

# **CM/ECF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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## **General Questions**

### **What is the Case Management/Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) system?**

CM/ECF, or Case Management/Electronic Case Filing, is an electronic system that allows attorneys to file petitions and other electronic documents with designated United States courts through the Internet by using a standard web browser. In addition, it allows court personnel to manage the case electronically.

The result is a completely electronic “case file” that does not have any papers associated with it at the court. Except for confidential docket events, all case information is available for examination electronically through the Internet.

### **What are the benefits of CM/ECF?**

The system is easy to use.

Except for system maintenance, ECF has 24-hour availability for filing bankruptcy cases, adversary proceedings and documents and access to electronic files.

Confirmation to filers of documents is immediate.

Users can receive automatic e-mail notice of case activity.

Documents may be printed from your printer – no more copy requests or delays.

Users can view and print docket sheets, claims registers, and other reports.

Paper and copying costs are reduced.

Courier and mailing costs are reduced.

Multiple parties can view the same file simultaneously.

The system is secure and reliable.

### **Are fees assessed for access to CM/ECF?**

Users are not charged access or user fees to file documents electronically through CM/ECF, although case and document filing fees do apply. Litigants receive one free view of documents filed electronically in their cases. The viewed file may be saved to the user’s computer or

printed for the user's files.

All users, except government agencies, are assessed a PACER fee to view CM/ECF cases and documents, after the free first look. The Judiciary has been directed by Congress to fund electronic case systems through the assessment of user fees. Fees are set at the lowest possible level to recoup program costs. Currently, the fee is set eight cents per page, with a maximum cost per document of \$2.40.

**Can any member of the public use CM/ECF to file documents with the court?**

No. Access to CM/ECF is available to attorneys, trustees, and, on a limited basis to high volume creditors who have complied with Court training and certification.

**Since access is limited to authorized attorneys, can pro se filers file documents in CM/ECF cases?**

Yes. Paper documents from pro se filers can be scanned and saved in CM/ECF. The court converts paper filings to electronic format by scanning and adding the scanned image into the CM/ECF system.

**Can the general public view CM/ECF cases and the documents in those cases?**

Access to view cases and documents in CM/ECF is available to anyone with a PACER login and password. PACER offers convenient electronic access to case file documents, a listing of all case parties, reports of case-related information, chronologies of events entered in the case record, claim registries, and a calendar of events. The PACER website is <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov>.

To defray the costs of PACER and CM/ECF, the Judicial Conference has set a fee of eight cents per page to view electronic court documents. No fee is assessed to view calendar information. Parties entitled to view documents as part of the legal process receive one free electronic view. Charges are assessed for subsequent views or for copies, regardless of the format of the document.

**How is payment of filing fees handled for CM/ECF cases?**

Attorneys that electronically file documents requiring a filing fee are prompted to pay fees using a credit card. Filers can choose to pay after each filing or a filer may make one payment for all transactions at the end of the day.

**How are signatures on documents or pleadings (attorney and/or debtor) placed on**

## **CM/ECF cases?**

### **Attorney signatures:**

When registering to use the system, an attorney must sign an agreement stating that use of the attorney's login name and password (whether by the attorney personally or by delegation to an employee in the attorney's office) constitutes the attorney's signature on all documents electronically filed.

### **Debtor signatures:**

For documents that must be signed by the debtor (petitions, schedules, statements, etc.), originally executed paper copies must be maintained by the attorney or by the pro se filer. The electronically filed document will indicate a signature using the following format: s/ Jane Doe.

For additional information, please refer to the Administrative Procedures for Electronic Case Filing.

## **Can an electronically filed document be certified?**

On request, a copy of a document can be printed with the certification or seal in the traditional manner. A fee of \$9.50 is assessed for certification of a printed document.

## **Attorney Questions**

### **Can an attorney certify additional attorneys from their offices to use the CM/ECF system?**

Only court staff can provide an attorney with permissions to the database.

### **Will attorneys be able to access the CM/ECF system after the court's regular business hours to file cases and review documents/docket sheets?**

Except for routine maintenance of equipment or power failures, CM/ECF will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please refer to the Administrative Procedures for Electronic Case Filing for information on filing deadlines.

