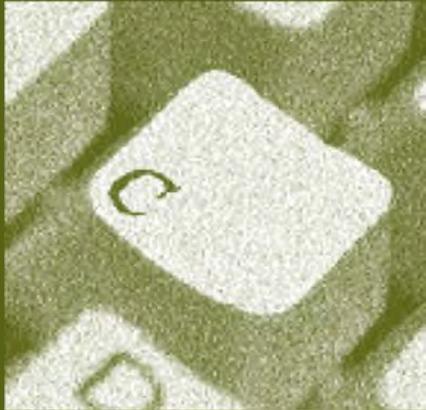


United States District Court  
Northern District of California



Hon. Claudia Wilken  
Chief Judge

Richard W. Wieking  
Clerk of Court

# CM|ECF

ELECTRONIC CASE FILING



## Guide to E-Filing New Civil Cases

*Updated for 2014*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Overview

As of August 2013, attorneys can electronically file (“e-file”) new civil cases in CM/ECF in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Online case opening allows attorneys to file new civil cases 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

This Guide provides step-by-step instructions for the three separate parts of e-filing a new civil case:

- Opening a civil case in CM/ECF;
- Filing the complaint or other initiating document;
- Paying the filing fee (if applicable) through Pay.gov.

It also explains:

- How a judge is assigned to a new civil case;
- How a summons will be issued via CM/ECF for service of process;
- After case opening, how and where to download documents to be served on the defendant(s).

Before you begin, you must obtain a unique login and password for our local CM/ECF system in the Northern District of California. A PACER account or a CM/ECF account for another federal court will not work in this district. To set up a new account, visit [cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/account\\_setup](http://cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/account_setup). *Allow at least one business day for ECF registration before attempting to e-file your first civil case.*

### B. Help Desk and Training

Detailed information and training resources are available on the court’s website ([cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/caseopening](http://cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/caseopening)). Also, the court provides email and telephone assistance and in-person training to attorneys and legal staff on electronic filing and new case opening.

1. ECF Help Desk is available for assistance or questions during the case opening process at 866-638-7829 or [ECFhelpdesk@cand.uscourts.gov](mailto:ECFhelpdesk@cand.uscourts.gov) M-F, 9:00-4:00 PDT.
2. Live, instructor-led training will be offered based on demand. Please contact the ECF Help Desk at 866-638-7829 or [ECFhelpdesk@cand.uscourts.gov](mailto:ECFhelpdesk@cand.uscourts.gov) to request training.

### C. ECF Case Opening Do’s And Don’ts

Below are some tips to make the ECF case opening process go smoothly:

- DO read this Guide and all information at [cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/caseopening](http://cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/caseopening) before you begin, then follow the instructions carefully as you complete the steps. DO NOT rely on instructions from other federal courts, as many have different procedures.
- DO NOT use ECF case opening for **sealed** or **miscellaneous** cases, or to **reopen** or **transfer** existing cases. Sealed cases must be filed manually; to reopen or transfer, use the relevant civil motions in ECF.
- DO use an Internet browser that has been fully tested for use with ECF: Microsoft Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox.
- DO follow the instructions in this Guide carefully during the ECF case opening process; e.g., DO NOT enter data in all caps, and DO leave fields blank as specified in these instructions.
- DO redact personal identifiers from case opening documents as required by *See Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2*. For instructions on redacting documents, visit [cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/redaction](http://cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/redaction).

- DO docket the lead event (initiating document) and upload PDF documents in the correct order, as explained in these instructions.
- DO NOT attempt to open the same case twice.
- If you are filing an emergency motion (such as a motion for a temporary restraining order/TRO) along with your complaint or notice of removal, DO contact the Clerk’s Office at 415-522-2000 during regular business hours, M-F 9:00-4:00.

**IMPORTANT:** For quality control purposes, the Clerk’s Office may modify your selections after reviewing your filings. In some instances, you will be asked to re-file documents in order to comply with the filing requirements; you will receive an email notice of the need to take corrective action.

## II. ATTORNEY CHECKLIST

The items listed below are necessary to e-file a new civil case in CM/ECF.

### *Initiating Documents (i.e. Complaint, Notice of Removal)*

- Must contain electronic signature (/s/) or scanned image of signature.
- Must be redacted to remove personal identifiers per Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2.
- Must be in PDF format.
- Files larger than 5 MB must be separated into smaller files before uploading.

### *Civil Cover Sheet*

- Form JS-44 – available on the court’s website at [cand.uscourts.gov/forms](http://cand.uscourts.gov/forms).

### *Proposed Summons, if applicable*

- The summons may also be submitted after the case is opened.

### *Credit Card for Payment of Filing Fee*

- Credit card payment will be required through Pay.gov during case opening. (Payment is not required if a Motion to Proceed In Forma Pauperis (IFP) is filed or for attorneys representing the United States.)

**IMPORTANT:** If the Pay.gov website happens to be unavailable to accept your filing fee, return to ECF and complete the remaining steps in the case opening process. You will be able to pay the filing fee separately using the “New Case Filing Fee” event in ECF.

## III. E-FILING A NEW CIVIL CASE

### A. Logging In

With your Northern District of California ECF login and password in hand, select the **Electronic Case Filing** link on the court’s home page.



