

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT  
OF LOUISIANA



ELECTRONIC FILING PREVIEW GUIDE  
FOR ATTORNEYS

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## **What is CM/ECF?**

The acronym stands for Case Management/Electronic Case Filing. CM/ECF is a comprehensive case management systems developed by the Administrative Office of the U. S. Courts. The systems allows courts to maintain electronic case files and offer electronic filing over the Internet.

## **Benefits of CM/ECF**

Registered attorneys can file documents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from any location. However, there will be routine scheduled maintenance which will be posted on the Court's website. Maintenance will typically be done very early in the morning hours and the system will be down just briefly.

Paper, photocopy, postage and courier costs are reduced. However, existing document filing fees do apply.

Full case information is available immediately to attorneys, parties and the general public through the Internet. There is also a word search feature for electronically submitted documents.

Registered attorneys will receive e-mail notices electronically in CM/ECF cases. This greatly speeds delivery and eliminates the costs to both the court and attorneys of handling and mailing paper notices.

Multiple parties can view the same case files simultaneously.

Out-of-pocket costs for participation for attorneys is typically very low since CM/ECF uses Internet standard software.

## **System Requirements**

- A personal computer running a standard platform such as Windows or Macintosh.
- Internet service.
- A web browser like Netscape Navigator 4.6 or 4.7, Netscape 7.X, Internet Explorer 5.5 or later (Netscape 6.0 is not recommended).
- Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available for free, is needed for viewing case documents.
- Word processing software like WordPerfect or Word.
- If your word processing software is not capable of saving documents in a PDF format, then you will need software to convert documents to the PDF format. One suggestion is Adobe Acrobat Standard.
- A scanner may be necessary to image documents which you have in paper form only.

## **Other Requirements**

- A PACER account - which will allow you to view case docket sheets and case documents beyond any first free looks for which you receive notice. To obtain a PACER account, visit the PACER Service Center's website at [pacer.psc.uscourts.gov](http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov), and complete the on-line form or call the center toll free at 1-800-676-6856.
- An ECF account for Louisiana Eastern District - which will allow you to electronically file case documents for your cases with this court. Your ECF account will be issued to you once you complete ECF training with our court. For more information, see our court's website at [www.laed.uscourts.gov](http://www.laed.uscourts.gov)
- Attorneys must be admitted to practice in the district, admitted pro hac vice, or serving as government attorneys.

## **Registration**

A Registration Form may be obtained at the Eastern District of Louisiana's Web site located at <http://www.laed.uscourts.gov> by clicking on the CM/ECF hyperlink. Then select "Registration for Electronic Filing Users".

## **Training**

The court will be conducting training sessions at the courthouse. Lawyers must attend one of the sessions in order to receive their passwords and be authorized to file electronically. You are welcome to bring one member of your staff with you and we will also offer classes for additional staff as soon as possible. It will also be helpful for you to be familiar with the Administrative Procedures adopted by the court to assure effective operation of the system. These procedures can be found on the court's website at <http://www.laed.uscourts.gov>

## **Setting Up the PDF Reader**

In order to view documents filed on the system, users must install a PDF reader. (Adobe Acrobat Reader can be downloaded for free from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).) All pleadings are in PDF format. When installing this product, please review and follow the provider's directions to utilize the PDF reader after installation.

## **Portable Document Format (PDF)**

Only PDF (Portable Document Format) documents may be filed with the court using the court's Electronic Filing System. Before filing the document with the court, users should preview the PDF formatted document to ensure that it appears in its entirety and in the proper format.

## How to View a PDF File

- Start your PDF program.
- Go to the **File** menu and choose **Open**.
- Click on the location and file name of the document to be viewed.
- If the designated location is correct, and the file is in PDF format, your PDF program loads the file and displays it on the screen.
- If the displayed document is larger than the screen or consists of multiple pages, use the scroll bars to move through the document.
- Click on the **View** menu for other options for viewing the displayed document. Choose the option that is most appropriate for the document.

## How to Convert Documents to PDF

You must convert all of your documents to PDF before submitting them to the Court's ECF system. The conversion process is relatively simple and can be accomplished in one of two ways depending on the word processing program you are using.

### **For WordPerfect:**

#### Version 6.1 and Higher (You must also have Adobe Acrobat Writer.)

- Open the document to be converted.
- Select **Print**. In the dialog box, open the drop down menu to view a list of printer choices to change the selected printer.
- Select your PDFWriter.
- **Print** the file. The file should not actually print out; instead the option to save the file as a PDF format file appears.
- Name the file, giving it the extension **.pdf** .
- Click **Save** and the file is converted to a PDF document.

#### Version 9

- Use above method or:
- Open the document.

- Click on the **File** menu and select, **Publish to PDF**.
- Save the file as a PDF file, giving it a .pdf extension.
- The file is now in a PDF format under the newly designated name, and the original document remains in its original form under the original name.

#### **For Microsoft Word 95 or later:**

- Open the document.
- Click on the **File** menu and select **Create PDF**.
- Save the file as a PDF file, giving it a .pdf extension.
- The file is now in PDF format under the newly designated name, and the original document remains in its original form under the original name.

#### **Other word processing programs:** (You must have Adobe Acrobat Writer or equivalent)

- Open the document to be converted.
- Select the **Print** option. In the dialog box, open the drop down menu to view a list of printer choices to change the selected printer.
- Select **PDFWriter**.
- **Print** the file. The file should not actually print out; instead the option to save the file as a PDF format file appears.
- Name the file, giving it the extension .pdf .
- Accept the option and the file is converted to a PDF document.

***Depending on the word processing program being used, it may be necessary to find the printer selection option elsewhere. At that point, change the printer to PDFWriter, and follow the directions above.***

#### **Help Desk**

The Help Desk phone numbers are 504-589-7788 or 1-866-209-7767.