

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES  
GUIDE FOR ELECTRONIC FILING



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Significant revisions from previous version are highlighted.

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

The U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York requires attorneys in civil and criminal cases to file documents with the Court electronically over the Internet using its Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF) system.

The Court requires attorneys to file documents electronically, absent a showing of good cause, unless otherwise excused by the procedures set forth below or by Order of the Court.

Typically only registered attorneys, as Officers of the Court, will be permitted to file documents electronically. A Judicial Officer may, at his or her discretion, grant a pro se litigant who demonstrates a willingness and capability to file documents electronically, permission to register to do so. Permission to electronically file documents by an attorney or approved pro se filer may be revoked at any time.

### **1. REGISTRATION FOR THE ELECTRONIC CASE FILING SYSTEM**

#### **(A) Designation of Cases**

Beginning January 1, 2004, all civil and criminal cases currently pending and newly filed, except as expressly noted herein, were assigned to the Electronic Case Filing System ("System"). Except as expressly provided and in exceptional circumstances preventing a filing user from filing electronically, all petitions, motions, memoranda of law, or other pleadings and documents required to be filed with the Court in connection with a case assigned to the System must be electronically filed.

#### **(B) Username and Password**

Attorneys admitted to practice in this Court and currently in good standing, including those admitted pro hac vice and attorneys authorized to represent the United States, must register as filing users of the Court's Electronic Filing System.

Pro Se litigants who have been granted permission to file documents electronically must register as a filing user of the Court's Electronic Filing System.

#### **(C) Registration**

- (i) Registration is in a form prescribed by the Clerk and requires the filing user's name, address, telephone number, and Internet e-mail address. Attorneys must include a declaration that they are admitted to the bar of this court. A completed registration form must be submitted to the Court

by each registering attorney or pro se litigant who has been granted permission to electronically file documents. The registration forms are available on our web site at: [www.nywd.uscourts.gov](http://www.nywd.uscourts.gov). Registration as a filing user constitutes consent to electronic service of all documents provided herein in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

All registration forms must be faxed, mailed, or delivered to the Office of the Clerk, U.S. District Court, 2 Niagara Square, Buffalo, NY 14202.

- (ii) On December 20, 2021 the Western District of New York upgraded to CM/ECF NextGen. Attorneys admitted and registered to e-file prior to this date must link their individual PACER account with their former CM/ECF account. Attorneys admitted after this date must register to e-file via PACER as well as submit a registration form to the Court.
- (iii) The PACER username and password combination serves as a signature for purposes of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (including Rule 11), the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, the Local Rules of this Court, and any other purposes for which a signature is required in connection with proceedings before the Court. The login and password issued to an individual may be used only to file documents on behalf of that attorney or pro se litigant.
- (iv) A registered attorney may share his or her username and password with an authorized employee or agent of that attorney's law office or organization for purposes of filing. This does not in any way alter the fact that the attorney's username and password combination constitute that attorney's official signature on electronically filed documents.
- (v) Registered users are able to change their own passwords and from time to time may be prompted to change their passwords for security reasons. In the event that they believe the security of an existing password has been compromised and that a threat to the System exists, registered users must change their pacer.gov password immediately and give immediate notice by telephonic means to the Clerk of Court or Systems Manager (716-551-1700) and confirm by facsimile (716-551-1705) in order to prevent access to the System by use of the old password.

Users may be subject to sanctions for failure to comply with this provision.

- (vi) A registered user whose e-mail address, mailing address, telephone number or fax number has changed from that of the original registration form shall timely e-file a notice of a change of address in each of that user's pending cases, and serve a copy of the notice on all pro se parties. Registered users are responsible for updating this information via pacer.gov

- (vii) The Court reserves the right to revoke or otherwise restrict a registered user's access to the System at any time should the Court have reasonable cause to believe that the user has misused the System. Electronic and written notice of any such revocation or restriction shall be provided to the user.
- (viii) Once registered, an attorney may withdraw from participation in the Electronic Filing System only by permission of the Chief Judge of the District for good cause shown. The registered attorney seeking to withdraw must submit a written request to the Chief Judge explaining the reason(s) or justification(s) for withdrawal.

Once registered, an approved pro se litigant may withdraw from participation in the Electronic Filing System by submitting a written request to the Judicial Officer who granted permission to participate in electronic filing of documents.

Upon approval of a request from either a registered attorney or pro se litigant, the Clerk of Court shall no longer allow the filing user electronic access to the System and notify the filing user of same. It is the filing user's responsibility to notify opposing counsel in all pending cases that the filing user has been granted permission to withdraw from the Electronic Filing System and that all future service of documents must therefore be made by manual means.

