** Follow the instruction to *Select the category to which your event relates* by choosing the filing category in which the related document was filed. To select more than one, hold down the <Ctrl> key and click on the desired items (if you are unsure of the category, you can click the first item, hold down the <Shift> key, and click on the last item to select all).

Example 1. You are filing a response to a motion. You choose the category **motion**.

Example 2. You are filing an answer to a complaint. You choose the category **cmp** (complaint).

Example 3. You are filing an objection to a trustee's notice. You choose the category **notice**.

- To narrow the range of documents (motions, notices, etc.) which will be displayed, you may enter dates in **Filed** \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
- To narrow the range of documents (motions, notices, etc.) which will be displayed, you may enter document numbers in **Documents** \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Click **Next**.

**STEP 3** Follow the instruction to *Select the appropriate event(s) to which your event relates* by choosing the document to which the document you are filing relates. Click **Next**.

#### **E. Attaching the Document to be Filed**

This screen instructs you to select the PDF document to be filed.

**STEP 1** Click the **Browse** button. Find and attach your file.

**STEP 2** If there are no attachments to the document, click **Next**.



**NOTE:** When preparing an CM/ECF filing, always create all documents (LBF's, motions, affidavits, certificates, etc.) related to a single event as one PDF, beginning with the LBF if there is one, unless the file size exceeds 50,000 KB (50 MB).

**STEP 3** If there are attachments to the filed document (i.e., if the original PDF was over 50 MB and therefore was broken into smaller PDFs per IV.B. above), click **Yes** and then **Next**.

- Repeat the instructions in Step 1 to find and paste the document attachment.
- Either select a **Category** from the drop-down menu or type a **Description**.
- Click **Add to List**.
- If there are additional attachments, repeat the instructions above.
- Click **Next**.

#### **F. Reviewing the Final Docket Text**

On the **Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate** and **Final Docket Text** screens, you are presented with the final text which will appear on the docket. There may be a drop-down box in which you may select clarifying text such as **First Amended, Ex Parte**, etc. Read the docket text carefully to ensure that you have made the correct choices as to the document to be filed, the party filer, etc. At this point, the document is not yet filed and you have an opportunity to correct your error without the intervention of the court. If you notice that the docket text is incorrect, click the appropriate heading (Bankruptcy, Adversary) and start the electronic filing process over again.

**NOTE:** If you notice an error after you have proceeded past the Final Docket Text screen, you will need to contact the court (the contact information is listed on the court's website and at the top of most CM/ECF screens - click on ECF Assistance).

#### **G. Understanding the Notice of Electronic Filing**

The Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) confirms that the document was filed. It shows the following information:

- The exact date and time the document was filed.
- The case name, case number, and document number.
- The docket text.
- The other parties in the case to whom notice will be electronically sent.
- The other parties in the case to whom notice will not be electronically sent, and therefore may need to be served via mail or other means.

If you are the filer, you may wish to print the NEF and save it for your records; however, note that the NEF is always available to you in CM/ECF from the Docket Report by clicking on the silver ball next to the document number. If you do not see a silver ball next to the document number on the Docket Report, return to the Docket Report selection screen and click on "Include Links to Notices of Electronic Filing".

## V. PAYING FEES WITH THE INTERNET CREDIT CARD PROGRAM

All CM/ECF participants who owe fees to the court are required to pay them using the Internet credit card program on the day the associated case or document is filed. At the end of a filing for which a fee is due, an Electronic Payment window displays. If you are going to file additional documents requiring fees that same day and wish to pay all fees for the day in one transaction, you may click **Continue Filing**. The payment window will reappear at the end of every event and you will need to click **Continue Filing** each time until you are ready to pay.

See separate procedure entitled *Paying Fees with the Internet Credit Card Program*.

## VI. SERVING OTHER PARTIES

As noted in the discussion of the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) above, the NEF displays which parties are served electronically through CM/ECF and which must be served by non-electronic means. Per 5005-4(d), "By accepting an ECF login and password, an ECF Participant waives the right to receive notice or other documents, including notice of the entry of an order or judgment under FRBP 9022, by any manner other than electronically, and agrees to accept all service electronically, but that waiver and agreement do not apply to service of a document that is required by any FRBP to be served other than electronically on a party (i.e., as opposed to an ECF Participant attorney for that party)."

