



## United States District Court District of South Carolina

### Electronic Case Filing (ECF) - Frequently Asked Questions

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#### Logins and Passwords

##### **How do I obtain an ECF login and/or password?**

The ECF Registration Form is on our website ([www.scd.uscourts.gov](http://www.scd.uscourts.gov)) under Forms > ECF Registration Forms. Complete the form and submit it as indicated on the form. Training is required and may be accomplished via the On-Line Training Tutorials link on our website under ECF Training Resources > On-Line Training Tutorials. There are four district court modules.

##### **What do I do if I lose or misplace my ECF login and/or password?**

You may reset your ECF password on the Troubleshooting page of our website [www.scd.uscourts.gov](http://www.scd.uscourts.gov) or you may send an e-mail request to [ecf\\_registration@scd.uscourts.gov](mailto:ecf_registration@scd.uscourts.gov). Include your full name, federal court ID number and the e-mail address you registered with. If your e-mail address has changed and does not match the one listed in your ECF account you will need to include BOTH your previous and current e-mail addresses.

##### **May I share my password with my staff?**

You may authorize a non-attorney staff member to complete electronic filing on your behalf, but only after you have personally approved the final document. This is necessary because use of your password together with your s/typed name constitutes your signature. You may not allow another attorney (including associated out-of-state counsel) to use your password.

##### **May my co-counsel file the document that is signed by me (using their login) if I am out of the office?**

No. The ECF login and s/typed name on the document being filed need to match, as the two components together constitute the electronic signature.

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## New Cases

**I'm filing a new case that has a complaint, summons, civil cover sheet and LR 26.01 interrogatories. Do I make a separate entry for each document in the shell case (*current yy-av-99999*, e.g., *13-av-99999*)?**

No. You should only make one entry into the shell case number. You should only enter the names of the first plaintiff and first defendant. The initiating pleading (complaint, notice of removal, etc.) should be the main document. All other items need to be attachments to the main document.

**How will I get my case number and summons back on a new case?**

You will be notified via the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) of the case number and judge assignment. The plaintiff will access the summons via the NEF and print copies as needed for service.

**How long will it usually take before I receive my summons back from the clerk on an e-filed case?**

New cases are normally opened and the summons is accessible via the NEF within one business day after all required initial pleadings are filed into the shell case.

**How can I tell from the document when it was filed?**

The CM/ECF software places a "header" at the top of the page for each filed document. The header shows the case number, docket entry number, filed date, and page numbers.

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## Free Look/Viewing Filed Documents

**I understand I get a free look at filed documents from the NEF email. How many additional addresses can I add to my account to receive notice of all filings in my cases and will each receive the free look?**

The field for additional e-mail addresses accepts up to 250 characters (approximately ten e-mail addresses). Separate each address with a comma and space. Each e-mail address will receive its own free look and the opportunity to download the document.

**Does the free look from the hyperlink on Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) expire?**

Yes. The free look expires 15 days from transmission of the NEF or after the first use, whichever comes first. Any time that same hyperlink is accessed after it has expired, the NEF recipient will be asked for a PACER login and will be charged to view the document.

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## Service

### **How do I know which parties to serve traditionally?**

The NEF will advise you who requires traditional service in the “Notice will not be electronically mailed to” section. Service on those entitled to be served by hard copy must be accompanied by a copy of the NEF, and a certificate of service must be filed electronically within one business day.

### **May my secretary s/ his or her name on the certificate of service?**

No. Only registered filing users are permitted to use the s/typed name. If filed by itself, the attorney must electronically sign the certificate of service. If scanned and attached to the document you’re filing, the paralegal or secretary may sign it (wet signature).

### **Do I have to file a certificate of service if all attorneys are signed up on CM/ECF?**

No. If all attorneys involved in the case are on ECF and received the NEF, no certificate of service is needed. The NEF serves as the certificate of service if all parties are electronically notified of the filing.

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## Preparing and Filing Documents

### **What is the appropriate case number format for cases in ECF?**

The case number format has changed slightly in ECF. You do not need to enter the division number in ECF to find a case (although you should continue to use the division number on the document itself). When looking up a case in ECF, you can use the year and sequence number (10-501). If you insert the type of case between the two numbers (*e.g.*, “cr” or “cv”), you will go directly to the case. If you omit these letters, the system will offer you a choice of captions from which you can select the appropriate case.

### **Should I convert my documents for e-filing or scan them?**

Convert. Do not scan. With certain exceptions, e-filed documents should be converted to a PDF file from a word-processing software program, and should not be scanned. Converted documents require much less computer memory than scanned documents and are text-searchable. The exception to the rule is that exhibits should normally be scanned since they are not documents that counsel have in a word-processing format.

### **I have exhibits that were not created in a word-processor. How do I file them with my document?**

Scan and save in PDF. Scanned exhibits should be easily readable (black and white, 300 dpi resolution is usually appropriate). Exhibits must be filed as attachments to the main document. Each attachment should include a

descriptive name and cannot exceed the 10MB file size limit. Call the clerk's office if something cannot be scanned.

**Do I have to file all of my exhibits separately, or can I scan them all in together?**

Always check the judge's e-filing preferences located on the court's website before proceeding. As a general rule, multiple exhibits (or other attachments) may be linked to the primary document as individual attachments, or if they do not exceed the allowable 10MB file size, combined as a single attachment. Every attachment should contain a complete description.

**How do I file sealed documents?**

Absent a governing rule, statute, or order for filing documents under seal, a party shall electronically file a Motion to Seal accompanied by a memorandum. A separately sealed attachment labeled "Confidential Information to be Submitted to Court in Connection with Motion to Seal" shall be submitted in paper for the Court's *in camera* review. See Local Civil Rule 5.03.

Attorneys are allowed to file documents into sealed cases in which they have made an appearance. Contact the clerk's office if you need assistance filing in a sealed case.

**How do I file documents bearing multiple attorney signatures?**

If a document being filed is one "signed" by multiple Filing Users (including the attorney who does the filing), then the e-filed document should bear the s/typed name of all the signatories. The attorney filing the document represents that he or she has obtained the original signatures on a hard copy of the document in question and has that document in his or her possession.

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**Miscellaneous**

**May *Pro Hac Vice* attorneys file electronically in their cases?**

No. Attorneys admitted *pro hac vice* are not permitted to e-file documents, but are permitted to receive courtesy electronic notices along with the right to "one free look." *Pro Hac Vice* (PHV) attorneys are considered participants in the ECF system, rather than filers.

**Do all of the reports on the ECF Reports Menu require a PACER login and fee?**

No. There are several free reports available to filing users, such as the Calendar reports, Written Opinions report, and Activity in My Cases report.

**Is there any way to pay for fees associated with filings other than by credit card?**

Filing users must pay using a credit or debit card or by an electronic check through Pay.gov. [Click here for details.](#)

**If I'm filing after business hours and attach the wrong PDF, should I re-file it again immediately and attach the new document, or wait until the next business day and contact the court before re-filing?**

Do not re-file the document until you contact the clerk's office for further instructions.

**If my deadline falls on a weekend, holiday, or a date the court is closed, do I have until the end of the next day the court is open to file?**

Yes.