

Instructions for Attorney Case Opening *E-filing Sealed Complaints*



Common E-filing Steps

Attorneys submitting a complaint under seal will follow common elements of opening a civil case in the [Attorney Case Opening Guide](#) Part III, sections A-B and F.

- Logging In
- Selecting the correct office location
- Entering case opening statistical information
- Submit payment for filing

E-filing Differences for Sealed Cases

The major differences to filing an under-seal case are the following:

- Docketing a Motion to Seal Case event (**NOTE: Not required for Qui Tam / False Claims Act cases**)
- Docketing a Sealed Complaint event
- Adding parties to the case

Requests for sealing a partial complaint or to seal an entire case will follow the sealed docketing process. Once the case is assigned a Judge, the sealing request will be further reviewed by the Court.

Failure to follow the sealed case opening steps will result in your case information being accessible to the public.

Opening the Sealed Case

[Opening the Sealed Case](#)

Select the ECF event **Civil – Attorney Case Opening – Attorney Sealed Case Opening** and follow the case prompts for entering information related to office and civil case opening information.

You will receive confirmation that your case number has been opened. Click on the link **Docket Lead Event?** to submit your under-seal case initiating documents, add parties, and submit payment for your under-seal case.

Open a Civil Case

Case Number 25-2 has been opened.

[Docket Lead Event?](#)

Selecting Sealed E-filing Events, Submitting Case Initiating Documents and Adding Parties to the Case

[E-filing event selection](#)

Requests for sealing a partial complaint or to seal an entire case will follow the sealed docketing process. Once the case is assigned a Judge, the sealing request will be further reviewed by the Court.

Select the e-filing events in the following order:

1. **Motion to Seal Case** (**NOTE:** Not required for Qui Tam / False Claims Act cases)
2. **File a Complaint in a New Under Seal Case**

Click **Submit** to continue and confirm your case number and click **Submit**.

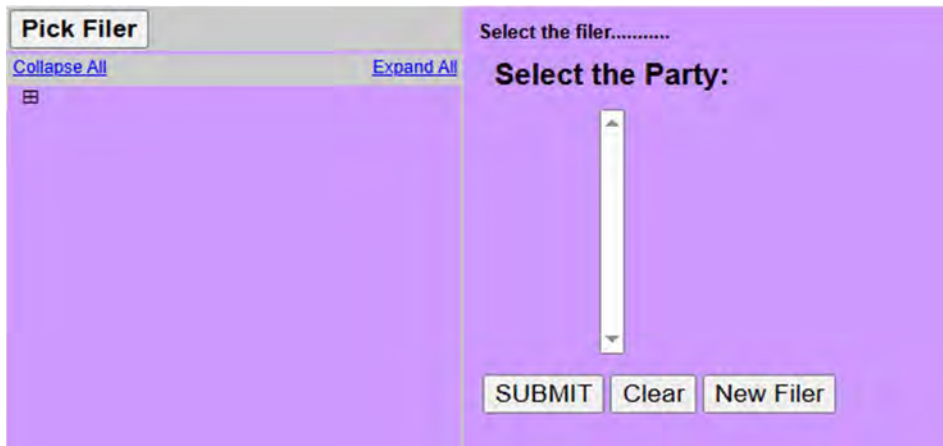
The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Complaints and Other Initiating Documents" with a purple header. Below the title is a search bar with the placeholder text "Start typing to find another event." Below the search bar are two columns of event selection lists. The left column, titled "Available Events (click to select events)", contains a scrollable list of legal events, with "File a Complaint in a New Under Seal Case" highlighted. The right column, titled "Selected Events (click to remove events)", contains a scrollable list of the same events, with "Motion to Seal Case" and "File a Complaint in a New Under Seal Case" listed. At the bottom of the interface are two buttons: "SUBMIT" and "Clear".

Available Events (click to select events)	Selected Events (click to remove events)
Amended Complaint	Motion to Seal Case
Amended Notice of Removal	File a Complaint in a New Under Seal Case
Amended Petition	
Application for Stay of Execution	
Application for Writ of Garnishment	
Bankruptcy Appeal	
Case Transferred In - District Transfer	
Case Transferred In - Divisional Transfer	
Complaint	
Counterclaim	
Crossclaim	
File a Complaint in a New Under Seal Case	
Intervenor Complaint	
Motion to Seal Case	
Motion to Vacate/Set Aside/Correct Sentence (2255)	