- A. Preparing Your Certificate of Service.** When preparing the certificate of service for a document to be electronically filed, include a list of the names and addresses of all parties served using paper.

**B. Determining Who will Be Electronically Served via CM/ECF.** To view the status of other parties prior to filing, proceed as follows:

- STEP 1** Click on **Utilities** on the CM/ECF Main Menu Bar.
- STEP 2** Click on **Mailings . . . .**
- STEP 3** Click on **Mailing Info for a Case.**
- STEP 4** Enter the case number.
- STEP 5** The Mailing Information for Case screen appears. It displays an Electronic Mail Notice List (i.e., parties who will receive an e-mail NEF), a Manual Notice list (i.e., parties who must be manually served), and hyperlinks to the creditor list and a list of all creditors and parties.

**C. Determining Who was Served With a Filed Document.** To determine who was served with a filed document, you must look two places:

- To determine who was served electronically via CM/ECF, go to the Docket Report as follows:
  - STEP 1** Click on **Reports** on the CM/ECF Main Menu Bar.
  - STEP 2** Click on **Docket Report.**
  - STEP 3** Enter the case number and click “Include links to Notice of Electronic Filing” if it is not already checked. Click **Next.**
  - STEP 4** Find the document of interest and click on the silver ball to the left of the document number, then click **Display Receipt.**
  - STEP 5** The NEF appears. Scroll to the bottom and find the heading **Notice has been electronically mailed via CM/ECF to:** for a list of parties served via CM/ECF.
- To determine who was served by the filer or the Bankruptcy Noticing Center (whether by mail, fax, e-mail, or EDI), look at the filed certificate of service or certificate of notice. For documents served by parties, it may be part of the original document or a separate docket entry entitled Certificate of Service linked to the original document. A BNC Certificate of Notice will be a separate docket entry linked to the order, judgment, notice, etc. and is generally docketed within two business days of the filing

of the original document. The list of those served is followed by a copy of the document.

- D. Preferred Address.** Creditors can register a preferred address with the BNC through the National Creditor Registration Service ([www.ncrs.uscourts.gov](http://www.ncrs.uscourts.gov) or call 877-837-3424). When a notice is sent to the BNC, the creditor's preferred address is automatically substituted for the address in the court's CM/ECF database. Creditors can prevent the substitution in specific cases by requesting in writing an override of the preferred address (see LBR 2002-1). The Preferred Address database is not available to the public (including bankruptcy practitioners).
- E. Mailing Lists/Matrices.** As noted above, creditors can register *preferred addresses* with the Bankruptcy Noticing Center (BNC).
- F. List of Creditors.** This list is accessed either from the Query menu or from Utilities>Mailings. Undeliverable and duplicate addresses are noted, and PACER charges are incurred. When run in 3-column format, addresses submitted by the debtor for which the preferred address was substituted are also separately listed. This option lists creditors, debtors, any debtor's attorney, the trustee, and the U.S. Trustee, but it does not include attorneys for other parties.
- **Mailing Matrix by Case.** This option is available in CM/ECF but not PACER, and is accessed from Utilities>Mailings. Undeliverable and duplicate addresses are noted, and no PACER charges are incurred. If the default "All" is selected, all parties and creditors and their attorneys are included. It is also possible to narrow the label selection to certain parties, creditor committee members, only creditors who have filed claims, etc. **Use this option to ensure service on all parties and creditors.**
  - **Special Mailing Groups:** Special mailing groups are created by the court to send selected notices (for example, 341 meeting notices and discharges) to entities who may not otherwise be parties or creditors in the case. Special mailing groups include agencies such as the U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney General, Oregon Department of Revenue, Division of Child Support, and Oregon Attorney General.

