Policies and Procedures - Signatures

Signatures: Judges

A judge signs a document by either (a) writing his or her signature in the traditional manner or (b) affixing or causing to be affixed the mark "/s/" above or beside the judge's name on the document.   A judge can sign any document in either manner, and the judge's signature is effective immediately upon so doing for purposes of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, the Local Rules of this Court, and any other purpose for which a signature is required in connection with proceedings before this Court.

Then, when the judge has caused a signed document to be converted into an electronic file in PDF format and docketed by the Clerk, the representation of the judge's handwritten or printed signature in the court's database becomes the judge's signature for that document for all purposes thereafter.

When a judge rules on a motion electronically, or approves an electronic record reflecting one or more dispositions or other actions on a petty offense docket managed through the Central Violations Bureau, that judge's user login and password for the ECF system constitute the judge's signature for all purposes related to the motion, dispositions, or other actions.

Signatures: Filing Users

The user login and password required to submit documents to the ECF system serve as the filing user's signature on all electronic documents filed with the Court. They serve as a signature for purposes of Fed.R.Civ.P. 11, all other Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, the Local Rules of this Court, and any other purpose for which a signature is required in connection with proceedings before the Court.

Therefore, it is the filing users' responsibility to safeguard their login and password.

 Note: No filing user or other person may knowingly permit or cause to permit a filing user's password to be used by anyone other than an authorized agent of the filing user.

Policies and Procedures - Signatures, Continued

Signatures: Nine Element Signature Block

An electronically filed document must include a nine-element signature block that contains the following typed information about the filing user:

- "/s/" typed in the space where the signature would otherwise appear,
- Name,
- Virginia bar number,
- Attorney for [party name]
- Firm name,
- Firm address,
- Telephone number,
- Fax number, and
- E-mail address.

Signatures: Non-Filing Users

Filing users who are electronically filing a document for a non-filing user (e.g., a defendant in a criminal case or an affiant) will electronically file such documents in the following way:

- Obtain the non-user's actual signature on a paper version of the document.
- Scan and file the document electronically.
- Retain the signed paper version of the document for the duration of the case, including any period of appeal.

Signatures: More Than One Party/Signatory

A document requiring signatures of more than one party/signatory must be filed electronically by the filing user as follows:

- Obtain from all parties/signatories either physical or facsimile signatures which constitute authorization for an electronic signature on their behalf.
- Create an electronic version of the document with the filing user's regular signature block, as well as a typed signature block for all other parties/signatories.
- Convert the electronically signed version of the document to PDF.
- File electronically the electronically signed document.
- Retain the signed authorizations for the duration of the case, including any period of appeal.