1. On the ECF page, click the **Login to ECF** link in the left navigation menu.



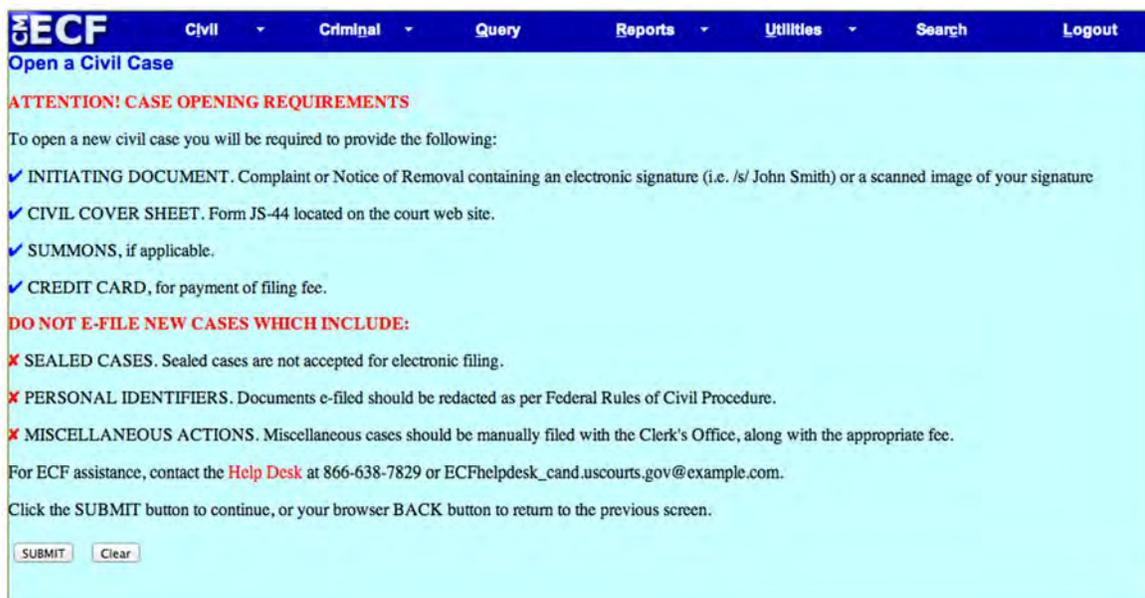
2. Enter your ECF Login and Password; click the **Login** button to go to the ECF welcome page.

## B. Case Opening Part I: Jurisdiction, Venue and Statistical Information

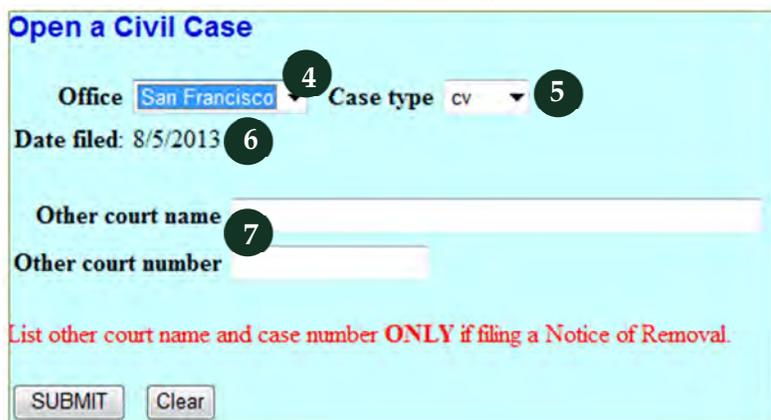
1. On the ECF welcome page, select **Civil** on the blue navigation bar.
2. Select **Attorney Case Opening** under the **Open a Case** category on the Civil Events page.



3. The Case Opening Requirements screen provides information about document and fee requirements to open a new case. Review the information and click **Submit** to proceed.

A screenshot of the 'Open a Civil Case' screen. The page has a blue header with the ECF logo and navigation menus for 'Civil', 'Criminal', 'Query', 'Reports', 'Utilities', 'Search', and 'Logout'. The main content area is light blue and contains the following text: 'ATTENTION! CASE OPENING REQUIREMENTS', 'To open a new civil case you will be required to provide the following:', a list of four requirements with checkmarks (INITIATING DOCUMENT, CIVIL COVER SHEET, SUMMONS, CREDIT CARD), a section 'DO NOT E-FILE NEW CASES WHICH INCLUDE:' with three items marked with an 'X' (SEALED CASES, PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS, MISCELLANEOUS ACTIONS), and contact information for the Help Desk. At the bottom, there are 'SUBMIT' and 'Clear' buttons.

4. On the first Open a Civil Case screen, click the **Office** drop-down menu and select the divisional office location indicated on your civil cover sheet (JS 44).

A screenshot of the 'Open a Civil Case' screen. The page has a light blue background. The 'Office' dropdown menu is set to 'San Francisco' and is circled with a '4'. The 'Case type' dropdown menu is set to 'cv' and is circled with a '5'. The 'Date filed' field is set to '8/5/2013' and is circled with a '6'. The 'Other court name' field is empty and circled with a '7'. The 'Other court number' field is empty. At the bottom, there are 'SUBMIT' and 'Clear' buttons. A red note at the bottom says 'List other court name and case number ONLY if filing a Notice of Removal.'