## 2. ELECTRONIC FILING AND SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS

### (A) Filing

- (i) All documents in civil, criminal, miscellaneous civil, miscellaneous criminal and new civil case openings, except sealed documents, sealed cases, opening of a criminal case, opening of a miscellaneous case and as expressly provided for in these guidelines, shall be electronically filed on the system. Electronic transmission of a document to the System consistent with these procedures, whether accomplished by the filing user or a Court user, together with the transmission of a Notice of Electronic Filing from the Court, constitutes filing of a document for all purposes of the Federal Rules of Civil and Criminal Procedure and the Local Rules of this Court, and constitutes entry of the document on the docket kept by the Clerk under Fed.R.Civ.P. 58 and 79 and Fed.R.Crim.P. 49 and 55. A document shall not be considered filed for purposes of the Federal Rules of Civil and Criminal Procedure until the filing party receives a System generated Notice of Electronic Filing.

E-mailing or faxing a document to the Clerk's Office or to the assigned judge shall not constitute "filing" of such document.

- (ii) If the document to be filed requires leave of court, such as an amended complaint or a document to be filed out of time, the proposed document shall be attached as an exhibit to the motion (please refer to Local Rule 15 on submitting red-lined versions of amended pleadings). If the motion is granted, the attorney must file the document electronically with the Court as a separate document.
- (iii) Courtesy copies of certain documents may be required. Filers should refer to the "Judge Preferences" published on the Court's website at [www.nywd.uscourts.gov](http://www.nywd.uscourts.gov) for guidance.
- (iv) Before filing an electronic document with the court, a filing user must verify its legibility.
- (v) A document created with a word processor, or a paper document, must be converted to Portable Document Format to be electronically filed with the court and must be **text searchable**. Do not print, scan and .PDF your document when it has been created in a word processing program. Additional information on working with PDFs is located at Section 4(A).

Documents which exist **only** in paper form may be scanned into a portable document format (PDF) for electronic filing.

- (vi) Pursuant to the policy set forth by the Judicial Conference in October 2005, a hyperlink contained in a filing is no more than a convenient mechanism for accessing material cited in a document. A hyperlink reference is extraneous to any filed document and is not part of the Court's record.

In order to preserve the integrity of the Court record, users wishing to insert hyperlinks in Court filings shall continue to use the conventional method for the cited authority, in addition to the hyperlink.

The Court accepts no responsibility for, and does not endorse any product, organization, and content at any hyperlinked site, or at any site to which that site may be linked. The Court accepts no responsibility for the availability or functionality of any hyperlink.

#### (B) Official Court Record

- (i) The Clerk's Office will not maintain a paper court file in any case begun on or after January 1, 2004, except as otherwise provided herein. The official court record shall be the electronic file as stored by the court, and any manually filed documents or exhibits filed in accordance with these procedures.

- (ii) Original documents must be retained by the filing party and made available, upon request, to the Court and other parties for a period of one year following the expiration of all time periods for appeals.

(C) Complaints, Petitions, Summons and Charging Instruments

- (i) Registered attorneys must open most civil complaints, notices of removal, and petitions for habeas corpus online (see 2(A)(i) for exemptions from this rule). Filing fees for civil cases opened online are submitted using a credit card during the opening process. Charging instruments in criminal cases shall be submitted manually rather than electronically. In addition, when a case is submitted manually, registered attorneys shall provide the initiating document, in electronic format on a CD or DVD, in PDF format, with signatures in accordance with Section 2(G) below.
- (ii) Entry of party names shall follow the Standard Party Guidelines, available at Section 4(C) and on the Court's website at [www.nywd.uscourts.gov](http://www.nywd.uscourts.gov).
- (iii) When opening a civil case online, the civil cover sheet, summons (if applicable) and marshal forms (if applicable) must be attached to the initiating document as individual attachments. The filer should complete the summons prior to uploading it as an attachment to the opening document.
- (iv) Summons will be issued electronically and returned to the registered attorney through an entry in the System.

(D) Attachments, Exhibits, Large Documents and Color Documents

- (i) Filing users must submit in electronic form all documents referenced as exhibits or attachments, except as otherwise provided herein. A filing user must submit as exhibits or attachments only those excerpts of the referenced documents that are directly germane to the matter under consideration by the court. Excerpted material must be clearly and prominently identified as such. Filing users who file excerpts of documents as exhibits or attachments under this rule do so without prejudice to their right to timely file additional excerpts or the complete document. Responding parties may timely file additional excerpts or the complete document that they believe are directly germane. The Court may require parties to file additional excerpts or the complete document. A filing user must request leave of the Court to file a document exhibit or attachment in non-electronic form (see 2(D)(vii)).
- (ii) All documents filed in CM/ECF must be less than fifty Megabytes (50 MB) in size. Due to potential processing errors, we recommend that users limit attachments to twenty or fewer per docket entry. CM/ECF cannot merge

multiple attachments into a single document if the sum total file size of all attachments is larger than 50 MB.

