

ECF START-UP GUIDE

Introduction

This manual provides instructions for using the Electronic Case Filing (ECF) NextGen system to file documents with the court, or to view and retrieve docket sheets and documents for all cases. Users should have a working knowledge of an ECF-compatible web browser and Adobe Acrobat for creating and reading Portable Document Format (PDF) files.

Help Desk

Registrants may call one of the following telephone numbers between 9:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, to discuss computer system requirements and receive guidance in electronically filing documents.

Operational Filing Assistance

Civil ECF Helpline: (202) 354-3190

Criminal ECF Helpline: (202) 354-3060

Technical Assistance

Office of Information Technology Help Desk: (202) 354-3210

Users may also visit the court's website for further ECF documentation and information:
<http://www.dcd.uscourts.gov/ECFCR>

Requirements

Hardware and Software Requirements

The following hardware and software are needed to electronically file, view, and retrieve case documents in **ECF NextGen 1.3**, and pay fees electronically using Pay.gov.

- Internet Explorer (version 11), Google Chrome (up to version 62), Mozilla Firefox (up to version 59), or Apple Safari (up to version 11.0.2).
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (to view PDF documents) and Adobe Acrobat Writer (to create PDF documents).
- A scanner to convert paper documents (i.e., exhibits, signed declarations, etc.) to PDF format.

Note: When scanning documents for ECF, scan at a resolution of **300 ppi**. National Archives and Records Administration has requested that courts increase the ppi of scanned documents to 300 or greater for long-term archival purposes. Users are requested to adjust scanners accordingly.

PACER Registration

Effective October 7, 2019, filers must have an individual and updated PACER account in order to file electronically in the ECF NextGen system. Shared firm accounts will no longer be permitted for e-filing. If you do not have a PACER account, contact the PACER Service Center via phone ((800) 676-6856 or (210) 301-6440) or online (<http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov>). Please see our website for more information: <https://www.dcd.uscourts.gov/news/nextgen-cmecf-information-e-filers>

Note: Computer terminals are available for public use in the Clerk's Office (Room 1725) and may be used to file documents electronically or view documents and docket sheets through PACER.

E-Filing Access

Attorneys who are active members of the bar of this court can request access to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia's ECF NextGen system via PACER (www.pacer.gov). Select **Manage My Account**, then select the **Maintenance** tab. Next, select **Attorney Admissions/E-File Registration**, followed by **E-File Registration Only**, and then follow the prompts. Do not hesitate to contact the Clerk's Office for assistance.

Note: The Clerk's Office will only grant e-filing access to attorneys who are members of this court's bar and attorneys who have been admitted *pro hac vice* or *pro bono* by the court. Pro se filers must petition the court for permission to e-file.

Scope of Electronic Case Filing

All documents in civil, criminal, magistrate and miscellaneous cases are to be filed by the use of the court's ECF system. Except as expressly provided herein, by order of court, or in exceptional circumstances (e.g., technical difficulties), attorneys must file all case documents electronically. In addition, all civil cases initiated by a Complaint or Notice of Removal must be opened and filed in ECF by the attorney.

Preparation

Setting Up Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Reader

Users must install Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Reader in order to view documents that have been electronically filed with the court. Users may also need to install the full version of Adobe Acrobat software to convert electronic files from their native application format (e.g. Word or Word Perfect) to PDF. All new documents prepared for ECF cases must be converted to PDF before entering them into ECF or transmitting them to the court. After installing these products, review and follow Adobe's directions for using Acrobat or Acrobat Reader.

Portable Document Format (PDF)

Only documents in PDF format may be filed with the court using its ECF system. Before sending the file to the court, users should preview the actual PDF document to ensure it is complete and in the proper format.

