UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS

ELECTRONIC CASE FILING
CM/ECF USER MANUAL FOR ATTORNEYS

Revised September 2015

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GETTING STARTED

Introduction

This manual provides instructions on how to obtain a CM/ECF account and how to properly use the account to file documents with the court and to view and/or retrieve docket sheets and documents. Users should have a working knowledge of Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox and PDF files.

Help Desk

Contact the Court's Help Desk during regular court business hours (Monday through Friday, 9am – 5pm EST) at 1-866-784-6273 (toll free) or 202-357-6402 (local).

Software Requirements

The following software is required to electronically file, view and retrieve cases documents:

- a word processing program;
- Internet Explorer 9, Mozilla Firefox 15, or Safari 5 or 6 (these versions have been tested, others may work as well);
- PDF software (reader to view and writer/converter to file); and
- An Internet connection.

Registering For Access to ECF

Participants will need to register with the Court and pass a certification test in order to receive a login and password for the ECF system. These steps can be completed by visiting our website www.uscfc.uscourts.gov and selecting the CM/ECF Resources/Obtain a CM/ECF Filing Account links.

Complete the electronic registration form and follow the instructions to electronically submit the form to the court and successfully complete the certification test (a score of 75% or higher must be achieved). Once these requirements have been satisfied, your United States Court of Federal Claims CM/ECF login and password will be e-mailed to you.

Registered users can practice filing in our training system provided they have indicated they would like a training login on their registration form. The CM/ECF training system mimics the live CM/ECF system using test cases that do not contain official court records. These TEST cases have been given the following case numbers: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4 and 3-5. There is no time limit on use of the training system and there are no PACER charges.

PACER Registration

ECF users must have a PACER account in order to use the Query and Report features of the ECF system. PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records) is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case and docket information from federal courts via the Internet. If you do not have a PACER login, contact the PACER Service Center to establish an account. You may call the PACER Service Center at (800) 676-6856 or (210) 301-6440 for information or to register for an account. Also, you may register for a PACER account online at www.pacer.gov .

PREPARATION

Portable Document Format (PDF)

Only PDF (Portable Document Format) files may be filed with the court using the ECF system. Before sending the file to the court, users should review the PDF formatted document to ensure that it appears in its entirety and in the proper format.

Installing The PDF Reader

Users must install software capable of reading PDF files in order to view documents that have been electronically filed on the system. All pleadings must be filed in PDF format.

How To Convert A Document To PDF

- Using any word processing program (with a PDF converter on your computer), open the document to be converted. Select the Print option (generally found under the File menu) and in the dialog box select the option to change the current printer. A drop down menu with a list of printer choices is displayed. Select the PDF converter and print.
- Remember the file location so you can find the document later when you are ready to upload it.
- Name the file, giving it the extension .PDF, and click the **Save** button.

How To View A PDF File:

- Start the PDF reading program.
- Go to the **File** menu and choose **Open**.
- Double click on the location and file name of the document to be viewed.
- If the designated location is correct, and the file is in PDF format, it will be loaded and displayed on the screen.

BASICS

User Interactions

There are three general types of user interactions allowed by the CM/ECF system:

- Entering information in data fields
- Using command buttons to direct system activities
- Clicking on hyperlinks

Conventions Used In This Manual

- Command buttons are represented in this manual in **bold** face
- Hyperlinks are represented in <u>underlined</u> type

Documents Filed In Error

A document incorrectly filed in a case may result from posting the wrong PDF file to a docket entry; selecting an incorrect document type from the events menu; or entering the wrong case number. The CM/ECF system does not permit corrections after a document has been electronically filed. If you realize that you have made an error, call the CM/ECF Help Desk Monday through Friday between the hours of 9am – 5pm.

Viewing Transaction Log

This feature allows you to review all transactions that have been processed with your login and password. If you believe that someone is using your login and password without your permission, change your password immediately, then telephone the Court's Help Desk as soon as possible.

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

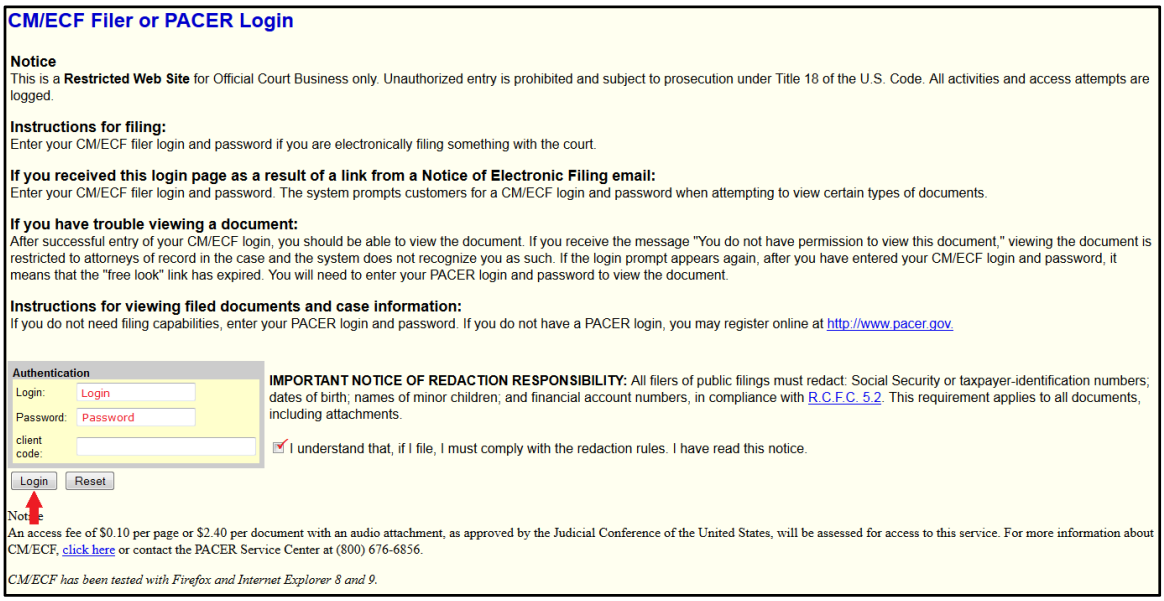
Below is a step-by-step guide for entering the system, preparing a document for filing, filing a motion or application and displaying a docket sheet. We suggest that you go through the steps on the training database before trying to file a document in the live system.

How To Access The System

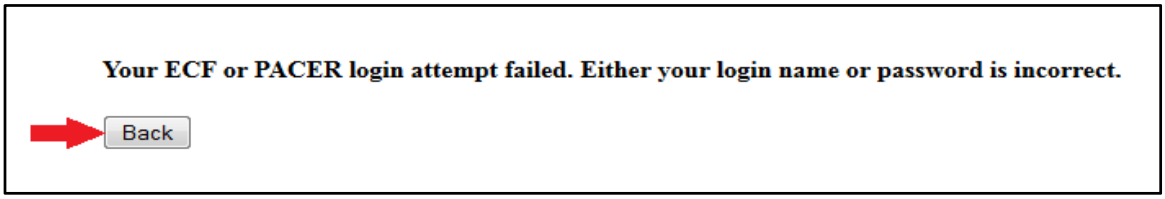
Users may access the system via the Internet by going to www.uscfc.uscourts.gov and clicking on the following links: CM/ECF Resources and Login to the CM/ECF Live System, at which point you will be taken to the Welcome page. Click on the Document Filing System link.

Logging In

Enter your ECF Login and Password in the appropriate fields. All login names and passwords are case sensitive. Remember to check the box regarding redaction rules.



If the ECF system does not recognize your login and/or password, it will display the following error message:



If this occurs, click on the **Back** button and re-enter your login and password. Please remember, your ECF login credentials are different than your PACER login credentials. If you have forgotten your login and/or password please contact the Help Desk.

Once the Main Menu appears, choose from the list of options on the blue menu bar located at the top of the screen.

Selecting ECF Features

ECF provides the following options:

- **Civil**: Select Civil to electronically e-file all motions and other court documents.
- **Query**: Query ECF to review a docket sheet, retrieve documents that are relevant to a case, view all pending deadlines and hearings. Additional features are discussed later in this manual.
- **Reports**: Choose Reports to retrieve docket sheets and cases-filed reports.
- **Utilities**: Utilities allows you to view your personal ECF transaction log and maintain personal ECF account information.
- **Search**: Search Menus and Events can help you find and get the menu option or e-filing event you need. Each option displays a link to deliver you to the first screen for docketing.
- **Logout**: Allows you to exit from ECF and prevents further filing with your password until the next time you log in.

The question mark icon, which will be found at the far end of the blue menu bar, will provide a help file for the screen you are viewing.

Please note: if you are entering the system to query the database for case information or to view a document, you will be prompted to enter your PACER login and password after you click on either the Query or Reports option. Any questions regarding your PACER account should be directed to the PACER Service Center at (800) 676-6856 or (210) 301-6440.

CIVIL EVENTS FEATURE

Registered filers will use the Civil feature of ECF to electronically file with the Court a variety of pleadings and other documents. This section of the manual describes the basic steps to take in order to file a single motion with the Court. The process is consistent regardless of the event.