- (iii) Continuation of exhibit entries (for exhibits that are too large to attach to a main document) must be filed and entered on the same day that the main document was filed.
- (iv) Color Documents - Documents in color or containing graphics take longer to upload. Filing users are encouraged to configure their scanners to scan documents at 200 dpi and preferably in black and white or grayscale rather than color.
- (v) Large Documents - A party who believes a document is too lengthy to electronically image (*i.e.* scan), may contact the Court Room Deputy for the assigned judge and request permission to file that document manually (in paper form). If granted permission to file the document manually, the filing user shall electronically file a Notice of Manual Filing for that item. Exhibits submitted to the Court manually shall be served on other parties manually.
- (vi) Exhibits offered or admitted at trial will not be filed electronically or manually unless so ordered by the Court.
- (vii) Exhibits such as videotapes, CDs, DVDs, and tape recordings shall be filed manually with the Clerk of Court, and a Notice of Manual Filing shall be electronically filed by the party. Manually filed exhibits must have the case number and case name securely fastened or permanently marked on the item.

#### (E) Timely Filing of Documents

- (i) A document will be deemed timely filed if filed prior to midnight Eastern Time, unless otherwise ordered by the Court. A document will be considered untimely if filed thereafter. When a Court order requires that a document be filed on a weekend or holiday, the document may be filed by close of business the next business day without further application to the Court.
- (ii) A document filed electronically is deemed filed on the date and time stated on the Notice of Electronic Filing.

#### (F) Service of Documents by Electronic Means

- (i) Registered users consent to the electronic service of all documents, and must make available an electronic mail address for service during the registration process. Upon the filing of a document by a party, a Notice of Electronic Filing, with a hyperlink to the filed document, will be automatically generated by the electronic filing system and sent via



electronic mail to the e-mail addresses of all parties participating in the electronic filing system in the case. Electronic service of the Notice of Electronic Filing constitutes service of the filed document for all purposes of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure and the Local Rules of this Court.

- (ii) The hyperlink to filed documents contained in the Notice of Electronic Filing must be opened within 15 days from the date the document was filed to provide registered users access to the document. The hyperlink expires after 15 days and users will be unable to access documents for free after that time. Filing users are encouraged to check their e-mail frequently for notice of filed documents.
- (iii) Attorneys granted an exemption from electronically filing documents in the System and pro se litigants who have not been granted permission to electronically file documents are entitled to a paper copy of any electronically filed pleading, document, or order. The filing party must therefore provide the non-registered party with the pleading, document, or order according to the Federal Rules of Civil and Criminal Procedures.
- (iv) The Notice of Electronic Filing effectuates service for all registered users and no certificate of service is required when all filers on an action are registered users. The following exemptions require a certificate of service to be filed (refer to Section 4(B) for a sample):
  - (1) When a document is manually filed, a certificate of service must be filed stating the manner in which service or notice was accomplished on each party so entitled. This may be an attachment to the required Notice of Manual Filing.
  - (2) When a pro se filer (who isn't authorized to electronically file documents) is a party, a certificate of service must be filed stating the manner in which service or notice was accomplished on the pro se party. The Notice of Electronic Filing effectuates service for the registered users in this situation and it is not necessary to note service on those parties. Non-registered pro se filers are required to file certificates of service on all documents they file.
  - (3) If an attorney is exempt from electronic service, a certificate of service must be filed stating the manner in which service or notice was accomplished on the exempt attorney. The Notice of Electronic Filing effectuates service for the registered users in this situation and it is not necessary to note service on those parties.
- (v) E-mailing or faxing a pleading or document to any party shall **not** constitute service of the pleading or document.

