

GETTING READY TO FILE

Document Creation and Format

Pleadings may be created using any word processing application, however all documents must be converted to Portable Document Format (PDF) prior to filing electronically with the court, with the exception of the matrix. If you attempt to upload a non-pdf file, or try to submit a docket entry without a document attached, an error message will display.

When preparing a document, you must comply with the Administrative Procedures Section IIC. The name of the Participant under whose log-in and password the document is submitted must be displayed by a “/s/” and typed in the space where a signature would otherwise appear, e.g., “/s/Jane Doe”. In addition, documents filed electronically which require original signatures, other than the Participants (“third party signatures”), must be maintained in paper form by the Participant for a period not less than seven years from the date of closure of the case or proceeding in which the document is filed. The third party signature on a document must be electronically filed in one of the following two ways: (1) submitting a scanned document containing the third party signature; or (2) by submitting a document displaying the name of the person signing the document, preceded by “/s/” and typed in the space where the signature would otherwise appear.

When creating documents in a word processing application, we recommend you create folders for each of your cases in which to save the documents, as well as the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) which you will receive back from the court. In order to track your pleadings with ease, your office should develop some type of file naming convention. For example, you may want to use the case number and abbreviations for the type of document being filed. (i.e. 12345rs is the equivalent of case number 01-12345 Motion for Relief from Stay).

All documents should be captioned as they normally are. On motions, do not include a hearing date on the document. You will be prompted during the docketing of a motion to set your own hearing, which will automatically be placed on the Judge's calendar. For more specific information on setting hearings, please refer to the Common Tasks and Filing a Document sections of the this Guide.

Converting a Document to PDF Format

Conversion to PDF is necessary for any document prior to electronically filing with the court. Converting a document to PDF will not alter your original, it will only create a copy. Refer to the instructions below for converting a document to PDF from WordPerfect; other applications may vary in the how the conversion process is done. It is important to convert to PDF using Acrobat Writer.

- STEP 1** Open the document to be converted.
- STEP 2** Click on *File* on the tool bar and select the *Print* option. The print dialog box will display. Select the drop down arrow to change the option for the selected printer.
- STEP 3** Select Acrobat PDFWriter. Click on Print button.
- ☛ *TIP - Pressing Print will save the file as a PDF, it will not actually print the document.*
- STEP 4** The Save PDF File As dialog box displays. Select the folder in which to save the PDF file. Create file name; ensure PDF Files (*.pdf) displays in the *List of Files Type* window; click [SAVE].

Optional Feature

In the Save PDF File As dialog box, there are two additional functions:

- ▶ **Edit Document Info** - This feature is located in the lower left corner of the dialog box and allows the user to edit the PDF document before saving it.
- ▶ **View PDF File** - If a check mark is place in this box, it will open the acrobat document once you click Save.

Viewing PDF Documents before Filing

Often, users file the correct document in the wrong case, or the incorrect document in the right case. In order to prevent filing in the wrong case, users should be careful to take note of the name of debtor and case number, which will display as a hyperlink, at the top of the screen when filing.

To ensure that the correct document is being filed the user must review the PDF before submitting. During the filing of an event, a screen will always display requiring the user to upload their document. During the upload process, the user will browse their own file folders and search for the file previously created. Once you find the correct document, and before uploading it, be sure to open the document and view it. Follow the direction below for viewing a document during the uploading process:

- Highlight the file name and right click on the name of the document with the mouse. A menu will display.
- Using the left mouse button, select Open, this will allow you to view the PDF document prior to sending it to the court. Make sure that all the pages you intended are there and if it is a scanned document that it is legible and did not skip any pages during scanning.

Once the document has been verified, the user would close the PDF viewer and click Open on the cm/ecf screen. Upon clicking Open, the filename and path will display in the box labeled "filename". If there are no separate attachments to the document (i.e. certificate of service), continue by clicking Next. If there are attachments, place a dot in the radio button to say "yes" to attachments, then click Next.

CAUTION:

**Be sure to view document before accepting and filing with the court.
Filing with the court creates a docket entry immediately.**

To view the document and ensure it was converted prior to the filing process, refer to the steps below:

- STEP 1** Open *Adobe Acrobat* program.
- STEP 2** Select File from the menu bar, then select Open.
- STEP 3** Click on the location and filename of the document to be viewed.
- STEP 4** Highlight the file name and click Open.
- STEP 5** Use the scroll bars or the buttons on the tool bar to move through the multi-page documents. Click on View on the menu bar for other viewing options of the document.

Combining Different Types of Papers in One Document

The CM/ECF software has no method to decipher PDF documents to determine the type of pleading being filed, e.g. motion, brief etc. Thus, choosing the correct docket event is imperative. Do not combine into one file any papers which can be filed separately. NEVER combine events from different CM/ECF categories into the same PDF document. You may only combine the petition, schedules, summary of schedules, statement of financial affairs, attorney's disclosure statement, and statement of intention in one document (do not include the chapter 13 plan or the matrix).

Never combine (1) a motion with a response or answer to another document, (2) a plan or disclosure statement with each other or with any other documents (except for a certificate of service), (3) a pleading in an adversary proceeding with a motion.

Users may file multi-part motions electronically. In the event pick list, the user must select all types of motions that describe the PDF document. To select more than one item from the list use the <CTRL> key. The resulting docket text will list each motion event type selected, but the user is not able to edit the docket text. In addition, the user cannot put the motion events selected in a particular order to emphasize which motion should be listed first. Do not worry about how the docket text reads, draft the document so that it clearly explains the relief requested.

Combining Supporting Documents with Main Document

It is permissible to file a document that is a combination of several different types of documents (which may have been filed separately), where one section is the main document (e.g. the motion), and the other document(s) are the support to the main document (i.e. brief, certificate of service, proposed order). When docketing motions or applications be sure to select the event for the main document which is the Notice of Motion or application, from the *Motions/Applications* category. At the upload screen, the main document is the Notice of Motion or Application. To “attach” supporting documents such as a Certification, select the [YES] radio button and click [NEXT]. On the attachments screen, upload the supporting documents such as the Certificate of Service and/or proposed order. Use the “*type*” drop-down box to identify the type of document (if the document type is not on the list, use the free text description box.) After each attachment, click Add to List. After all attachments have been uploaded, click [NEXT]. For more specific instructions on uploading PDF’s, please refer to the Common Tasks section of this Guide.