Converting Electronic Documents to PDF Format

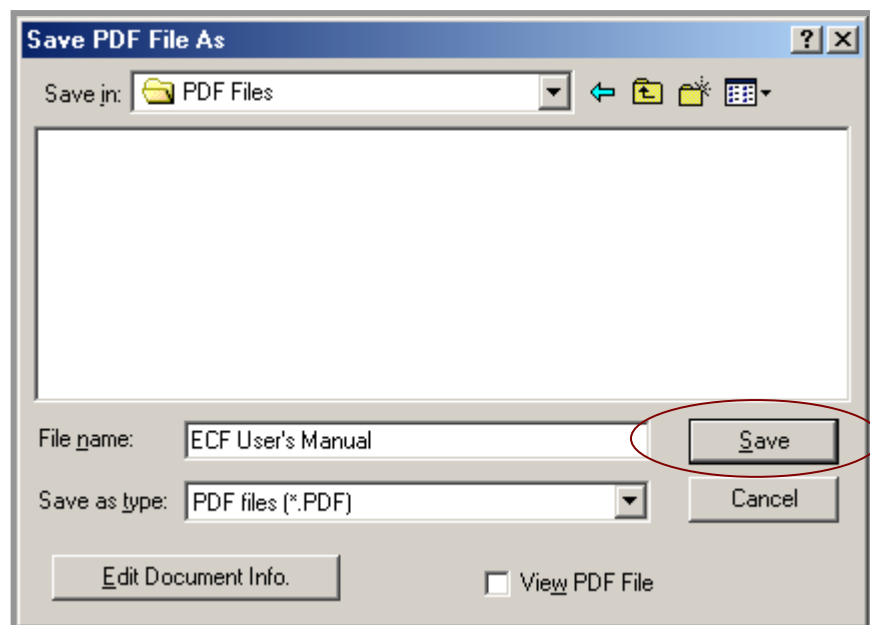
Users must convert all documents from their native application to PDF format before submitting them to the Court through its ECF system. The conversion process requires Adobe Acrobat or a word-processing application (e.g., Microsoft Word) with a built-in PDF conversion capabilities.

From Microsoft Word and other Microsoft Office products:

- Open the document in Microsoft Word or other Microsoft program.
- From the File menu, select **[Save as Adobe PDF]**.
- Save the document as a PDF file, giving it a .pdf extension.
- The file is now in Adobe PDF format under the newly designated name. The original document remains in its native format with its original file name.

For Word Perfect and other Adobe Acrobat-supported software applications:

- Install Adobe Acrobat on your computer.
- Open the document you wish to convert.
- Select **[Print]** from the menu bar. Within the *Current Printer* field of the *Printer* window, select the option to change the selected printer. A drop-down menu opens and a list of printer choices is displayed.
- Select **[Adobe PDF]**.
- Click **[OK]** to “print” the file. Instead of the file printing to your printer, the following window opens.



- Name the document, verify the “saved file type” is .pdf, and click the **[Save]** button.
- The document is now saved as a PDF file.

Note: This process of printing to a PDF is especially important when dealing with fillable forms already in PDF format. Simply saving the original PDF document will keep the text fields on the form fillable and editable, whereas printing the form to a new PDF fixes the text fields so that they can no longer be edited.

ECF Basics

Incorrectly Filed Documents

A document incorrectly filed in a case may result from: a) posting the wrong PDF file to a docket entry; b) selecting the wrong docket event; or c) entering the wrong case number and not discovering the error before completing the transaction.

To request a correction, call the Clerk’s Office Help Desk at **(202) 354-3190 (Civil) or (202) 354-3060 (Criminal)**, and ask for assistance. You will need to provide the case and document numbers for the document requiring correction. If appropriate, the Clerk’s Office will make an entry indicating that the document was filed in error. You will be advised if you need to refile the document. The ECF system does not permit you to make changes to the misfiled document(s) or to correct erroneous docket entries after the transaction has been accepted.

ECF Mass Mailing Notification

The Clerk’s Office has a mass mailing email notification service for all registered filers. Email messages from the court will contain pertinent information, such as system outages, new procedures, and ECF newsletters.

ECF Privacy Notice

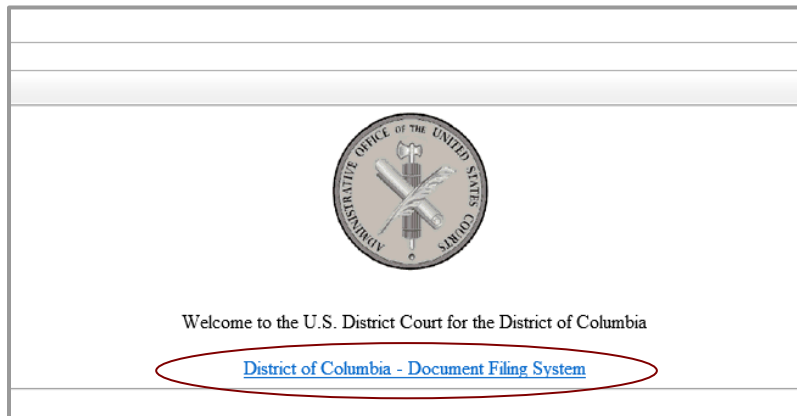
You should not include sensitive information in any document filed with the court unless such inclusion is necessary and relevant to the case. You must remember that any personal information not otherwise protected will be made available over the internet via PACER. If sensitive information must be included, certain personal data identifiers must be partially redacted from the pleading, whether it is filed traditionally or electronically. **The responsibility for redacting personal identifiers rests solely with counsel and the parties. The Clerk’s Office will not review each pleading for compliance with this rule.** All ECF filers should read the notices regarding privacy and public access to electronic case files which are available on the court’s website (<http://www.dcd.uscourts.gov/dcd/ecf-forms-instructions-and-other-information>), or as attachments to this manual.