### **How are fees paid?**

CM/ECF allows filers to directly pay filing fees on CM/ECF using the U.S. Treasury Internet credit card service, Pay.gov or <https://www.pay.gov/paygov/>. When a document is filed that requires payment of a fee, the filer is immediately given the option to pay the filing fee online. Upon the successful online processing of a credit card payment, the filer receives a receipt. An

"internet credit card payment" docket event is automatically entered into the case record. Failure to pay fees in any 24 hour period will result in the suspension of the user's access to CM/ECF until payment has been made.

### **How is email delivered to my office under ECF?**

Email notification of filings will be sent to an attorney's email account by summary report. The summary report is sent once each day. The summary report contains a summary of all documents filed for that day and hyperlinks to the docket entries.

Users can change the way the email is delivered by requesting a change through the ECF email help desk at [cmecfhelpdesk@okwb.uscourts.gov](mailto:cmecfhelpdesk@okwb.uscourts.gov)

### **Can emails be sent to multiple email addresses in my office?**

Yes. Each user may list up to 5 notification email addresses. Requests for a additional email notification addresses may be made at initial application or by emailing the Help Desk at [cmecfhelpdesk@okwb.uscourts.gov](mailto:cmecfhelpdesk@okwb.uscourts.gov)

### **What do I do if I have attended training or I registered as trained in another district but I do not have a login or password yet?**

Attorneys wishing to be certified to use CM/ECF should visit the Court's web site, [www.okwb.uscourts.gov](http://www.okwb.uscourts.gov), to determine procedures for certification without training.

## **User Information**

### **How many users can submit documents at once?**

The system has no predetermined limit for filers. However, response time may be reduced with an increased number of users.

### **How many people at a time may view a document?**

No limitation on the number of users has been established.

### **Will the creator of the docket entry be identified?**

Yes. All entries can be identified by the name of the person that logged in and submitted the entry.

**Is the number of aliases a party may have limited?**

No.

**How will signatures be placed on documents that are filed electronically?**

A document shall include a signature block setting forth the Filer's or User's name, complete address, telephone number, email address, and the Filer's state bar registration number and firm affiliation, if applicable, preceded by a signature line on which is typed "s/ Name" where the Filer's or User's signature would otherwise appear in a signed document.

**Systems Access**

**Who may file documents on CM/ECF?**

Only those individuals with a login and password from the court will be able to file documents electronically. Anyone with PACER access will be able to view a docket.

**Is the system SSL (Secure Socket Layer) enabled?**

Yes.

**How is filer identity authenticated?**

Authentication is currently completed at login. Each user is required to identify himself or herself by presenting a valid combination of user name and password. Upon doing so, access to the site is granted.

**Will an external user be able to access CM/ECF with WebTV?**

The user will be able to log onto CM/ECF through WebTV, but they will not be able to access PDF files through the tool. WebTV is a browser tool with little or no memory and additional software, such as Adobe Acrobat Reader or word processing tools, cannot be installed on the box.

**Systems Capabilities - Filing**

**How will CM/ECF handle the filing of motions or other actions in multiple cases (e.g.,**

**trustees filing objections to claim in several cases)?**

Bankruptcy CM/ECF has a "batch filing" feature. The court will be able to define the events for which batch filing will be available; the user will see these events listed in a pull-down menu.

**Does CM/ECF check for duplicate filing when a user opens a case? In other words, when a party name is entered, will the system alert the user to other cases in which the filer appears?**

The CM/ECF software does not automatically check for duplicate filings. However, when adding a participant to a case, a pick list is presented with the names of parties that are already in the database. This provides a limited comparison. In bankruptcy cases, the ability to search by social security number can assist in identifying duplicate filings. The court staff and the bar will have comprehensive training on case opening to avoid problems with serial filers.

**Can CM/ECF accommodate recorded audio files (e.g. WAV files) as part of the case record?**

No.

## **Procedural Issues**

**How does the system handle the filing of a multi-part motion?**

Several types of multi-part motions can be filed. These include:

1. Motion for Relief or to Abandon Property;
2. Motion for Relief, to Abandon, or for Adequate Protection;
3. Motion for Relief, to Abandon, or Dismiss;
4. Motion to Convert or Dismiss;
5. Motion to Modify the Chapter 13 Plan and Application for Attorney Fees

Although the system is designed to allow the selection of more than one motion, a problem exists in the functionality of CM that will not allow different results to be docketed in the subsequent order. If the multi-part motion that you wish to file is not listed, filing two motions may be the only method for requesting court action.

