IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

ELECTRONIC CASE FILES USER MANUAL

Revised JUNE 18, 2007

GETTING STARTED **4**

INTRODUCTION 4

Basic Requirements *4*
Help Desk *4*
VID Internet Site *4*
Local Rules. *4*

ECF DEFINITIONS 5

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS 8

PREPARATION 9

Setting Up the Acrobat PDF Reader *9*
How to View a PDF File *9*
Document Size *11*

ECF REGISTRATION 12

Login and Password Security *13*
Changing Your Password *13*

PACER REGISTRATION 13

PACER FEES 14

ELECTRONIC FILING AND SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS 15

Electronic Filing *15*
Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) As Proof of Filing *15*
Official Record *15*
Docket Entry Creation *15*
Filing in the wrong case or Attaching an Incorrect PDF *15*
Service of Process *15*

SPECIAL FILING REQUIREMENTS AND EXCEPTIONS 17

Overview *17*
Payment of Fees *17*
Civil Case Exemptions *17*
Proposed Orders *19*
Sealed Documents *19*

CM/ECF SYSTEM –BASIC USER INTERACTION 21

ECF Screens- *21*
Command Buttons *21*
Correcting a Mistake *21*
Aborting a Transaction *21*
Timing Out *22*

ACCESSING THE SYSTEM **23**

HOW TO ACCESS THE SYSTEM 23

SELECTING ECF OR PACER 23

LOGGING INTO ECF 24

BASIC STEPS FOR FILING A PLEADING AND OR DOCUMENT ELECTRONICALLY 26

BASIC STEPS FOR ATTACHMENTS AND EXHIBITS 26

FILING PROCEDURES CIVIL CASES 28

Overview *28*
Menu of Civil Events *28*
Filing Initial Pleadings *28*

FILING A CIVIL MOTION 36

Introduction *36*
Filing a Civil Motion: Selecting Civil from the Menu *36*
Filing a Civil Motion: Selecting the Type of Motion *36*
Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Entering the Case Number *37*
Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Selecting the Case *38*
Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Selecting the Parties *39*
Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: First Appearance of an Attorney *40*
Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Selecting the PDF File Name and Location *41*
Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Verifying That You Have Attached the Correct Document *42*
Filing a Motion in Civil Case: Modifying the Docket Entry *43*
Linking Documents *44*
Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) *46*

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION 48

Query Menu *48*
Reports Menu *51*
Utilities Menu *54*
Logout *57*

GETTING STARTED

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This manual provides procedures and instructions for using the Electronic Case Files (ECF) system version 3.0 to file documents with the Court or to view and retrieve docket sheets and documents for all civil, criminal and miscellaneous cases in the system. Users should refer to the court's local rule 5.4 which governs electronic case filing, located on our website, www.vid.uscourts.gov

Basic Requirements

Filing user should have the following basic requirements:

- Working knowledge of an ECF-compatible web browser and access to the Internet
- Adobe Acrobat (or equivalent software) with which to create and read portable document files (PDF) and
- A PACER account (See http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov.)

Help Desk

Filing users may call the Clerk's Office Help Desk for assistance Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) between the hours of 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM

St. Thomas Division- 340-774-0640
St. Croix Division- 340-773-1130

VID Internet Site

Anyone can use the VID Internet site https://www.vid.uscourts.gov to do the following:

- View, print, or download the most recent version of the ECF User Manual and Local Rules.
- Self-train on an online ECF tutorial
- Print Registration form for ECF

ECF DEFINITIONS

This section defines the following basic terms associated with electronic case filing:

Adobe Acrobat An application used to create and view PDF documents. Adobe Systems Inc. developed the PDF format. Adobe Acrobat Reader is free from Adobe and can be used to view PDF documents. Adobe Acrobat Writer must be purchased. Adobe Acrobat Writer can read and create PDF documents.

Attachment An additional supporting document filed with a pleading.

Browse A Window operation of navigating through directories using a mouse to find and select a specific file.

Browser A program which allows a user to access information and services available on the Internet, or "web." The browser program interprets Hypertext Markup Language (html) documents delivered from web servers. Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer are the two most popular web browsers. CM/ECF is certified to work with Netscape Navigator versions 4.6 and higher. It is also certified to work with Firefox 1.5 and 2.0, Internet Explorer 6.0 and 7.0, and Netscape 7.2.

Check Box A control object a user can click to select choices from a list. Check boxes are designed so that you can choose one or more items from a list.

Default A common suggested value displayed by CM/ECF on a screen. Many fields in CM/ECF have common values suggested. If a value is correct, you can accept it without changing it; if it is incorrect, you can type over it with the correct value.

Documents Documents can be any of the following:

- Pleadings
- Memoranda
- Briefs
- Exhibits
- Orders

- Transcript of depositions actually used in support of motion or at trial and
- All other writing filed in the Court's case filed by the parties or the Court

Document Type

A specific filing or event in a case, which behaves uniquely from but is similar to other document types of the same category. A motion to appear and a motion to substitute attorney are separate document types, but are in the same category (motions) and have similar characteristics.

Drop-down List

A list which appears, or "drops down" when a down arrow is clicked. It is used for making a selection. When you see the selection you want to make, click to highlight it.

E-Government Act of 2002

E-Government Act of 2002 established a broad framework for the use of technology to enhance public access to government information and services.

Electronic Filing (ECF)

The process of uploading a document from the registered user's computer, using the court's Internet-based Case Management/ Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) system to file the document in the court's case file. The ECF system only accepts documents in a portable document format (PDF).

Filing User

A filing user is an individual who has a court-issued login and password (ECF login and password) to file documents electronically.

Free Look

Individuals who receive electronic notification of a filing are permitted one "free look" at the document by clicking on the associated hyperlinked document number embedded in the Notice of Electronic Filing. 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.

Hypertext Link

A link in a document which, when clicked on, will take you to another document or a web site. These links are normally in blue text and

underlined, and contain an unseen URL. They permit you to move from one area (or topic) to another in a web-based program, such as CM/ECF.

Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF)

A Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) is a notice automatically generated by the CM/ECF system at the time a document is filed with the system.

The NEF gives the following information:

- The time of filing
- The name of the party and attorney filing the document
- The type of document
- The text of the docket entry
- The name(s) of the party and/or attorney receiving the notice, and
- Electronic links (hyperlinks) to the filed document and the docket report.

PACER

PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records) is an automated system that allows an individual to view, print and download court docket information over the Internet.

PDF

Portable Document Format. There are two types of PDF documents:

a. ELECTRONICALLY CONVERTED PDF documents, which are created from word processing documents (MS Word, WordPerfect, etc)using Adobe Acrobat or similar software and

b. SCANNED IMAGE PDF documents, which are produced using an optical scanner.

Electronically converted PDF documents are text searchable and their file size is small. Scanned image PDF documents are not searchable and have a large file size. Ideally, therefore, whenever possible, filing users should create PDF documents through electronic conversion rather than through scanning.

Radio Button

A round selection button you click on to select an item from a list. Radio buttons are designed so that you can choose only one item.

URL

URL is short for Uniform Resource Locator. URLs are the naming scheme for Web pages, and are similar to street addresses. The URL for the District Court of the Virgin Islands is www.vid.uscourts.gov

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The hardware and software needed to electronically file, view, and retrieve case documents are as follows:

- A personal computer running a standard platform such as Windows or Macintosh.
- A word processing software, such as WordPerfect or Microsoft Word
- An e-mail account
- Adobe Acrobat software or some other compatible software to convert documents from the format of their native application to portable document format (PDF).
- An Internet service provider and web browser. ECF has been certified to work with Mozilla Firefox version 1.5 or higher and Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher. The system may work with other browsers, but the Court will not be able to offer any support to people who use other browsers.
- A scanner to convert paper documents not in a word processing format (e.g., medical records filed as exhibits to a document) to a digital format for electronic filing in the Court's ECF system.

Note: Scanners should be used ONLY when a document cannot be electronically prepared with word processing software and converted to PDF. Documents for ECF should be scanned at a resolution of 200 to 240 dpi. Scanning at resolutions greater than 240 dpi tends to clutter the electronic transfer with unwanted markings and print. All documents should be scanned with a "black and white" setting unless the original document is in color.

PREPARATION

Setting Up the Acrobat PDF Reader

Users must set up Adobe's Acrobat Reader software in order to view documents that have been electronically filed on the system. All documents must be filed in PDF format. When installing this product, please review and follow Adobe's directions to utilize Acrobat Reader after installation.

How to View a PDF File

Step	
1.	Start Adobe Acrobat program.
2.	Go to ***File*** menu and select ***OPEN.***
3.	Click on the location and file name of the document to be viewed. If the designated location is correct, and the file is in PDF format, Adobe Acrobat Reader loads the file and displays it on the screen. If the displayed document is larger than the screen or consists of multiple pages, use the scroll bar to move through the document.
4.	Click on the ***View*** menu for other options for viewing the displayed document. Choose the option that is most appropriate for the document.

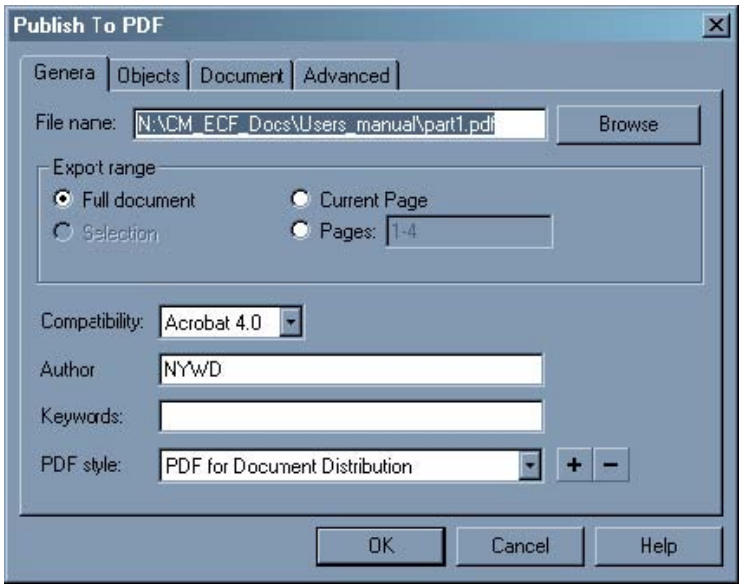
How to Convert Documents to PDF Format

You must convert all your documents to PDF format before submitting them to the court's ECF system. The conversion process requires special software such as Adobe Acrobat Writer or FinePrint pdfFactory.

WordPerfect versions 9, or later versions have Acrobat Writer built-in and can also be used to convert documents to PDF.

