

INTRODUCTION

CM/ECF is the electronic case management and electronic case files system for the federal courts. It provides federal courts with enhanced docket management. It allows courts to maintain case documents in electronic format, and, it gives each court the option of permitting case documents -- pleadings, motions, petitions -- to be filed with the court over the Internet.

CM/ECF implementation has been underway in the bankruptcy courts since early 2001. District court implementation began in 2002, and appellate court implementation is scheduled to begin in late 2004.

Why Electronic Case Files?

Judges and court staff have electronic access to docket information, case management data and legal research materials. With computer word processing, most documents generated are created first in electronic form, which allows the federal courts to further reduce the reliance on paper records by establishing electronic case file systems. These systems enhance the accuracy, management and security of records, reduce delays in the flow of information and achieve cost savings for the judiciary, the bar and litigants.

Benefits of the system include:

- ◆ improved judge, court staff, and public access to case file information
- ◆ cost savings and efficiencies through increased productivity
- ◆ reduced physical handling, maintenance, and copying of file documents
- ◆ improved docketing, scheduling, case management and statistical reporting; and
- ◆ enhanced accuracy and efficiency in record maintenance

Capabilities of the System

- ◆ Electronically file pleadings and documents to "live" cases
- ◆ View official docket sheets and documents associated with cases
- ◆ View various reports (*e.g.* Cases Filed Report, Judge's Calendar) for electronically filed cases

- ◆ Make electronic documents easily printable for users who require a paper copy
- ◆ Train users on a training system comparable to the "live" (official) system
- ◆ Download the most recent version of the User's Manual
- ◆ Download Netscape Browser and Portable Document Format ("PDF") configuration information
- ◆ Submit comments and questions regarding the system

This manual provides instructions on how to use the Electronic Case Filing System (ECF) to file documents with the court, or to view and retrieve docket sheets and documents for all cases assigned to this system. It assumes a working knowledge of Netscape, Internet Explorer and Adobe Acrobat. For questions regarding Netscape, Internet Explorer or Adobe Acrobat, please refer to their instruction manuals.

ECF Assistance and Training

If you need technical assistance or training in ECF, please contact the Data Quality Analyst in the appropriate Division Office.

Alexandria - Evelyn Flowers - 703-258-1225
 Kathy Dragg - 703-258-1211

Norfolk - Pat Woodhouse - 757-222-7575 (for Norfolk cases)
 Caroline Bradley - 757-222-7574 (for Newport News cases)

Richmond - Delores Jones - 804-916-2416

Some examples of technical issues/questions are:

- ◆ Login problems (PACER versus CM/ECF)
- ◆ Is the system down?
- ◆ I can't access your web site
- ◆ I can't access documents in Acrobat
- ◆ I can't access documents from my e-mail notification
- ◆ I'm getting a syntax error when I try to docket [event]
- ◆ I tried to open a case and I didn't get a receipt
- ◆ I opened a case, but the receipt didn't reflect the case number or the name or both
- ◆ I'm trying to upload a document and my system either freezes or it just keeps scrolling

If you have procedural or case specific questions or problems, please contact the case manager in the appropriate divisional office who handles that case. The telephone numbers of all case managers in all divisions may be obtained through the **Phone Us** link on the court's web site at www.vaeb.uscourts.gov.

Some examples of procedural and case specific questions are:

- ◆ How do I correct a mistake I made on filing a petition or adversary proceeding?
- ◆ How do I correct a spelling error on a debtor's or plaintiff's or defendant's name?
- ◆ How do I docket a [description of pleading]?
- ◆ How do I file schedules? Amended schedules?
- ◆ I received a notice of deficient filing; what do I need to do?
- ◆ I filed the wrong documents in a case; what do I need to do?
- ◆ How do I file an attachment to a proof of claim that I have already docketed?
- ◆ I'm moving to another law firm? What do I do with the cases I'm taking or not taking?
- ◆ How do I find out who is getting electronic notification in a case?

REQUIREMENTS

Hardware

Minimum requirements of hardware needed to electronically file, view and retrieve case documents are:

IBM-compatible

- Pentium processor-based personal computer, with 16 MB of RAM (24 for Windows NT), with 40 MB of available hard disk space and a Windows 98 or Windows NT operating system
- CD-ROM drive or 3.5" diskette drive (NOTE: Adobe sells the Acrobat software on CD-ROM only. If you desire the diskette software, you must complete the request provided with the software and forward, together with \$25.00, to Adobe)
- Modem, 56K (or faster) or other Internet Access device
- Scanner and scanner software, for conversion and transmission of documents not in a word processing system

Macintosh

- Macintosh with a 68020 processor or Power Macintosh, with 16MB of available RAM, and 40 MB of available hard disk space
- Apple System Software version 7.1.2 or later
- CD-ROM drive or 3.5" diskette drive (NOTE: Adobe sells the Acrobat software on CD-ROM only. If you desire the diskette software, you must complete the request provided with the software and forward, together with \$25.00, to Adobe)
- Modem, 56K (or faster) or other Internet Access device
- Scanner and scanner software, for conversion and transmission of documents not in a word processing system.

Software

Software

- Adobe Acrobat software 3.0 ,4.0 or 5.0 (Acrobat Reader and Acrobat Writer) to convert documents from word processor format to PDF (Portable Document Files)
- Netscape Navigator software, version 4.6x or 4.7x. Do NOT use Netscape version 6.0. Upgrades can be downloaded free of charge from the Netscape website @ www.netscape.com) or Internet Explorer 5.5 or 6.0
- An Internet Service Provider, using point-to-point protocol (PPP). America On Line is not endorsed for use with ECF. It is recommended the provider is capable of a minimum connection speed of 56kps

[**NOTE:** Connection can be made at speeds less than the recommended 56kps, however, system performance may be less than optimal (*i.e.* slow response time and access)]