5. **Case type** defaults to Civil (cv). Do not modify this field.

6. The **Date filed** field is automatically populated with the current date and cannot be changed.
7. If you are filing a notice of removal, enter the name of the court where the case originated in the **Other court name** field; include that court's case number in the **Other court number** field. Click **Submit** to proceed to the next screen.
8. On the *second Open a Civil Case screen*, you will enter most of the information from your already-completed civil cover sheet (JS 44).

The screenshot shows the 'Open a Civil Case' form with the following fields and callouts:

- 9: Jurisdiction (3 (Federal Question))
- 10: Cause of action (29:0621 (29:621 Job Discrimination (Age)))
- 11: Nature of suit (710 (Labor: Fair Standards))
- 12: Origin (1 (Original Proceeding))
- 13: Citizenship plaintiff
- 14: Jury demand (n (None))
- 15: Class action (n (No Class Action Alleged))
- 16: Demand (\$000)
- 17: Arbitration code
- 18: County (Alameda)
- 19: Fee status (pd (paid))
- 20: Fee date (8/5/2013)
- 21: Date transfer

9. In the **Jurisdiction** drop-down menu, select the jurisdiction code identified on your civil cover sheet. This field defaults to 3 (Federal Question), the most common jurisdiction choice.
  10. In the **Cause of Action** drop-down menu, select the cause of action for your case. To reduce the list of options, put your cursor in the filter field and begin typing the cause of action. Matches will appear in the list. Select the correct one and **Enter** on your keyboard.
  11. In the **Nature of Suit** drop-down menu, select the nature of suit code. To minimize the list of options, put your cursor in the filter field and begin typing the nature of suit. Matches will appear in the list. Select the correct one and **Enter** on your keyboard.
- IMPORTANT NOTE:** The cause of action and nature of suit codes must correlate. *Example:* A cause of action related to labor litigation must have a nature of suit of a similar type. ECF does not allow the selection of unrelated fields.
12. In the **Origin** drop-down menu, select 1 (Original Proceeding) if the case is new or 2 (Removal from State Court) if removing the case from state court. Items 3-6 are for court use only.
  13. If jurisdiction is based on diversity (selection 4 in the Open a Civil Case screen), select the appropriate entry from the **Citizenship plaintiff** or **Citizenship defendant** drop-down menu for the first named plaintiff and first named defendant. Otherwise, leave these fields blank.
  14. In the **Jury Demand** drop-down menu, select one of the following if there is a jury demand set forth in the case opening document.
    - o b (Both)
    - o d (Defendant)
    - o n (None)
    - o p (Plaintiff)

When a complaint is filed, the jury demand is usually “none” or “plaintiff.” When a notice of removal is being filed, “both,” “plaintiff,” “defendant” or “none” are all possible choices.

15. If you are claiming class action status, select “y” (yes) in the **Class Action** drop-down menu.
16. If a specific dollar amount is demanded in the Complaint, round the number to the nearest thousand and enter in that amount, without punctuation, in the **Demand** box.  
*Example: \$500,000 would be entered as 500.*
17. Leave the **Arbitration code** field blank.
18. In the **County** drop-down menu, select the county in which the **first listed plaintiff** resides as stated on the civil cover sheet (JS 44).
  - If the plaintiff resides outside of California, select “Out of State.”
  - If the plaintiff resides in another country, select “Out of Country.”
  - If the plaintiff is the United States of America, select the county for the **first listed defendant**.
19. Filing fees must be paid by credit card when opening a new civil case. A judge will not be assigned until the required filing fee is paid or an IFP motion is filed. Open the **Fee Status** drop-down menu and select ONE of the following (ignore all other fee status options):
  - pd (paid) ... when paying the fee during the case opening process.
  - ifpp (IFP pending) ... when filing a motion for IFP when opening a new case; *(do not select “fp (in forma pauperis)” when filing an IFP request).*
  - wv (waived) ... when filing on behalf of the United States.
  - jones (Jones Act) ... when filing a case under the Jones Act.
20. The **Fee Date** is automatically generated by the system. Do not modify this information.
21. Leave the **Date transfer** field blank.
22. Verify that all information you have entered on the screen is correct and consistent with the civil cover sheet, then click **Submit**. ECF will verify the accuracy of the combination selected for cause of action and nature of suit. If the selected combination is invalid, an error message will appear. Correct the entry and click **Submit** to proceed.

### C. Case Opening Part II: Adding Parties

The next phase of case opening involves adding parties. *It is very important that you search ECF for the parties in your case to determine whether they have previously been involved in litigation in this district and are therefore already in the ECF system. Please conduct a thorough search and do not create a new party unless absolutely necessary.*

The screenshot shows a web interface for searching parties. At the top, there are three text input fields: 'Last / Business Name' containing 'Green', 'First Name' containing 'J', and 'Middle Name' which is empty. Below these fields is a 'Search' button. Underneath is a section titled 'Search Results' containing a list box with the following entries: 'Green, J', 'Green, J. Duane', 'Green, Jack', 'Green, James', 'Green, James A.', and 'Green, James P.'. At the bottom of the list box are two buttons: 'Select Party' and 'Create New Party'.

The [Add New Party screen](#) is divided into two panels:

1. The case participant tree (on left), which displays the parties and their aliases as they are added to the case and
2. Party search fields (on right) to locate parties already in the ECF system and add new ones if necessary.

