

U.S. District and Bankruptcy Courts for the District of Columbia

# Media User Guide: Access to Electronic Court Records

Tips and Information for Online Access to Court Records by Media Account Users

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Revised: March 2013



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT AND BANKRUPTCY COURTS  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**Online Access to Court Records  
for the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia**

**PACER Information**

Online access to court records can be obtained through **PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records)**. PACER contains docket sheets for nearly all civil and criminal cases filed in the federal court in the District of Columbia since 1970. In addition, the system provides access to civil case documents since January 2004, and most criminal case documents after March 15, 2005.

Fees apply for most documents (currently 10 cents per page with a maximum charge of \$3.00 per document). For further information on obtaining a PACER account or questions regarding PACER fees, contact:

PACER Service Center  
P.O. Box 780549  
San Antonio, TX 78278  
(800) 676-6856 or (210) 301-6440  
<http://www.pacer.gov>

Members of the media may receive email notification of filings in individual cases. To establish an email notification account, media members must submit a completed Media Account Application.

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# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## MEDIA APPLICATION FOR EMAIL NOTIFICATION

This form permits the media to apply for a read-only Media account to receive email notification of filings in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia's Electronic Case Filing (ECF) System. The Court reserves the right to grant, deny or withdraw access to the system at any time. Individuals whose requests are approved will be provided with an ID and password that permit the user to sign up to receive electronic notices of Court orders and attorney filings in selected cases.

The following information is required for registration:

First Name/Middle Initial/Last Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Last four digits of Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Media Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

By submitting this registration form, the undersigned agrees:

1. To follow any orders (as directed by the presiding judge in any court proceedings) and *the guidelines for an email notification account* as provided herein. Failure to comply with this directive may result in sanctions for a media representative and/or the organization he or she represents.
2. Upon receipt of the login and password, a media participant is strongly encouraged to change his/her password to a password easily recalled, which may be done through the Utilities function in ECF. Renewed password requests will not be accepted by phone and may not be obtained for two to three weeks after appearing in person to obtain a new password. Under no circumstances should the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Judge, nor a member of the staff, be contacted for lost passwords.

3. The documentation on the Court's website has been read and the Clerk's Office shall not be contacted for instructions on the use of PACER.

Please return this form by mail to: Tiffany Gough, ECF Coordinator  
U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia  
333 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 1720  
Washington, DC 20001

Email to: Attention: Tiffany Gough re: Media Account  
U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia  
Email: [Tiffany\\_Gough@dcd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Tiffany_Gough@dcd.uscourts.gov)

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Full Last Name                      Initial of First Name                      Last 4 Digits SS#

# UNITED STATES DISTRICT AND BANKRUPTCY COURTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Setting Up Email Notification

Users can receive email notification of all electronic filings in cases in which they are interested by setting the automatic email notification in their user account. This is done by the following method:

1. Log into the Court's ECF system using your ECF media account or PACER account.
2. Click **UTILITIES** on the blue menu bar.
3. Select **Maintain Your E-mail** under **Your Account**.
4. Your *Primary email address* will be displayed (**Figure 1**). You may include more than one email address (i.e., work, home, etc.).
5. To add *Secondary e-mail addresses*, select **add new e-mail address**. Once you add a valid address in the field provided, additional information will appear.
6. You can select how notices should be sent to you, either on a **Per Filing** basis or through daily **Summary Report**. Per filing notices are sent the exact time something is filed, while a daily summary report is sent to you at the end of the day (after midnight). The summary report has no fee; however, accessing the documents from the summary will incur PACER costs.
7. To add specific cases to your email notifications, enter them one at a time into the ***Add additional cases for noticing*** field.