**When a user files a pleading with the court does the system automatically serve the other parties or must the user take other action to serve the others? Do the other parties receive notification of a filing or do they get the actual document?**

When a document is filed in CM/ECF, a Notice of Electronic Filing(NEF) is automatically generated and emailed to the registered parties in the case. The NEF includes the text of the

docket entry, the unique electronic document stamp, a list of the case participants receiving email notification of the filing, and a hyperlink to the document(s) filed. If a party requiring service is not a registered user, the party will not receive the NEF and will should receive service by mail through the Bankruptcy Noticing Center, or BNC.

**What format will the Notice of Electronic (NEF) be in when it comes into my office?**

The NEF can be in one of two formats:

HTML format allows the recipient to view the documents through a hyperlink. Most email applications allow an HTML format.

Text Only format does not provide a hyperlink to documents. To view documents if you have selected a “text only” format, you must use a docket report.

If you have selected one format and wish to change to another format, please send a request through the ECF email help desk at [cmecfhelpdesk@okwb.uscourts.gov](mailto:cmecfhelpdesk@okwb.uscourts.gov)

**Will the system support scanned documents in color?**

The system does support scanned, color documents; however, because color documents are considerably larger files, the court will not accept documents in color.

**What should an attorney do if the document to be filed is not listed in the pick list?**

If a user wishes to file a document that is not listed in the pick list, he or she should choose the event that most closely resembles the pleading. Suggestions regarding events should be directed to the ECF email site at [feedback@okwb.uscourts.gov](mailto:feedback@okwb.uscourts.gov) The court will review these requests to determine the necessity of creating new events.

**Where do I submit an order for the judge to review?**

The Court is currently working to complete an E-orders Program. Until the program is operational, please continue to submit your orders in paper format. They will be scanned and docketed by the Court Clerk Office staff.

**If a member of my staff serves a pleading and the staff member has signed the Proof of Service, can this notice be filed under my login and password?**

A certificate of service electronically signed by support staff and entered using the attorney login and password will be accepted by the court.

**What do I do if I accidentally file a motion requiring a fee in the wrong case? Will I be charged a second fee when it is filed in the correct case?**

Yes, you will be charged the second fee when the motion is filed in the correct case. The motion filed in the wrong case should be withdrawn and a motion requesting a refund of the fee should be filed in the case where the mistake was made.

**What do I do if Pay.Gov does not open for me?**

Make sure you have completed the following steps:

Use Microsoft Internet Explorer.  
Ensure that the Pop-up blocker is turned off.  
Clear the cache.

**How do I clear the cache?**

In Internet Explorer:

Click on Tools on the tool bar.  
Select Internet Options.  
Click on Delete Cookies.  
\* Click OK.  
Click on Delete Files.  
\* Click OK.  
Click OK .

**If I submit a matrix in PDF format with the voluntary petition, is that sufficient?**

The matrix should be filed as a PDF document with the petition; however, the creditors should also be uploaded into the database by following these steps:

Click on Bankruptcy.  
Click on Creditor Maintenance...  
Click on Upload a creditor matrix file.  
Enter the case number.  
Browse for the matrix.  
NOTES: The matrix must be in Text (\*.txt) format.  
Select the matrix to appear in the document window.  
Click Next.

The total number of creditors uploaded will be indicated.  
Click Submit.

More detailed directions for uploading a matrix are available on the court's web site [www.okwb.uscourts.gov](http://www.okwb.uscourts.gov) in the ECF Attorney's Manual.

**When filing a new case including the Statement of Social Security Number, how can the security of the debtor's social security number be maintained?**

Make sure that the Statement of Social Security Number is filed as a separate document using the event for Statement of Social Security Number. If anyone other than a court employee tries to access that document, they will receive an error message denying them access and therefore would not be able to view the entire social security number.

**What should I do if I realize I entered my document in the wrong case?**

Enter the document in the correct case and notify the help desk at to withdraw the document entered in the wrong case.

**How do I know who will receive electronic notice of my document and who will need to be served by regular mail?**

This information can be verified through the following steps:

Click on Utilities.  
Click on Mailings...  
Click on Mailing Info for a Case.  
Enter the case number.  
The information will be displayed for you.

**I have tried to look at documents from my email but the system won't let me.**

Some docket entries are text only and do not have a PDF attached.