*Search carefully to be sure each party you plan to add is not already in the database before you add it.*

### Searching For A Party In ECF

1. Search for and add parties to the case in the precise order in which they appear in the complaint.
2. In the **Last/Business Name** field, enter two or more consecutive characters, then click the **Search** button. *Example:* For the name "Anderson," "Ande" would work as a search parameter.
3. A list of party names matching your criteria may appear. Click on the name of the correct party to highlight it and click the **Select Party** button.
4. If your search finds no matches in the ECF system, you will receive a message indicating the search produced no results and no names will appear in the search results field. If this occurs, broaden the search parameters and try again.

#### Party Name Search Hints

- Enter at least two consecutive letters or characters of a party's name.
- The search is not case sensitive. For example: Enter Smith or smith.
- The name may have been abbreviated when it was added to the database, especially state names.
- You can enter a wild card before letters, to take the place of other letters. For example: Enter "\*am" and find Bob Cunningham and Judy Amhurst, but not Steven Armstrong since the letters are not consecutive. A wild card (\*) is not required at the end of a search string.
- Try alternate searches if your first search is not successful.
- Always begin with a broad search and narrow it down by entering more of the party name if the results are too voluminous.

### Creating A New Party In ECF

If your broadest search does not yield your party, click the **Create New Party** button to add the party to the system.

ECF will display the [Party Information screen](#).

**IMPORTANT:** Although there are many fields in which information can be entered, only the following fields should be used:

- Name (Last, First, Middle, Generation)
- Role in case (Select plaintiff or defendant)
- Party text (if applicable; see explanation below)

Leave all other fields blank (e.g. address, phone number, email):



The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "Party Information". The form has several fields: "Last name" (Green), "First name" (Josephine), "Middle name" (R), "Generation", "Title", "Role" (Plaintiff (pla.pty)), "Pro se" (No), "Prisoner Id", "Unit", "Office", "Address1", "Address2", "Address3", "City", "State", "Zip", "Country", "Prison", "Phone", "Fax", "E-mail", "Party text", "Start date" (8/8/2013), "End date", "Corporation" (no), "Notice" (yes), and an "Add Party" button. A large red "X" is drawn over the address fields (Address1, Address2, Address3, City, State, Zip, Country).

### Data Entry Rules for Adding Parties

The following are the data entry rules for typing party information into the Party Information screen fields. Please consult the **Party Naming Conventions** section below (Section VII in this Guide) for complete instructions on entering party names.

- **Use standard capitalization.** Do not use all capital letters unless all or part of the business name is in all capitals, such as IBM; in that case, only use capitals for the portion of the name that is in all capitals.
- For a business, enter the company name in the **Last name** field. Leave the **First name** and **Middle name** fields blank.
- For an individual, complete the **Last name**, **First name** and **Middle name** fields, and the **Generation field**, if applicable.
- **Omit spaces between initials**, or between initials and ampersands.  
*Examples:* AO Smith, M&I.
- If a business name begins with an article (A, An or The), **omit the article**.  
*Example:* The Grand Avenue Mall would be entered as Grand Avenue Mall.
- Do not abbreviate the word "and" to an ampersand (&); do use an ampersand if it is part of the company name.
- If an individual only has a first name, put the first name in the **Last name** field.
- The **Party Text** field is optional and allows you to add descriptive information about the party. For example: "A California Corporation" or "Individually and in the Official Capacity."
- **Do not include "Doe" defendants as parties in the case opening process.**

Click the **Add Party** button when all required information for this party has been entered. A new search screen will appear to prompt you to add the next party in the case.

### The Case Participant Tree

Repeat the steps outlined above to add all plaintiffs, defendants, and other parties-in-interest to the case. As each party is added to the case, it appears in the case participant tree. The case participant tree provides editing buttons to edit party information after a party has been added to the case.

#### Understanding the case participant tree icons and settings:

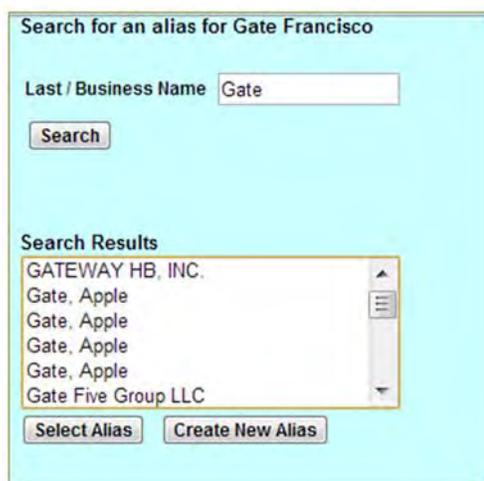
##### **Actions available:**

- Delete a party.
- Add an alias to a party.
- Edit party information.
- Collapse All displays only the parties in the case, with all other information collapsed in the tree.
- Expand All displays all parties, including aliases, corporate parents and attorneys.
- + or - icons expand or collapse the number of lines of displayed information for each party.



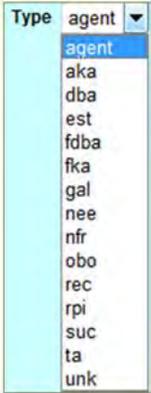
#### Adding an Alias

1. To add an alias for a party, click the **Add Alias** icon next to that party. In the example below, we are searching for an alias for defendant Francisco Gate.
2. Enter the alias in the search field and click the **Search** button.