(G) Signatures

- (i) Non-Attorney Signatures Generally. If the original document requires the signature of a non-attorney, the filing party shall obtain the signature of the non-attorney on the document.
  - (1) The filing party or attorney then shall file the document electronically indicating the signatory's name in the form "**s/(name).**"
  - (2) A non-filing signatory or party who disputes the authenticity of an electronically filed document or the authenticity of the signature on that document must file an objection to the document within ten days of receiving the Notice of Electronic Filing.
- (ii) Defendant Signatures in Criminal Cases. A document containing the signature of a defendant in a criminal case will be filed in a scanned format that contains an image of the defendant's signature.
- (iii) Registered User Signature. The username and password required to file documents on the Electronic Filing System serve as the filing user's signature on all electronic documents filed with this Court for purposes of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (including Rule 11), the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, the Local Rules of this Court, and any other purposes for which a signature is required in connection with proceedings before the Court. A pleading requiring a registered user's signature must include a signature block in the following format:

s/Attorney's typed name	s/Registered pro se litigant's name
<i>Attorney for [pltf/deft]</i>	<i>pro se</i>
Firm Name	Address
Address	Telephone Number
Telephone Number	Email Address
Email Address	

For certificates of service, affidavits, affirmations, and declarations **only**, the signature block may be in the following format:

s/registered user's typed name

Any party challenging the authenticity of an electronically filed document or the attorney's signature on that document must file an objection to the document within ten days of receiving the Notice of Electronic Filing.

- (iv) Multiple Signatures. The following procedure applies when a stipulation or other document requires two or more signatures:
  - (1) The filing party shall initially confirm that the document is acceptable to all persons required to sign the document and shall obtain the

signatures of all parties on the document.

- (2) The filing party or attorney then shall file the document electronically indicating the signatories, e.g., **s/Jane Doe, s/John Smith, etc.**
  - (3) A non-filing signatory or party who disputes the authenticity of an electronically filed document containing multiple signatures or the authenticity of the signatures themselves must file an objection to the document within ten days of receiving the Notice of Electronic Filing.
- (v) Originals of all documents containing signatures must be retained by the filing party and made available, upon request, to the Court and other parties for a period of one year following the expiration of all time periods for appeals.
- (H) Fees Payable to the Clerk
- (i) Any fee required for filing of a pleading or paper in District Court is payable to the Clerk of Court by check or money order. In addition, when opening a civil case online, filing a notice of appeal online, or applying to appear pro hac vice online, the fees shall be paid online by registered users through pay.gov. Users will be directed to pay.gov while entering their transaction and should have a credit card available. When opening a civil case and applying to proceed in forma pauperis or when the United States of America opens a case, the payment screen can be bypassed to complete the transaction. Additional information on making electronic payments can be located on our website: [www.nywd.uscourts.gov](http://www.nywd.uscourts.gov).
  - (ii) Case filing fees that are due after case opening, such as when application to proceed in forma pauperis is denied, may be paid only by check or money order that is hand-delivered or mailed to the Clerk of Court.
- (I) Title of Docket Entries
- The party electronically filing a pleading or document shall be responsible for designating a docket entry title for the document by using one of the docket events prescribed by the Court.
- (J) Stipulations
- Pursuant to Local Rule of Civil Procedure 29 and 41, and Local Rule of Criminal Procedure 49.3, all stipulations (regardless of whether it requires a judge's signature) shall be filed electronically.
- (K) Filing Letters Electronically
- (i) Letters may be filed electronically pursuant to Local Rule of Civil Procedure 5.1(h) – please note that judges preferences can be located on

our website: [www.nywd.uscourts.gov](http://www.nywd.uscourts.gov). If the letter makes a request (such as requesting an extension of time) and the judge permits letters, file it using the Motion event with appropriate relief selected.

- (ii) Letters to the Court from attorneys that are submitted manually will not be entered on the docket and marked filed unless directed by the Judge.
- (iii) Letters to the Court from pro se filers that are submitted manually:
  - (1) **Civil Cases:** will be entered on the docket and marked filed.
  - (2) **Criminal Cases:** will not be entered on the docket and marked filed unless directed by the Judge.

(L) Proposed Orders

- (i) Other than Discovery Plans, proposed orders may only be filed on the system as attachments to motions or other filed documents. In addition, proposed orders should be attached to an e-mail sent to the chambers of the assigned judge. No other documents, pleadings or electronic communications may be sent to the above e-mail addresses unless prior approval has been granted. The e-mail addresses are as follows:

Chief Judge Wolford	wolford@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Geraci	geraci@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Vilaro	vilaro@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Sinatra	sinatra@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Larimer	larimer@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Siragusa	siragusa@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Arcara	arcara@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Skretny	skretny@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Reiss	elizabeth_hall@vtd.uscourts.gov
Judge Sessions	elizabeth_evelti@vtd.uscourts.gov
Judge Schroeder	schroeder@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Payson	payson@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge McCarthy	mccarthy@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Roemer	roemer@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Pedersen	pedersen@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Foschio	foschio@nywd.uscourts.gov
Judge Feldman	feldman@nywd.uscourts.gov

- (ii) All proposed orders must be emailed in a format compatible with Microsoft Word, which has a "Save As" option, as is true with most word processing software. Judges will not accept proposed orders in PDF format.
- (iii) Proposed Discovery Plans or Case Management Orders may be e-filed using the Discovery Plan filing event.