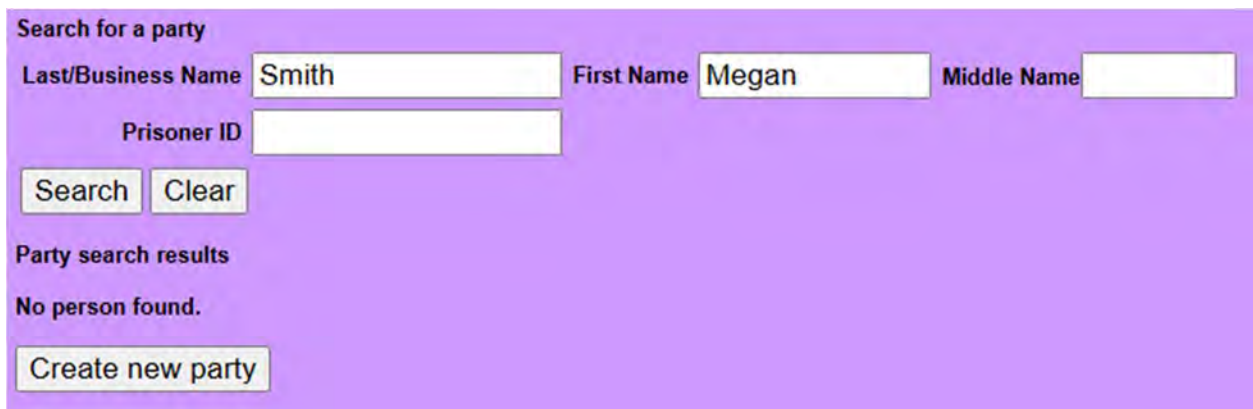
Adding Parties

Adding the Plaintiff(s)

Click **New Filer**



Enter your first named plaintiff to add to the case. Click **Search**. If no party results appear, click **Create new party**



Update party **role** to Plaintiff. Click **Submit**.

Click **New Filer** to repeat the steps to add additional Plaintiff(s) to the case.

Party Information

Last name	Smith	First name	Megan
Middle name		Generation	
Title			
Role	Plaintiff (pla:pty)		
Pro se	No		
Prisoner Id		Unit	
Office			
Address 1		<input type="checkbox"/> Show this address on the docket sheet	
Address 2			
Address 3			
City		State	
County		Country	
Prison		Populate Prison Address Lines	
Phone		Fax	
E-mail			
Party text			
Start date	4/29/2025		
Corporation	no	Notice	yes

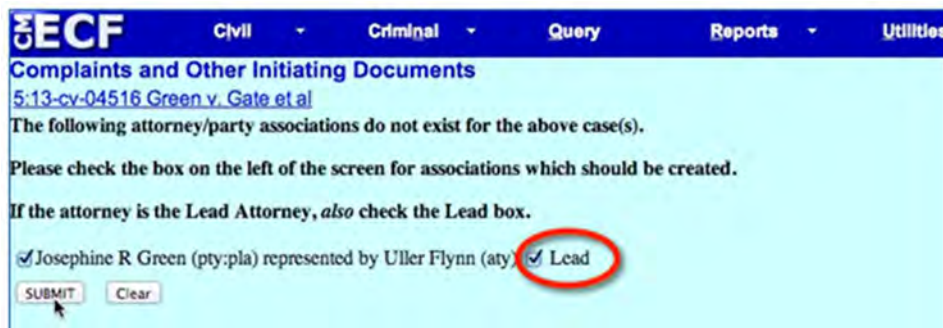
Submit Cancel Clear

Select your plaintiff filer(s) and click **SUBMIT** to continue.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Select the Party:" on a purple background. At the top, it says "Select the filer.....". Below this is a text input field containing "Smith, Megan [pla]". Underneath the input field is a large, empty rectangular box. At the bottom of the form are three buttons: "SUBMIT", "Clear", and "New Filer".

You, as the ECF user logged in during the case filing process, will be added as the attorney for this case for the Plaintiff(s). Ensure that at least one attorney checkbox is selected to ensure your appearance is added to the case. Click **Submit** to continue.



The screenshot shows the ECF system interface. At the top is a blue navigation bar with the ECF logo and tabs for "Civil", "Criminal", "Query", "Reports", and "Utilities". Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Complaints and Other Initiating Documents". The case number "5:13-cv-04516 Green v. Gate et al" is displayed. A message states: "The following attorney/party associations do not exist for the above case(s). Please check the box on the left of the screen for associations which should be created. If the attorney is the Lead Attorney, also check the Lead box." Below this message, there is a list of associations. The first entry is "Josephine R Green (pty:pla) represented by Uller Flynn (aty)" with a checked checkbox. To the right of this entry is a "Lead" checkbox, which is also checked and circled in red. At the bottom left of the form are "SUBMIT" and "Clear" buttons.

Adding the Defendant(s)

You will need to first add the defendant(s) to the case before selecting who the filing is against.

