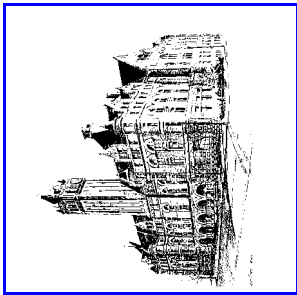


Sofron B. Nedilsky, Clerk of Court
517 East Wisconsin Avenue Room 362
Milwaukee, WI 53202

United States District Court Eastern District of Wisconsin Electronic Case Filing



What is ECF?

Electronic Case Filing (ECF) streamlines the process of creating, filing and noticing legal documents by permitting attorneys in eligible civil and criminal cases to file documents with the Court and deliver them to opposing parties directly from their computers using the Internet. It has the potential to provide substantial savings to attorneys, their clients, and the Court while improving access to Court records.

ECF was developed by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and is available in several U.S. district and bankruptcy courts. The system provides unprecedented access to court records and has proven that widely available and inexpensive technology can accommodate electronic case filing in nearly all federal cases.



Are any documents precluded from being filed electronically?

Initial pleadings (complaint, notice of removal, etc.) are not eligible for electronic case filing at this time. In addition, documents to be placed under seal may not be filed electronically and must be filed in the traditional manner. Notices of appeal, state court records, bankruptcy appeal records, and social security transcripts are also precluded from electronic filing.



How are documents prepared?

Attorneys create documents on their own computers just as they do now. However, instead of printing the documents on paper and delivering them to the Court, the attorneys save the documents in a portable document format (PDF) that allows other system users to view the documents in their original format, regardless of the type of computer or word processing system that was used to create the documents or is being used to view them.



How do I file electronically?

Attorneys access ECF over the Internet. After establishing their identity by entering a Court assigned user login name and password, attorneys indicate the case number that their document applies to, the party the document is being filed on behalf of, and the type of document (answer, motion, etc.) being filed. The document is then *attached* to the entry and transmitted to the Court's computer.



What happens next?

Upon receipt by the Court, ECF:

- Sends a receipt to the sender verifying the document has been received
- Creates the docket entry
- Sends an e-mail notice of filing to all parties who have agreed to receive electronic notice
- Allows immediate access to the updated docket sheet and the document itself



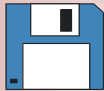
What if the document was not created on a computer?

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



What are the benefits?

- 24-hour access to file or view documents over the Internet
- Automatic e-mail notice of case activity
- Ability to download and print documents directly from the court system
- Concurrent access to case files by multiple parties
- Potential savings in copying, courier and noticing costs
- Ability to store and search documents electronically



When may electronic case filing be used?

Attorneys may file electronically in any case being *maintained electronically* by the Court. If a filing must be made on paper in an electronic case file, attorneys are urged to accompany the paper filing with a diskette or CD ROM of their papers in PDF digital format, so that the document can be easily added to the electronic case file.



Which cases are best suited for electronic filing?

Electronic case filing is suitable for nearly all cases. The only cases specifically excluded from electronic case filing are those that are filed under seal, criminal juvenile cases, and those cases filed by pro se litigants or by prisoners.



What do I need to do?

An attorney seeking to file documents electronically in the Eastern District of Wisconsin must previously be admitted to practice in this Court and must complete an electronic case filing registration form. Upon completion of the form, the attorney will be assigned a user login name and password that will permit access to the system and serve as that attorney's signature on all documents filed for Fed. R. Civ. P. 11 purposes. Attorneys must secure their passwords and notify the Court if they learn that a password has been compromised. A PACER account is also required to access the system. PACER accounts can be established through the PACER Service Center at <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov>.



What equipment do I need?

In order to file electronically in this Court, attorneys need the following:

- a personal computer running a standard platform such as Windows or Macintosh
- Internet access supporting a transfer rate of 28.8kbs or higher
- Netscape Navigator 4.6 or higher
or
Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher
- word processing software such as Corel Word-Perfect or Microsoft Word
- software to convert the documents into a portable document format (PDF)
- a scanner to transmit documents not in a word processing system
- PACER account to access the system – in addition to an ECF login name and password



What if I need assistance?

While ECF is very user friendly, the Clerk's Office has established a Help Desk. If you need assistance or have questions, call 1-866-438-5410. The Help Desk is available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.



Is the system secure?

The electronic case filing system has several layers of security. A login name and password are required to access the system. Documents are encrypted and transmitted through your browser's Secure Sockets Layer. In addition, the electronic receipt issued by the Court contains a unique validation code that works along with the portable document format to ensure that documents cannot be altered after being received by the Court.



Is training available?

An online Tutorial and User Manual are available on the Court's web site at www.wied.uscourts.gov. ECF is easy to learn and very user friendly. If additional assistance is needed, you may contact the ECF Help Desk at 1-866-438-5410.



Where can I learn more?

Information about electronic case filing can be obtained from the Clerk's Office and from the Court's web site at www.wied.uscourts.gov. Web site materials include: Electronic Case Filing Registration form and a list of Frequently Asked Questions.