

# **ATTORNEY'S** GUIDE TO **OPENING** A **CIVIL CASE**

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## GETTING STARTED

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# 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 35 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.