General Rules and Manipulations

Each screen has the following buttons:

- **Clear**, which removes all characters entered in the boxes on that screen
- **Next** or **Submit**, which accepts the entry and displays the next entry screen

Correcting a Mistake

Use the back button on the browser or toolbar to go back and correct an entry made on a previous screen. Review the final text window carefully before submitting an e-filing. If the text is incorrect, or the wrong document was attached to the e-filing, **START OVER** by clicking the Civil option on the blue menu bar. Once the document is transmitted to the court, only the court can make changes or corrections.

Signatures

Documents which must contain original signatures or which require either verification or an unsworn declaration under any rule or statute shall be filed electronically with originally executed copies maintained by the filer. The pleadings or those documents electronically filed shall indicate a signature, e.g., "s/Jane Doe."

Filing Documents

Basic Steps for Filing A Document

- Select the type of event to file
- Enter the relevant case number
- Designate the filing party
- Specify the PDF file from your saved documents
- Add attachments, if necessary
- Review the final text for accuracy

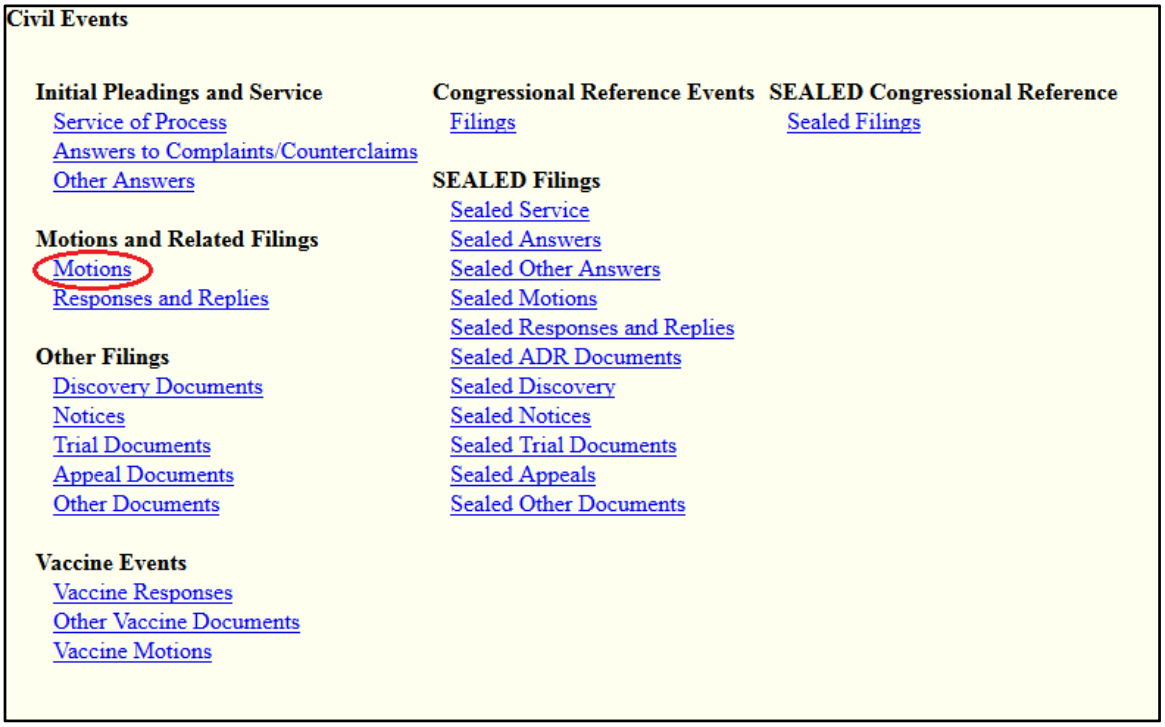
- Submit
- Receive notification of electronic filing (NEF)

After successfully logging into CM/ECF, follow these steps to file a document.

- Select the Civil button from the blue menu bar at the top of the ECF screen.

The Civil Event Window will open, displaying all of the events from which you may choose. (This section of the manual describes the process of filing a motion. The process is similar for e-filing other documents in CM/ECF).

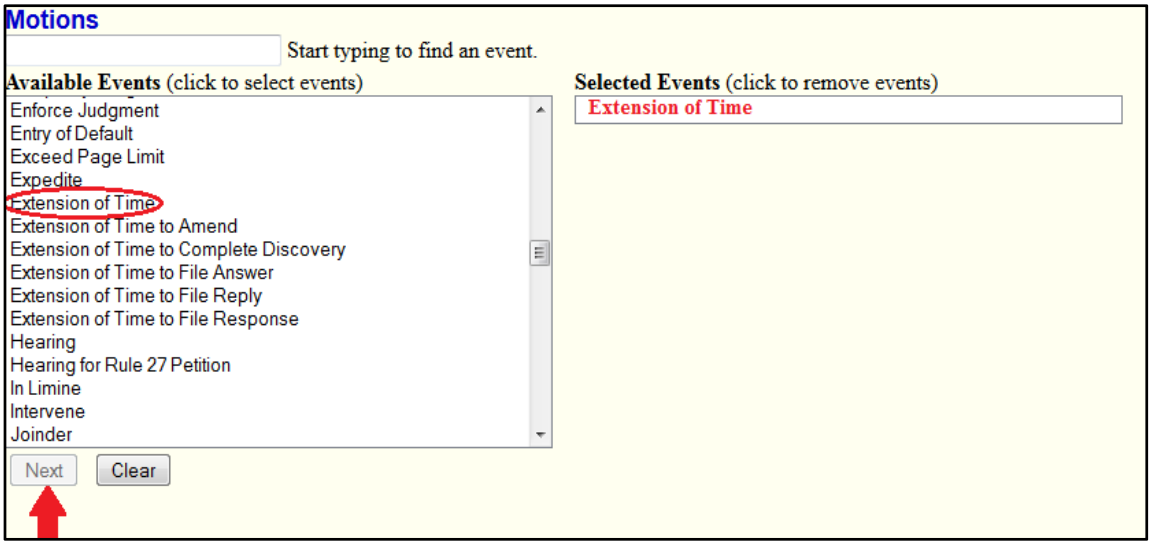
- Click on **Motions** under the **Motions and Related Filings** category.



- The Motions screen displays the **Available Events** list. To find the correct event, you can either use the scroll bar on the right of the available events box or type the first

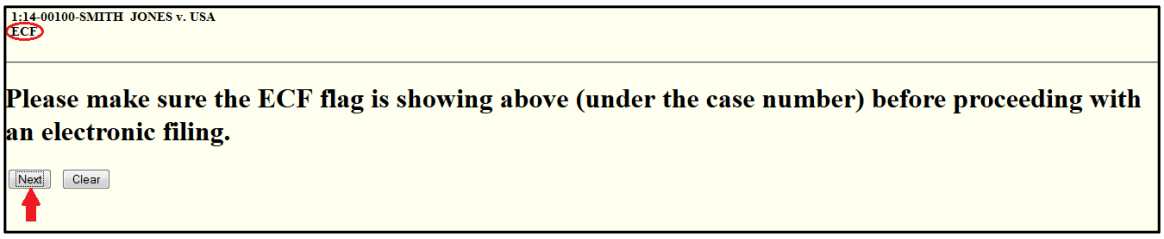
letter of the relief you are requesting in the text box directly above the available events. Once you have found the correct event you may click on it; it will appear in the **Selected Events** box. Multiple motion types are allowed and should be selected if your motion is requesting multiple reliefs. Any event can be removed by clicking on it in the Selected Events box.

(For demonstration purposes, we will select the **Extension of Time** event.)

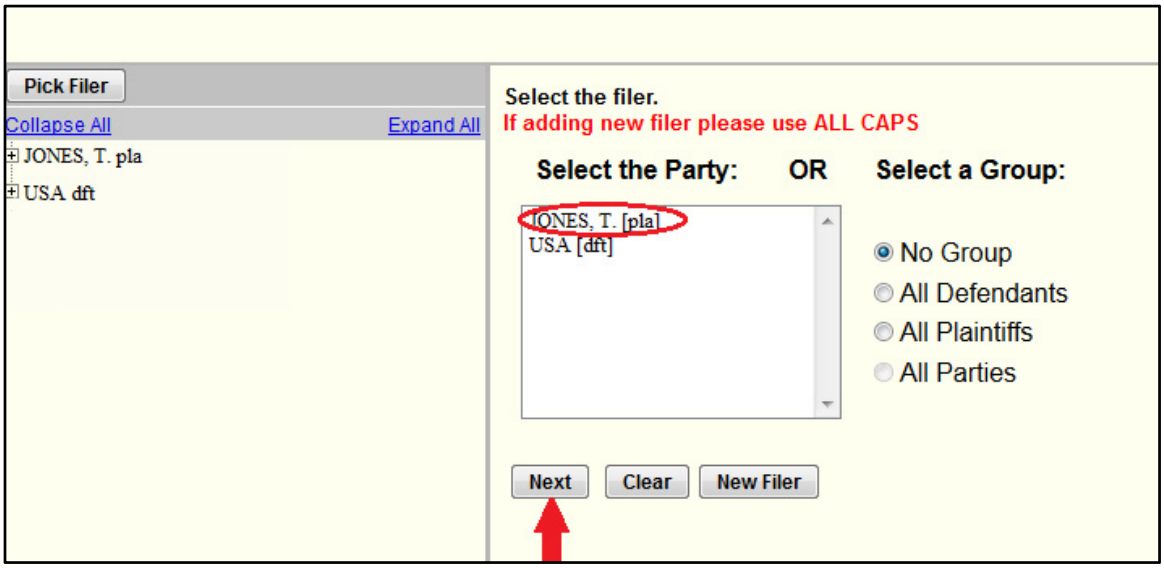


- Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed and click on the **Find This Case** button. If an invalid case number is input a message "Cannot find civil case" will be received. Click the **Clear** button to re-enter. When the correct case number is entered, click on the **Next** button.