(M) Orders and Judgments

- (i) All signed orders and judgments will be electronically filed by the Court. Any electronically signed order or judgment has the same force and effect as a conventional order or judgment. Sealed orders and orders on sealed cases will be mailed via the U.S. Postal Service to all registered users, and pro se litigants and attorneys exempt from electronically filing (and receiving) documents.
- (ii) The assigned judge, if appropriate, may issue routine orders by a text-only entry upon the docket. In such cases, no PDF document will issue; the text-only entry shall constitute the Court's only order on the matter.
- (iii) Immediately upon the entry of an order or judgment in an action assigned to the Electronic Filing System, the clerk will transmit to the filing users in the case, in electronic form, a Notice of Electronic Filing. Electronic transmission of the Notice of Electronic Filing constitutes the notice required by Fed.R.Civ.P. 77(d) and Fed.R.Crim.P. 49(c). The clerk must give notice in paper form to a person who has not consented to electronic service in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

(N) Appeals

- (i) In Civil and Criminal cases, appeals to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals are entered and automatically transmitted to the Clerk of the Second Circuit via the Notice of Appeal event in CM/ECF.

Within 14 days of filing the Notice of Appeal, the appellant is required to electronically file with the District Court an index of filed documents it wishes the Court of Appeals to consider, called Designation of the Record on Appeal. After receipt, the Clerk's Office will certify and transmit the index to the Circuit.

- (ii) Appeals of a Magistrate Judge decision to the District Court should be entered on the system using the event related to case type. If an appeal is filed on an MJ case, the Clerk's Office will follow-up by opening a miscellaneous criminal case assigned to a randomly selected district judge.
  - (1) CR case type: Appeal of Magistrate Judge Decision to District Court – Criminal Case
  - (2) MJ case type: Appeal of Magistrate Judge Decision to District Court – Magistrate Judge Case
  - (3) CV case type: Appeal of Magistrate Judge Decision to District Court

Objections to a Magistrate's Report and Recommendation are not considered appeals and should not be filed as such. Objections to an R&R may be filed using the event of the same name.

- (iii) Appeals of an order or judgment from the Bankruptcy Court must be initially filed with the Bankruptcy Court. The Clerk of that court will transmit the necessary information to the District Court Clerk to open a case and randomly assign a district judge to the appeal.

(O) Correcting Docket Entries

- (i) Once a document is submitted and accepted, it becomes part of the case docket. The System will not permit non-court electronic filers to make changes to the document(s) or docket entry.
- (ii) A document incorrectly filed in a case may be the result of posting the wrong PDF file to a docket entry, selecting the wrong document type from the menu, entering the incorrect case number or not catching the error before the transaction is completed. **The filing party should not attempt to re-file the document.**
- (iii) As soon as possible after an error is discovered, the filing party should telephone the Clerk's Office (Buffalo: 716-551-1700 or Rochester: 585-613-4000) with the case number and document number for which the correction is being requested. If appropriate, the Court will make an entry indicating that the document was filed in error. The filing user will be advised if the document needs to be re-filed. In such cases, the Court will make a determination on the timeliness of the re-filed document. The Clerk's Office will never delete an entire entry from a docket. When entries are corrected, the Clerk's Office will enter a remark on the docket in the form of an e-filing notification which will summarize the correction. It will also advise if further action is required by the filing user.
- (iv) If a document containing information that is confidential or should have been redacted by the filer is entered on the system by a filing user, the filing user must contact the Clerk's Office immediately to notify court staff of the error. The Clerk will temporarily restrict the entry to court users and parties only and will contact the courtroom deputy for guidance.

(P) Privacy

In all filings, parties shall comply with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2 or Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 49.1.

(Q) Manual Opening of Certain Types of Cases

Miscellaneous Civil, Miscellaneous Criminal, Sealed and Criminal cases should be opened manually, which is to say delivered to the Clerk's Office and processed by court staff. If such cases are sealed, they will not be available electronically, except to court users, until such time as they are unsealed by order of the Court. An optical disc (CD or DVD) with all opening documents in .pdf format (as separate files on the disc) should accompany the paper originals of the documents.

(R) Manual Filing of Documents

The following procedures govern documents filed manually (by delivery of tangible object to the Clerk's Office). The Court, upon application, may also authorize manual filing of other documents.

If the manually filed document is larger than 5 pages, an optical disc (CD or DVD) should be provided to the Clerk's Office which contains the document in .pdf format. In many instances, the Clerk's Office will upload the documents to the docket, with default electronica access only for court users.