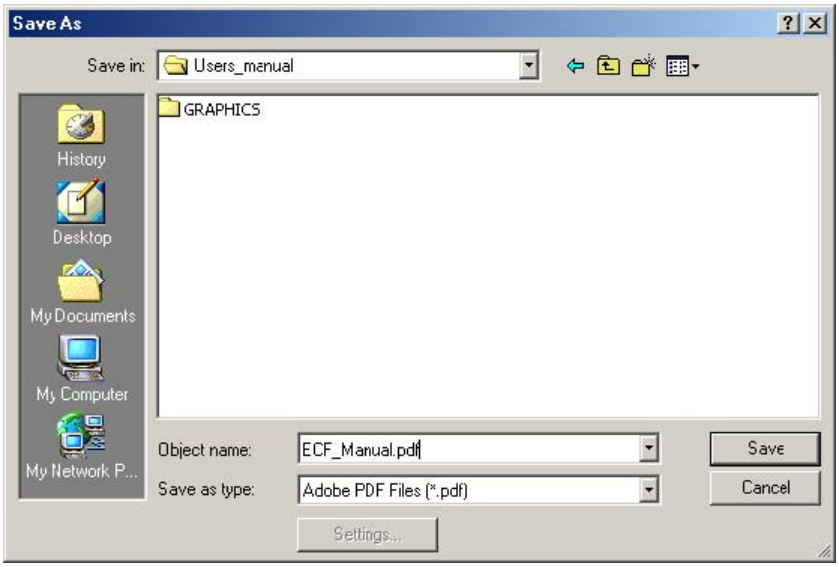
Using WordPerfect 9, 10, or 11 to create a PDF file:

1. Select the ***Publish to PDF*** or ***Publish to*** ÷ [PDF] option under the File menu.
2. Name the file, giving it the extension .PDF and click the ***OK*** button



Using any word processing program (where Adobe Acrobat Writer or PDFfactory have been installed):

1. Open the document to be converted.
2. Select the ***Print*** option (generally found in the file menu) and in the dialog box select the option to change the current printer. A drop down menu with a list of printer choices is displayed.
3. Select ***Adobe PDFWriter*** or ***FinePrint pdfFactory*** (you must have either Adobe Acrobat Writer or FinePrint pdf Factory installed on your computer to see these choices listed).
4. Print the file. The file should not actually print out, instead the option to save the file as a PDF format file appears. Make a note of the file location so you can find the document later when you are ready to upload it.
5. Change the location if necessary by clicking the "Save in" area of the window.
6. Name the file, giving it the extension .PDF and click the **[Save]** button.



Depending on the word processing program being used, it may be necessary to find the printer selection option elsewhere. At that point, change the printer to Adobe PDFWriter, and follow the directions above.

Document Size

Documents filed electronically are limited to 2.5 megabytes (about 50 pages or 2,500 kilobytes).

• Any files larger than this will be rejected by the system.

• If you have a file that is larger than the limit, you can break it into smaller electronic PDF files by adding a numeric designation to each of the smaller files (e.g., Myfile1.pdf, Myfile2.pdf, and Myfile3.pdf) and file each smaller file as an attachment to the main document.

• In all cases assigned to the ECF system, no single document totaling more than 15 megabytes (about 300 pages) -- even if separated into individual electronic files -- shall be electronically filed without prior permission of the Court.

ECF AND PACER REGISTRATION

ECF Registration

Attorneys admitted to the bar of this court, including visiting attorneys, shall register as filing users of the court's ECF system prior to filing any pleadings. Registration shall be on an Attorney Registration Form, a copy of which is available on the Court's website

Completed registration forms should be mailed to:

Office of the Clerk
District Court of the Virgin Islands
Attn: ECF Attorney Registration
5500 Veteran's Drive, Suite 310
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802 or

Office of the Clerk
District Court of the Virgin Islands
Attn: ECF Attorney Registration
3013 Estate Golden Rock, Suite 219
Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00820

Registrants must indicate that they:

- Are members in good standing of the bar of this Court or are employees of the U.S. Attorney's Office or the Office of the Attorney General
- Have registered for a PACER account; and have met one of the following conditions:
    1. They have been e-filing with another federal court
    2. They have completed the on-line tutorial on our website
    3. They have attended the on-site training or
    4. They have read the User Manual and Local Rules.

If the court permits, a non-prisoner who is a party to a civil action and who is not represented by an attorney may register as a filing user in the ECF system. If during the course of the action the person retains an attorney who appears on the person's behalf, the Clerk's Office shall terminate the person's registration upon the attorney's appearance.

A registered pro se Filing User may withdraw from participation in the Electronic Filing System by providing the Clerk's Office with written notice of the withdrawal.

Registration constitutes consent to service of all documents by electronic means.

Login and Password Security

Once an account has been established, your login and password will be sent to you by the Clerk's Office via e-mail. A filing users' login and password constitute their official signature on all documents filed using that login and password.

A registered user shall not allow another person to file a document using the user's log-in and password, except for an authorized agent of the filing user. Use of a user's log-in and password by a staff member shall be deemed to be the act of the registered user.

Filing users must therefore:

- **Safeguard their login and password.**
- **Protect their login and password from unauthorized use.**
- **Notify the Clerk's Office immediately if they discover that someone has used their login and password without permission.**

Changing Your Password

Once you receive your login and password, you can change your password to one easier to remember by taking the following steps:

1. Log into ECF
2. Click on *Utilities* on the upper right side of the screen.
3. Click on *Maintain Your Login/password*
4. Enter your new password in the password box.
5. Click on the *Submit* button.
6. Click on the *Logout* button.

The Clerk's Office does not maintain a record of your password. If you forget your password, the Clerk's Office will have to issue you a new one.

PACER REGISTRATION

PACER Registration

ECF users must have a PACER account in order to use the Query and Report features of the ECF system. If you do not have a PACER login, contact the PACER Service Center at (800) 676-6856 or (210) 301-6440 to establish an account. Or, you may register for PACER online at http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov

A Filing User with a PACER account, an ECF-compatible web browser, Adobe Acrobat or equivalent software, and access to the Internet can use the court's ECF system to perform the following functions:

- Access the court's web page;
- View, print or download the most recent version of the ECF User Manual;
- Electronically file pleadings and documents in actual ("live") cases;
- View official docket sheets and other documents associated with cases and;
- View various reports.

PACER Fees

Access to web based documents and reports (except transcripts) via the ECF/PACER system will generate a $.08 per page charge with a cost ceiling of $2.40 per document. Transcripts are not available for viewing via the ECF/PACER system. Contact the court reporter for copies of transcripts.

The free look period for accessing documents via the Notice of Electronic Filing is fifteen days. The "one free look" expires after its first use or after 15 days, whichever occurs first.

.

YOUR ECF ACCOUNT (COURT-ISSUED LOGIN AND PASSWORD) IS NOT A PACER ACCOUNT. YOUR ECF ACCOUNT WILL ALLOW YOU TO FILE DOCUMENTS ELECTRONICALLY IN THE COURT'S ECF SYSTEM. A PACER ACCOUNT ALLOWS YOU TO VIEW THE DOCKET AND DOCUMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN FILED ELECTRONICALLY. AN ATTORNEY MUST REGISTER WITH BOTH PACER AND ECF IN ORDER TO VIEW AND ELECTRONICALLY FILE DOCUMENTS.

ELECTRONIC FILING AND SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS

Electronic Filing

Electronic transmission of a document to ECF in accordance with these procedures, together with the transmission of a Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) from the Court with a hyperlink to the electronically filed document, constitutes filing of the document for all purposes of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, and the Local Rules of this Court.

Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) As Proof of Filing

A document filed electronically is deemed filed on the date and time stated on the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF), so you may wish to print out or store electronically a copy of the NEF as proof of filing.

Note: E-mailing a document to the Clerk's Office or to the assigned judge does not constitute filing of the document, nor does simply submitting a document via the CM/ECF system. A document is not filed until the system generates a NEF with a hyperlink to the electronically filed document.

Official Record

The official record is the electronic recording as stored by the Court, whether the document has been filed electronically or filed on paper and scanned into the system.

Docket Entry Creation

When a filing user files a document, the system creates a docket entry that uses the information provided by the filing user. All documents filed electronically shall be filed in accordance with the approved dictionary of civil and criminal events of the ECF system of this court. A list of civil and criminal events will be posted on our website .

Filing in the wrong case or Attaching an Incorrect PDF

In the event a filing user electronically files a document in the wrong case or attaches an incorrect PDF document, the clerk of court, or a designee is authorized to strike the document from the record. A notice of the action striking a document from the record will be served on all parties in the case.

Service of Process

A certificate of service must be included with all documents filed electronically. Such a certificate must indicate that service was accomplished pursuant to the Local Rule 5.4.9, and sent via U.S. mail to any non-filing users. Service by electronic mail shall constitute service pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 5(b)(2)(D) and shall entitle the party being served to the additional three days provided by Fed.R.Civ.P. 6(e).

Sample Certificate of Service

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the ___ day of ____, 20 ___, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of Court using the CM/ECF system, which will send a notification of such filing (NEF) to the following:

Jacob Thomas, Esq.

Attorney at Law

Yacht Haven Grand

4000 Long Bay Road

St. Thomas, VI 00802

jacobthomas@xxx.com

And I hereby certify that I have mailed the document by U.S. mail to the following non-filer user:

Jane Smith

2300 Norre Gade

St. Thomas, VI 00802

s/ Frank Tatamban

Frank Tatamban, Esq.

Attorney for John James

9000 Veteran's Drive

St. Thomas, VI 00802

Phone: 340-774-0000

Fax: 340-774-1111

franktatamban@xxx.com

SPECIAL FILING REQUIREMENTS AND EXCEPTIONS

Overview

All documents submitted for filing in civil and criminal cases except those documents specifically exempted, shall be filed electronically using the Electronic Case Filing System (ECF) in portable document format (PDF).

Exempt documents are to be filed on paper and includes the following:

- All civil case exempt documents delineated below.
- All criminal case exempt documents delineated below

Payment of Fees

Payment of fees for documents filed electronically must be made in accordance with Local Civil Rule 5.4.1.

The Clerk's Office will document the receipt of fees on the docket with a text only entry.

Civil Case Exemptions

The following documents are excluded from the Electronic Filing System and **shall be filed only on paper:**

- Administrative records in social security cases and in other administrative review proceedings.
- Evidentiary hearing and trial exhibits
- Transcripts of court proceedings
- In camera documents
- Offers of Judgment
- Any other documents that the court orders not be electronically filed, imaged, or maintained in the ECF system

The following documents **shall be filed on paper and scanned into ECF** by the Clerk's Office:

- All handwritten pleadings
- All pleadings and documents filed by pro se litigants , prisoner pro se litigants, and other agencies (e.g. US Marshal Service)
- Consent Order- submitted in paper form. The Clerk's Office will submit to chambers for signature. Once signed the Clerk's Office will scanned into ECF.

Criminal Case Exemptions

The following documents are excluded from the Electronic Filing System and **shall be filed on paper only:**

- The state court record and other Rule 5 material in habeas corpus cases filed 28 U.S.C. §2254 proceedings.
- Transcript of court proceedings
- Grand Jury Matters
- Warrants
- Sentencing Memorandums

The following document may be received by the Clerk's Office in criminal cases, **but are not filed, electronically or otherwise**, unless ordered by the court.