## Entering a Case Number

To enter a civil, miscellaneous, criminal or magistrate case number, follow the guide below:

<b>Civil case number:</b>	1:10-cv-00210 may be entered as <b>10cv210</b>
<b>Miscellaneous case number:</b>	1:10-mc-00210 may be entered as <b>10mc210</b>
<b>Criminal case number:</b>	1:10-cr-00210 may be entered as <b>10cr210</b>
<b>Magistrate case number:</b>	1:10-mj-00210 may be entered as <b>10mj210</b>

**OR**

Simply enter the case number as **10-210** and select a case by checking the appropriate box as shown below:

*Case-specific options*

Add additional cases for noticing

10-210

Select a case:

1:10-cr-00210-RWR USA v. GARCIA

1:10-cv-00210-PLF LAIL et al v. UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT et al (closed 03/24/2011)

1:10-mc-00210-RWR GARMIN INTERNATIONAL, INC. et al v. PIONEER CORPORATION (closed 05/20/2010)

- Once you have selected the case number, click on [**Add Case(s)**]. At this point, you may add as many cases as you would like to receive notification; however, you must click [**Add Case(s)**] after each case number to register it to your account.
  - After you enter all of the cases you are interested in, you can click [**Show all cases for this e-mail address**] and a pop-up screen will appear showing all those cases that you will receive notification of.
8. Once all email specifications have been entered or modified, click [**Submit all changes**] to save your account specifications.

**Figure 1**

**ECF**   Civil ▾   Criminal ▾   Query   Reports ▾   Utilities ▾   Search   Logout

Email Information for atty20

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**Registered e-mail addresses**

Primary e-mail address:  
[tiffany\\_reed@dcd.uscourts.gov](mailto:tiffany_reed@dcd.uscourts.gov)

Secondary e-mail addresses:  
[add new e-mail address](#)

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**Configuration options**

Should this e-mail address receive notices?  Yes  No

How should notices be sent to this e-mail address?  Per Filing  Summary Report

In what format should notices be sent to this e-mail address?  HTML  Text

Should this e-mail address receive general announcement notices from this court?  Yes  No

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**Case-specific options**

Add additional cases for noticing

These cases will send notice *per filing*. (default method)

1:10-cv-00072-ESH JUDICIAL WATCH, INC. v. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY (Closed on 08/02/2010) (interest)
1:90-cv-00042-UNA USA v. REEVES (Closed on 03/13/1991) - Representing GINA L. REEVES
1:91-cr-00002-SS-3 USA v. MARTINEZ (Closed on 04/05/1998) - Representing MARIO MARTINEZ, SR
1:91-cr-00096-CRR-1 USA v. GREENE (Closed on 05/27/2004) - Representing KIRK D. GREENE
1:91-cr-00250-WBB-1 USA v. MASON (Closed on 12/10/1991) - Representing JAMES LARRY MASON
1:97-mj-00417-DAR-1 USA v. LEE - Representing YOLANDA D. LEE
1:98-cr-00186-RCL-2 USA v. SALAZAR-REINA - Representing NELIA DELSECORRO SALAZAR-REINA
1:98-cr-00391-CKK-1 USA v. ORTIZ - Representing LUIS ELIAS ORTIZ

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These cases will send notice *as a summary report*. (alternate method)

<input type="text"/>
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(Copy case lists from here)

# UNITED STATES DISTRICT AND BANKRUPTCY COURTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Use of the Docket Activity Report

The Docket Activity Report can be used to provide members of the media with a Virtual Press Box of documents filed with the court for any day, or during any date range, with convenient links to the documents themselves. A search of documents may be narrowed to documents filed in a specific case. (**NOTE: Applicable PACER fees apply**).