(i) **Documents filed Under Seal.**

- (1) Non-redacted documents filed with the Court pursuant to the privacy provisions of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2, Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 49.1 shall be submitted in a sealing envelope with the following on the envelope.

Case name and number  
Non-redacted version of document #\_\_ e-filed on <date>  
FILE UNDER SEAL

Court staff will add the non-redacted document to the docket as a Sealed Unredacted Document filed on the same date that the redacted version of the document was filed electronically by the attorney.

- (2) No document shall be filed under seal without approval by the Court, except as authorized by statute or federal rule. A party seeking to file a document under seal shall deliver a paper copy of the following documents directly to the chambers of the assigned judge, **without** electronically filing the same:
  - a. original document to be sealed;
  - b. a supporting affidavit setting forth the reasons as to why the document should be placed under seal and, if appropriate, a memorandum of law ("supporting materials");

- c. an envelope (“sealing envelope”) large enough to accommodate the proposed sealed item to which is affixed a label bearing the case name, case number and the words “Sealed per Order of Judge”; and
- d. a proposed order granting the motion to seal.

In addition, the registered user shall electronically file a Notice of Motion which shall identify the nature of the documents to be sealed, but need not state the reasons why sealing is necessary. Motions by the government to file a warrant under seal are excluded from this requirement. In all other cases, a party seeking to be relieved of this requirement or seeking to file an *ex parte* motion to seal shall contact the chambers of the assigned judge for instructions.

If the motion to seal is granted, the assigned judge will sign the sealing envelope and electronically file an order authorizing the filing of the document under seal and provide the document to the Clerk’s Office for filing. The assigned judge, in his or her discretion, may also direct that the supporting materials be filed under seal. The Clerk’s Office will electronically file the document(s) using the SEALED DOCUMENT event, which does not allow the document to be viewed electronically by anyone other than court users.

If the motion to seal is denied, the assigned judge shall enter an order denying the motion and return the documents and supporting materials to the moving party.

- (ii) **Fully sealed actions.** When an entire case is sealed, whether by order of the court or as authorized by statute or federal rule, sealing envelopes are not required for the filing of individual documents on those actions. However, filers are required to attach a cover page on the front of their document/disc with the following information:

Case Name:

Case Number:

This action is fully sealed and this must be filed under seal pursuant to (choose one) order of the court or as authorized by statute or federal rule.

- (iii) **Magistrate Judge Consents.** Pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 73(b), parties’ filing consents to jurisdiction by United States Magistrate Judge will continue to be treated as non-public documents until all parties have consented. Therefore, parties must **submit manually (in paper form) and not** electronically file their consent forms so that the consent is not a public document. If all parties consent to the jurisdiction of a Magistrate Judge, the Clerk will scan all consent forms which will then be electronically filed by the Clerk and become a public document.



Parties may submit, in paper form, the consent with original signatures or a consent which contains signatures using the s/party or attorney's typed name. If a consent is submitted with the s/party or attorney's typed name, filers are reminded that pursuant to Section 2(B) of this Administrative Guide original documents with signatures must be retained by the filing party.

- (iv) **Pro Se Filers.** Pro Se filers shall file paper originals of all initiating documents, pleadings, motions, affidavits, briefs and other documents which must be signed or which require either verification or an unsworn declaration under any rule or statute. The Clerk's Office will scan these original documents into an electronic file in the System. A certificate of service is required for all documents a pro se litigant files with the court. If a Pro Se filer is granted permission to register to electronically file documents, they shall comply with the guidelines contained in this document.
- (v) **Habeas Corpus Cases.** Absent a showing of good cause, and except as provided in Section 2(R)(4) above, all documents, notices and orders in habeas corpus cases pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254 will be filed and noticed electronically, except as noted below.
  - (1) The state court record in habeas corpus cases may be electronically filed. Alternately, it may be manually filed if scanning that set of documents and filing or retrieving them electronically is impractical. In such instance, the filing party shall enter a Notice of Manual Filing and deliver a paper copy to the Clerk's office on the same day. If the administrative record is submitted for manual filing, the Clerk's Office will docket a text only event stating that the record was received and is available in paper form at the Clerk's Office.
  - (2) All original state court records submitted for manual filing must be marked "ORIGINAL." Upon the close of the appeal period after case termination, the Clerk's Office will return original records to the filing party and make an entry on the docket noting the return of documents. Photocopies (not stamped original) will not be returned.
  - (3) All other documents in the case, including briefs, will be filed and served electronically unless the Court otherwise orders.
  - (4) Access to electronic records in Habeas Corpus cases is governed by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2.