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Pick Party". On the left, there is a list of parties with a "Collapse All" link at the top and an "Expand All" link at the bottom. The list contains one entry: "+ Megan Smith pla". On the right, there is a section titled "Please select the party that this filing is against." Below this, there are two main options: "Select the Party:" and "OR Select a Group:". Under "Select the Party:", there is a dropdown menu showing "Smith, Megan [pla]". Under "Select a Group:", there are four radio button options: "No Group" (selected), "All Defendants", "All Plaintiffs", and "All Parties". At the bottom right, there are three buttons: "Next", "Clear", and "New Party".

Click **New Party** to search for Defendant(s).

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Search for a party". On the left, there is a list of parties with a "Collapse All" link at the top and an "Expand All" link at the bottom. The list contains one entry: "+ Megan Smith pla". On the right, there are four input fields: "Last / Business Name" (containing "Pacific Plaza Hotels, Ir"), "First Name" (empty), "Middle Name" (empty), and "Prisoner ID" (empty). Below these fields is a "Search" button.

Enter in defendant information to Last / Business Name and First Name fields to search for the defendant. Click **Search** to continue.

Pick Party

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

+ Megan Smith pla

Search for a party

Last / Business Name Pacific Plaza Hotels, Inc. First Name Middle Name

Prisoner ID

Search

Search Results

Pacific Plaza Hotels, Inc.

Select Party Create New Party

If no match occurs, select Create New Party.

Otherwise, review the search results to select the matching defendant. Click Select Party to continue.

Update the party role as Defendant. Click **Add Party** to continue.
Click **New Party** to repeat the steps to add additional Defendants(s) to the case.

Party Information
Pacific Plaza Hotels, Inc.

Title

Role **Defendant (dft:pty)** ▼

Pro se **No** ▼

Prisoner Id Unit

Office

Address1

Address 2 ☐ Show this address on the docket sheet

Address 3

State Zip City

Country

Prison ▼

Phone Fax

E-mail

Party text

Start date **4/29/2025** End date

Corporation **no** ▼ Notice **yes** ▼

Add Party

[Start a New Search](#)

Once all defendants have been added, select the defendant(s) who the filing is against. **DO NOT** select the radio buttons. Click **Next** to continue.

Please select the party that this filing is against.

Select the Party: **OR** **Select a Group:**

Smith, Megan [pla]
Pacific Plaza Hotels, Inc. [dft]

☒ No Group
☐ All Defendants
☐ All Plaintiffs
☐ All Parties

This screen displays twice. You will need to also select the defendant(s) information on the second screen when prompted. **DO NOT** select the radio buttons. Click **Next** to continue. Then click **Submit** twice to continue.

Please select the party that this filing is against.

Select the Party: **OR** **Select a Group:**

Smith, Megan [pla]
Smith, Megan [pla]
Pacific Plaza Hotels, Inc. [dft]

☒ No Group
☐ All Defendants
☐ All Plaintiffs
☐ All Parties

Please read this instruction prompt. You will only have one opportunity to submit all documents to the case at case opening. Click **Submit** to continue.

ATTENTION: Please follow the subsequent e-filing screens carefully and respond as applicable to your case. Failure to properly submit your case documents may result in the assignment delays or cause your case documents to become accessible to the public. Once you complete your final submission in ECF, please save a copy for your records as it will be the only receipt you will receive that this filing was successful.

Enter the true name of your party/parties you are filing on behalf of and add your phone number and or email should the court need to contact you for additional information. Click **Submit** to continue.

Enter the name of the party or parties you are filing on behalf of (example: John Smith, Plaintiff):	<input type="text"/>
Enter a <u>phone number and/or e-mail address</u> in case we need to contact you:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="SUBMIT"/> <input type="button" value="Clear"/>	

Submitting your documents

Review this prompt before you upload any documents.

TO COMPLETE THIS E-FILING: Upload the following documents as they pertain to your case.

Main Document:

(1) Upload the complaint or the notice of removal

Attachments:

(1) Any exhibits to the complaint/notice of removal,

(2) Proposed Summons,

(3) For Patent, Trademark, or Copyright actions, attach the respective AO form *Report On Filing Of Action Regarding Patent Or Trademark* or *Report On Filing Of Action Regarding Copyright*,

(4) through (6) A Motion to Seal Case and supporting documents (declaration, proposed order).

Note: Cases sealed by statute (False Claims, Qui Tam) no Motion to Seal is needed. For attachments, you must also select the corresponding description under the category pull down menu or use the description field to enter information.

REMINDERS TO E-FILERS: This will be the only opportunity you have to submit ALL case initiating documents for filing a case with a sealed complaint.

Upload your PDFs as outlined in the display message.

Select the PDF document and any attachments.