3. Names matching the search description will be displayed. If your alias appears, highlight the name and click the **Select Alias** button.
4. If your search does not yield the alias you would like to add, click the **Create New Alias** button and add the party name.

- After selecting (or adding) an alias, click the **Type** drop-down arrow, select the appropriate alias type and click the **Add Alias** button. In our fictitious case, we add the alias “Frankie Gate” of the type “aka.”

ALIAS TYPE DEFINITION	DROP-DOWN MENU
agent (agent of, one acts for another) aka (also known as) dba (doing business as) est (estate) fdba (formerly doing business as) fka (formally known as) gal (guardian ad litem) nfr (next friend) obo (on behalf of) rpi (real property in interest) suc (successor) ta (trading as) unk (unknown)	

- Before proceeding, expand the participant tree and verify you have added all parties and aliases to your case.

### Final Steps in the Case Opening Process

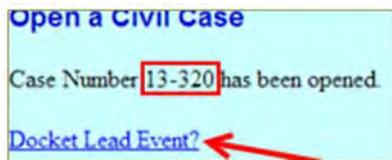
- After all parties have been added, click the **Create Case** button above the case participant tree.
- You will be prompted to select Yes or No to create your case. Clicking No will allow you to add, delete or modify parties. Clicking **Yes** will finalize the parties in the case.
- The case is now open in CM/ECF and a case number has been assigned. Please make a note of the case number for future reference.

**IMPORTANT: YOU MUST FILE THE CASE INITIATING DOCUMENTS IMMEDIATELY AFTER OPENING THE CASE.**

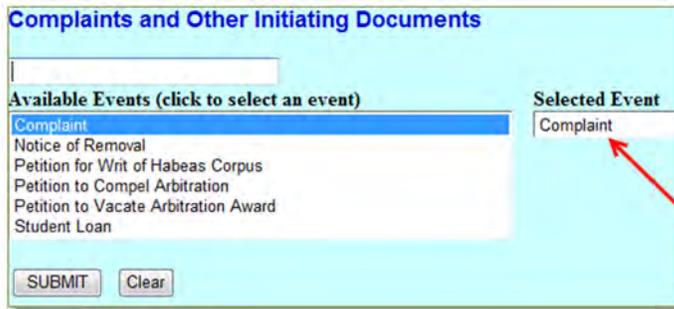
### D. Docketing the “Lead Event”

Even though a case number has been issued, the case is not considered filed until the complaint or other initiating document has been filed and the filing fee, if required, has been paid (or a motion to proceed *in forma pauperis* filed). *Failure to submit a valid and complete initiating document may result in the failure of the electronic case filing process.*

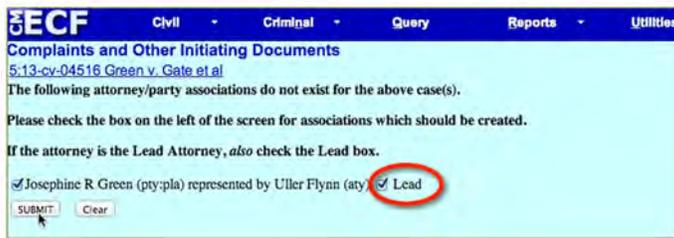
- To file the Complaint or Notice of Removal, click the **Docket Lead Event?** link.



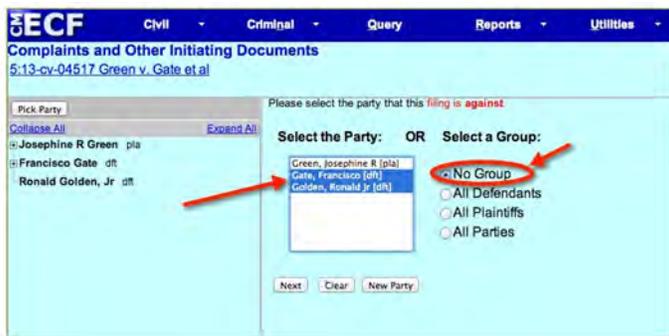
- Select the type of initiating document you are filing by highlighting your selection in the Available Events list. When your selection appears in the Selected Event field, click **Submit**.



3. Confirm the case number is correct and click **Submit**.
4. Select the name of the party filing the Complaint. For multiple plaintiffs, hold the control CTRL key and select all additional plaintiff names. Click the **Next** button.
5. You, as the ECF user logged in during the case filing process, will be added as the attorney for this case. If multiple attorneys are listed, one can be designated as the lead by clicking the Lead checkbox. Ensure that at least one attorney checkbox is selected to ensure that you receive notices of electronic filing. Click **Submit**.



6. Next, select the names of the defendants. For multiple defendants, hold the control CTRL key and all additional defendant names. **IMPORTANT: DO NOT add "Doe" defendants during the case opening process.** Confirm that the **No Group** radio button is selected; **DO NOT select the "All Defendants" button.** Click **Next**.