- (vi) **Social Security Cases.** Absent a showing of good cause, and except as provided in Section 2(R)(4) above, all documents, notices and orders in social security reviews will be filed and noticed electronically, except as noted below.
- (1) The administrative record in Social Security cases is typically electronically filed, but may be manually filed and served if scanning that set of documents and filing or retrieving them electronically is impractical. In such instance, the filing party shall enter a Notice of Manual Filing and deliver a paper copy to the Clerk's office on the same day. If the administrative record is submitted for manual filing, the Clerk's Office will docket a text-only event stating that the transcript was received and is available in paper form in the Clerk's Office.
  - (2) All other documents in the case, including briefs, will be filed and served electronically unless the Court otherwise orders.
  - (3) Access to electronic records in Social Security cases is governed by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2.
- (vii) **Electronic access to sealed or restricted items**
- (1) Sealed documents docket entries and cases shall only be viewable by court users. Attorneys, PACER, and Public Terminal users will not have access to sealed entries or documents. If a docket entry is sealed, the public docket will not show the entry on the docket sheet, often leading to "skipped" document numbers. When a document is sealed, attempts to access the document by an attorney, PACER, or public terminal will be denied, with a message indicating that the document or case is sealed.
  - (2) A judge may direct that access be granted to case participants or applicable parties on specific cases. Only registered users will have the ability to view sealed cases and documents when this access is permitted. Full instructions on how to access restricted or sealed documents are available on the Western District of New York website.
  - (3) A judge may also direct that registered users be granted access to electronically file documents on a sealed case. If such access is granted, registered users are reminded that they must manually serve all documents on all case participants in paper form. CM/ECF does not electronically serve sealed documents on registered users.

(S) Motion to Unseal Case or Document

A party seeking to have a sealed case or document unsealed must seek relief by motion on notice.

A non-party moving to unseal a case or document shall file the motion and supporting documents to open a miscellaneous civil case and pay the required fee. The Clerk will assign a case number. The judge will be assigned after a review of documents to determine any related cases. The Clerk will not provide any information about sealed matters, including case name, number, or status.

(T) Bounce Back E-mails

If the Clerk's Office receives a "bounce back" (*i.e.*, an undeliverable e-mail) notice from a registered user's primary or secondary e-mail account, no follow up will occur by Court staff. It is the registered user's responsibility to update all information as it pertains to the user's account.

(U) Government Attorneys

- (i) Upon request, CM/ECF logins/passwords are issued to attorneys employed by the government. Upon transfer to different government agencies, users must fax (716-551-1705) notification to the Clerk and include updated U.S. mail and e-mail addresses.
- (ii) Government users who leave government agencies and do not transfer to other government agencies must fax notification to the Clerk so that their accounts may be deactivated.
- (iii) Government users associated with government agencies who leave government practice must already be or become members of the Bar of the Western District of New York in order to have continued access to CM/ECF. Information on becoming a member of the Western District of New York can be obtained on our web site at: [www.nywd.uscourts.gov](http://www.nywd.uscourts.gov)
- (iv) Government agencies must also notify the Clerk when users leave the agencies. A notice of substitution of counsel must be filed in order for a government agency to receive future CM/ECF notices regarding case activity associated with a user who is no longer with the agency.

(V) System Availability

Although parties may file documents electronically 24 hours a day, registered users are strongly encouraged to file all documents during normal working hours of the Clerk's Office (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time).

(W) Technical Failures

A filing user whose filing is made untimely as a result of a technical failure must seek appropriate relief from the Court.

3. PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE SYSTEM

(A) Public Access at the Court.

A person may review at the Clerk's Office filings that have not been sealed by the Court. Only a registered user may file documents electronically. Electronic access to the electronic docket and documents filed in the System is available to the public at no charge at the Clerk's Office during regular business hours. A copy fee for an electronic reproduction is required in accordance with 28 U.S.C. Section 1914.

(B) Internet Access

Remote electronic access to the System for viewing purposes is limited to subscribers to the Public Access to Court Electronic Records ("PACER") System. The Judicial Conference of the United States has ruled that a user fee will be charged for remotely accessing certain detailed case information, such as filed documents and docket sheets in civil cases, but excluding review of calendars and similar general information. Parties' initial access to a document filed electronically is free of charge via the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF). Parties are encouraged to download or print the filed document when it is initially accessed via the Notice of Electronic Filing generated by the System.

(C) Conventional Copies and Certified Copies

Conventional copies and certified copies of electronically filed documents may be purchased at the Clerk's Office. The fee for copying and certifying will be in accordance with 28 U.S.C. Section 1914.

