

Clerk's Office
United States District Court
Northern District of Ohio
801 West Superior Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1830

United States District Court
Northern District of Ohio

Help Desk: 800-355-8498
216-357-7000



Electronic Filing



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The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio is a leader in electronic filing and is proud to have been the first Court to accept an electronic filing over the Internet. Using the Case Management/Electronic Case File (CM/ECF) system, attorneys can:

- File complaints and initiating documents, except in criminal cases;
- File subsequent pleadings and documents;
- Retrieve up-to-the-second docket sheets;
- Retrieve most case documents; and
- Receive electronic notification of filings.

CM/ECF was developed by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and is used by Federal Appellate, District and Bankruptcy courts throughout the country. The system provides unprecedented access to Court records and has proven that widely available and inexpensive technology can accommodate electronic filing in federal cases.

Transcripts of Court Proceedings

CM/ECF is continually evolving and providing new services. For example, when court reporters fulfill orders for transcripts of Court proceedings, the transcripts are now filed electronically. During the first 90 days after filing, transcripts are only available for viewing at public access terminals within our courthouses; they will not be available over the Internet during that time. The transcripts are also available for purchase from the court reporter. Counsel of record are responsible for informing the court reporter within 21 days after the filing if the transcript contains social security numbers, financial

account numbers, birth dates, the names of minor children, or in criminal cases only, home addresses that must be redacted to protect privacy interests pursuant to the E-Government Act, Local Rule 8.1 and Local Criminal Rule 49.1.1. After 90 days, the transcripts (redacted if necessary) will also become available to the public from the Clerk's Office and over the Internet through PACER.

? How are documents prepared?

Attorneys create documents on their own computers using standard word processing software. However, instead of printing the documents on paper and delivering them to the Court, documents are converted to a portable document format (PDF) that allows everyone to view the documents, regardless of the type of system used to create or view them.

A B C How do I file electronically?

Attorneys access the Court's electronic filing system over the Internet. After entering a Court assigned user name and password, attorneys enter the case number in which their document is to be filed, the name of the party for whom the document is being filed and the type of document being submitted (answer, answer with cross-claim, etc.). The document is then transmitted to the Court's computer.

What happens next?

Once the document is received by the Court, the electronic filing system:

- Sends a receipt to the sender verifying that the document has been received;
- Updates the docket sheet and provides immediate access to the event and the document to anyone with access to the system;
- Sends a notice of the filing to all parties who have agreed to receive electronic notice.



What if the document was not created on a computer?

The Court seeks to have as many documents as possible filed electronically, but recognizes, however, that some documents may not be available in electronic format – for example, certain medical records. Nevertheless, many of those documents can be easily and inexpensively scanned for electronic filing. Documents or objects that cannot be scanned reasonably can be filed and served in the traditional manner. Advance planning will help avoid the need to make last minute decisions on such matters.



Are any documents precluded from being filed electronically?

Documents to be placed under seal may not be filed electronically and must be filed in the traditional manner. Attorneys should pay close attention to Local Civil Rule 8.1 and Local Criminal Rule 49.1.1 which requires the redaction or exclusion of specific personal

identifiers from documents.



What are the benefits?

Electronic filing streamlines the typically time-consuming and costly process of delivering legal documents to the Court and sending copies to all the parties in the litigation. In addition, attorneys can file documents and review cases from anywhere with an internet connection. The system also improves access to Court records by making documents available even when the Courthouse is closed for business.



Who decides if it will be used?

The Court requires attorneys to file and receive notices electronically in all civil and criminal cases, absent a showing of good cause, unless otherwise excluded by the rules, procedures or orders of the Court.



What do I need to do?

To file electronically you must:

- Be admitted to practice in this Court;
- Complete an electronic filing registration form; and
- Secure your passwords and notify the Court if you learn that it has been compromised.
- Have access to the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) system which allows users to obtain case and docket information from Federal Appellate, District and Bankruptcy courts, and the U.S. Party/Case Index via the

Internet.

Upon completion of the registration form, you will be assigned a user name and password that will permit access to the system and serve as your signature on all documents filed under Fed. R. Civ. P. 11.



What equipment do I need?

To file electronically in this Court, parties need the following:

- a computer running a Windows or a Macintosh operating system;
- Adobe Acrobat 3.0 or higher to convert documents to a portable document format (PDF);
- a PDF-compatible word processor like Macintosh or Windows-based versions of WordPerfect and Word;
- Internet access supporting a transfer rate of 28.8 kbs or higher;
- CM/ECF has been tested and works correctly with Netscape 7.x, Internet Explorer 6.0 and Firefox 1.5; and
- Access to a scanner to image non-computerized documents.



What if something goes wrong?

If problems occur, call the Clerk's Office Help Desk (1-800-355-8498) Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. (eastern standard time). A voice mail message may be left at other times.



Is the system secure?

The electronic filing system has several layers of security. A user name and password are required to access the system and documents are encrypted and transmitted through SSL protocol. In addition, the electronic receipt issued by the Court contains a unique validation code ensuring that documents cannot be altered after being received by the Court.



Is training available?

Attorneys and law firm staff may receive training by contacting one of the following numbers:

Cleveland: 216-357-7007
Akron: 330-252-6015
Toledo: 419-213-5500
Youngstown: 330-884-7419

An online tutorial is available on the Court's internet web page at <http://www.ohnd.uscourts.gov> under Electronic Filing. Registered attorneys can also practice filing and retrieving documents using a training system.



Where can I learn more?

Additional information about the CM/ECF system and electronic filing can be obtained from the Clerk's Office or through the Court's web page at <http://ecf.ohnd.uscourts.gov>. Available materials include: attorney admission and electronic filing registration forms, an "Electronic Filing Policies and Procedures Manual" and a "User Manual."