For example, to obtain a list of documents filed from May 28<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007, the user would follow these steps:

1. Log into the Court's ECF system using your ECF media account or PACER account.
2. Click **REPORTS** on the blue menu bar.
3. Select **Docket Activity**.
4. The user will be required to enter a PACER password in order to see the report.
5. The **Docket Activity Report** screen (**Figure 2**) provides a variety of selection criteria (e.g., Case number, Office, Case Type, Event Category, Case Flags, etc.). The default values should remain the same. The user should only change the items necessary to narrow the focus of the cases he or she wishes to see. In this example, only the date range needs to be altered.
  - a. To obtain the cases filed on January 1<sup>st</sup> through January 31<sup>st</sup>, change the date to read: "Filed between 1/1/2013 and 1/31/2013."
  - b. **Tip:** For cost effectiveness, leave the default to **Summary text**, as running a report with **Full docket text** will produce a lengthier report.
6. Click [**Run Report**].
7. The system provides the user with a list of documents entered in the system on those dates.
8. If the user were looking to find orders, he or she would choose in the event category – Order.

**NOTE:** In the event category, the search can be narrowed for a single case by selecting one, or more categories. To capture all events on a given day, the user should let the report default. The following are categories that can provide certain information for a single case or all cases.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| • answer       | all civil answers                               |
| • appeal       | all civil appeals                               |
| • appeal-cr    | all criminal appeals                            |
| • charge       | all indictments, complaints, informations, etc. |
| • cmp          | all civil complaints                            |
| • detention-cr | all criminal detentions documents               |
| • discov       | all civil discovery                             |
| • discovery-cr | all criminal discovery                          |
| • minutes      | all in-court civil hearings                     |
| • minutes-cr   | all in-court criminal hearings                  |
| • misc         | miscellaneous civil filings                     |
| • misc-cr      | miscellaneous criminal filings                  |
| • miscs        | miscellaneous case filings                      |
| • mot2255      | motion vacate or set aside in criminal cases    |

- motion                   all civil and criminal motions
- notice                   all notices in civil cases
- notice-cr               all notices in criminal cases
- order                    all civil orders
- order-cr                all criminal orders
- plea-cr                 all criminal pleas
- respm                  all civil oppositions, replies, surreplies, etc.
- respm-cr               all criminal oppositions, responses, etc.
- resp-oth               all other responses
- service                all civil summons
- service-cr             all criminal service documents
- transfer                all civil transfer cases
- transfer-cr            all criminal transfer cases
- trial                    all civil trials
- trial-cr                all criminal trials

The time it takes to run the report is dependent upon the selection criteria and the number of users on the system. It is recommended that users experiment with whichever criteria meet their needs.

You may strengthen your search by searching by case flags also. The following are Case Flag Types or Categories:

**CIVIL CASE FLAG TYPES:**

- TYPE A – Antitrust
- TYPE B – Personal Injury/Malpractice
- TYPE C – Administrative Agency Review
- TYPE D – Temporary Restraining Order/ Preliminary Injunction
- TYPE E – General Civil
- TYPE F – Pro Se General
- TYPE G – Habeas Corpus/2255
- TYPE H – Employment Discrimination
- TYPE I – FOIA/Privacy Act
- TYPE J – Student Loan
- TYPE K – Labor/ERISA
- TYPE L – Other Civil Rights/Non-Employment
- TYPE M – Contract
- TYPE N – Three-Judge Court
- TYPE O – Miscellaneous Cases

**CRIMINAL CASE FLAG CATEGORIES:**

- Category A – Criminal Information
- Category B – Criminal Indictment

Figure 2

**MECF** Civil ▾ Criminal ▾ Query Reports ▾ Utilities ▾ Search Logout ?

**Warning: This report is not subject to the 30 page billing cap.**  
You will be billed for the total number of pages. If you want to run a report for a single case, you can use the Query Menu or the Docket Report.

**Docket Activity Report PUBLIC ACCESS**

Case number

Only cases to which I am linked  Open cases  
 Closed cases

Office  Case type   
Civil  
Criminal

Event category   
adr  
answer

Case flags   
CASREF

Filed between  and   Summary text  
 Full docket text

Sort by Case Number ▾

Make these options my default.

# UNITED STATES DISTRICT AND BANKRUPTCY COURTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Obtaining Written Opinions

You can easily obtain a listing of written opinions issued by the Court after April 16, 2005, as well as copies of the documents themselves, for free. Simply follow these instructions.