## E. Uploading Documents

This *Complaints and Other Initiating Documents* screen contains important information and fields to upload initiating documents. The maximum file size is 5 MB/5,000 KB, so documents should be divided into parts if necessary. For more instructions, see [cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/restrictions-when-is-a-file-too-big-to-e-file?](http://cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/restrictions-when-is-a-file-too-big-to-e-file?) The documents should be uploaded in the following order:

- Main Document:** Complaint, Petition or Notice of Removal
- Attachments:** Exhibits to the complaint, if desired (any number of separate files)  
Civil Cover Sheet (should be filed last)

1. *Complaint.* Click the **Browse** button to the right of the **Main Document** field. A file manager window will appear through which you can navigate to and select the PDF document containing the complaint. Confirm that it is the correct document and double-click on it. The file name and path will display in the **Main Document** field.
2. *Exhibits (if any).* Exhibits may be included in the same PDF document as the complaint, or may be filed separately if the file would exceed 5 MB. Click the **Browse** button first row of the Attachments section and select exhibits to be uploaded. Click the **Category** drop-down arrow and select **Exhibit**. More information can be entered in the Description field. After each entry, a new upload field will appear. Group exhibits so as not to exceed .
3. *Civil Cover Sheet.* Under **Attachments**, click the **Browse** button to the right of the second field (use the first if you have not uploaded exhibits to the complaint) and select the PDF file for the civil cover sheet for upload. Click the **Category** drop-down arrow and select **Civil Cover Sheet**. You may leave the **Description** field blank.

**IMPORTANT:** *DO NOT attach the proposed summons, motions, certificates of interest, or other pleadings that are not associated with the initiating document.* Proposed summonses, motions, consents or declinations, certificates of interest, etc. should be e-filed separately using the appropriate events after you have filed your initiating document and attachments.

4. When ALL of the required documents are attached, click **Submit**.

## F. Filing Fees/Pay.gov

**IMPORTANT:** A judge will not be assigned to a case until the filing fee, if required, is paid.

1. Filing fees are paid online upon the filing of the initiating document. A second [Complaints and Other Initiating Documents screen](#) will display three questions to help you determine whether you are exempt from paying the filing fee. If your answers to the questions are **No**, after you click **Submit** you will be redirected to the Pay.gov web site to pay the filing fee.



5. The Online Payment Authorization screen displays details of your payment transaction. Enter your email address in the **Email Address** and **Confirm Email Address** fields to receive an electronic receipt. If you want a receipt sent to another email address, enter the secondary address in the **CC:** field.
6. Check the **Authorization and Disclosure** checkbox to charge your account for the filing fee.
7. Click **Submit Payment**.
8. Once the transaction is processed you will be redirected back to the CM/ECF site to complete your filing. At that point, the Pay.gov transaction is considered complete and your credit card will be billed, whether or not you complete your filing.

## Payment Issues

If for any reason you are unable to complete your filing once the Pay.gov transaction is complete and must start the filing process over, you will be required to pay the filing fee a second time.

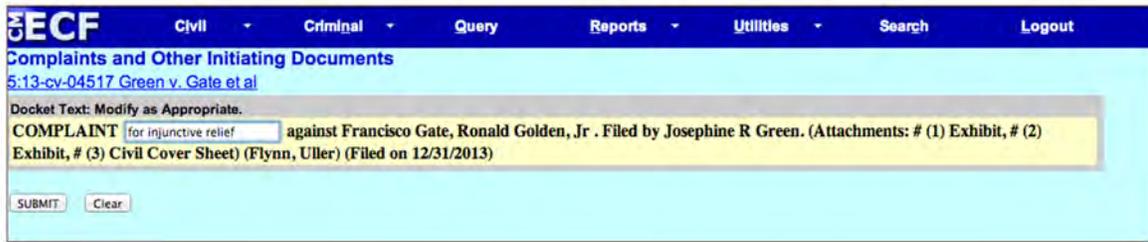
**Requesting a Refund for Double Payment.** Refund requests are governed by General Order 68. An application for refund may be submitted via CM/ECF using the event found under: Other Filings > Other Documents > Application for Refund. You will need the tracking identification numbers from the payment confirmation email to request reimbursement for the initial filing fee.

**Paying the Filing Fee After the Case Is Opened.** If you fail to pay the filing fee during the case opening process you may pay the filing fee for opening a new case via CM/ECF using the event found under: Other Filings > Other Documents > New Case Filing Fee. You will be directed to Pay.gov for payment of the filing fee.

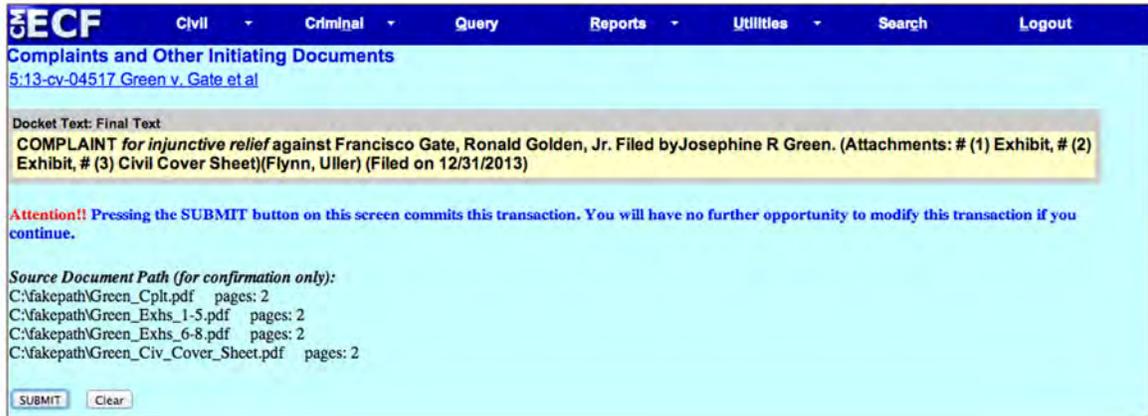
**PLEASE NOTE:** Only fees associated with new civil case filings may be paid in this manner.