- Confirm that your case is an electronic case and click **Next**.
  If the letters ECF do not appear under your case number/name at the top of the screen then you may not file electronically.

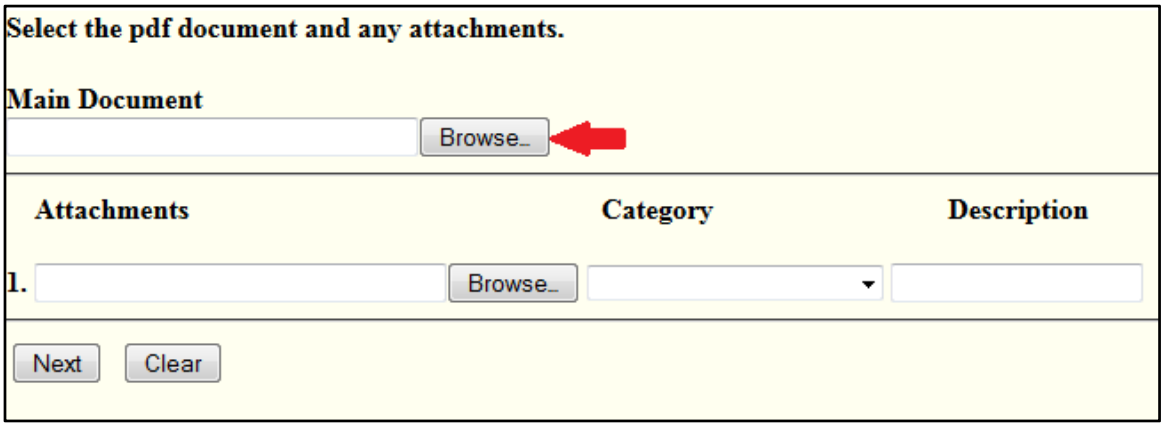


- Select Party and click the **Next** button.



Note: If your party does not appear, see the section of this manual titled Add/Create New Party.

- Select document and attachments by clicking on the **Browse** button and navigating to the appropriate directory and file name(s) and selecting the PDF document you saved. **Remember, all documents must be in PDF format**.



If you need to verify that the document you selected is the correct document, right mouse click on the highlighted file name to open a quick menu and left mouse click on

Open. Once you have verified the document is correct, close Adobe and click on the **Open** button. ECF closes the File Upload screen and inserts the PDF file in the Main Document screen.
The Main Document and Attachment(s) must each be no more than 12MB in size.

If there are no attachment(s) to the motion, click on the **Next** button.

If you have Attachment(s), you will download them with the Attachments Browse button.

Note: In the event that the document(s) selected are not in PDF format, ECF will display the following error message. Click on the Back button and ECF will return to the previous screen.

ERROR: Document is not a well-formed PDF document (no further information is available).

Error File: Document ABC

Submitted Entries

File Type	Filename	Category	Description
Main Document	Document ABC	-	-

Back

Select and highlight the PDF file of your pleading and proceed as before.

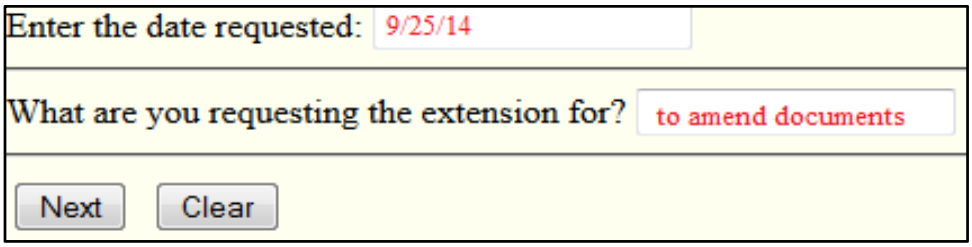
Note: If you fail to select a document to e-file with your pleading, ECF will display the following message. Click on the OK button and ECF will return to the previous screen.

Please select a main document.

OK

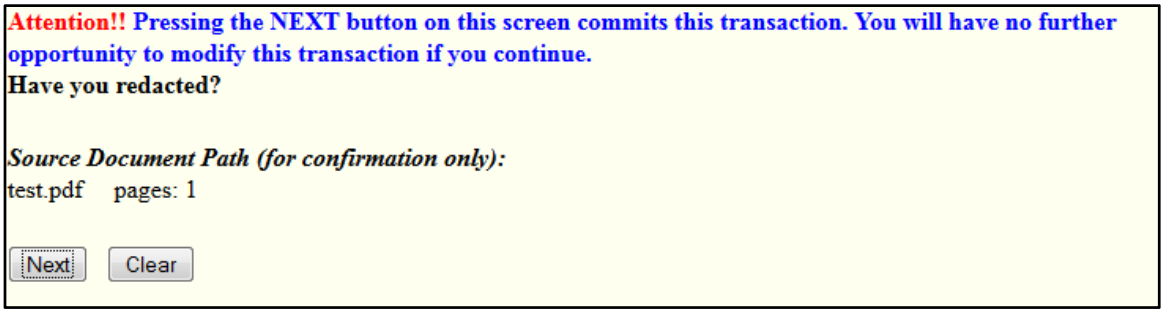
Select and highlight the PDF file of your pleading and proceed as before.

Adding/Modifying Text



- Click in the open text areas to type the required and/or any additional text for the description of the pleading. Please do not use all CAPS.
- Click the **Next** button. (**Please Note**: the response deadline that appears is the response deadline for the opposing party to respond to your motion).
- Review the docket text for any errors. Click the **Back** button if any corrections are needed. Make the necessary corrections and click the **Next** button.

Submitting The Pleading



The above example displays the message: "Attention!! Pressing the **NEXT** button on this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue. Have you redacted?"

Please carefully review your docket text one final time, if no changes are needed click on the **Next** button to submit the pleading.

Notice of Electronic Filing

The Notice of Electronic Filing screen provides confirmation that ECF has registered your transaction and the pleading is now an official court document. It also displays the date and time of the transaction and the document number assigned to your document.

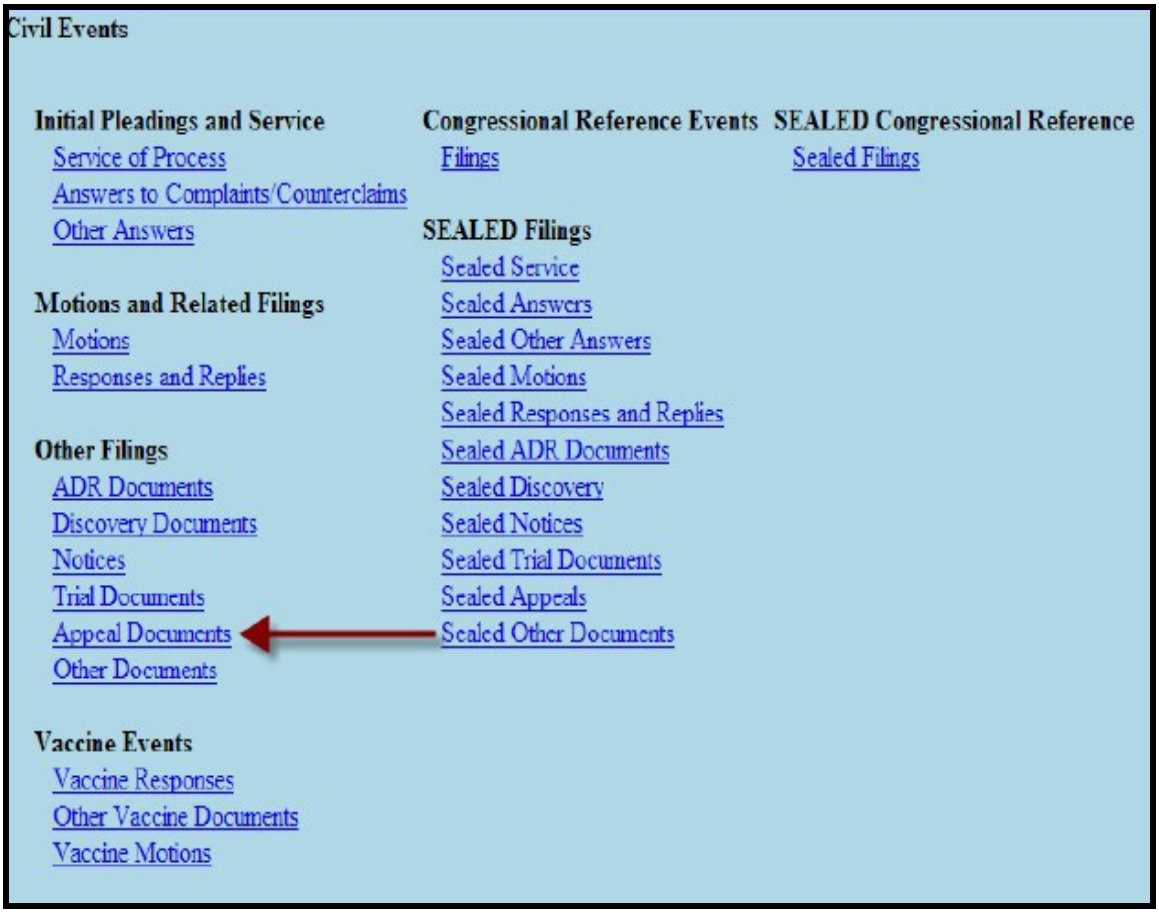
The CM/ECF system will electronically transmit the Notice of Electronic Filing to the judge's chambers and all the parties in the case who have supplied their e-mail addresses to the Court. The NEF also displays the names and addresses of the individuals who will not be electronically notified of the filing.