1. Log into the Court's ECF system using either your ECF media account or PACER account.
2. Click **REPORTS** on the blue menu bar.
3. If you have logged in using your ECF media account, you may be asked for your PACER information here; if so, enter it.
4. Select **Written Opinions** under **Civil and Criminal Reports**.
5. The **Written Opinions Report** screen (**Figure 3**) will provide you with a variety of selection criteria to help you refine your search (e.g., Case Number, Officer, Nature of Suit, Case Type, Cause, Case Flags, etc.). Keep the default values for most of the items as they are. Change only those values which meet your specific search.
6. Click [**Run Report**]. The system then provides you with a list of Written Opinions for your specific criteria.

**Example:** If you were looking for a written opinion in FOIA cases for a period of time filed during the month of May...

In the "**filed between**" fields, enter the following: **5/1/2012** to **5/31/2012**

On the **Cause** menu, select the following: **05:0552fi (05:552 Freedom of In....)**

### NOTES:

- Written Opinions are defined by the Judicial Conference as "any document issued by a judge of a Court sitting in that capacity that sets forth a reasoned explanation for a Court's decision. The responsibility for determining which documents meet this definition rests with the authoring judge."
- The Nature of Suit codes can also be used as search criteria and are taken from the Civil Cover Sheet (JS44). (**See Appendix A**)
- You may select more than one Nature of Suit or Cause of Action by holding the control **<ctrl>** key when you click on your selections.
- The **Filed** dates can be set for any range, but the system may only identify Written Opinions issued after April 16, 2005.
- While access to Written Opinions is free, PACER fees still apply for other documents.

**Figure 3**

**ECF**    Civil ▾    Criminal ▾    Query    Reports ▾    Utilities ▾    Search    Logon

### Written Opinions Report

Case Number

Last Name     First Name     Middle Name

Office

Nature of Suit  (0 (zero), 110 (Insurance))

Case Type  (Civil, Criminal)

Cause  (05:0551 (05:551 Administrativ...), 05:0552fi (05:552 Freedom of In...), 05:0552pa (05:552 Right to Priv...))

Case Flags  (2255, 3JUD-PANEL)

Filed between  and      Summary text     Full docket text

Sort by  ▾

# UNITED STATES DISTRICT AND BANKRUPTCY COURTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Running a Cases by Category Report

You can obtain a list of civil and criminal cases filed in this Court by category in civil cases, and by time frame in criminal cases. Simply follow these instructions.

### CIVIL CASE REPORT

To find whether there have been any FOIA cases filed during the month of January, 2013:

1. Log into the Court's ECF system using either your ECF media account or PACER account.
2. Click **REPORTS** on the blue menu bar.
3. If you have logged in using your ECF media account, you may be asked for your PACER information here; if so, enter it.
4. Select **Civil Cases** under **Civil Reports**.
5. The **Civil Cases Report** screen (**Figure 4**) will provide you with a variety of search criteria (e.g., Office, Case type, Nature of Suit, Case Flags, Cause, etc.). Keep the default values for most of the items, and change the following to meet your needs:
  - a. Select the desired **Case type** (i.e., civil or miscellaneous).
  - b. Select the desired **Nature of Suit** from the drop-down menu. Example: 895 (Freedom of Information)
  - c. Make sure the **Open** or **Closed** check boxes are checked or unchecked for your particular search.
  - d. Enter an appropriate **Filed** date range. Example: 1/1/2013 to 1/31/2013
  - e. Click [**Run Report**]. You will then obtain a listing of Freedom of Information cases filed in January, 2013.

