

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ECFS

The Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) is an Internet Web-based tool designed for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) to give access to Commission rulemaking (RM) and docketed proceedings. ECFS allows you to research, retrieve, view and print any document in the system including previous non-electronic FCC documents that have been scanned into the system. ECFS includes data and images from the year 1992 onward. ECFS serves as the repository for official records in the FCC's docketed and RM proceedings.

The goals of ECFS are as follows:

1. Provide the public with a simple electronic means to express and review opinions in docketed and rulemaking proceedings.
2. Improve staff access to documents.
3. Improve staff workflow.

ECFS provides the general public with direct access to FCC documents from their own computer workstations. Access to ECFS is unrestricted so that anyone with Internet access can file and retrieve comments. Multiple users may view and access documents concurrently.

ECFS users send or "upload" files via an Internet Web Browser. These files are typically word-processing documents containing comments in reference to a specific FCC Docket or RM proceeding. Users can also send comments via email (a computer readable form is submitted as part of email filings). Filers may also continue to send a paper filing (hard copy) instead, in accordance with existing rules, for inclusion in ECFS via FCC scanning. Virtually all documents are stored electronically and are available for search and retrieval via the Word Wide Web (WWW). Exceptions to this rule include a case in which the size of a document or certain types of media (video, microfiche, etc.) requires storing the document off-line. Confidential documents will not be available for the public to view.

ECFS accepts files in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word 6.0 or higher
- WordPerfect 5.1 or higher
- ASCII Text
- Microsoft Excel 4.0 or higher
- Lotus 123
- Portable Document Format (PDF)*

**preferred format*



Two types of reference materials are designed to familiarize you with the ECFS environment:









- **User Manual:** This manual is designed for individuals who have some basic knowledge of using the Internet. It focuses on tasks required for submitting and searching for filings(s).
- **Online Help:** Enables you to view procedural instructions on your monitor while you are using the ECFS application.

1.2 NOTES, TIPS, AND WARNINGS

This manual contains a number of notes, tips and warnings that are designed to aid in your understanding of how the system works, to prevent unnecessary errors, and to help you save time. Several of the notes, tips and warnings are listed below.

Table 1-1. Note, Tips, and Warning Icons

ICON	NAME
	Note/Tip
	Warning

-  When using ECFS for the first time, you may wish to file your comments several business days before the comment period deadline. This will enable you to obtain filing assistance, if needed, and to ensure that your comments are filed in a timely fashion.
-  ECFS is accessible from <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/welcome.html>. It is recommended for users to create a bookmark of this page and other frequently visited web pages for each access. Refer to your Web Browser's Help Menu for instructions on how to create a bookmark.
-  Test filings are permitted; however, the Office of the Secretary must be contacted prior to the submission at (202) 418-0300.
-  The filing deadline for email or electronic comments is before midnight EST. The filing deadline for hard copies (paper) is by 7:00 p.m. EST. In most cases, if ECFS is experiencing technical difficulties filing deadlines will be extended.
-  There is no specific turnaround time for placing filings on the Internet. Although electronic filings are generally placed quicker than hard copy/paper filings, processing could range from a few hours to approximately seven business days.
-  Please do not attach documents that are password protected, have redlined markings, macros enabled, formatted as read-only, or have automated links to source documents that are not included in your filing. Processing will be disrupted and your filing is subject to be rejected by ECFS, if the system detects these elements in your document.
-  MS Excel Workbooks that include multiple spreadsheets: Due to the conversion process that electronic submissions must undergo, the spreadsheets will display on ECFS as the last active sheet you viewed and saved before transmitting your Excel file to ECFS.
-  PDF documents: Although ECFS prefers documents to be submitted in PDF, you must remove all "Document Security" used to encrypt a document before attaching the file.

1.3 TECHNICAL SUPPORT

If while working in ECFS you experience any problems or have questions related to ECFS, please contact ECFSHelp@fcc.gov or call (202) 418-0193. Technical support is available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. EST. You may also contact the FCC's Reference Information Center at (202) 418-0270 for general information concerning proceedings. If you are seeking guidelines on filing documents, contact the Office of the Secretary at (202) 418-0300. Of course, some problems may relate directly to your computer system and/or Web browser. Contact your Network Administrator or your Internet Service Provider.