It is strongly recommended that you save an electronic version of the NEF to your computer's hard-drive.

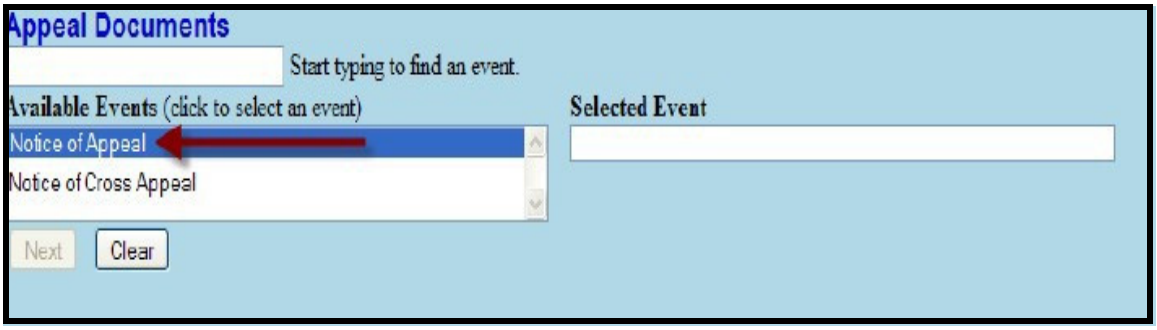
NOTICES OF APPEAL/CROSS APPEAL

Notices of appeal may be filed electronically in cases that have been designated ECF. Detailed instructions on how to file are posted below. **Please note that the filing of notices of appeal require online payment of the filing fee. Please make sure to have your credit card information on hand.**

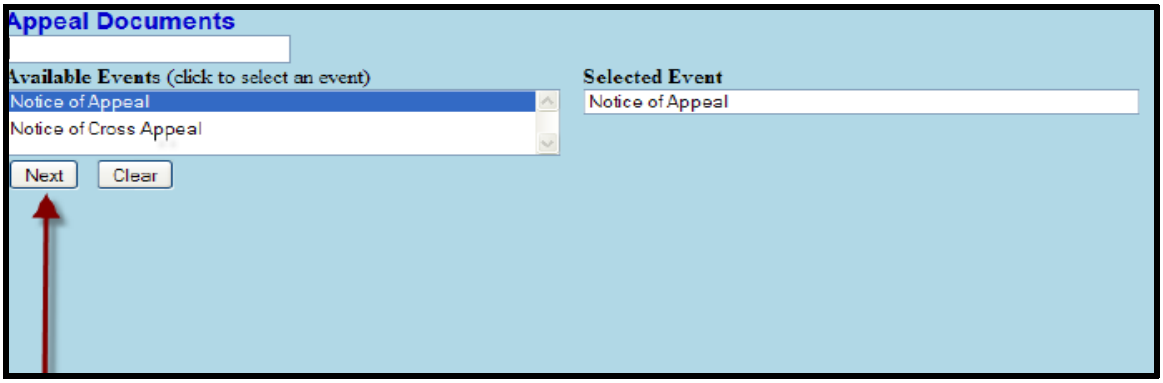
From the Civil Events menu select Appeal Documents



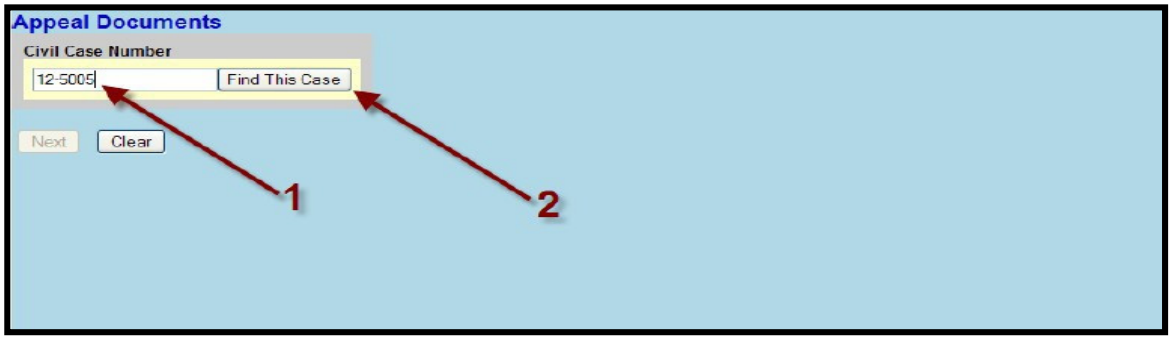
From the Appeal Documents menu select the proper event: Notice of Appeal or Notice of Cross Appeal



Once you have selected the correct event select the **Next** button.

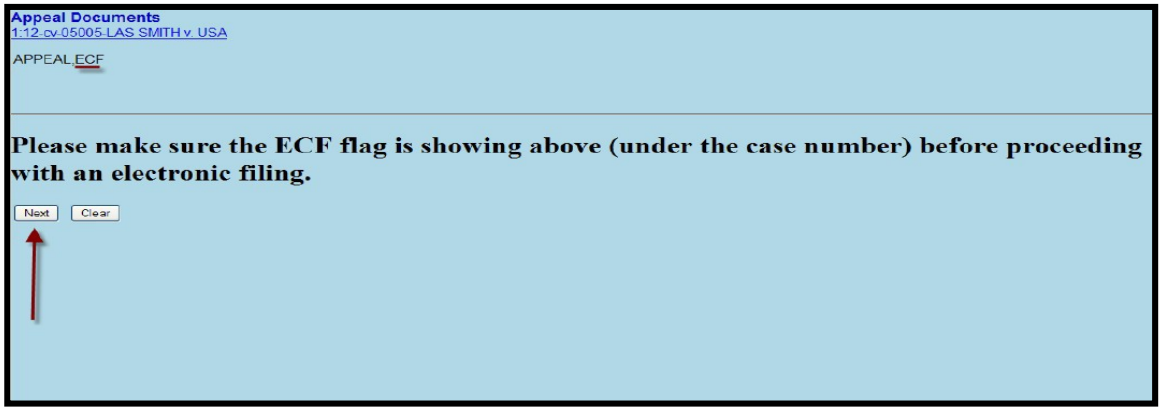


Enter your case number in the text box and click the **Find This Case** button.

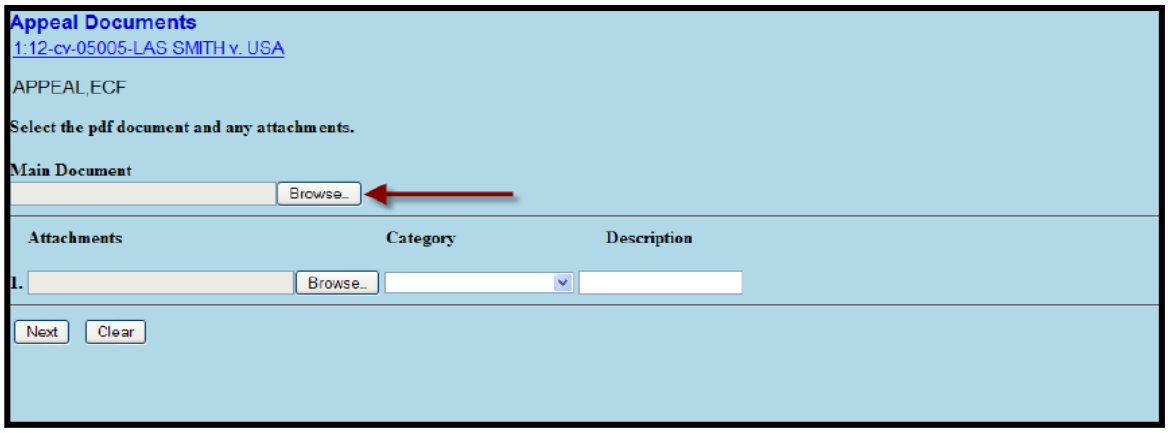


Verify that you have entered the correct case number and select the **Next** button.

