

CM/ECF Newsletter



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www.wawd.uscourts.gov

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Page One

Attorney Case Opening

Page Two

Questions & Answers

Is It Mandatory?

Don't Panic!!

Help is on the way.

The CM-ECF Support Team provides a help line to assist electronic filers in the Western District of Washington. This service is available Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm. We can help filers with online "events" and answer questions regarding formatting documents, training, etc.

To contact us, call:

ECF Helpdesk

1-866-323-9293 (Toll Free)

or

1-206-370-8440 (WA Local)

Training Classes

In the Seattle Courthouse:

700 Stewart Street, Seattle

Date: Thurs., 1/28/10, 10:00-12:00

Date: Tues., 2/9/10, 10:00-12:00

Date: Thurs., 2/25/10, 1:00-3:00

Date: Thurs., 3/11/10, 10:00-12:00

Date: Tues., 3/23/10, 1:00-3:00

In the Tacoma Courthouse:

1717 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma

Classes in Tacoma arranged upon request.

ATTORNEY CASE OPENING BEGINS

Beginning on February 1, 2010, the Attorney Civil Case Opening module will be available for use in CM/ECF. Attorney Civil Case Opening will be optional for a month and become mandatory on March 1, 2010. Attorneys will now be able to file their own case opening documents directly in CM/ECF.

~Special~
Attorney Case
Opening
Edition

HOW IT WORKS

- ❖ Filers open their own civil cases and are responsible for entering all case information including Nature of Suit, Cause of Action, named parties, etc.
- ❖ Filers receive a case number after completing the case opening process.
- ❖ Filers pay the filing fee (if applicable) online while posting the Complaint, Petition, Notice of Removal, etc.
- ❖ Filers may submit Summonses which will be issued by the court electronically and can be accessed by the filer via NEF email hyperlink.
- ❖ The court assigns a judge after the case is opened and notifies the filer via NEF email.
- ❖ The court checks all newly opened cases for errors and omissions and makes corrections as necessary.
- ❖ The court has posted instructional and training materials on the court's website: www.wawd.uscourts.gov.
- ❖ The court staffs a Helpdesk phone line available from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, to assist filers, answer questions, and/or provide moral support: **206-370-8440**
- ❖ If your filing is an emergency matter, please call the Clerk's Office immediately after filing to alert the Intake department to the urgent nature of the filing. **Seattle Cases:** 206-370-8400. **Tacoma Cases:** 253-882-3800.



Will attorneys be required to open their own civil cases?

Yes.

As of March 1, 2010, this process is mandatory. **Attorneys** must open their new civil cases in the Western District of Washington, electronically, file the initial pleadings, and pay the filing fee (if applicable) online.

Electronic New Case Filing will be optional for attorneys from February 1 through February 28, 2010.

Pro Se Filers (including prisoners) will not be allowed to open new cases, but will still be able to file electronically (after submitting an ECF Registration Form) once their case has been opened by Clerk's Office staff.

Sealed Civil Cases are an exception to mandatory civil case opening and will still be processed by Clerk's Office staff.

DON'T PANIC!!

HELP IS JUST A CLICK, OR PHONE CALL, AWAY.

The Clerk's Office has provided great resources to help you navigate the Case Opening process, including detailed, easy-to-follow instructions and Powerpoint training modules. Check out the materials at: www.wawd.uscourts.gov.

We strongly recommend that you view the training modules and print out and review the instructions before attempting to open a new civil case.

We also provide a Help Desk phone line from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Help Desk phone number: 206-370-8440 or 866-323-9293.**

Staff members on the Help Desk have decades of experience opening cases, and docketing in U.S. District Court and are a great resource for filers, from answering a quick question to staying on the line and walking you through the entire case opening process.

If you still need additional assistance, call the ECF Help Desk at 206-370-8440/866-323-9293 and request a login and password for our Training database. This will allow you the opportunity to practice filing new cases in a system that is refreshed on a daily basis.

BENEFITS OF ATTORNEY CIVIL CASE OPENING

- ✓ Attorneys can open a new civil case and receive a case number immediately, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- ✓ Summonses are available immediately upon issuance. No trip to the courthouse required. No waiting for them to arrive via snail mail.
- ✓ Filing fee is paid online. No need to call the Clerk's Office to provide credit card information or send a check via messenger.
- ✓ Go Green! Aside from printing copies for process service, the entire process is paperless.
- ✓ Reduce costs associated with paper filings.