### CRIMINAL CASE REPORT

To find what criminal or magistrate cases were filed during the month of January, 2013:

1. Log into the Court's ECF system using either your ECF media account or PACER account.
2. Click **REPORTS** on the blue menu bar.
3. If you have logged in using your ECF media account, you may be asked for your PACER information here; if so, enter it.
4. Select **Criminal Cases** under **Criminal Reports**.
5. The **Criminal Cases Report** screen (**Figure 5**) will provide you with a variety of search criteria (e.g., Office, Case type, Case Flags, Citation, etc.). Keep the default values for most of the items, and change the following to meet your needs:
  - a. Select the desired **Case type** (i.e., criminal or magistrate).
  - b. Enter an appropriate **Filed** date range. Example: 1/1/2013 to 1/31/2013
  - c. Click [**Run Report**]. You will then obtain a listing of criminal cases filed in January, 2013. (**Figure 6**)

## NOTES:

### Civil

- The **Nature of Suit** codes are taken from the Civil Cover Sheet (JS44). (See Figure X)
- You may select more than one **Nature of Suit** or **Cause of Action** by holding the control <ctrl> key when you click on your selections.
- The **Filed** dates can be set for any range. The system has most cases dating back to the early 1990s.
- The amount of time it takes to run the report is dependent upon a number of factors, including your search criteria and the number of users on the system.

### Criminal

- Although there are other search criteria available, the best way to narrow the search is by **Filed** date range and **Case type**.

**PACER fees apply with this report.**

Figure 4

**ECF** Civil Criminal Query Reports Utilities Search Logout

### Civil Cases Report

**Warning: This report is not subject to the 30 page billing cap.**  
You will be billed for the total number of pages. If you want to run a report for a single case, you can use the Query Menu or the Docket Report.

Office: Washington, DC

Case type: Civil  
Miscellaneous

Nature of suit: 895 (Freedom of Informati...)  
896 (Arbitration)  
899 (Administrative Proce...)

Cause: 0 (No cause code entered)  
01D2439 (01DCC2439 WMATA (cou...))

Jurisdiction: Diversity  
Federal Question

Case flags: 2255  
3JUD-PANEL

Terminal digit(s): 2, 4-7  Open cases  
JPML number:   Closed cases

Filed: 1/1/2013 to 1/31/2013

Sort by: Case Number

Output Format:  Formatted Display  
 Data Only

Make these options my default.

Figure 5

**ECF** Civil Criminal Query Reports Utilities Search Logout

### Criminal Cases Report

**Warning: This report is not subject to the 30 page billing cap.**  
You will be billed for the total number of pages. If you want to run a report for a single case, you can use the Query Menu or the Docket Report.

Office: Washington, DC

Case types: Criminal  
Magistrate Judge

Case flags: 2255  
3JUD-PANEL

Citation:

Count Status:  Pending  Disposed

Include CVB Cases:  Yes  No

Filed: 2/1/2013 to 2/3/2013

Terminal digit(s):  2, 4-7  Pending defendants  
 Terminated defendants

Sort by: Case Number

Output Format:  Formatted Display  
 Data Only

Make these options my default.

**Figure 6**

**ECF**    Civil ▾    Criminal ▾    Query    Reports ▾    Utilities ▾    Search    Logout

### Criminal Cases Report

U.S. District Court -- District of Columbia  
Filed Report Period: 2/1/2013 - 2/3/2013

Case Number/ Title	Case Dates	Days Pending	Notes
<a href="#">1:13-cr-00035-ESH</a> USA v. MAYO	<i>Case filed:</i> 02/01/2013		<i>Office:</i> Washington, DC
<a href="#">1 - AISHA MAYO</a>	<i>Added:</i> 02/01/2013	49	<i>Presider:</i> Ellen S. Huvelle
<a href="#">1:13-cr-00036-RCL</a> USA v. JOHNSON	<i>Case filed:</i> 02/01/2013		<i>Office:</i> Washington, DC
<a href="#">1 - RODNEY JOHNSON</a>	<i>Added:</i> 02/01/2013	49	<i>Presider:</i> Royce C. Lamberth