## G. Completing the Filing

1. When you return to ECF from Pay.gov, the draft docket text will appear on another ***Complaints and Other Initiating Documents screen***. Review and verify the accuracy of the text, party information and attachment content.
2. You may use the blank text field located near the beginning of the docket entry to add additional docket text if you wish to do so. Any additional language should be brief and descriptive (e.g., "*Complaint for Injunctive Relief...*"). When ready, click **Submit**.



- The final *Complaints and Other Initiating Documents screen* displays the docket entry as it will appear on the official court record including, in italics, any additional docket text that you added. Click **Submit** to commit the transaction and file the documents.



- The Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF), displayed after e-filing, confirms the documents associated with the new case filing have been filed with the court. The notice includes:
  - o A link for the case number, which opens the docket sheet.
  - o A link for the document number, which opens the document file.
  - o Information about who has received notice of the filing via email.



*Your case is now open in ECF.*

## IV. SUBMITTING A PROPOSED SUMMONS

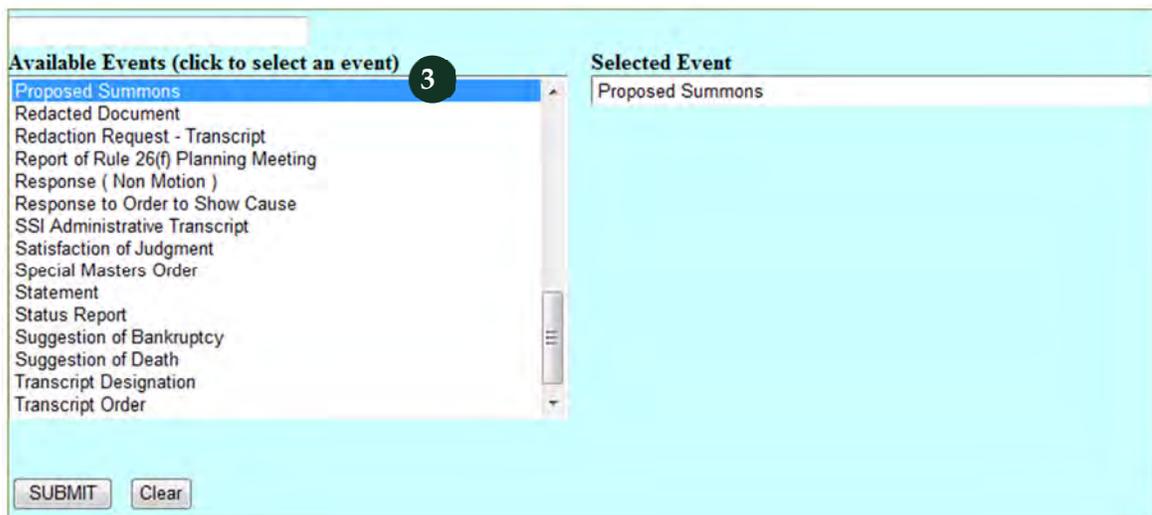
After filing a new case, it is now possible to submit a proposed summons to the court in CM/ECF.

The summons should be uploaded separately and not as part of, or as an attachment to, the complaint or other initiating documents. The court discourages the use of multiple summonses, but if they are used, they should be uploaded as a single PDF document.

1. Click **Civil** on the ECF menu bar.
2. Click on **Other Documents** within the **Other Filings** category.



3. Select **Proposed Summons** under **Available Events** (as a shortcut, begin typing it in the text field above the title). **Proposed Summons** will appear in the **Selected Event** field. Click **Submit**.



4. Enter the **Civil Case Number** and click **Submit** on this screen and the next one.
5. Click on the name of the party for which you are filing the proposed summons. When the name is highlighted, click the **Next** button.
6. Click the Main Document **Browse** button and select the PDF containing the summons and click **Submit** on this screen and the next screen.
7. Verify that the docket entry appears as it should for the official court record. Click **Submit** to commit the transaction and file the proposed summons.
8. The Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) confirms that your filing is complete. It includes:
  - o A link for the case number, which directs the user to the docket sheet.
  - o A link for the document number, which directs the user to the document file.
  - o Information about who will receive notice of the filing via email.

## V. CASE ASSIGNMENT

1. After the case has been opened, court staff will review the documents for compliance with filing requirements.
2. You will be notified by telephone or Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) if there are errors requiring your immediate attention.
3. If there are no critical errors, court staff will proceed to randomly assign the case to a judge.
4. You will receive notice of the judge assignment by Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF). The notice will include a link to the docket entry in CM/ECF.