- Pretrial service reports.
- Appearance bonds;
- Psychiatric and psychological reports;
- Pre-sentencing reports and other papers submitted prior to sentencing; and

The following documents **shall be filed on paper and scanned into ECF** by the Clerk's Office:

- The charging documents in a criminal case

  Complaints- presented to magistrate judge in paper form. The Clerk's Office will scan the complaint and open the case.

  Indictments- U.S. Attorney's Office will submit the indictment along with a redacted version in paper form during the Grand Jury return. The Clerk's Office will scan the documents and open the criminal case.

  Informations- U.S. Attorney's Office will submit the information in paper form. The Clerk's Office will scan the documents and open the criminal case.

- Consent Order- submitted in paper form. The Clerk's Office will submit to chambers for signature. Once signed the Clerk's Office will scan into ECF.

- Affidavits for search and arrest warrants and related papers.

- Fed.R.Crim.P 20 and Fed.R.Crim.P. 40 papers received from another court and

- Any pleading or document in a criminal case containing the signature of a defendant, such as a waiver of indictment or plea agreement

Proposed Orders

Proposed orders shall accompany a motion or other request for relief as an electronic attachment to the document unless otherwise requested by the court. When requested by the court, proposed order shall be filed by e-mail in word processing format,

Sealed Documents

A case or document under seal shall not be available to the public through electronic or any other means.

In ECF, if the PDF file of a document is to be placed under seal, the Filing User must mark the CHECK BOX when prompted indicating that the document submitted with the entry is to be sealed pursuant to

Local Civil Rule 5.4.6. Failure to do so will result in the document becoming publicly available.

Sealing of Criminal Documents –A document subject to a sealing order or order of confidentiality must be submitted as a paper filing, in an envelope clearly marked “sealed”, and shall be accompanied by a disk or CD-ROM containing the document in PDF format for filing by the Clerk’s Office. A motion to file a document under seal may be filed electronically, unless prohibited by law. The order of the court authorizing the filing of documents under seal may be filed electronically, unless prohibited by law. A paper copy of the sealing order must be attached to the documents under seal when delivered to the Clerk’s Office.

CM/ECF SYSTEM –BASIC USER INTERACTION

There are three general types of user interactions allowed by the system:

1. **Entering information in data fields.**
2. **Using command button to direct system activities.**
3. **Mouse-clicking on hyperlinks.**

ECF Screens-Command Buttons

At the bottom of each ECF screens you are allowed to make one of two elections

1. **[Clear]** Button- Clears all characters entered in the box(es) on that screen.
2. **[Next]** *or* **[Submit]** *Button*-Accepts the entry made and displays the next entry screen, if any.

Correcting a Mistake

You can correct a mistake any time before you commit a transaction.

To correct a mistake before committing a transaction:

1. Click on the **[Back]** button on your browser's toolbar to return to the previous screen.
2. Make your corrections.
3. Click on the **[Next]** or **[Submit]** button

Once you completed you data entries you see will see the following warning message:

Attention!! Pressing the *NEXT* button on this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue.

If you click on the **[NEXT]** button after this message you will have no further opportunity to go back and correct any mistakes. Clicking NEXT will cause the document to be filed electronically. Only the Clerk's Office can make corrections to electronically filed documents. Please call the Help Desk for assistance.

Aborting a Transaction

If you wish to abort a transaction entirely, simply click on any item on the main blue menu bar at any point before committing the transaction. The system will retain no memory of the steps you took before aborting.

Timing Out

If you are logged in to the ECF system, after 30 minutes of inactivity, the following will occur:

1. The system will automatically time out.
2. When you start to type again, the system will take you back to the login screen,
3. When you login again, the system will give you an error message that reads as follows: *Warning: The account you entered is already logged in.*
4. The message will give you an option of clicking one of the two following choices:

    - The *Continue login* button, which will allow you to continue filing in the same session. OR
    - The *Cancel* button, which will cancel the session and return you once more to the login screen. If you select the *Cancel* option before having committed your transaction, your transaction will be aborted.

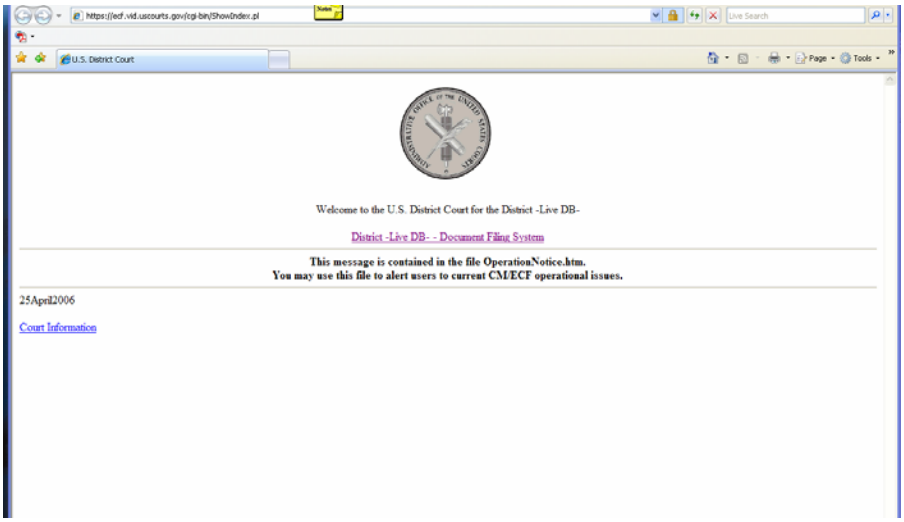
ACCESSING THE SYSTEM

How to Access the System

Filing users can access the Court's ECF system via the Internet by going to: www.ecf.vid.uscourts.gov
Click on **ECF District Court**

Once you have the main page of ECF on your screen, click on ***District Court-Live DB – Document Filing System.***

Figure 1 *ECF Main Page Screen*

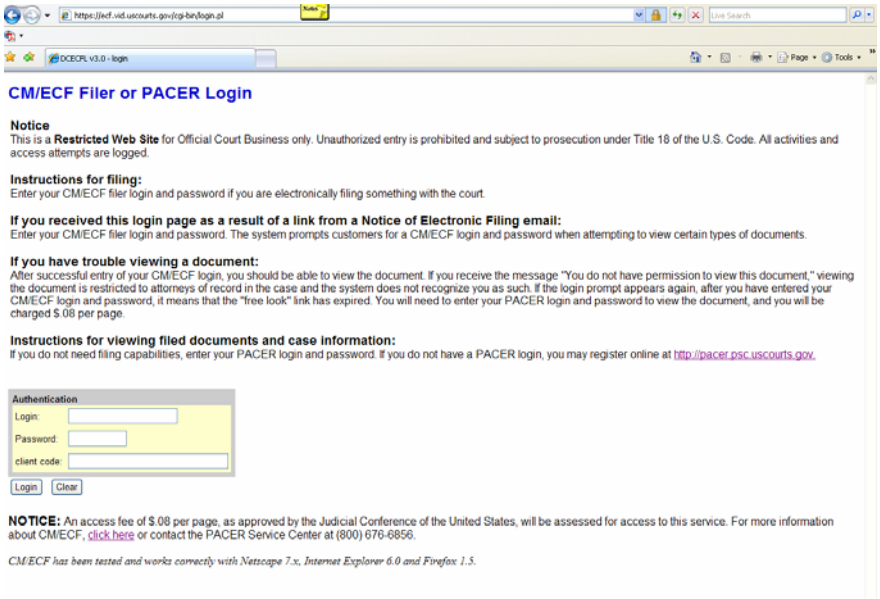


Selecting ECF or PACER

The next screen is the login screen. From this screen, you can log into ECF or PACER, as follows:

- If you wish to file documents, enter your ECF login and password.
- If you wish to perform any other functions, including viewing documents previously filed, enter your PACER login and password.

Figure 2 *ECF/PACER Login Screen*



Logging Into ECF

Step	Action
1.	Type your ECF login and password
2.	Verify that you have typed your ECF login and password **REMINDER: This is your court-issued login and password**
	Note: All ECF logins and passwords are case sensitive
3.	Click on the **[Login]** button to transmit your user information to ECF.
	OR
	If you have typed your login and password incorrectly:
1.	Click on the **[Clear]** button to erase an incorrectly typed login and password.
2.	Type the correct login and password.
3.	Click on the **[Login]** button to transmit your user information to ECF.
	If the login and password is not recognized by the ECF system;
	The following error message will be displayed
	Login failed either your login name or key is incorrect.
1.	Click on the **[Back]** button and re-enter your correct login and password.
2.	Click on the **[Login]** button to transmit your user information to ECF.

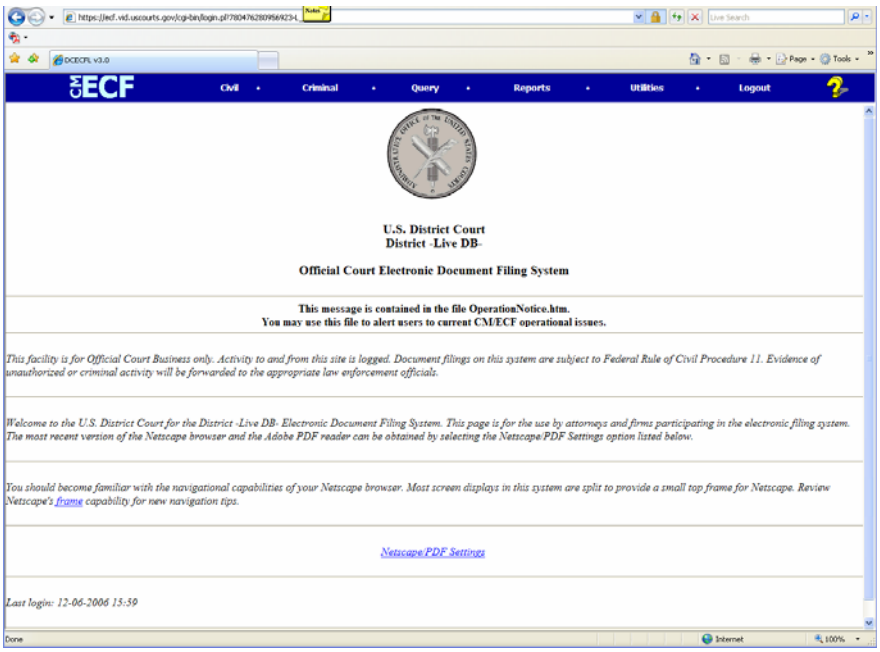
After ECF accepts your login and password, the main ECF screen with a blue functional selection bar at the top will be displayed. See figure 3.