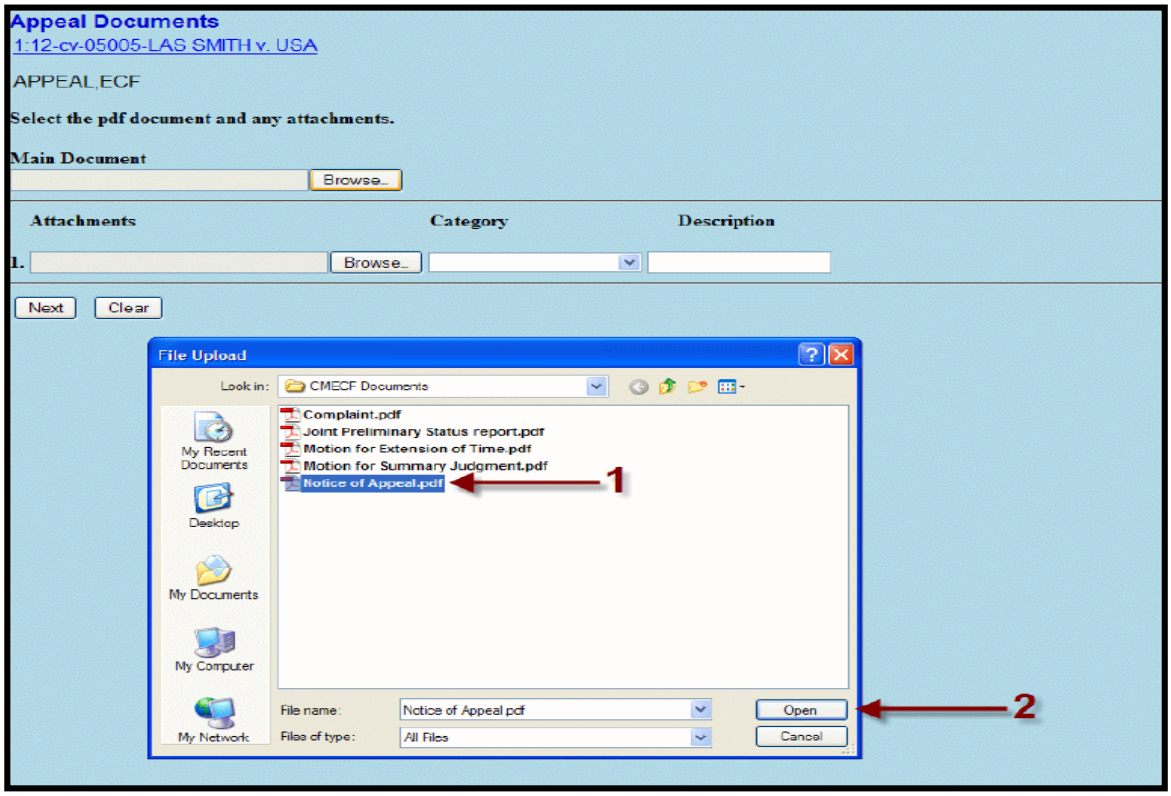
Verify that the ECF flag is present and select the **Next** button.



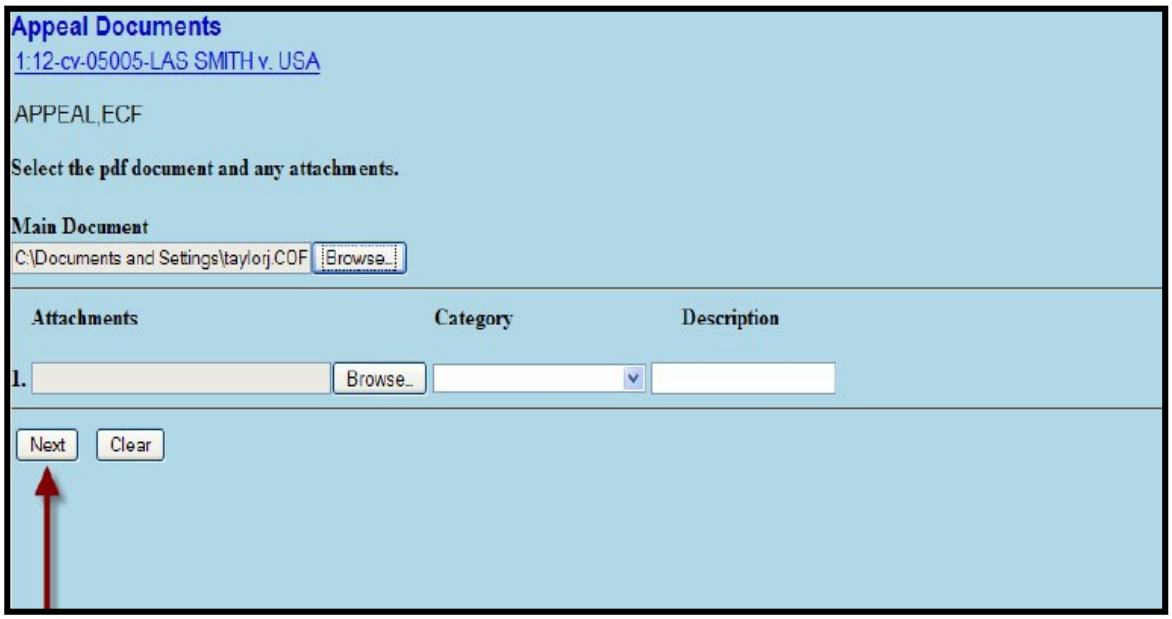
Click **Browse** to retrieve your pdf version of your Notice of Appeal.



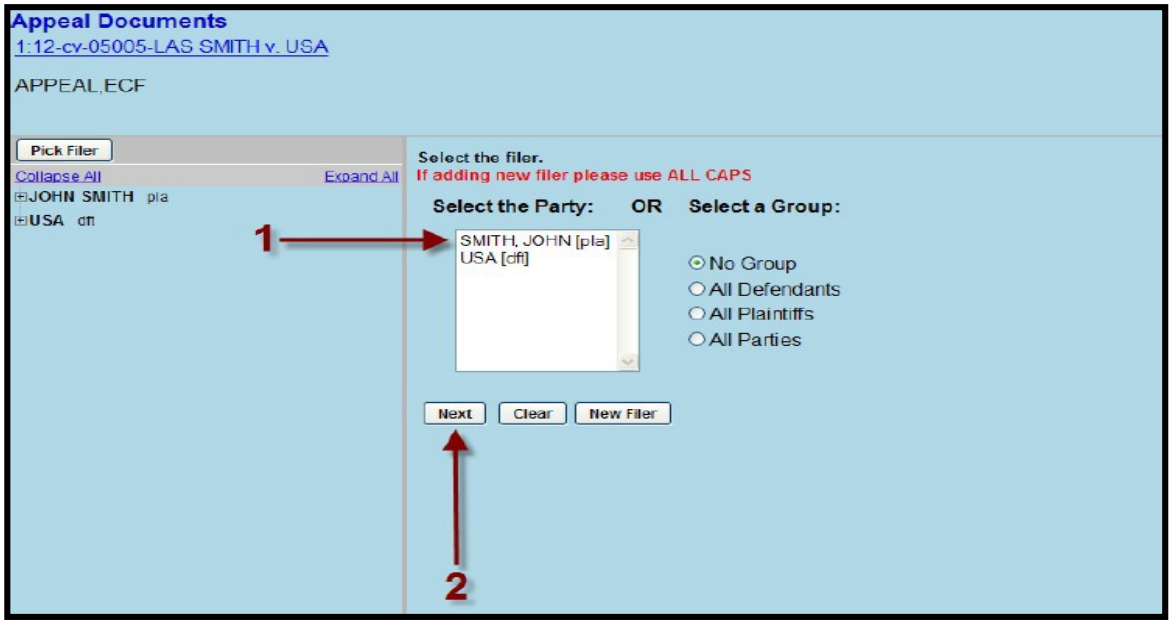
Once you have located and selected your PDF, click the Open button to continue. **NOTE:** If you would like to view the document before filing, please do so at this point. This will be your only opportunity to do so before filing. This may be done by right clicking on the file and clicking on the **Open with Acrobat** or **Open**.