Entering the ECF System

You may enter the ECF system here: <https://ecf.dcd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/ShowIndex.pl>

This URL connects you directly to the District Court's ECF welcome screen shown in Figure 1. Select **District of Columbia –Document Filing System** to open the PACER login screen.

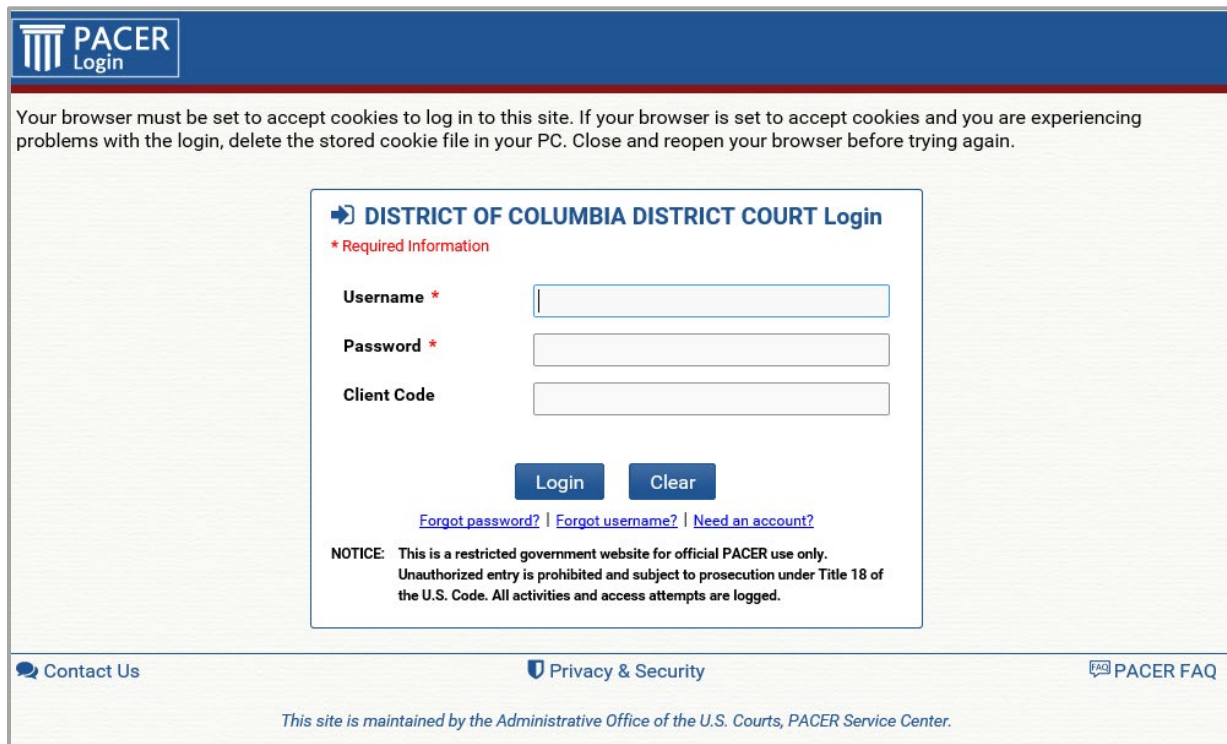
Figure 1



Logging In

Figure 2a shows the PACER login screen.