Total Number of Cases Reported: 2

**Selection Criteria for Report**

Office	All
Case type(s)	cr
Citation	All
Pending counts	Yes
Disposed counts	No
CVB Cases	No
Filed Date	2/1/2013 - 2/3/2013
Case flags	All
Terminal digits	All
Pending defendants	Yes
Terminated defendants	No
Fugitive defendants	No
Non-fugitive defendants	Yes
Sort by	case number

# UNITED STATES DISTRICT AND BANKRUPTCY COURTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Obtaining Court Calendars

Court schedules can be obtained two ways:

### VIA THE COURT'S WEBSITE

To obtain calendars from the Court's website:

1. Follow this link: <http://www.dcd.uscourts.gov/dcd/court-calendars> (Figure 7)
2. Click [Go] to view **today's** court calendar (default), or enter a future date range and click [Go].
3. This report will generate **all** court events for a given date only; it cannot be manipulated to show only certain types of hearings or only hearings in one specific case.

### VIA THE ECF SYSTEM

To obtain calendars using the ECF system:

1. Log into ECF with your ECF Media account.
2. Click **REPORTS** on the blue menu bar.
3. Select **Calendar Events** under **Civil and Criminal Reports**.
4. The **Calendar Events Report** screen (Figure 8) will provide you with a variety of search criteria (e.g., Case number, Nature of Suit, Time, etc.).
5. To run a report of calendar events for a **given day**, enter the date in both fields next to **Set**. For example, to find the court events for February 23, 2013, enter 2/23/2013 as both the beginning and ending **Set** dates.
6. To run a report of calendar events for a **range of dates**, enter the beginning and ending dates in the **Set** fields. For example, to find the court events for the week of March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013, enter 3/4/2013 as the beginning **Set** date and 3/8/2013 as the ending **Set** date.
7. To run a report of calendar events for a **specific case**, enter the case number in the **Case number** field, and enter a beginning Set date of choice (e.g., the date the case filed) and enter a future date as the ending Set date (e.g., six months from now, or the last day of the year), so that the system can capture all past and future hearings.
8. You may also choose **AM, PM** or **Both**, and can also choose to **Include docket text**, or not.
9. The **Calendar events** menu defaults to **All Hearings**, which will display all hearings except for sealed matters, but you may also narrow your selection by choosing a specific type of hearing (e.g., Arraignment, Detention Hearing, Jury Trial, etc.).
10. This list of calendar events generated by this report does not incur PACER fees. However, clicking on the case number and accessing the docket sheet **will** incur PACER fees.

Figure 7

The screenshot shows the homepage of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. The header features the court's name in a large, serif font, with the names of the Chief Judge and Clerk of Court below it. The main content area is titled "Court Calendars" and includes a "Printer-friendly version" link, "DAILY COURT CALENDARS" text, and "DYNAMIC COURT CALENDARS" with a date range selector (From: [input], To: [input], GO). A search bar is located in the top right corner, and a navigation menu on the right side lists "Home", "Courthouse Information", "Jury Information", and "Court Calendars" (which is highlighted).

Figure 8

The screenshot displays the ECF (Electronic Case Filing) system's "Calendar Events Report" search interface. The top navigation bar includes "ECF" and menu items for "Civil", "Criminal", "Query", "Reports", "Utilities", and "Search". The search form includes fields for "Case number", "Office" (set to "Washington, DC (1)"), "Nature of suit" (a dropdown menu showing "0 (zero)" and "110 (Insurance)"), "Calendar events" (a dropdown menu showing "All Hearings", "Allocution Hearing", and "Arbitration Hearing"), "Set" (a date range starting with "3/22/2013" and a "Calendar" button), "Time" (radio buttons for "Both", "AM", and "PM"), and checkboxes for "Include docket text", "Include closed cases", and "Display terminated parties". A "Sort by" dropdown is set to "Time", and "Run Report" and "Clear" buttons are at the bottom.