Main Document
Choose File Sealed Complaint.pdf

	Attachments	Category	Description	
1.	Choose File Exhibits to S...omplaint.pdf		Exhibits	Remove
2.	Choose File Proposed Summons.pdf	Summons		Remove
3.	Choose File Motion to Seal Case.pdf	Motion to Seal Case		Remove
4.	Choose File Declaration i...eal Case.pdf	Declaration	in Support of Motion to Seal	Remove
5.	Choose File Proposed Or...eal Case.pdf	Proposed Order	on Motion to Seal Case	Remove
6.	Choose File No file chosen			

SUBMIT Clear

Submit Payment

Once you have uploaded all your documents, click **Submit** to follow the pay.gov prompts to submit payment for your case.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

3:25-cv-00002 Sealed v. Sealed

Is this case:

- Filed with an Application to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees?
- Already filed with the fee paid and you are filing a corrected complaint?
- Filed on behalf of the USA?
- State or Municipal Agency with special payment arrangements? Or,
- Filed in a Jones Act Case?

Select Yes if any of the above apply. Otherwise, select No.

☐ Yes

☒ No

SUBMIT

Clear

After completing your filing fee payment, you will return to ECF to submit your documents. This is the final display screen before the case documents are submitted. Click Submit to continue.

Docket Text: Final Text

MOTION to Seal Case, SEALED Complaint on behalf of Megan Smith. Filer can be contacted at attorney@example.com.

NOTE TO FILER: This Notice of Electronic Filing is the *only* receipt you will get that this filing was successful. Please print out this Notice of Electronic Filing. You will *NOT* receive a Notice of Electronic Filing through email of this filing, and you will *NOT* be able to download or view the documents you have filed using this event. Confirmation of this filing will not be given over the phone by the ECF Help Desk. For any questions, contact the docket clerk for your specific case directly through email or by phone. (Filing fee \$ 405. ACANDC-20612345). Filed by Megan Smith. (Attachments: # (1) Exhibits, # (2) Summons, # (3) Motion to Seal Case, # (4) Declaration in Support of Motion to Seal Case, # (5) Proposed Order on Motion to Seal Case)(ecg, COURT STAFF) (Filed on 4/29/2025)

Attention!! Pressing the SUBMIT button on this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue.

Source Document Path (for confirmation only):

C:\fakepath\Sealed Complaint.pdf pages: 1
C:\fakepath\Exhibits to Sealed Complaint.pdf pages: 1
C:\fakepath\Proposed Summons.pdf pages: 1
C:\fakepath\Motion to Seal Case.pdf pages: 1
C:\fakepath\Declaration in Support of Motion to Seal Case.pdf pages: 1
C:\fakepath\Proposed Order Granting Motion to Seal Case.pdf pages: 1

Receipt of Case Filing

Save this Notice of Electronic Filing for your records. Your case has been submitted! This is the only receipt you will receive to confirm your documents have been submitted to the court.

U.S. District Court
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was entered on 4/29/2025 at 11:43 AM and filed on 4/29/2025

Case Name:
Case Number: 3:25-cv-00035 *SEALED*
Filer: Megan Smith
Document Number: 1

Docket Text:
MOTION to Seal Case, SEALED Complaint on behalf of Megan Smith. Filer can be contacted at attorney@example.com.

NOTE TO FILER: This Notice of Electronic Filing is the ***only*** receipt you will get that this filing was successful. Please print out this Notice of Electronic Filing. You will ***NOT*** receive a Notice of Electronic Filing through email of this filing, and you will ***NOT*** be able to download or view the documents you have filed using this event. Confirmation of this filing will not be given over the phone by the ECF Help Desk. For any questions, contact the docket clerk for your specific case directly through email or by phone. (Filing fee \$ 405. ACANDC-20612345). Filed by Megan Smith. (Attachments: # (1) Exhibits, # (2) Summons, # (3) Motion to Seal Case, # (4) Declaration in Support of Motion to Seal Case, # (5) Proposed Order on Motion to Seal Case)(ecg, COURT STAFF) (Filed on 4/29/2025)

3:25-cv-00035 *SEALED* No electronic public notice will be sent because the case/entry is sealed.

The following document(s) are associated with this transaction:

Document description: Main Document
Original filename: C:\fakepath\Sealed Complaint.pdf
Electronic document Stamp:
[STAMP CANDStamp_ID=977336130 [Date=4/29/2025] [FileNumber=10051789-0]
[86f444623e7c1cb2f042d990fa1627b033ccb6840a397e48693f74adcc8073319adc
18cd9745147dffe31cfee6ca7651b2bf03a5e7cb56509bc10e42106b3c9a]]
Document description: Exhibits