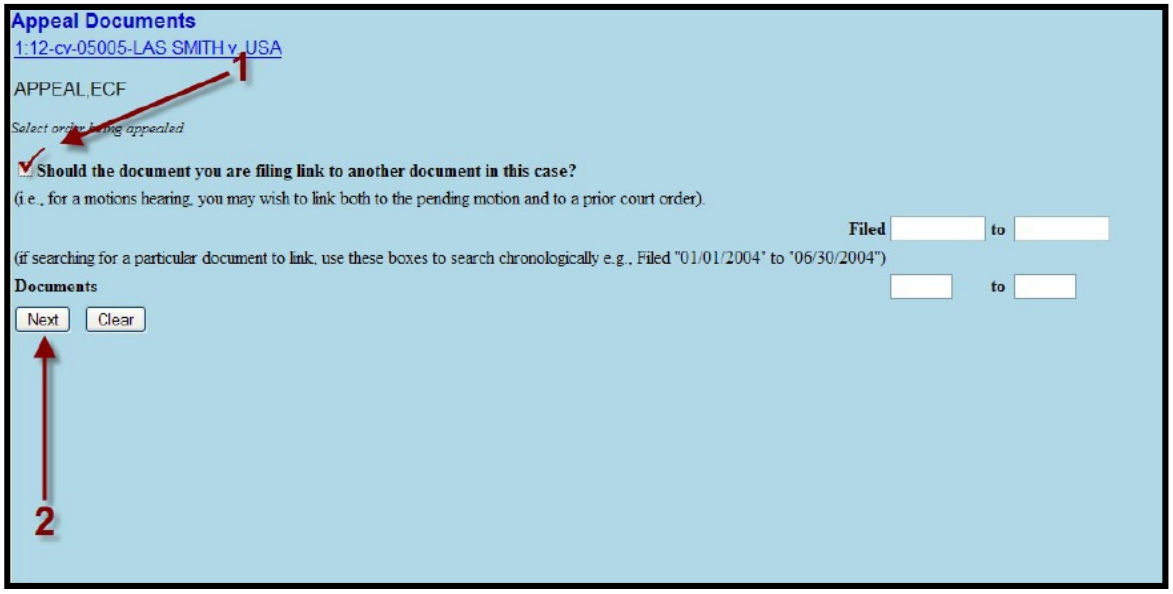
Select the **Next** button.



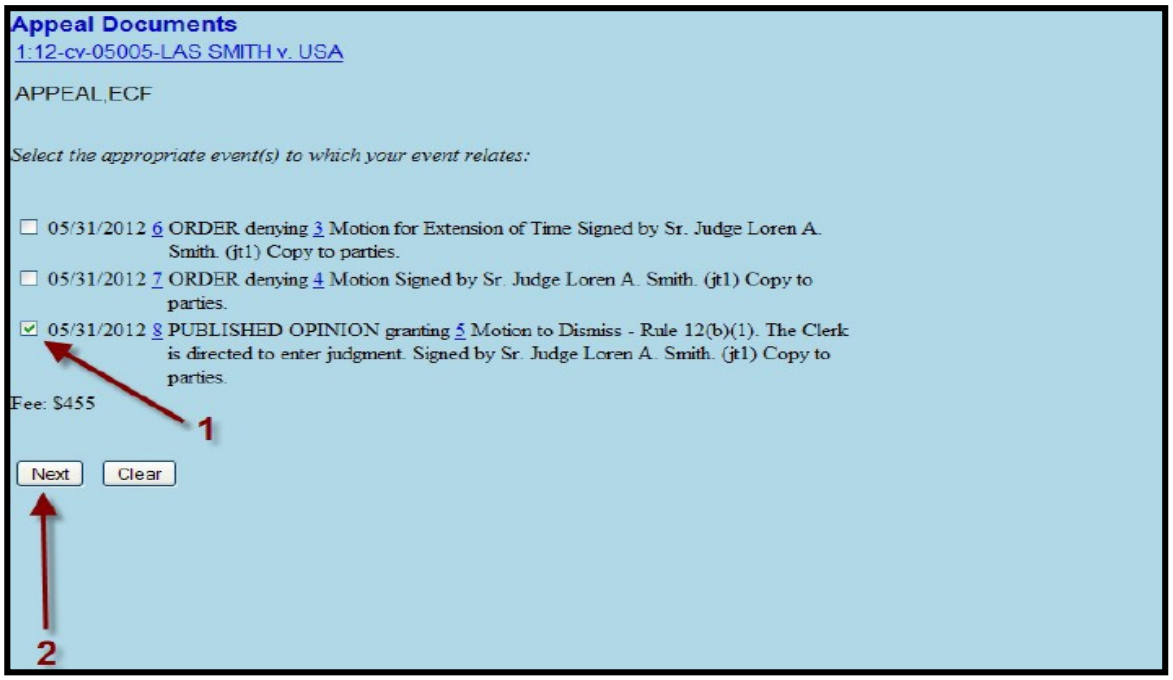
Select the proper filer of the Notice of Appeal by clicking on the appropriate party name and selecting the **Next** button.



In order to link to the decision being appealed, please check only the box noted above (please leave all other boxes blank) and then select the **Next** button.

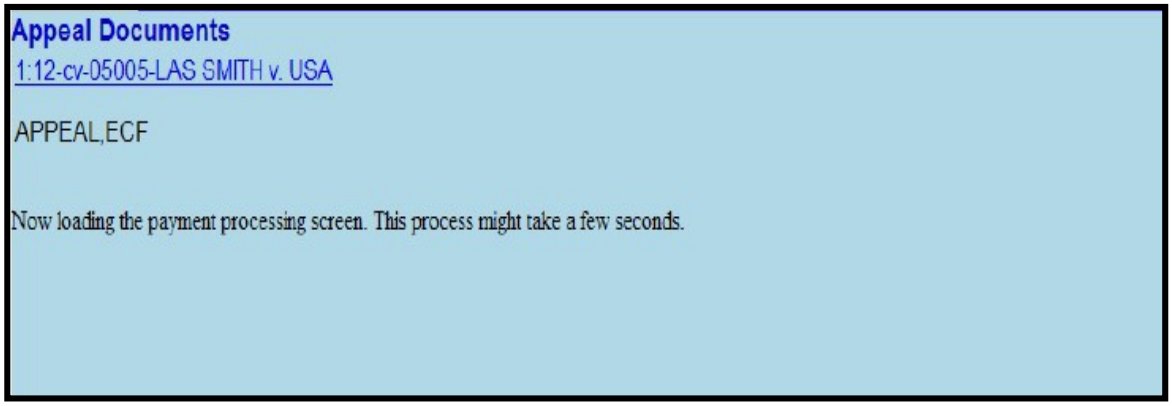


Check the appropriate box and select the **Next** button.

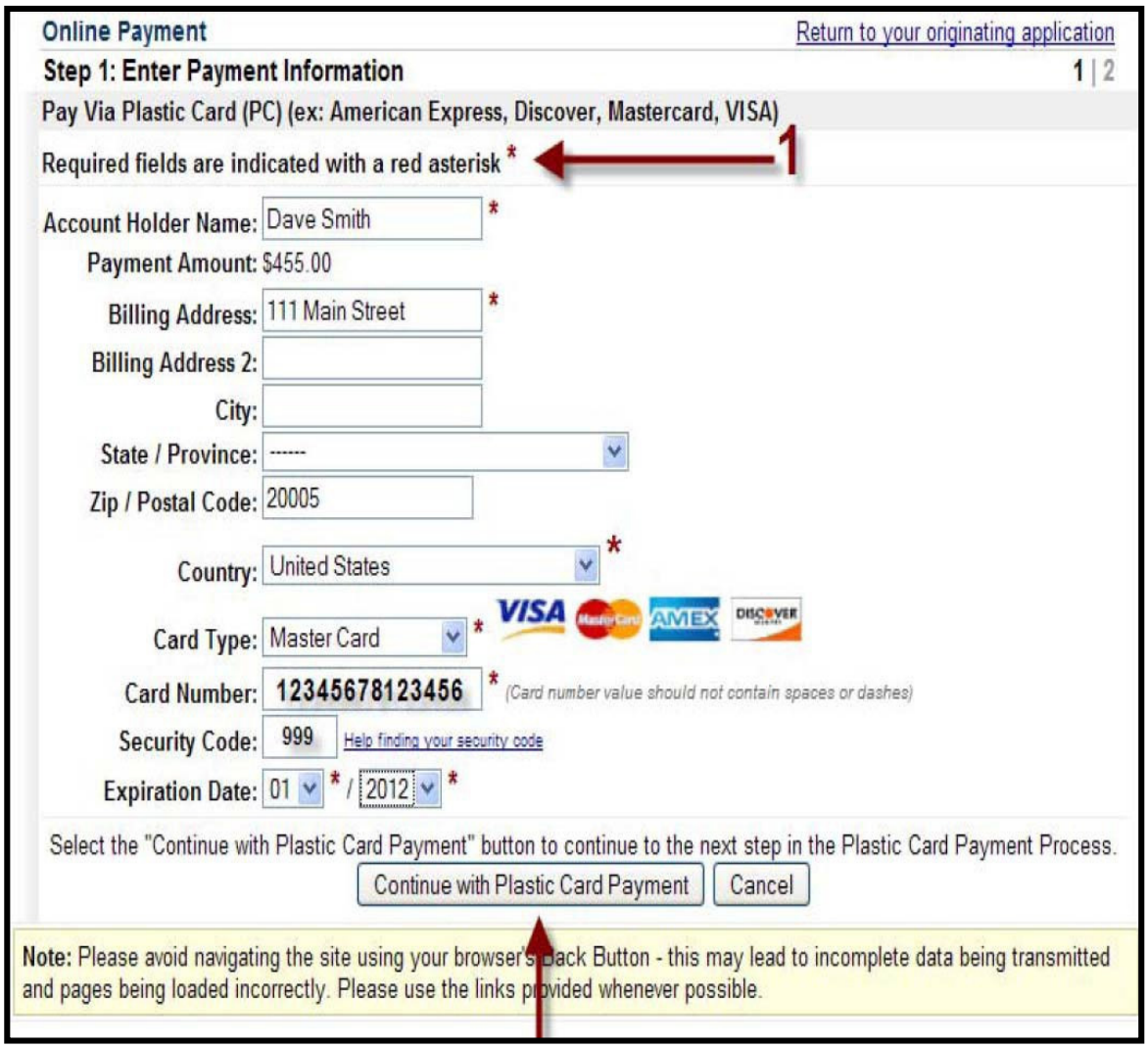


Select the **Next** button.

