Case Management

CM / ECF

Electronic Case Files

Overview

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Objectives

- Learn:
  - What is CM/ECF
  - How the filing process works
    - Including how to file and view sealed documents
  - Avoid common mistakes
  - How to get an account
  - Where to go for help

What Is CM/ECF?

An internet accessible case management system for the Federal Courts.

CM = Case Management

ECF = Electronic Case Files

What Does CM (Case Management) Provide?

- <u>All court cases are entered into CM</u>

- Reports
  - Individual cases (docket sheets)
  - Overall case load
  - Scheduling calendars

- Access
  - Available over the internet 24 hours a day

What Is ECF (Electronic Case Files)?

- An enhancement to CM (used in limited number of cases)

- Allows PDF (Portable Document Format) documents to be attached to the docket sheet (no paper filings)

- Automated electronic service of PDF documents

Advantages of Electronic Cases (ECF)

- 24-hour access to view <u>documents</u> (PDF) via the internet

- "Real-time" docket creation by filer

- Automatic "real-time" email service of documents

- No need to certify service

- Less physical storage space needed

Fees for Using CM/ECF

- Viewing
  - Standard PACER fees apply (¢8 per page)
  - Parties get one free look at ECF documents
    - Free documents can be printed and/or saved
- Filing
  - There are no fees for filing
  - Users must obtain their own internet connection

ECF Cases

- All complaints are filed in paper form with the Clerk's Office.

- The Clerk's Office determines a case is ECF and then scans the complaint and files it electronically.

- Attorneys and Chambers will be notified in paper that the new case is ECF and all future filings must be made electronically.

ECF Documents

- All documents must be filed electronically in an ECF case

- Documents not filed electronically:
  - Complaints
  - Trial Evidence and Trial Transcripts from the court reporter
  - Appeals

PDF Documents

- Documents must be filed electronically in PDF (Portable Document Format)

- Create PDF documents by electronic conversion when possible

- Verify content and format of final PDF document **before** posting to CM/ECF

- Each PDF file must be less than 5 MB and you can attach multiple PDFs per filing

Scanned PDF Documents

- Scanning should be avoided when possible
- Scanned documents are 4-5 times larger than electronically created PDF files
- Scan at 200dpi
- Scan as black and white (not color or grayscale)
- Scan to PDF format
- File size limit still applies

E-Government Act

- Appendix E Complies with E-Gov't Act of 2002
  - Requires redaction of:
    - Social Security Numbers
    - Names of Minor Children
    - Date of Birth
   - Financial Account Numbers

Sealed Documents

- Must use the SEALED menus
- You must have an order allowing sealed filings in each case
- Only the court and attorneys of record can view sealed documents
  - Anyone not officially on the docket (e.g. of counsel) do not have access
- Need ECF login to view

How to sign

- "s/" followed by attorney's name must be used in place of a signature on documents
- Login ID and password identifies you on the system
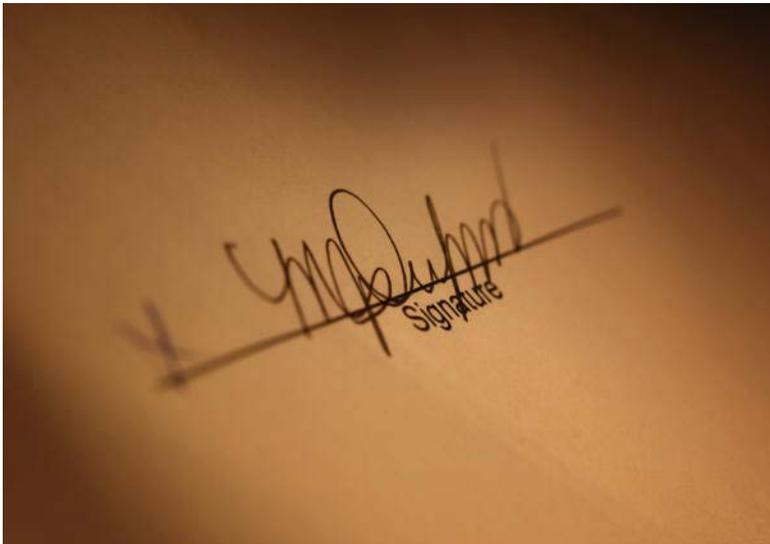
Common ECF Mistakes

- Document not signed
- Filed document in wrong case
- Attached wrong document
- Filed document with corruption or formatting errors
- Mistakes must be corrected by the Clerk's Office

Attorney Registration

- Attorneys must register for accounts to file
- Accounts given only to attorneys who are members of the bar
- Attorneys must pass certification test

Hardware/Software Requirements

- PC with standard operating system (Windows, Macintosh or Linux)

- Word processor (WordPerfect, Word, etc.)

- PDF software (Acrobat Writer, CutePDF, etc.)

- Browser - Netscape Navigator 4.7x, 7.0x or Internet Explorer 5.5, 6.0

- Internet Access

- Scanner

More Information

- Court's public website at www.uscfc.uscourts.gov
  - User Manual for Attorneys
  - FAQ
  - Best Practices
  - Registration form
  - Event Lists
  - On-Line Streaming Video
- CM/ECF User Assistance Line at 202-357-6402 or 866-784-6273 (toll free)

Questions?

Thank You