**IMPORTANT:** There are critical steps you must take after receiving notice of the judge assignment. Please read the docket entry carefully. Go to the court's website and follow the instructions for downloading standing orders, filing procedures for the division to which your case is assigned and additional documents to be reviewed and served on the defendant(s): [cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/caseopening#Downloading](http://cand.uscourts.gov/ecf/caseopening#Downloading).

## VI. ISSUANCE OF SUMMONS

1. If you e-filed a proposed summons, court staff will electronically issue summons and enter it on the docket.
2. Upon receipt of the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) for the issuance of summons, the filer may print the official summons for service upon defendant(s).
3. After completing service, promptly file a Certificate/Proof of Service in ECF using this event: Civil > Initial Pleadings and Service > Service of Process.

## VII. PARTY NAMING CONVENTIONS

This section contains the party naming conventions that all users of the CM/ECF system in the Northern District of California are expected to apply when adding parties to the system.

E-filers' compliance with these conventions enables effective searching in CM/ECF to prevent the creation of duplicate records and, in turn, reduces the burden on court staff associated with correcting erroneous or duplicative entries.

### A. Individuals

Enter individual names using the following criteria:

- **Use upper and lower case.** Do not enter names in ALL CAPS.
- Enter the last name in the Last Name field, the first name in the First Name field and the middle name (if any) in the Middle Name field.
- Enter miscellaneous titles or aliases in the appropriate fields.

The following examples show how text entered into the various name fields is rendered when displayed on the docket:

**TEXT ENTERED IN NAME FIELDS** → **NAME ON CASE CAPTION**

Last Name: Smith	}	Jane Doe Smith
First Name: Jane		
Middle Name: Doe		

Last Name: Villegas-Navarro First Name: Jesus Middle Name: Adolfo	} Jesus Adolfo Villegas-Navarro
---	---------------------------------

Last Name: Navarro First Name: Jesus Middle Name: Adolfo Villegas	} Jesus Adolfo Villegas Navarro
---	---------------------------------

Last Name: Smith First Name: George Title Name: Lieutenant	} Lieutenant George Smith
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Last Name: Guy First Name: Eric Alias Type: aka Turtle	} Eric "Turtle" Guy
--	---------------------

## B. Businesses

Enter business names using the following criteria:

- *Use upper and lower case.* Do not enter names in ALL CAPS.
- Enter the full name of the business in the Last Name field.
- Leave First Name and Middle Name fields blank.
- Omit articles such as "The" or "A" that precede the name of the business.

TEXT ENTERED IN NAME FIELDS →	NAME ON CASE CAPTION
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Last Name: Boeing Company	Boeing Company
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Last Name: www.followdirections.com	www.followdirections.com
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## C. Government Agencies

Enter government agency names using the following criteria:

- Use upper and lower case. Do not enter names in ALL CAPS.
- Enter the name of the city, county, or state in the Last Name field, then department name.
- Do not use the First Name or Middle Name fields.

TEXT ENTERED IN NAME FIELDS →	NAME ON CASE CAPTION
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Last Name: State of California	State of California
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Last Name: California Department of Education	Department of Education for the State of California
---	---

Last Name: Kern County Solid Waste Division	Solid Waste Division of Kern County
---	-------------------------------------

## D. Unions

Enter union names using the following criteria:

- *Use upper and lower case.* Do not enter names in ALL CAPS.
- Enter the official union name as captioned on the Complaint. The "Local" may be at the beginning or the end of the listing.

TEXT ENTERED IN NAME FIELDS →
-------------------------------

**Last Name:** International Union of Operating Engineers Local 302 & 612

**OR**

**Last Name:** Local 302 & 612 International Union of Operating Engineers

## E. Objects or Locations

Enter object or location names using the following criteria:

- Use upper and lower case. Do not enter names in ALL CAPS.
- When entering property, jewelry, currency, bank accounts, vehicles, etc., enter them in the Last Name field, with descriptions entered in the Party Text field.

**TEXT ENTERED IN NAME FIELDS →**

**NAME ON CASE CAPTION**

---

**Last Name:** 1234 Byrd Drive, Concord, CA

**Party Text:** Real Property

Real Property identified as 1234 Byrd Drive, Concord, CA

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**Last Name:** Chevrolet Camaro 1998

**Party Text:** Red, CA license plate 123ABC9

A red 1998 Chevrolet Camaro bearing CA plate 123ABC9

## F. Vessels

Enter vessel names using the following criteria:

- Use upper and lower case. Do not enter names in ALL CAPS.
- Enter the vessel name, followed by the vessel designation and number.

**TEXT ENTERED IN NAME FIELDS →**

**NAME ON CASE CAPTION**

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**Last Name:** Happy Halibut M/V, No. 54321

Happy Halibut M/V, No. 54321

## G. Estates

Enter estate names using the following criteria:

- Use upper and lower case. Do not enter names in ALL CAPS.
- When entering estates, enter the executor/personal representative as the main party.
- Do not enter the deceased as a party.
- Enter them as an alias to the party, using the alias type “est” (estate of).

**TEXT ENTERED IN NAME FIELDS →**

**NAME ON CASE CAPTION**

---

**Last Name:** Happy

**First Name:** Donna

**Party Text:** Personal Representative

**Alias Last Name:** Happy

**Alias First Name:** Seldom

**Alias Type:** est

Donna Happy as Personal Representative of the Estate of Seldom Happy