

ATTORNEY'S GUIDE
TO OPENING A CIVIL
CASE

GETTING STARTED



EMERGENCY MATTERS

IF THIS IS AN EMERGENCY MATTER, follow these steps:

1. Open the case
2. File your emergency documents
3. Have your case number ready
4. Immediately call the appropriate Clerk's Office:
Seattle: (206) 370-8400 option 0 **Tacoma:** (253) 882-3800
 - The Clerk's Office will assign a judge to your case and notify him/her of the emergency.
5. To ensure that your case receives the immediate attention it needs, please file prior to 4:30PM (or as early in the day as possible)



PREPARE YOUR DOCUMENTS

- ✓ Make certain that all attorneys who will be appearing on the case have each properly signed the initiating document.
- ✓ All documents must be converted to Portable Document Format (PDF).
- ✓ Each PDF document must be under 75 MB (megabytes) in size.
- ✓ Visit the Court's website at <http://www.wawd.uscourts.gov/court-forms> for a list of available forms.

Documents can be converted to PDF by:

- Scanning to PDF
- Using conversion software included in word processing programs such as Word
- Using PDF conversion software such as Adobe Standard or Professional



INITIATING DOCUMENTS

1. Complaint
2. Notice of Removal
3. Motion to Proceed In Forma Pauperis with Written Consent (IFP)
4. Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus
5. Petition (Other)

POSSIBLE ATTACHMENTS

- Civil Cover Sheet – *All cases except Petition for Habeas Corpus*
- Summons – *IFP and Civil Complaint cases*
- Report on Filing or Determination of an Action Regarding a Patent or Trademark – *Patent or Trademark cases*
- Report on Filing or Determination of an Action or Appeal Regarding a Copyright – *Copyright cases*
- State Court Complaint or Amended Complaint – *Removal cases*
- Jury Demand – *If applicable, per LCR 101(b)(3), LCR 38, and LCR 7*



FILING A SUMMONS

- ✓ Download and save the summons form found on the [Court's website](#).
- ✓ Use this fill-able form each time you post a summons to the court docket.
- ✓ Each summons must be filed as a separate attachment.
- ✓ Summonses will be issued by the court electronically the following day.
- ✓ You will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) of the issued summons when the Clerk's Office enters it on the docket.
- ✓ Use the NEF hyperlink to retrieve the issued summons to effect service process.



FILING FEE REQUIREMENTS

As of **MAY 1, 2013**, the filing fee requirements are as follows:

Civil Filing Fee (including Notices of Removal)	\$400
Miscellaneous Cases	\$47
Habeas Corpus Cases (2254, 2241)	\$5

You must pay the filing fee through Pay.gov using one of the following options:

1. Bank Account (ACH): Similar to an online check; the funds are withdrawn from your bank account.
2. Debit/Credit Card

NOTE

Have your card/banking information ready. You will be prompted to pay the filing fee during the case opening process.

IF YOU ARE REQUESTING A WAIVER of the filing fee, have your *Application to Proceed In Forma Pauperis with Written Consent* prepared to file as your initiating document.