## VII. RECEIVING NOTICES OF ELECTRONIC FILING (NEF's)

- A. Changing Your Setup.** As a CM/ECF participant, you will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) of every document filed in cases in which you are a participant. You may opt to receive these NEFs as individual documents are filed or in a daily summary report; you may designate one or more e-mail addresses to which NEFs will be sent; and you may specify cases in which you are not involved but wish to receive NEFs. You may also choose to receive notices in an adversary proceeding without receiving notices in the related bankruptcy case.

To change your primary email address and/or frequency:

- STEP 1** At [www.pacer.gov](http://www.pacer.gov), click on **Manage My Account**. [Note: You can also access this from within CM/ECF by going to **Utilities-Maintain Your CM/ECF Account**, clicking on **Email information**, and clicking on the **Update my primary email address** link.]
- STEP 2** Click on the **Maintenance** tab.
- STEP 3** Select **Update E-Filer Email Noticing and Frequency**.
- STEP 4** Select the Court(s) to which the changes should apply, make the desired changes, and click **Submit**.

**NOTE:** CM/ECF attorney and trustee participants incur PACER charges to view documents in any case in which they are not involved as an attorney or party, but are receiving NEFs because they have entered the case numbers in the “Send notices in these additional cases” field. Effective 3/18/13, CM/ECF participants who are non-attorney creditors began receiving NEFs in cases in which they are a party; however, they incur PACER charges to view all documents from NEFs.

To add or update a secondary email address:

- STEP 1** Under **Utilities**, click on **Maintain Your CM/ECF Account**.
- STEP 2** Click on **Email information**.
- STEP 3** Enter and re-enter a secondary email address and under **Send the notices specified below**, click on **to the secondary address**.
- STEP 4** Click on **Return to Account screen** and click **Submit** on the next screen.

- B. Viewing Documents.** When you receive an NEF via e-mail, clicking on the hyperlink for the case number will prompt you for your PACER login and password, then take you to the Docket Report screen. Clicking on the hyperlink for the document number will prompt you for your PACER login and password, then display the document. You can access the document one time only at no cost (“one free look”) and then save it or print it. Please note that the “one free look” is per PACER login; so if the NEF is e-mailed to the attorney and two legal assistants and they each access the document using the same PACER account, the first access will be free and the next two will result in PACER charges.
- C. Effect on BNC Noticing.** E-filers do not receive mailed notice from the BNC, with a few exceptions (notably 341(a) meeting notices).

- D. Links to Court-Produced Documents.** If a notice is produced by the docketing of an event by an e-filer (for example, when a Chapter 7 trustee files the Inventory and Report of Assets, an Order Fixing Time to File Claims is produced), clicking on the link will return a “not yet available” message until the court releases the notice to the BNC.
- E. Recovering NEFs.** A report is available to assist e-filers who do not receive their NEFs due to problems with their Internet Service Provider. This report is entitled Docket Activity and is available under the Reports heading. It allows e-filers to view all items docketed in their cases on a specific date. E-filers will incur PACER charges for running the report, but will get their “one free look” at the documents listed on the report.
- F. Reducing Your Volume of NEFs.** CM/ECF participants have complained that they receive NEFs of documents in which they have no interest. In particular, CM/ECF participants receive NEFs in bankruptcy main cases if they are associated with the adversary proceeding, even if the adversary is closed and they have withdrawn from or were never involved in the main case. You may now choose to receive NEFs in adversary proceedings and avoid receiving NEFs in the related bankruptcy main case.

If your client’s involvement with a case has ended, you may remove your client and yourself from the case by e-filing the text-only event **Miscellaneous-Request for No Further Notices** in both the main case and the adversary proceeding.

Another option available to you is to learn to manage your NEFs using the Rule Agent that typically comes with your e-mail software. For example, you can instruct the Rule Agent to route NEFs with certain subject line keywords to Trash or another folder. For more information, contact your IT support professional or e-mail software provider.

**VIII. For additional ECF Tips and Tricks,** visit [www.orb.uscourts.gov/ecf/tips-tricks](http://www.orb.uscourts.gov/ecf/tips-tricks)