Selecting ECF Features

ECF provides the following features accessible from the BLUE menu bar at the top of the main menu screen:

Civil	Select to electronically file all civil and civil miscellaneous case documents
Criminal	Select to electronically file all criminal case documents
Query	Select to retrieve information and documents relevant to the case. You can query either by specific case number or party name. You must login to PACER before you can query ECF.
Reports	Select to retrieve docket sheets and filed case reports. You must login to PACER before you can view an ECF report, with the exception of the Written Opinions Report.
Utilities	Select to maintain your account; view your personal ECF log, which shows all transaction processed with your login and password; and maintain personal account information,
Logout	Select to exit from ECF and prevent further filing with your password until the next time you login.

Figure 3 *Main Menu Screen*

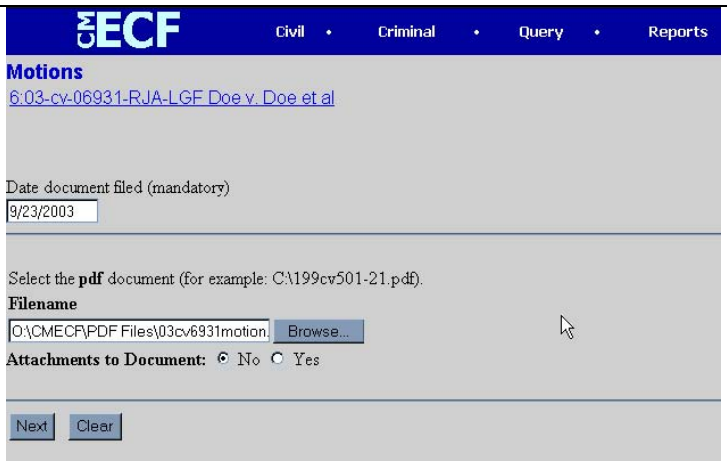


Basic steps for filing a Pleading and or Document Electronically

Step	Description
1	Login to ECF. Select **Civil or Criminal** from the blue menu bar at the top of the screen.
2	Click on the name of the type of document you are filing (e.g., motion, answer, etc.).
3	Select the specific document you are filing (e.g., motion to dismiss).
4	Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed.
5	Select the party or parties for whom the document is being filed.
6	Select the PDF document to be filed.
7	Add attachments, if any, to the document being filed.
8	Modify docket text as necessary.
9	Submit the document to ECF.
10	Retain Notification of Electronic Filing (NEF).
11	Mail paper copies of the document to any non-filing user.

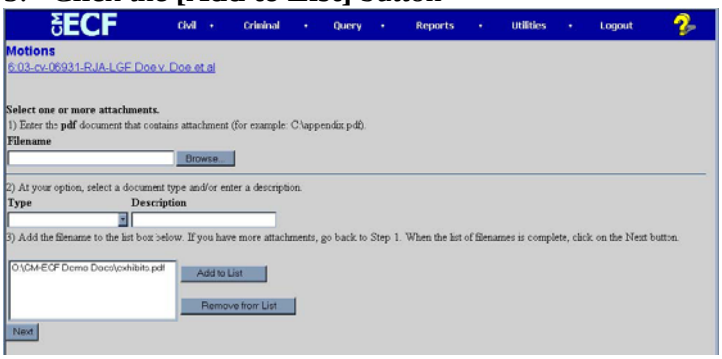
Basic steps for Attachments and Exhibits	A filer user shall submit, in electronic format, all documents referenced as exhibits or attachments to filings as outlined below, unless otherwise ordered by the court. Each referenced exhibit must be labeled with a proper exhibit marking and filed as a separate attachment. The screen where you select the PDF document you are filing is also the same screen where you indicate that you have an attachment.

	To Add Attachment : 1. After selecting the PDF document you are filing, change the **Attachments to Document** radio button from No to Yes. Click the **[Next]** button.



2. From the **Select one or more attachment screen,** click on [**Browse]** button to search for the document file name of the attachment
3. Next to the field for attachment **Category,** click on the arrow and ECF opens a pull down screen. Highlight the type of attachment from the displayed selection.

4. Describe the attachment by clicking in the **Description** box and typing a clear and concise description of the attachment.
5. Click the **[Add to List]** button



6. Repeat the sequence for each additional attachment
7. Click on **[Next]** Button after adding all of the desired attachments.

FILING PROCEDURES CIVIL CASES

Overview

This section outlines the process and procedures to use when filing civil documents

Menu of Civil Events

Following is a list of categories of civil pleadings and documents that may be filed electronically:

Open a Case

- **Open a Civil Case**

Initial Pleadings and Service

- **Complaint, Other Initiating Documents**
- **Service of Process**
- **Answers to Complaint**
- **Other Answers**

Motions and Related Filings

- **Motions**
- **Responses and Replies**

Other Filings

- **Discovery Documents**
- **Notices**
- **Trial Documents**
- **Appeal Documents**
- **Other Documents**

Filing Initial Pleadings

Complaints, Notices of Removal and Petitions for Writ of Habeas Corpus are to be filed electronically. Cases subject to sealing or restricted access should be filed as a paper filing. I

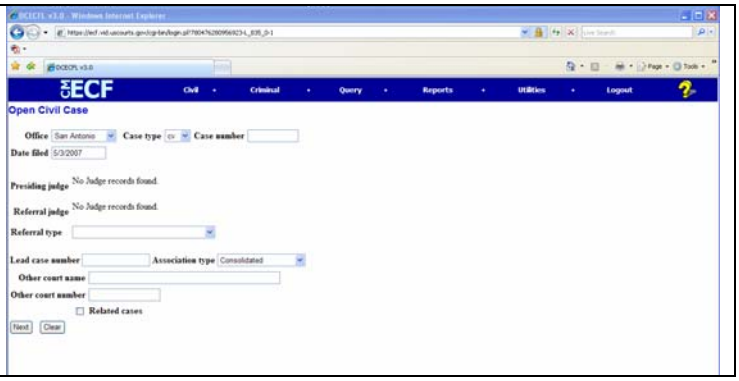
Before getting started, you will need the following:

1. Complaint, Notice of Removal or Petitions in PDF format.
2. Completed civil cover sheet (Form JS-44) available in PDF format on our website under forms.
3. Completed summons in PDF format.

Log into the ECF system using your ECF login and password.

Filing Initial Pleadings-

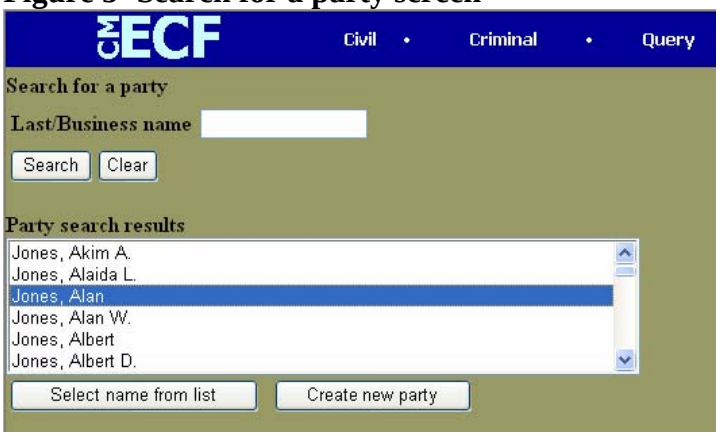
Step	Required Action
1.	Select **Civil** from the blue menu bar at the top of your main menu screen.
2.	Select Open a Civil Case -Figure 4

Figure 4	

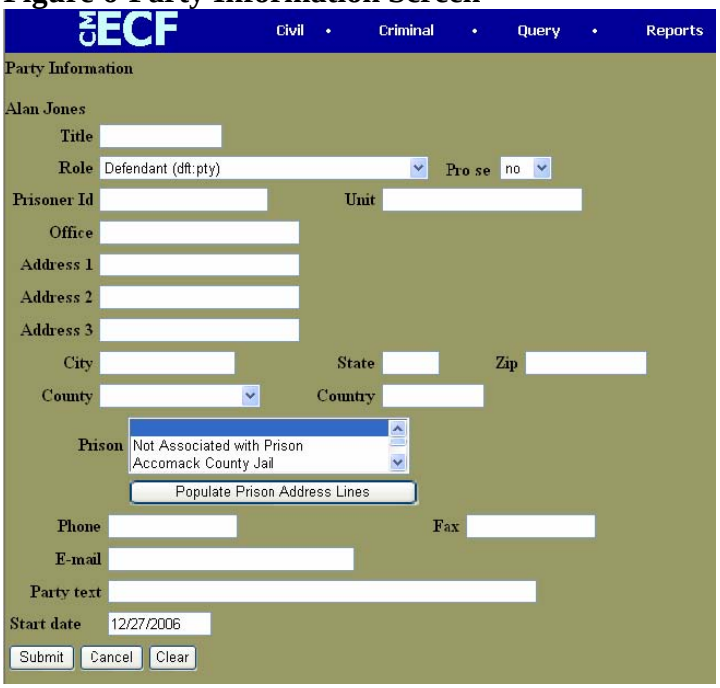
3.	Select Divisional Office from drop down list (St. Thomas Division or St. Croix Division) where case should be assigned. Select Case Type (e.g. **cv-Civil, mc-Miscellaneous**); Lead case number if associated case type. Association type - Consolidated or Multi-District Litigation) Click on Related cases to enter information on the next screen. **Note: Only in Association cases.** Click the **[Next]** button.

4.	Enter the information from the Civil Cover Sheet on this screen. (e.g. Jurisdiction, Cause of Action, etc.) Click the **[Next]** Button.

5.	Enter the last name of each party on the complaint plaintiff and defendant. If the party is a company, enter the company's name in the **Last Name** box. Click the **[Search]** button. Figure 5 The system will search for the name, if the last name is already in the system, a list of names will appear. Select the party name by clicking on it, then click **[Select name from list]** (See Figure 6) Review party information and select the party role, then click the **[Submit]** button.