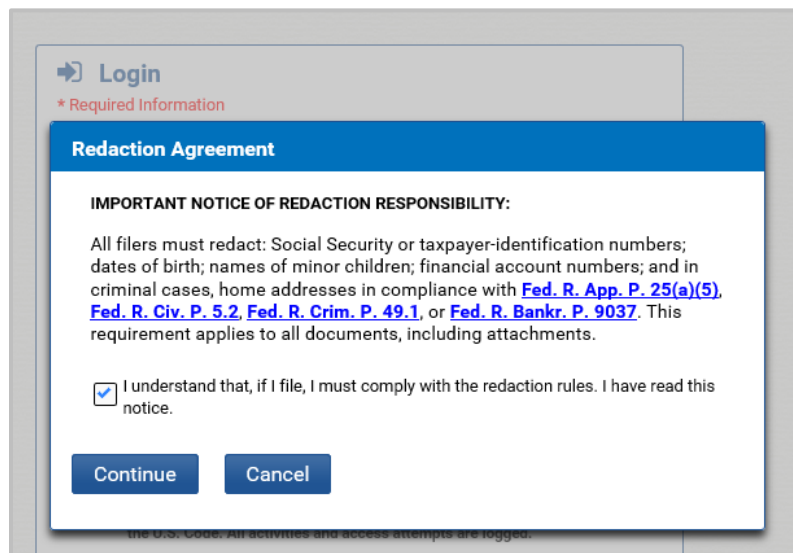
Figure 2a



Enter your PACER username and password in the appropriate data entry fields. The field for client code is not a required field but can be used for billing purposes in law firms. If you want PACER to break out your charges by client, enter your own internal client codes in this field. Next, click **[Login]**.

A Redaction Agreement dialog box will appear (Figure 2b). The attorney/filer must agree to the terms of the redaction policy before continuing. Add a check mark to the box and click **[Continue]**.

Figure 2b



The screenshot shows the PACER Login interface. At the top, there is a 'Login' button and a note '* Required Information'. Overlaid on this is a 'Redaction Agreement' dialog box. The dialog box has a blue header and contains the following text:

IMPORTANT NOTICE OF REDACTION RESPONSIBILITY:

All filers must redact: Social Security or taxpayer-identification numbers; dates of birth; names of minor children; financial account numbers; and in criminal cases, home addresses in compliance with [Fed. R. App. P. 25\(a\)\(5\)](#), [Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2](#), [Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1](#), or [Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9037](#). This requirement applies to all documents, including attachments.

☒ I understand that, if I file, I must comply with the redaction rules. I have read this notice.

At the bottom of the dialog box are two buttons: 'Continue' and 'Cancel'. Below the dialog box, a small note reads: 'the User Code. All activities and access attempts are logged.'

Note: PACER charges a fee of \$.10 per page to view documents in ECF. There is a \$3.00 cap (30 pages) on each document viewed. This cap applies to all case documents, including docket sheets and case-specific reports, with the exception of transcripts of federal court proceedings. If you accrue a total of less than \$15.00 worth of charges in any given quarter, fees are waived for that quarter. Viewed documents open as PDF files and can be printed and/or saved to your computer.

ECF Menu Features

Once logged in, the following features are accessible from the main menu bar at the top of the screen in ECF:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <u>Civil:</u> | Select [Civil] to electronically file all civil or miscellaneous case pleadings, motions, and other court documents. |
| <u>Criminal:</u> | Select [Criminal] to electronically file all criminal or magistrate case pleadings, motions, and other court documents. |
| <u>Query:</u> | Select [Query] to search ECF by specific case number or party name to retrieve information and documents that are relevant to the case |
| <u>Reports:</u> | Select [Reports] to retrieve calendar events, cases-filed reports, and docket sheets. |

- Utilities:** Select **[Utilities]** to maintain your address or view your billing and internet payment history.
- Search:** Select **[Search]** to enter a key word or phrase to aid in locating a proper docket entry or report.
- Logout:** Select **[Logout]** to exit the ECF system.

Entering a Case Number

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

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

OR

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

Case number	10-210	Hide Case List
Select a case:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1:10-cr-00210-RWR USA v. GARCIA	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1:10-cv-00210-PLF LAIL et al v. UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT et al (closed 03/24/2011)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1:10-mc-00210-RWR GARMIN INTERNATIONAL, INC. et al v. PIONEER CORPORATION (closed 05/20/2010)	

Additional Information Regarding ECF and PACER

Deadline Calculation

All deadlines will be calculated using calendar days only in multiples of seven (7). If the calculated date falls on a weekend or holiday, it is extended until the next working day.

Sealed Documents

Sealed documents in **completely sealed cases** are **not** to be filed electronically nor emailed to the court. They should be delivered to the Intake section of the Clerk's Office during normal business hours. **Do not place sealed documents in the overnight drop box at the 3rd Street and Constitution Avenue entrance to the courthouse.** The sealed material should include the original documents, copies for the judge, and PDF files on CD.

Note: As of May 2013, attorneys are permitted to file sealed documents in **otherwise unsealed cases**. Please refer to our website (<http://www.dcd.uscourts.gov/ECFCR>) for more detailed information.