## 4. Appendices

### (A) WORKING WITH PDFs

The court requires a document filed in CM/ECF to be in a Portable Document Format (PDF). To upload a document to the CM/ECF system in a PDF format, a filer must have computer software that (1) enables a document's conversion to PDF from a word processor format or (2) reads a scanned copy of a document and converts the image to PDF.

A PDF document filed in CM/ECF or submitted to the Court in addition to any required paper copy of the document must be text searchable. The Court deems any PDF that is not text-searchable to be non-conforming and the Court may return or strike a PDF that is not text-searchable to a filer for resubmission.

A filer must also combine multiple PDFs in certain instances, alter a PDF's pagination so that it matches the way the filer initially paginated the submitted document (*i.e.* make the page numbers properly text-searchable), and divide an oversized PDF for appropriate submission in CM/ECF. Adobe Acrobat Standard or Adobe Acrobat enables a user, among other things, to combine multiple separate PDFs into one PDF as required. Either program also permits necessary adjustment of a PDF's default pagination which designates the first page of a document as Arabic number 1 and continues with sequential Arabic numbering even when the filer has paginated the document differently (*e.g.*, when a filer paginates a brief's table of contents and table of authorities with Roman numerals and argument sections in Arabic numerals). Either program also provides easy manipulation of a PDF so that it can be broken down when its file size is too large.

The CM/ECF system accommodates Adobe Acrobat Version 5 and higher. If a user's computer does not meet this software requirement, a filer can obtain Adobe Acrobat Reader, Adobe Acrobat Standard or Adobe Acrobat Professional software from Adobe's website.

Disclaimer: The Court does not promote any specific software and this content is for informational purposes only.

(B) Sample Certificate of Service.

United States District Court  
Western District of New York

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Case No.

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**Certificate of Service**

I hereby certify that on \_\_\_\_\_, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the District Court using its CM/ECF system, which would then electronically notify the following CM/ECF participants on this case:

- 1.
- 2.

And, I hereby certify that I have mailed the foregoing, by the United States Postal Service, to the following non-CM/ECF participants:

- 1.
- 2.

s/typed name

## (C) Standard Party Guidelines

If unsure how to enter a specific party name, please contact the Clerk's Office for guidance.

**1. Corporate Names** Enter the entire corporate name as it appears in the complaint in the last name field. If the name is spelled out in the complaint, spell it out when entering the party. If it is not spelled out, use abbreviations as they appear in the complaint.

Example: The Enrich Company, Inc.

**Last Name: The Enrich Company, Inc.**

ABC Corp.

**Last Name: ABC Corp.**

**2. Social Security Cases** Always enter the party name as Commissioner of Social Security.

Example: Department of Health and Human Services,  
Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security  
Social Security Commissioner  
Secretary of Health and Human Services

**Last Name: Commissioner of Social Security**

**3. John Does** If the complaint includes numerous John does, add as one party name. Never add the numbers, letters or roman numerals to the party name - always add as party text.

Example: John Doe I-X

**Last Name: Doe First Name: John**

**Party Text: I-X**

John Doe Police Officers 1-10

**Last Name: Doe First Name: John**

**Party Text: Police Officers 1-10**

## 4. Estates

Example: The Estate of James Sentinel by Ann Smith

**Last Name: Smith First Name: Ann**

**Party Text: Executor of the Estate of**

**Then create Alias:**

**Last Name: Sentinel First Name: James**

**Alias Code: dec**

## 5. Individuals with Titles

Example: James S. Haviland, Warden of Attica Correctional Facility

**Last Name: Haviland First Name: James**

**Middle Name: S.**

**Party Text: Warden of Attica Correctional Facility**

## 6. Unknown Names

Example: Unknown Spouse of Jim Keller, if any

**Last Name: Unknown Spouse, if any, of Jim Keller**

## 7. Union Names

Example: Building Laborers Local 310 Pension Fund

**Last Name: Building Laborers Local 310 Pension Fund**

## 8. Residences

Example: In the matter of 428 Main Street, Rochester, New York  
**Last Name: 428 Main Street, Rochester, New York**  
**Party Text: In the matter of**

## 9. Vehicles

Example: One 1992 Ford Focus VIN 141JC144N7136603  
**Last Name: One 1992 Ford Focus**  
**Party Text: VIN 141JC144N7136603**

## 10. Currency

Example: \$1,000 in US Currency  
**Last Name: \$1,000 in US Currency**

## 11. Cities, Towns, etc.

Example: City of Buffalo  
**Last Name: City of Buffalo**  
State of New York  
**Last Name: State of New York**