	Figure 5- Search for a party screen 

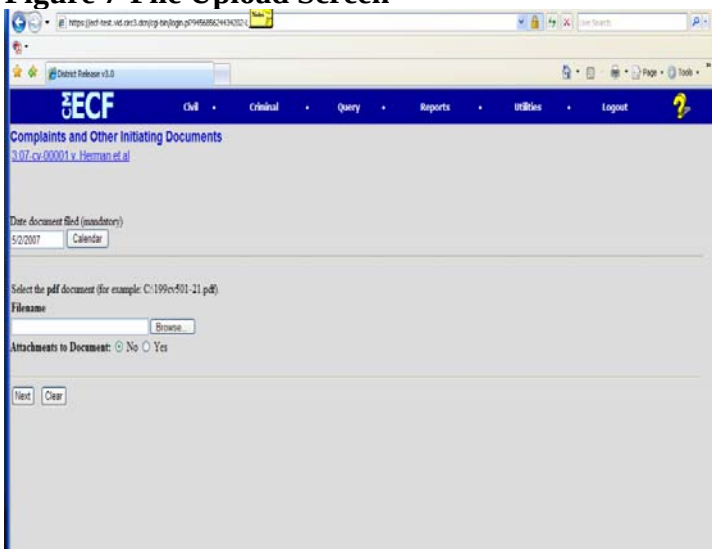
6.	**If the party name does not appear on the list** , Click on the **[Add/Create New Party]** button

7.	**Enter Party Information –** **Enter** company's name or last name, first name, middle name Generation and title fields of the individual are not required. **Select** appropriate role from drop down list, then click the **[Submit]** button. **Leave all other fields blank.** **Figure 6-Party Information Screen** 

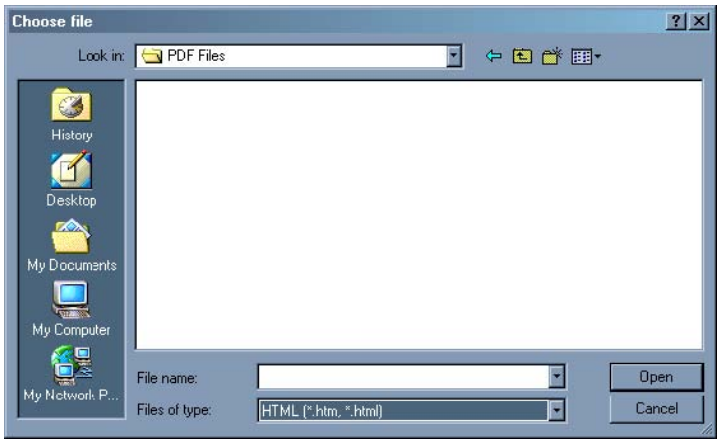
8.	**Repeat steps 5 thru 7 until all party names are entered.** Once you have entered all party names, Click on **[End party selection]** button.

9.	**Click on Docket Lead Event** Select Complaint from the drop down list Click on the **[Next]** button
10.	**Enter** date document filed then select the PDF document.
11.	To select the PDF document, click on the **[Browse]** button. (See Figure 7 below)

Figure 7-File Upload Screen



ECF opens the following screen.



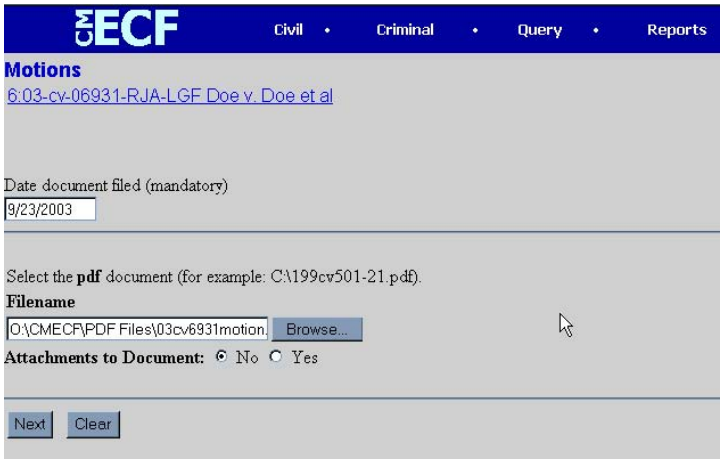
Change File of type to **All Files (*.*) or Adobe PDF**

Navigate to the appropriate directory and file name to select the PDF document (Complaint)

Click on the file to upload to ECF.

Note: In order to verify that you have selected the correct document, right mouse click on the highlighted file name to open a **quick menu** and left mouse click on **[open]**. Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Reader will launch and open the PDF document that you selected. When e-filing any document, you should always view it in this manner to verify that it is the document you intend to file.

Once you have verified the document:
Click on the **[Open]** button.
ECF closes the File Upload Screen and inserts the PDF file name and locations.



Attachments to Complaint (e.g. exhibits, appendix)

If there are no attachment to the complaint, click on the **[Next]** button

If you have attachments to the complaint, Click the *Yes* Radio button. (e.g. Civil Cover Sheet, Summons, Affidavit)

Click on the **[Next]** button.

From the **Select one or more attachment screen** (Figure 8)

1. Click the **[Browse]** button to search for the document file name of the attachment.
2. Upload the attachment to ECF.
3. Next to the field for attachment **Type** (Figure 9), click on the arrow and ECF opens a pull down screen. Highlight the type of attachment from the displayed selection.
4. To describe the attachment more fully, click in the **Description** box and type a clear and concise description of the attachment.
5. Click on **[Add to List]** (Figure 10)
6. Click on **[Next]** button, after you have finished adding all your attachments.

ECF adds the selected document as an attachment to the pleading.

Figure 8-Select attachment screens

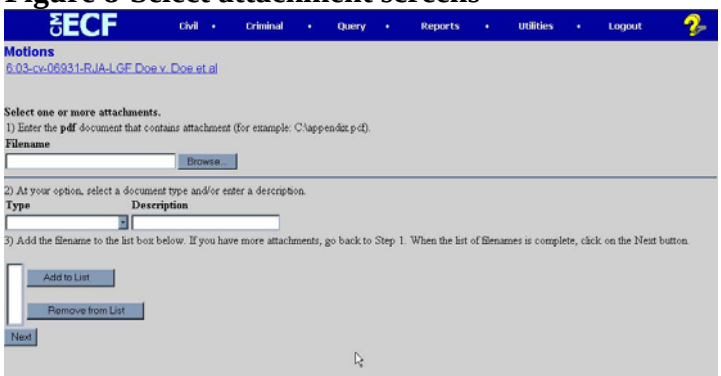


Figure 9-Type or Category of Attachment Screen

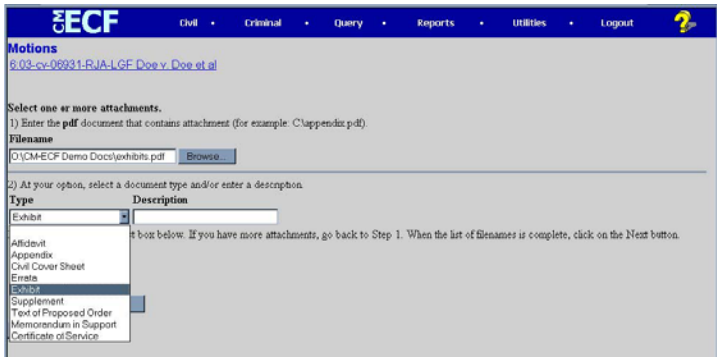
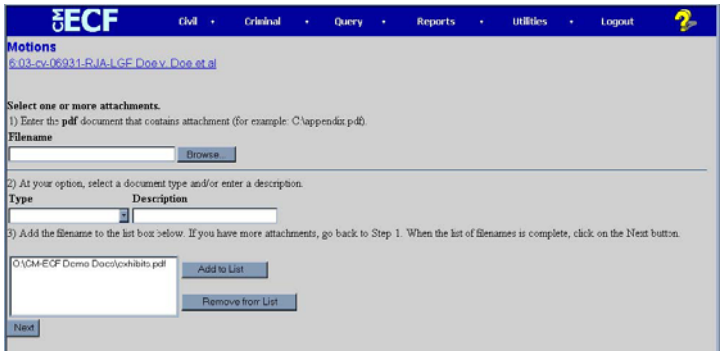


Figure 10-Add to List Screen



Notes:

• The file selected **MUST** be in PDF format with a .pdf suffix. If the file is not in PDF format, the system will not be able to read the file.

• If you do not attach a document, the following prompt will occur:

Click on the **[OK]** button and then click on the *Browse* button.

FILING A CIVIL MOTION

Introduction

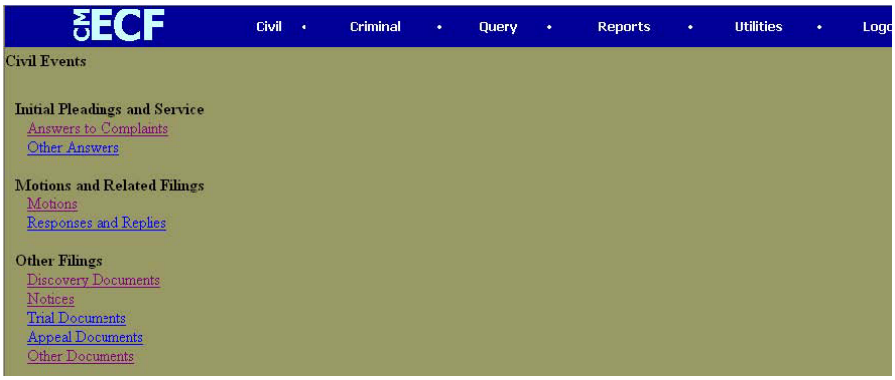
To give you a sense of how the ECF process and its screens work, the material below describes the steps for filing a civil motion. These steps are similar to those for filing other documents in ECF.

Filing a Civil Motion: Selecting *Civil* from the Menu

Step 1 – Login to the system. Then, select **Civil** from the blue menu bar at the top of the screen.

Filing a Civil Motion: Selecting *Motions* from the Menu

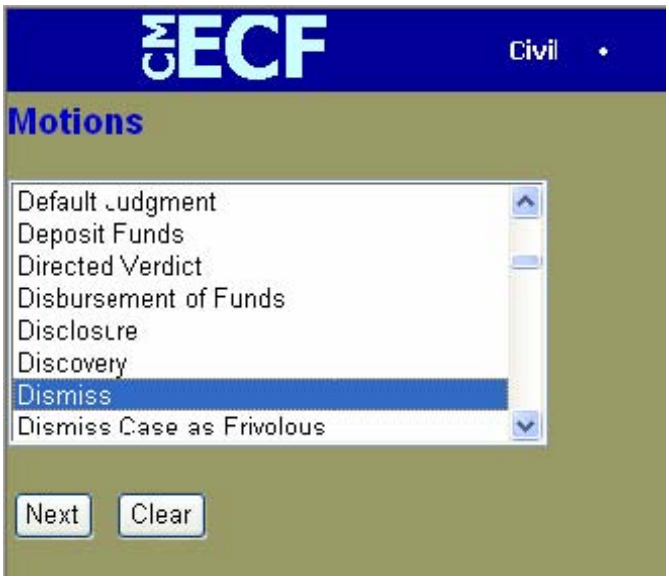
Step 2 – Select **Motions** as the type of document to file.



Filing a Civil Motion: Selecting the Type of Motion

Step 3 – Select the type of motion that you are filing by clicking on its name from the dropdown list and then click on **[Next]** button.

In the screen shot below, a *Motion to Dismiss* has been selected.



Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Entering the Case Number

Step 4a – Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed.

The case number format is as follows: *division:* ***year-type-number*** (e.g., *1:06-cv-690*), although you must type only a year and number when first prompted for a case number. The screen shot in the next block (Figure 11) shows the case number entry screen and its examples of case number formats acceptable to the system.

The division number denotes the division in which the case is pending, as follows:

- **St Thomas Division -3**
- **St. Croix Division- 1**

The codes for the two civil case types are **cv** for civil cases and **mc** for miscellaneous civil cases.

