

United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama
ATTORNEYS AND CM/ECF

GENERAL INFORMATION

Case Management/Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) is the new automated case management and electronic docketing system for the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama. CM/ECF provides a new, easy-to-use electronic case filing feature that will make life easier for you by allowing you to file and view court documents over the Internet.

CM/ECF for this Court will offer CM/ECF in two parts:

- **E-Noticing** **E-noticing is required for all attorneys who wish to practice in this court.**
Registration is available now and is a necessary prerequisite to E-Filing.
- **E-Filing** E-filing registration will be announced in the near future.

What does CM/ECF offer?

CM/ECF will allow attorneys to file and view documents from their office, home or anywhere they have access to the Internet, 24 hours a day. Documents are automatically docketed as part of the filing process and are immediately available electronically. CM/ECF also provides the following benefits:

- 24-hour access to filed documents over the Internet
- Automatic email notice of case activity
- The ability to download and print documents directly from the court system
- The ability to word search converted PDF documents and cut and paste from them.
- Concurrent access to case files by multiple parties
- Secure storage of documents (so files are not misplaced)
- Potential reduction in courier fees

When is CM/ECF coming to this Court?

Spring 2004

Contact Information

The Administrative Office of the United States Courts has developed a web site for your assistance. This site includes a video presentation on CM/ECF. For more information go to:

www.uscourts.gov/cmecf/cmecf.html

Computer-based training is also available through the Administrative Office. To practice filing and retrieving documents using the CM/ECF tutorial system, go to: www.pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/ecfcbt

E-NOTICING:
REQUIRED FOR ATTORNEYS WHO PRACTICE IN THIS COURT

What do I need to use CM/ECF for E-Noticing?

- A personal computer running a standard platform such as Windows or Macintosh
- Adobe Acrobat Reader software (available for free over the internet) to access the document
- Internet access and a browser. The system has been certified with Netscape and Internet Explorer
- A PACER account to view documents in Social Security or Criminal cases or to take a second look at any document or to query the system for other information
- A printer to print copy of document if desired

How do I sign up for E-noticing?

Complete and sign both portions of the Attorney Data Update Form included with this notice. A copy will also be posted to our website at: www.almd.uscourts.gov Click on the CM/ECF link

How does it work?

The electronic case files system accepts documents in a portable document format (PDF). PDF retains the way a document looks, so the pages, fonts and other formatting are preserved. Receiving a document notice by e-mail is easy:

- Open the e-mail message sent from the court
- Click on the document link (You will only need to log in if this is a Social Security or Criminal Case)
- Print the document if needed
- Save the document to your own system if desired. Attorneys may want to set up separate electronic folders for each case.
- In documents created by conversion from a word processing program, selected text can be highlighted, copied and pasted to other documents. The document can be searched for certain words or phrases -- a helpful feature in lengthy documents.

Are there fees?

There are no added fees for receiving e-mail notification of case activity. Each e-mail notification allows the reader one free look at the document, and each attorney registered can have more than one e-mail address. Some attorneys find it helpful to list their staff's e-mail as a secondary address. Both primary and secondary e-mails receive a free look. During that free look, the reader can save the file to their own computer, print the file, copy a section of the file (if it is a PDF file that was converted, rather than scanned). Additional looks are available for viewing or downloading at seven (7) cents per page thru the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) system. Directed by Congress to fund electronic access through user fees, the judiciary has set the fee at the lowest possible level sufficient to recoup program costs. filing documents over the Internet using CM/ECF.

E-FILING

What do I need to use CM/ECF?

- A personal computer running a standard platform such as Windows or Macintosh
- Word processing software
- Internet access and a browser. The system has been certified with Netscape and Internet Explorer
- Software to convert documents into PDF (integral to many word processing software packages)
- Scanning equipment may be useful

How does it work?

The electronic case files system accepts documents in a portable document format (PDF). PDF retains the way a document looks, so the pages, fonts and other formatting are preserved. Filing a document with the court's CM/ECF system is quite easy:

- Create the document using word processing software.
- Save the document in PDF format. Log onto the court's CM/ECF system, using a court-issued login and password.
- Follow the set of simple prompts to provide information about the case, party and document to be filed.
- Attach the PDF document and submit it to the court for filing (by pressing a submit button).
- Save or print the CM/ECF electronic receipt e-mailed from the court confirming that the document was filed.

Are there fees?

There are no added fees for filing documents over the Internet using CM/ECF. Existing document filing fees do apply. Electronic access to court data is available through the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) program. Attorneys and litigants receive one free copy of documents filed electronically in their cases; additional copies are available for viewing or downloading at seven (7) cents per page. Directed by Congress to fund electronic access through user fees, the judiciary has set the fee at the lowest possible level sufficient to recoup program costs.

How will I sign documents?

The court will issue logins and passwords. Using your login and password to file a document is considered to be your signature.

How secure is CM/ECF?

CM/ECF has many security features and has passed an evaluation by the National Security Agency. Access to the system is through a court issued login and password.

What kind of training will be provided?

Training will be provided by the Clerk's Office in several locations over the next several months. All lawyers and law firms will receive information about training for lawyers and staff. Please check our website for training information and schedules.

How do I sign up for E-filing?

E-noticing registration is a prerequisite to registering for E-Filing. E-Filing Registration will be announced in the near future.