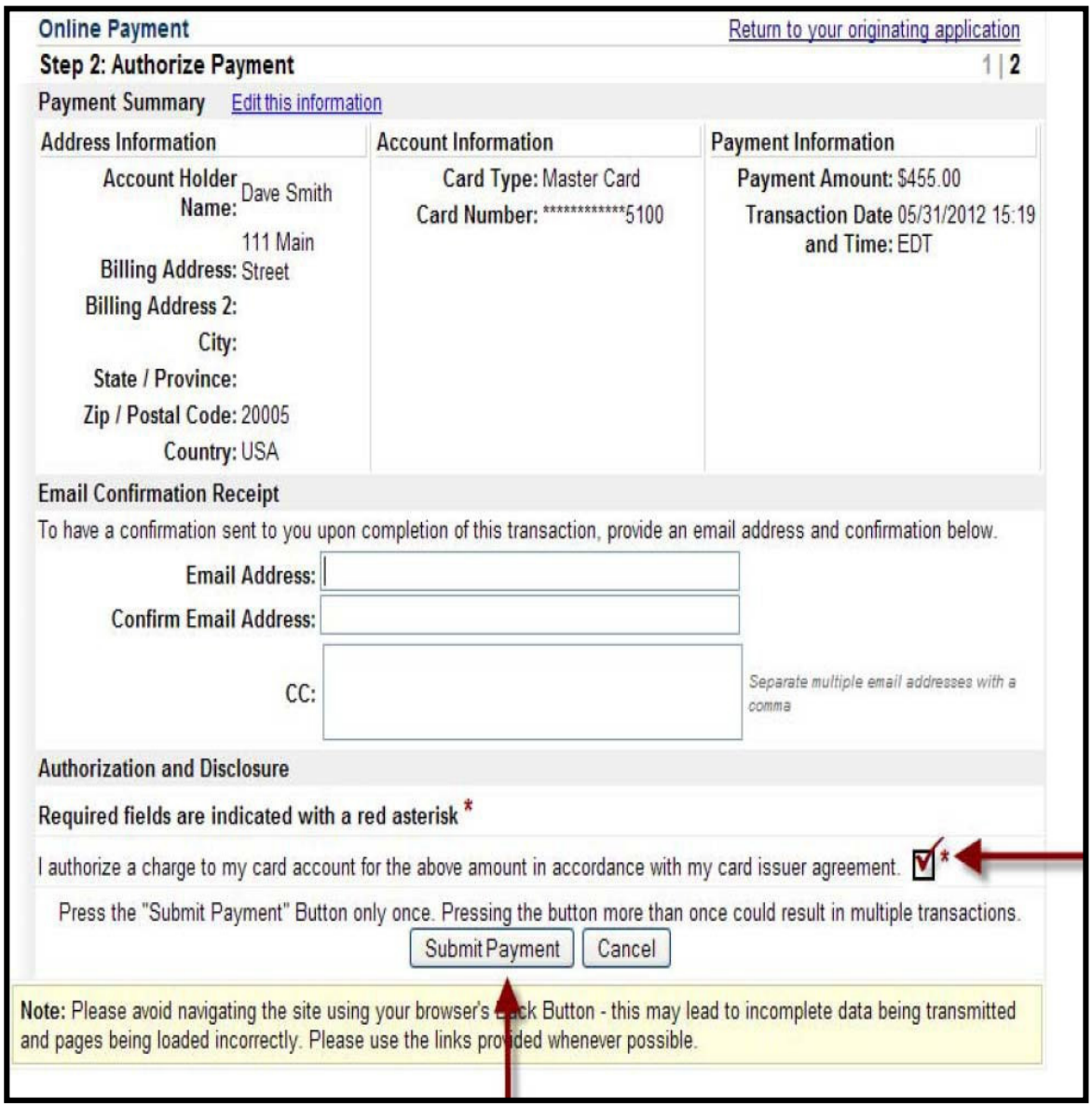
The payment processing screen will now load; this may take a few minutes.



Fill out all boxes that have a red asterisk. Review all information before selecting the **Continue with Plastic Card Payment** button.

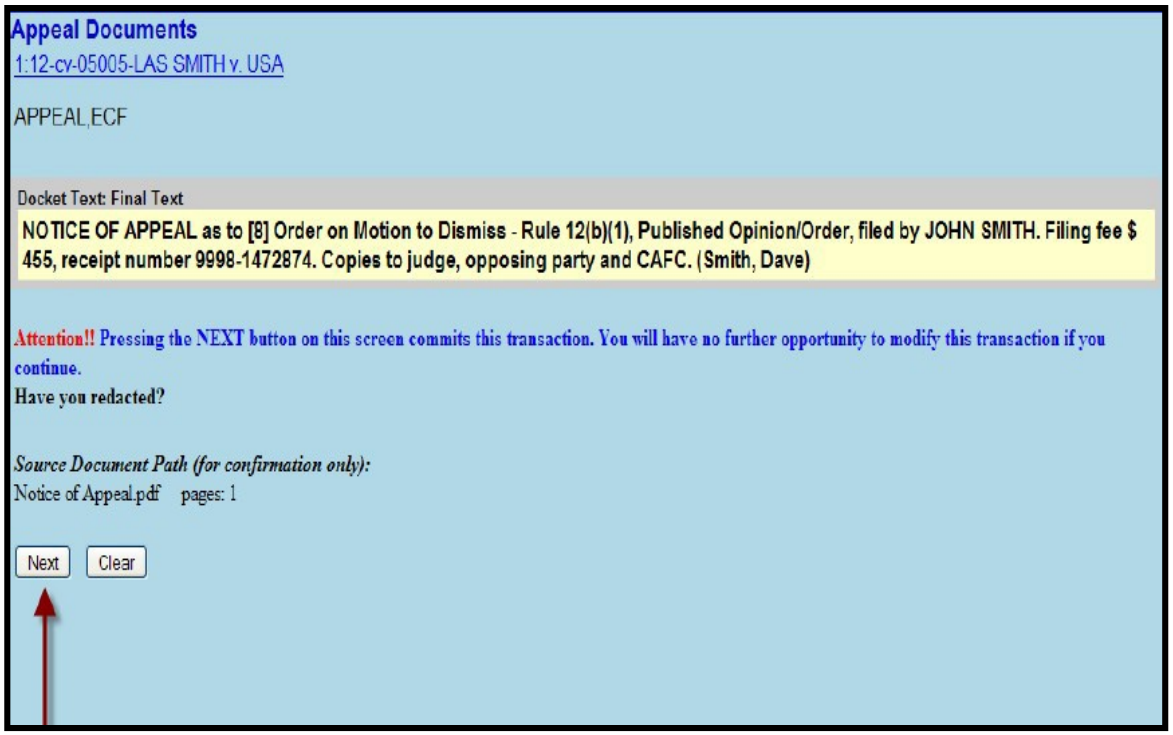


Review all information and add an e-mail address. Pay.gov will provide a confirmation e-mail to this address. You must check the box authorizing a charge to your credit card account. Select the **Submit Payment** button.



Select the **Next** button.

Select the **Next** button to finalize your docket entry.



Your Notice of Appeal has been docketed.