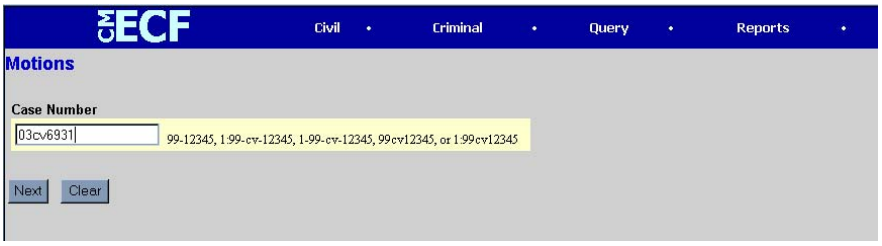
Note: ECF defaults to the number for the last case in which you worked. Ensure that the proper case number is entered to avoid filing your document in the wrong case.

If the case number was:

- Entered incorrectly, click on the **[Clear]** button to re-enter.
- Rejected by the computer as an invalid case number, click on the **[Next]** button on your browser menu bar to re-enter the number.

Entering the Case Number – Screen

Figure 11-Screen shot of the case number entry screen.



Note: If you submit a case number that is formatted incorrectly, ECF will give an error message advising you of the correct format for entering the case number. Take the following steps:

- 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.

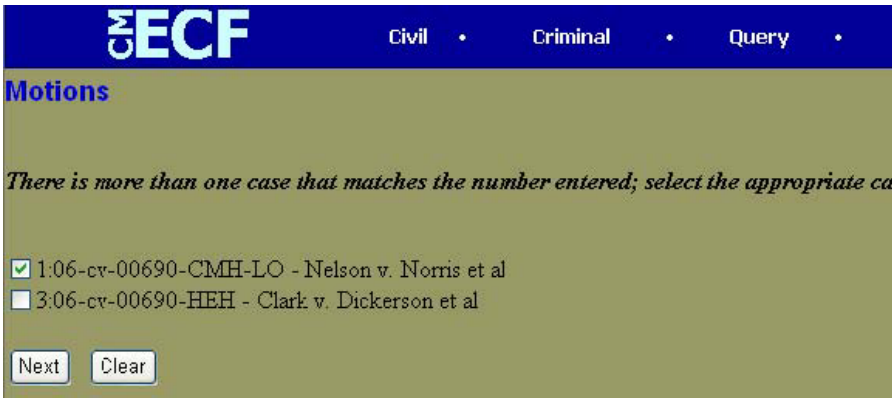
Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Selecting the Case

Step 4b – Select the correct case, if a list is provided.

If ECF finds more than one civil or miscellaneous case with the same number, it will list the cases, including the case number and short title of the case, which will allow you to select the correct case.

The screen shot below shows that two civil cases numbered 06-690 exist in the system: one is in Alexandria, and the other is in Richmond. The correct case has been selected by clicking in the box next to that case.

Once you have selected the correct case, click on the **[Next]** button.



Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Selecting the Parties

Step 5a – Select the party or parties filing the motion by clicking on the party name(s). The list of party names is presented on the screen in alphabetical order. (Figure 12)

• If you represent more than one defendant or plaintiff, you may select all the parties you represent by holding down the *CTRL* key while clicking on the name of each party.

• When filing a joint document, select all pertinent parties as filers.

Note: To deselect a party, hold down the *CTRL* key while clicking on the party or parties you wish to deselect.

After selecting all the parties filing the motion, click on the **[Next]** button.

Figure 12- Select the Filer

Note: If your party does not appear on the list, see the section of this manual titled "**Filing Initial Pleading-Steps 6 thru 8, pages 30 and 31.**"

Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: First Appearance of an Attorney

Step 5b – Create an association between you and the party, if necessary.

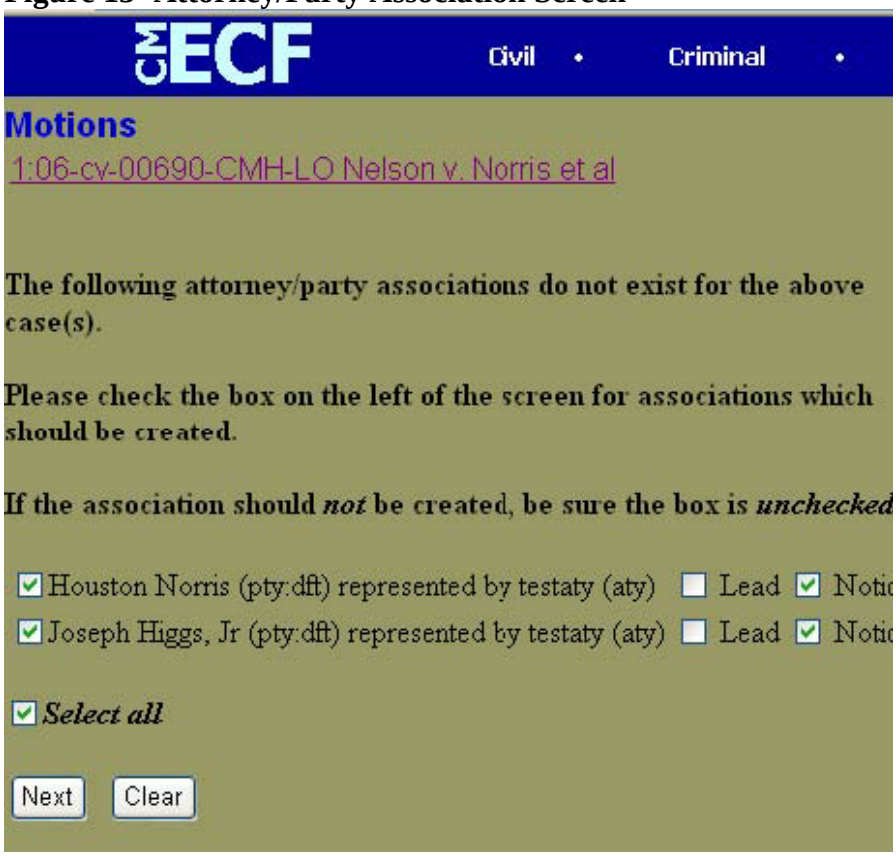
If this document is your first appearance in the case on behalf of the party, you will see the screen depicted in the screen shot below. Then, take the following steps:

• Click the box next to the party name to select the party or parties you represent AND deselect **Select all** if you do not represent all the parties listed.

• Click the box next to the word **Lead** if you are lead counsel for the party, and click the box next to the word **Notice**, if it is not already checked, to receive notices from the Court and other attorneys.

• If you want to deselect a checked box, click in the box you want deselected.

Figure 13- Attorney/Party Association Screen



Note: Make sure the system does not create an association between you and a party you do **NOT** represent, such as in a situation when you are filing a joint document.

Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Selecting the PDF File Name and Location

Step 6 – Select the PDF file name and location for the document you are filing by doing the following:

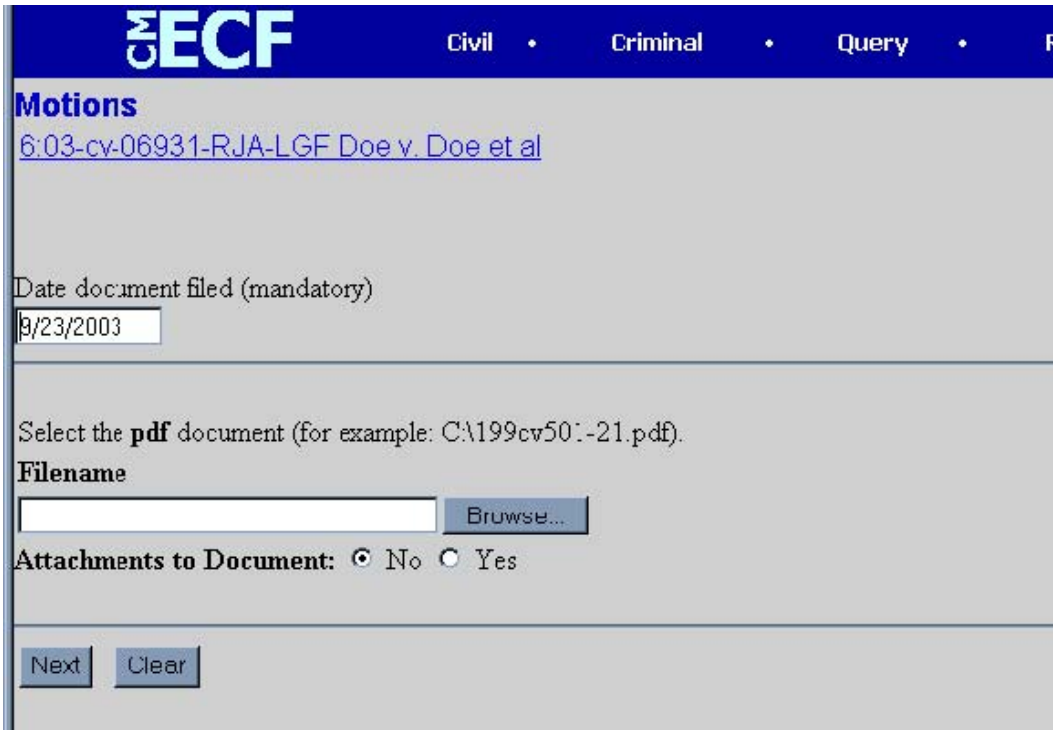
• Click on the **[Browse]** button to navigate to the appropriate directory and file.

• Select the document. Its name should appear in the *Filename* box.

• Verify that you have attached the correct document by viewing it. See Step 7 below for instructions on verifying attachment.

• Click on **[Next]**.

Figure l4-Selecting PDF screen



Notes

If you do not attach a document, the following prompt will appear:

Click on the **[OK]** button and then click on the **[Browse]** button.

• If you need additional assistance with the PDF process, you may wish to view the computer-based training module, "Filing a Civil Motion."

Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Verifying That You Have Attached the Correct Document

Step 7 – Verify that you have attached the correct document by taking the following steps:

• Right click on the highlighted file name to open a quick menu.

• Left click on *open*. The PDF document will be opened by Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Reader so that you can view the document and verify that it is the correct one.

• Close Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Reader.

• Click the *open* button on the file upload screen.

Filing a Motion in Civil Case: Modifying the Docket Entry

Step 8 – Modify the docket entry, if appropriate.

