

## CASE OPENING CHECKLIST

### EMERGENCY MATTERS

If this is an emergency matter, such as a vessel arrest or motion for temporary restraining order, follow these steps to ensure the quickest response:

1. Open the case.
2. File your emergency matter documents.
3. Have your case number ready.
4. Immediately call the appropriate Clerk's Office:
  - o Seattle: (206) 370-8400 option 0
  - o Tacoma: (253) 882-3802
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).

### GETTING STARTED

- Review the Attorney Case Opening Training Modules and read the "Attorney's Guide to Opening a Civil Case" document on [the Court's website](#).
- Prepare documents to file, and convert to PDF.
  - o Each PDF document must be under 35 MB (megabytes) in size.
- Once you begin, you must complete the entire case-opening process!

### CREATE YOUR CIVIL CASE

- Click the "Attorney Case Opening" link in ECF to begin.
- Enter case information and statistical data as it appears on the civil cover sheet.

### ADD PARTIES, ATTORNEYS AND ALIASES

- Enter **all** parties in the **exact** order they are listed on the Complaint.
- Select the correct role-type for each party (i.e., Plaintiff/Defendant).
- **DO NOT** add addresses for any of the parties, except if the Plaintiff in a removal case is appearing pro se.

### DOCKET THE LEAD EVENT

- Upload the initiating document and its attachments.
  - o Initiating documents:
    - Complaint
    - Notice of Removal – (add complaint only as an attachment with the civil cover sheet).
    - Motion to Proceed In Forma Pauperis with Written Consent (IFP)
    - Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus
    - Petition (Other)

- Possible attachments:
  - Civil Cover Sheet
  - Summons
  - Report on Filing or Determination of an Action Regarding Patent or Trademark
  - Report on Filing or Determination of an Action or Appeal Regarding a Copyright
  - State Court Complaint of Amended Complaint (as attachment to the Notice of Removal only).
  - Complaint if filing In Forma Pauperis (IFP).

### **PAY THE FILING FEE**

- The required filing fee is paid on-line through Pay.gov via credit card or ACH.

### **OPEN YOUR CIVIL CASE**

- After submitting your payment, you must return to ECF to finish opening your case.
- When your case is opened, you will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing as confirmation.

### **QUESTIONS/ISSUES**

- If you have questions or concerns during this process, please contact the Attorney Case Opening Help Desk at (206) 370-8440 option 1.
- If you experience technical difficulty with the CM/ECF system, please contact the CM/ECF Help Desk at (206) 370-8440 option 2.
- If you abandoned your filing (did not complete the entire process) do not attempt to re-file. Contact the Attorney Case Opening Help Desk at (206) 370-8787 option 1 for further instructions.
- If you believe you have been billed in error, contact the Clerk's Office Financial Department (Phone: (206) 370-8415; Email: [SeaFin@wawd.uscourts.gov](mailto:SeaFin@wawd.uscourts.gov)).
- **NOTE:** In the event Help Desk support is needed, attorneys needing to meet filing deadlines should attempt to file during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm). Please see the [Court's website](#) for information regarding regularly scheduled system maintenance, as CM/ECF may not be available during this period.