Appeal Documents
1:12-cv-05005-LAS SMITH v. USA

APPEAL,ECF

US Court of Federal Claims

United States Court of Federal Claims

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was entered by Smith, Dave on 5/31/2012 at 3:31 PM EDT and filed on 5/31/2012
Case Name: SMITH v. USA
Case Number: 1:12-cv-05005-LAS
Filer: JOHN SMITH
Document Number: 10

Docket Text:
NOTICE OF APPEAL as to [8] Order on Motion to Dismiss - Rule 12(b)(1), Published Opinion/Order, filed by JOHN SMITH. Filing fee $ 455, receipt number 9998-1472874. Copies to judge, opposing party and CAFC. (Smith, Dave)

1:12-cv-05005-LAS Notice has been electronically mailed to:

1:12-cv-05005-LAS Notice will NOT be delivered to:

Dave Smith
111 Main Street
Washington, DC 20005

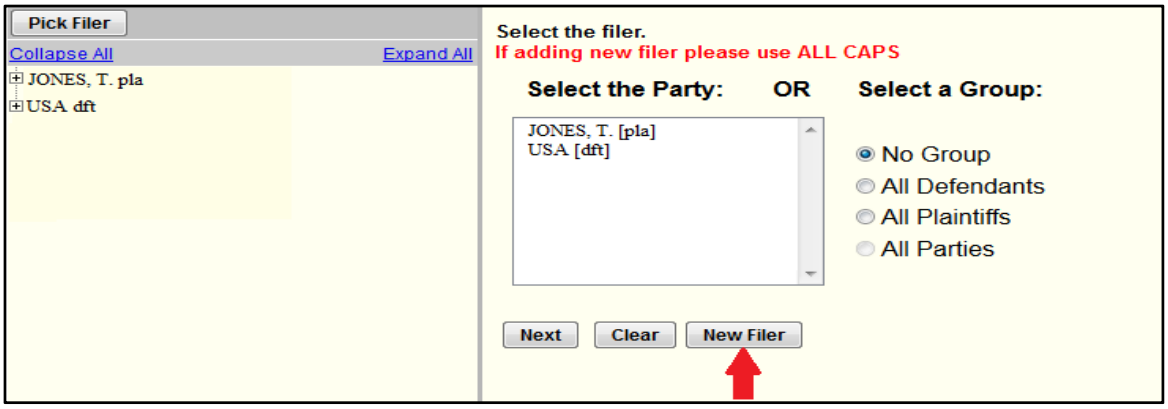
Jack Smith
111 14th Street
Washington, DC 20171

The following document(s) are associated with this transaction:

Document description: Main Document
Original filename:n/a
Electronic document Stamp:
[STAMP dcecfStamp_ID=1131461693 [Date=5/31/2012] [FileNumber=1161343-0
] [1613b399a09cc63eb3c840bf817e0a5f5475de7c2803d12b1812acfb44c82d062f7

ADD/CREATE A NEW PARTY

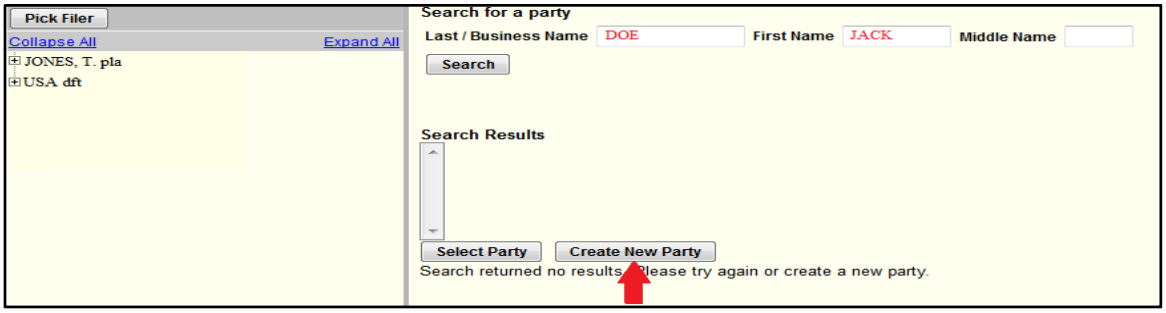
In rare cases you may need to add a party to the ECF system. If the party you represent is not listed, in the "Select the Party" screen, click on the **New Filer** button.



You must first perform a search to see if your party is already entered on the ECF system. Type the first few letters of the party's last name for any individual, or the first few letters of the company name in the Last/Business Name filed. Click on the **Search** button.

If a match is found, ECF will display a list of party names. If the name of the party you represent appears, click on it and then click the **Select Party** button. Review the party information making sure the spelling of the party name is correct. **Do not** add the party address/telephone number.

Select the party's role in this filing. Please note, if you have not been designated a party to this case you **must** add yourself as a **Movant** when selecting your party type. If a match was not found, click the **Create New Party** button.



- For a company, enter the entire company name (in ALL CAPS) in the **Last/Business Name** field.

Party Information

Last name DOE | First name JACK

Middle name | Generation

Title

Role Movant (mov:pty) 1

Pro se No

Prisoner Id | Unit

Office

Address1

Address 2 | Show this address on the docket she

Address 3 | City

State | Zip | Country

Prison

Phone | Fax

E-mail

Party text A California Business 2

Start date 5/19/2014 | End date

Corporation no | Notice yes

Add Party 3

- (1) Choose the appropriate **Role** from the drop down list (if you have not already been designated a party you **must** select **Movant**.
- (2) Enter the appropriate party text for the business, for example, *A California Business Entity*.
- (3) Click the **Add Party** button.
- Click the **Next** button and continue with the docketing process.

QUERY FEATURE

Registered participants should use this feature to query the Electronic Case Filing (ECF) system for specific case information. To enter the Query mode, click on **Query** from the Blue menu bar of ECF. ECF opens the PACER Login screen. You must enter your PACER login and password before ECF permits you to query the ECF database.

Note: Your PACER login and password are different from your ECF login and password. You must have a PACER account in order to revrieve, view and print certain documents.

After you enter your PACER login and password, ECF opens a Query data entry screen. If you know the number that the Court has assigned to the case, enter it in the **Case Number** field. Click on the **Find This Case** button.

If you do not know the case number, enter the party name in the Last/Business Name field and click on the **Run Query** button and follows the instructions. If the individaul is a party to more than one case, ECF will open a screen listing all of the cases with this party name. If you click on the case number hyperlink, ECF will open the Query Window screen.

You may also query a case by the Nature of Suit, Cause of Action or attorney.

Once ECF displays the corresponding case click the **Run Query** button for a list of available queries.

The most common/useful queries will be:

- **Attorney**, which will display the names and contact information of the attorneys who represent the parties involved in the case.
- **Deadlines/Hearings**, which will display all pending deadlines associated with the case.
- **Docket Report**, which will display the docket sheet of the case. This query allows you to see the parties involved and their attorneys. All case information, to include date filed, judge assigned, demand amount, nature of suit, etc… In addition, you will be able to see a list of all documents filed and entries made in the case. If the case has been designated an electronic case you will also be able, for a fee, to access these documents, provided they have not been filed under seal.
- **History**, which will provide you with a detailed history of the filing information of all documents in a specific case.
- **Party**, which will display all parties involved and their attorneys.

Once you have selected the query you wish to run, you will be provided with the information requested, or, you will be given the opportunity to narrow your query by providing a date range. If you wish to provide a date range, simply place the dates in the corresponding text boxes and when ready to run your report click the **Run Report** button.

REPORTS FEATURE

The reports feature provides the user with several report options. After selecting the Reports feature from the Blue menu bar, ECF opens the Reports screen.

- **Docket Sheet**, similary to the Docket Report option in the Query section, provides a copy of the case docket sheet, which includes all pertinent case information and documents.
- **Calendar Reports** can provide a list of upcoming events to include hearings and conferences, etc…
- **Civil Reports** allow you to query the ECF database to locate cases based on specific information.

UTILITIES FEATURE

The **Utilities** feature provides the means for registered users to maintain their account in ECF and to view all of their ECF transactions. In addition, the utilities feature provides links to several useful sites and pdfs.

Your Account: this section allows the user to change their email address and make changes/additions to their secondary email addresses.

Maintain Your Account

- Select **Maintain Your Account**
- Select **Email Information**

To make changes to current email address:

- Click on the email address you wish to change, this will open the **Configuration options** to the right of the screen
- Delete the current email address and type in the new email address
- Please review the options beneath the email address and make any appropriate changes
- Click the **Return to Person Information Screen**
- Click the **Submit** button.
- Click the **Submit** button.

To add an additional or secondary email address:

- Click on the "add new email address" link.
- Add the new email address to the text box beneath **Configuration options**
- Click the **Return to Person Information Screen**
- Click the **Submit** button
- Click the **Submit** button

To add additional cases for notification:

- Select **Maintain Your Account**
- Select **Email Information**
- Click on the Primary e-mail address
- In the box beneath "Add additional cases for noticing" add the case number
- Click the **Find This Case** button
- Click the **Add case(s)** button
- Click the **Return to Account Screen** button
- Click the **Submit** button
- Click the **Submit** button

To change your password:

- Select **Maintain Your Account**
- Select **More user information**
- Delete the area in the **Password** box (should be **********)
- Type in your new password and click the **Return to Account Screen** button
- Click the **Submit** button
- Click the **Submit** button

View Your Transaction Log

This option allows the user to verify all electronic transactions that he/she has entered are reflected in the Transaction Log and that no unauthorized individuals have entered transactions.

- From the **Utilities** screen, click on the **View Your Transaction Log** and input the date range you wish to view
- Click the **Run Report** button

Miscellaneous

ECF provides three **Miscellaneous** functions with the Utilities feature of the system

- **Legal Research**, which provides links to research related web sites
- **Mailings**, which provides mailing information for cases

- **Internet Payment History**, which is currently not used

Links

The **Links** section provides links to helpful sites/pdfs to include the Court's rules and procedures and the home pages of the Court and the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

SEARCH FEATURE

The **Search** option can help to find a menu option or event that you need. Upon clicking **Search**, enter a word or phrase and then click on the **Search** button. A complete list of menu items and events with names containing those letters will be displayed. Each option displays a link.

LOGOUT

Click on **Logout** from the ECF blue menu bar to exit the system.