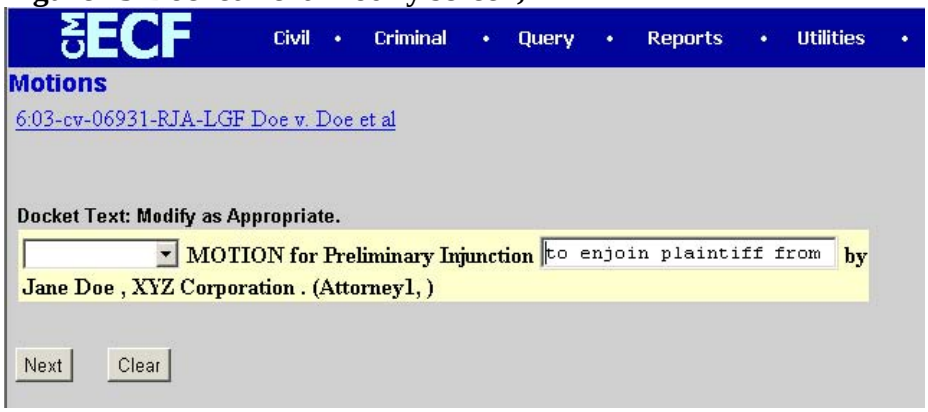
You can modify the docket entry in two ways:

• By selecting a modifier to go before the word *motion* from the dropdown list by clicking on the arrow and

• By typing more information about the motion in the white box following the word M*otion.* In general, white boxes in docket entries allow you to add additional text to the entries.

After you have made your modifications, if any, click on the **[Next]** button.

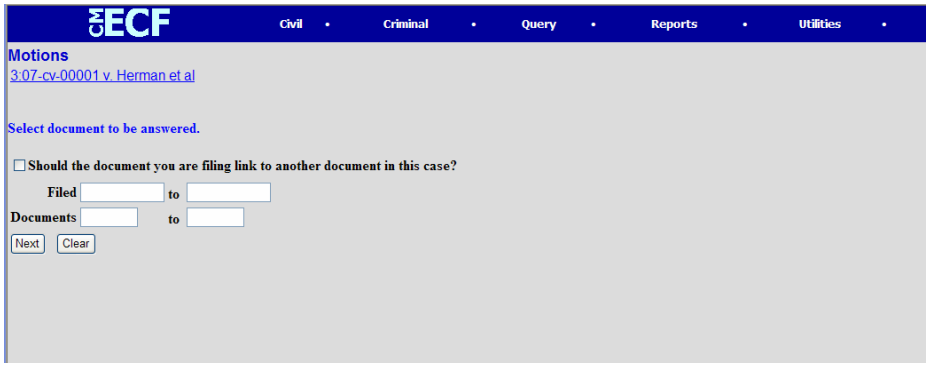
Figure 15-Docket Text-Modify screen,



The screen shot above shows that "to enjoin plaintiff from…" was typed into the white box, so that the final docket text now reads, "Motion for Preliminary Injunction to enjoin plaintiff from… by Jane Doe….

Linking Documents

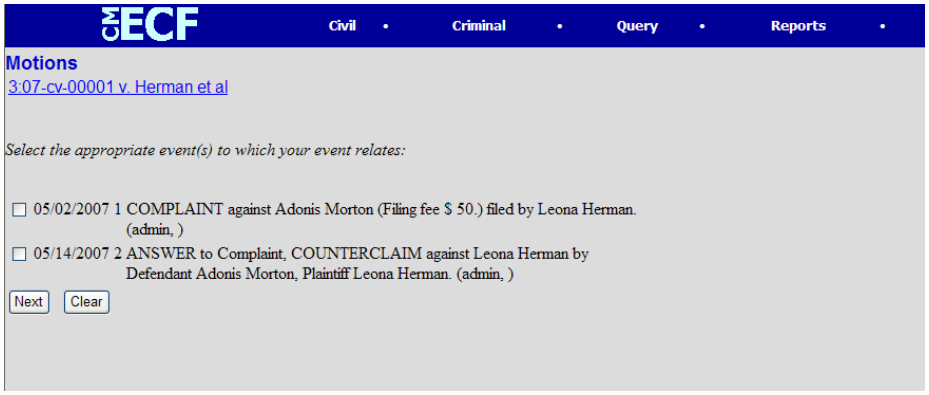
Some pleadings such as Memorandum in support of and Motions for extension of time should be "linked" to their related documents in the case. When filing these and certain other types of documents you will be presented with the following screen



An event in CM/ECF is anything that has been docketed in a case. To link the document you are currently filing to a previously filed document, click the check box next to **Should the document you are filing link to another document in this case** and then click **[Next]**

Note: You have the option of entering filed dates or document numbers if you would like to further narrow your search. In cases with numerous documents, that would likely be a good idea.

You will then be presented with a list of documents, click the checkbox for the document you wish to link to and click **[Next]**



Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Reviewing the Docket Entry for Accuracy

Step 9 – Review your docket entry for accuracy.

If the docket entry is…	Then…
Correct	Click on the **[Next]** button to commit the transaction. (Figure 16) The screen shot below shows that "Amended" was selected from the dropdown list and "Counts 2 and 3 of the Complaint" was typed into the white box, so that the final docket text now reads, "Amended Motion to Dismiss Counts 2 and 3 of the Complaint." This docket text is correct, so the next step would be to click on the *Next* button to commit the transaction. ***Note***: Once you click on the *Next* button, only Clerk's Office staff will be able to make any changes to the submission.
	Figure 16-Docket Text: Final Text
Incorrect	• Click on the **[Back]** button on your browser to correct a previous screen, or • Click on **Civil** on the main blue menu bar to abort the entry and start over.

Note: **Once you have committed the transaction, the next screen that appears is the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF), your official filing receipt. To ensure that your transaction is complete, wait for the NEF before clicking on any other function.**

`

Filing a Motion in a Civil Case: Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF)

ECF electronically transmits the NEF to the attorneys in the case who have supplied their e-mail addresses to the Court. Your transaction is complete once you have received the NEF, and the NEF is your proof of filing with the Court. Therefore, you should save either an electronic or a paper copy of the NEF.

To save a copy of the NEF either as an electronic record or as a paper document, see the chart below:

Figure 17- Notice of Electronic Filing screen

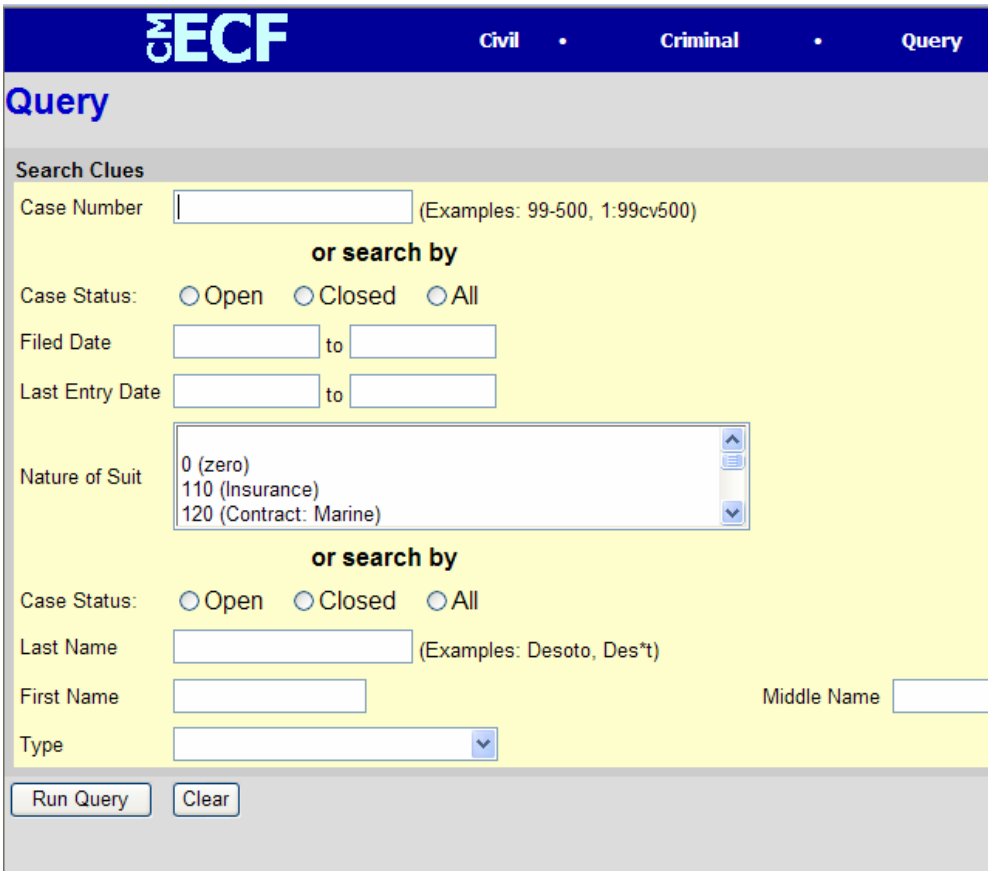
If you want to…	Then…
Save an electronic copy of the NEF	1. Click on the link to the document found in the e-mail verification notice. 2. The document loads into Adobe Reader. 3. A toolbar with a diskette icon appears at the top of the Adobe Reader screen. 4. Click on the diskette icon. 5. A dialogue box entitled Save As appears over the document. 6. Complete the following data fields: a. Save in: Designate the drive and directory to save the file b. File name: Name the file. Example: Smith, JQstaymotion.pdf c. Save as type: Leave at Acrobat (*.pdf) default 7. Click the Save button to store the document in the drive and folder you designated. 8. You can now view or print the document at a later time.
Print a copy of the NEF	Select *Print* on your browser's toolbar.

***Note**:* The NEF also displays the names and addresses of individuals who will not be electronically notified of the filing. It is the filing user's responsibility to serve paper copies of the document and of the NEF to attorneys and parties who are not receiving electronic notification.

Query Menu

The Query menu can be used to search the Electronic Case Filing (ECF) system for specific case information. To enter the "Query Mode," click on **Query** on the blue menu bar.

ECF opens the PACER Login screen (it looks much like the regular login screen, doesn't it). You must enter your PACER login and password before the system will let you query the ECF database. Enter your PACER login and password.



ECF opens a Query data entry screen (shown above). You can search by Case Number, Case Status or by Party. If your search by Party you can select from the drop down list under **Type,** Attorney, Party or Special Mailing Group/Individual. You may also search the system for cases open and/or closed for a specific time period or by nature of suit. You must enter a range for either the filed date or the last entry date in order for the query to run.

Case Number/ Party Query

If you know the number that the Court has assigned to the case, you may enter it in the **Case Number** field and click **[Run Query]**.

You may search the system by the name of a party or an attorney to the case. Enter the last name of the party in the appropriate field. If more than one person with that name is in the database, ECF returns a screen from which to select the correct name.

If the individual is a party to more than one case, ECF will open a screen listing all of the party's cases. Click on the case number hyperlink and ECF will opens the query screen below.

At the top of the window, ECF displays the case number, parties to the case, presiding Judge, date that the initial claim was filed, and date of last filing for the case. You may choose specific case information from a large list of query options by clicking on the appropriate hyperlinked name on the screen.

Case-Specific Query Options

Attorney – Displays the names, address, and telephone numbers of the attorneys who represent each of the parties to the case

Case Summary- Provides a summary of current case-specific information.

