

Getting Started – ECF Definitions

Overview This section defines the following basic terms associated with electronic case filing:

- Electronic Case Files System (ECF),
 - Documents,
 - Filing user,
 - PDF,
 - PACER, and
 - Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF).
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Electronic Case Files System (ECF) The *Electronic Case Files system (ECF)* refers to the courts' automated system that receives and stores documents filed in electronic form. The program is part of the CM/ECF (Case Management/Electronic Case Files) software which was developed for the Federal Judiciary.

Documents *Documents* can be any of the following:

- Pleadings,
 - Memoranda,
 - Briefs,
 - Exhibits,
 - Orders,
 - Transcripts of depositions actually used in support of motions or at trial, and
 - All other writings filed in the Court's case filed by the parties or the Court.
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Filing User A *filing user* is an individual who has a Court-issued login and password that allow the individual to file documents electronically in ECF.

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Getting Started – ECF Definitions, Continued

PDF

PDF stands for *Portable Document Format*. Portable Document Format means that the document's format is device-independent, resolution-independent, and fixed-layout. The document can be viewed as created, regardless of the software that created it, because PDF files do not encode information that is specific to the application software used to create the document.

There are two types of PDF documents:

- Electronically converted PDF documents are created from word processing documents (MS Word, WordPerfect, etc.) using Adobe Acrobat or similar software. Electronically converted PDF documents are text searchable, and their file size is small.
- Scanned Image PDF documents are produced by putting paper documents through an optical scanner. Scanned image PDFs are not text searchable and have a large file size.

Ideally, therefore, whenever possible, filing users should create PDF documents through electronic conversion rather than through scanning.

PACER

PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records) is an automated system that allows access to case records over the Internet. Through PACER, an individual can view, print, and download court docket information.

Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF)

A *Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF)* is a notice automatically generated by the CM/ECF system at the time a document is filed with the system.

The NEF gives the following information:

- The time of filing,
 - The name of the party and attorney filing the document,
 - The type of document,
 - The text of the docket entry,
 - The name(s) of the party and/or attorney receiving the notice, and
 - Electronic links (hyperlinks) to the filed document and the docket report.
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