How to File if ECF is Out of Service

If ECF is out of service or unavailable, email the court at dcd_cmecf@dcd.uscourts.gov (civil) or dcd_cmecf_cr@dcd.uscourts.gov (criminal) with your document(s) attached as a PDF file.

PACER Billing

When the **Review Billing History** option is selected under **[Utilities]**, a new browser window will open outside of ECF (Figure 3A). From this screen the user will be able to specify one or more courts for which data should be reported. It also provides a wider range of billing data (up to 24 months old). A message inside the *Date Range* box provides a specific range of dates for which transactions are available. The court from which the PACER user logged in is selected by default.

Figure 3A

The screenshot shows the PACER Billing History Report interface. At the top left is the PACER logo. The title "Billing History Report" is in red. Below the title, the user information "User: oc0520 - Oca/Td" is displayed. The form is divided into several sections: "Courts" with radio buttons for "All Courts" and "Other Court" (selected), and a dropdown menu showing "Arizona Test Bankruptcy"; "Date Range" with radio buttons for "Today", "this Week", "this Month", "this Quarter", and "other date range:" (selected), with a text box for the date range and a note "Transactions available: 03/01/2007 to current"; "Sort Order" with radio buttons for "Date", "Client Code", "Court/Date", and "Court/Client Code"; "Display" with radio buttons for "Details" (selected) and "Summary"; and "View" with radio buttons for "Formatted Report" (selected) and "Download Report". At the bottom right are three buttons: "Run Report", "Clear", and "Close".

Data is retrieved from the central billing transaction database and formatted according to the options selected by the user (Figure 3B).

Figure 3B

The screenshot shows the results of the PACER Billing History Report. At the top left is the PACER logo. The title "Billing History Report" is in red. Below the title, the subtitle "Detailed Transaction Report by Date" is displayed, followed by "Arizona Test Bankruptcy" and "for the day 11/1/2007". The user information "Thu Nov 1 08:56:18 2007" and "User: oc0520 - Oca/Td" is displayed. A "New Report" button is in the top right corner. Below the user information is a table with the following data:

Date	Time	Pages	Court	Client Code	Description	Search
11/01/2007	09:54:14	1	AZTC	abc,456	Search	LName: Goodman
	09:54:24	11	AZTC	abc,456	Search	LName: Goodman
Subtotal		12 pages				
		\$ 0.96				
Grand Total		12 pages				
		\$ 0.96				

Transactions for other months are available through the **Review Transaction History** option within the **Account Information** section of the PACER Service Center (PSC) site (Figure 3C).

Figure 3C

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Review Transaction History". At the top, it displays the user's PACER ID as "ao0581 Aousc" and the date as "Wednesday June 20, 2007". A note states: "Transaction details are archived on this web site for a maximum period of 24 months." The form includes several input fields: "*Specify Court" with a dropdown menu set to "All", "*Specify Client Code" with an empty text box, and "Transactions between:" with date pickers for "05/01/2007" and "05/31/2007". Below these are three sections of radio button options: "Sort Options" (Court / Date, Court/Search Criteria/Date, Client code / Date), "Display Options" (Details, Summed Details, Totals Only), and "Report Options" (Display Report in Text Format, Write Transactions to a Text File, Show Transaction File Layout). A detailed note explains rounding rules for subtotals. At the bottom, there are "Run Report" and "Cancel" buttons.

Review Transaction History

PACER User: ao0581 Aousc
Date: Wednesday June 20, 2007

Transaction details are archived on this web site for a maximum period of 24 months.

*Specify Court: All
*Specify Client Code:
Transactions between: 05/01/2007 and 05/31/2007

Sort Options:
☒ Court / Date
☐ Court/Search Criteria/Date
☐ Client code / Date

Display Options:
☒ Details
☐ Summed Details
☐ Totals Only

Report Options:
☒ Display Report in Text Format
☐ Write Transactions to a Text File
☐ Show Transaction File Layout

NOTE: This utility gives subtotals by court/client code for your convenience only. If you have dial-up transactions in the time frame specified above, when calculating your total due, your total time is rounded after adding the time for ALL transactions. Twenty-nine seconds and below is rounded down. Thirty seconds and above is rounded up. For this reason, the client/court subtotals given may not add up to exactly the account total.

* These fields are optional. You can enter data in one or both of these fields to limit the transactions selected. If you do not specify a court or client code, all transactions for the specified time frame will be processed.

Run Report
Cancel

In the finished report, duplicate and zero-page transactions will have been removed, so that it will correspond to the statement the user receives at the end of the quarter.