Deadlines/Hearings – Produces a screen that allows you to query the database by various means to obtain hearing and other schedule deadlines. After you click **[Run Query]**, the system opens the Deadline/Hearings screen. If you click on a document number, ECF will display the actual Scheduling Order for the conference or hearing. If you click on the button to the left of the Deadline/Hearing title, ECF will display the docket information and related docketing entries for the hearing you selected.

Docket Report – When you select Docket Report, ECF opens the Docket Sheet screen, You may select a date range for your docketing report as well as a range of docketing numbers. If you leave the range fields blank, ECF will default to display the entire docketing report. Place a checkmark in the box next to **"Include links to Notice of Electronic Filing"** if you wish to view them from the docket sheet. Click on the **[Run Report]** button. The system will run your custom report and display it. Click on a document number to see the actual document or click the silver ball to display the Electronic Notification Report for the document.

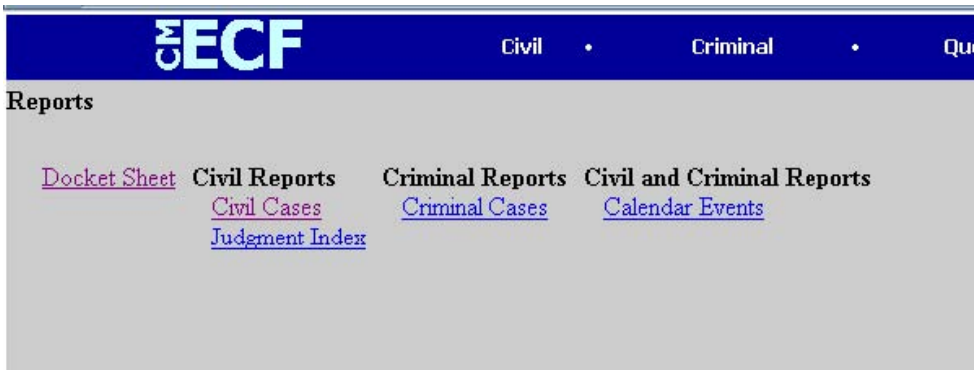
History/Documents – This selection queries the database for case event history and documents associated with the case. After you click on the **History/Documents** hyperlink, ECF opens the screen depicted here. You may select the sort order for the report and choose to exhibit all events or only those with documents attached. ECF also offers you the option to display the docket text in the report. After making your selections, click on the **[Run Query]** button. This particular report lists all of the events and documents associated with the case in reverse chronological order.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION: REPORTS

Reports Menu

The Reports function of ECF provides the filing user with the following report options:

- Docket Sheet
- Civil Cases
- Criminal Cases
- Docket Activity
- Written Opinions
    1. Click on **Reports** from the blue menu bar.
    2. The PACER login screen will open.
    3. Enter your PACER login and password.
    4. The following screen will appear.



Docket Sheet Report

The Docket Sheet report allows you to view a docket sheet.

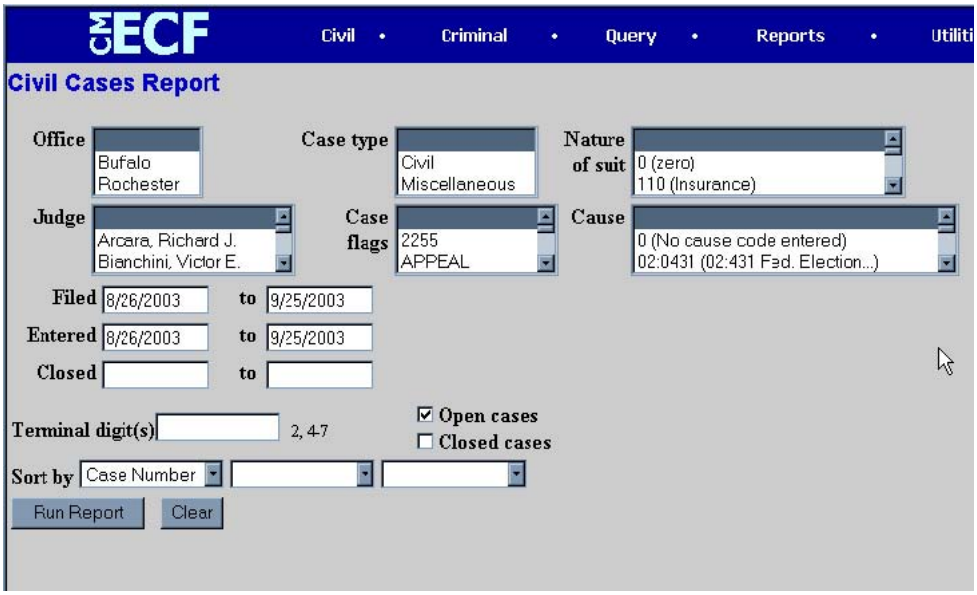
1. Enter the case number in the Case number field.
2. Check the boxes to include the information next to the check box.
3. Select the Oldest date first to sort the docket sheet by the oldest entry to the most recent or
4. Select Most recent date first to sort the docket sheet by the most recent entry to the oldest entry
5. Click on the **[Run Report]** button and ECF will run your custom docketing report and display it.

The document numbers are located in the middle column of the docket sheet report and are hyperlinks to the PDF documents.
To view the Notice of Electronic Filing for a document, place your pointer on the button next to the document number and click.

Civil Cases Report

The Civil Cases Report allows the user to run a civil case report by any of the selection on the screen below which includes:

- Office (division)
- Case type
- Nature of suit
- Cause, and
- Case flags.



Note: The system allows you to pick more than one item from the dropdown lists if you hold down the CTRL key while clicking on the items.

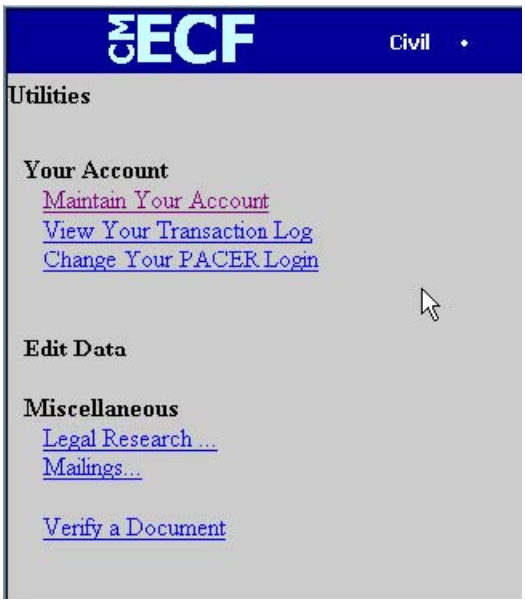
Written Opinions Report

The Written Opinions Report allows the user to search for written opinions that were filed by the Court in ECF and are available at no cost to ECF and PACER users.

Note: To access this report, you will be prompted to enter your PACER login and password

Utilities Menu

The Utilities Menu provides the means for filing users to maintain their account in ECF and to view all of their ECF transactions and some PACER related account information.

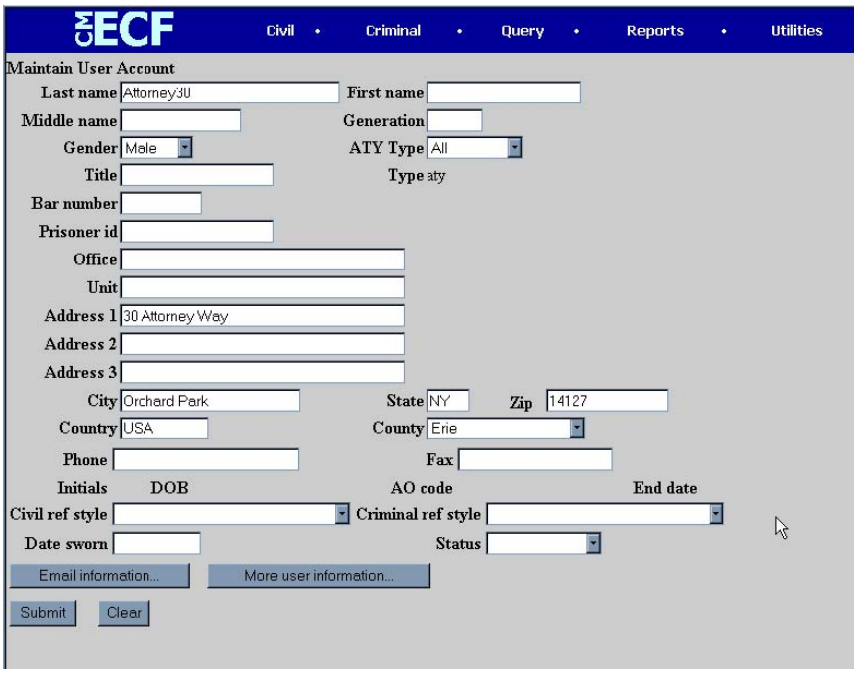


Maintain User Account

The **Maintain Your Account** main screen allows a user to keep current information relevant to your ECF account with the Court., such as the following:

- Name
- Phone number , and
- Fax number

For change of address, please contact the clerk's office.



From the above screen a user can change:

- e-mail information by clicking on the **[Email information]** button and
- password by clicking on the **[More user information]** button

E-mail Info

A User can update e-mail information by clicking the **[Email information]** button on the Maintain User Account screen.

Note: It is very important that you keep this e-mail information current, since ECF will e-mail the NEF based upon the information in this screen.

From the Email Information screen, you can add additional e-mail addresses for the individuals you wish ECF to notify,(paralegals, secretaries) concerning ECF activities.
To add additional e-mail addresses click on the **[Add Additional E-mail Address]** button.
When you have finished entering your email addresses click on **[Return to Person Information Screen]**
If you have completed your update to your account, click on the **[Submit]** button.

Changing your Password

To change your password:

• Click on the **[More User Information]** button on the *Maintain Your Account* screen.

• Enter a new password in the *Password* field.
• Click on the **[Return to Account screen]** button.
• Click on the **[Submit]** button.
• Click on the **[Submit]** button on the next screen.
• Logout.
• Use your new password to log back in.

The clerk's office does not maintain a record of your password. If you lose or forget your password, the clerk's office will have to issue you a new one.

View Transaction

To view all of your ECF transactions, click on **View Transaction Log** on the Utilities menu screen.

Enter a date range and click the **[Run Report]** button.

PACER Options

The Utilities function also allows you to access and maintain the following PACER-related account information.

- Change Client Code,
- Change Your PACER Login,
- Review Billing History, and
- Show PACER Account.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION: LOGOUT

Logout

After you have completed all of your transactions for a particular session in ECF, you should exit the system by clicking on the Logout function on the blue menu bar.

Steps:	**Action:**
1.	Click on the Logout function on the blue menu bar, which will return you to the ECF login screen
2.	Click on the X in the upper right-hand corner of the program.
	Note: Do not click on the X until you have clicked on Logout.