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Restrictions on E-Filing & Size Limits

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1. Are there any items which should not be filed electronically?

At a Glance: Limitations on E-Filing

1. INITIATING DOCUMENTS (COMPLAINTS, PETITIONS, NOTICES OF REMOVAL)

Initiating documents (complaints, petitions & removals) cannot currently be e-filed, but it will be possible to do so beginning in mid-2013. These documents are filed manually, and the filer is required to follow up by emailing PDF copies of the documents to the Court.

2. UNDER SEAL DOCUMENTS IN CRIMINAL CASES

Under seal items in criminal cases are currently excluded from the e-filing system. See the page on [manual filing](#) for more info and options when e-filing sealed documents in criminal cases. (NOTE: Under seal documents in Civil Cases CAN be E-filed. See [E-Filing Under Seal](#) for details.)

3. EX PARTE FILINGS

Because the ECF system automatically notifies all participants in a case (as well as the public in general), *ex parte* submissions, including those pursuant to the Criminal Justice Act (CJA), should never be e-filed.

4. SENSITIVE PRIVATE INFORMATION

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2 and Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 49.1 restrict the inclusion of personal information in e-filed documents. [View a summary of Rule 5.2's privacy protections.](#)

5. DISCOVERY COMMUNICATIONS & DISCLOSURES

Discovery-related communications between counsel are not typically filed, electronically or otherwise, without an order of the court. Initial disclosures, discovery responses and expert disclosures are also not filed.

6. ITEMS THAT CANNOT BE SCANNED

[Civil Local Rule 5.1](#) provides that if the document(s) do not exist in electronic format and it is not feasible to convert it, you may use the [Manual Filing Notification](#) procedure instead.

7. FILES THAT ARE TOO BIG

No single .pdf document (not combined) may be **5.0MB/5,000KB** (megabytes/kilobytes) or larger; otherwise, ECF will not accept the filing. Please see the options below if your file is too big.

8. NON-DOCUMENTS

Exhibits which are *physical objects* or *anything other than documents* cannot be e-filed. This includes electronic files which can not be converted to .pdf, such as music and video files. Such files must be filed manually in an accessible format.

When in doubt, consult the judge in your case.

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2. When is a file too big to e-file?

ECF will reject any individual.pdf file **5.0MB** (or 5,000KB) or larger. Note that your combined file size if submitting multiple filings is unlimited, but you may run into problems transferring huge amounts of data. Please read on.

> Electronically converted (rather than scanned) documents rarely exceed 5.0MB since you usually can get hundreds of pages into a 5.0MB file. Scanned documents can be problematic since scanning creates a much larger file size for the same number of pages. There is no way to tell exactly how many pages you can get into a file under 5.0MB when scanning, but here are some examples:

- 100 pages converted to .pdf may be only **1.5MB**.
- 100 pages scanned to .pdf at **high** resolution may be **18.0MB!**
- 100 pages scanned to .pdf at **low** resolution may be only **3.0MB**.

In testing, we were able to scan approximately 80-100 pages into a 3.0MB PDF file using the lowest resolution.

Please consult your scanner's documentation or the manufacturer's website/helpdesk for assistance in using your scanner. The ECF HelpDesk cannot provide technical assistance with scanning.

NOTE: On rare occasions when large or multiple PDF files are submitted, the e-filing confirmation page does not appear, but the Notices of Electronic Filing are sent and the filing appears on the electronic docket. In this event, there is no need for concern about your e-filing.

TIP : ECF is less likely to freeze if you submit no more than 8-10 files at a time, no matter what their size. If you have more than 8 documents to submit and ECF stalls, consider filing in smaller batches.

Example: If you have a Declaration and 23 Exhibits, e-file the Declaration as your main document and Exhibits 1 to 7 as attachments; when you finish e-filing these, select Civil or Criminal (as applicable), then "Other Supporting Documents" — Exhibits, file Exhibit 8 as your main document and Exhibits 9 to 15 as attachments, check the box for "Refer to Existing Events" on the following screen, and make a reference to the Declaration these Exhibits support; when you finish filing these, repeat for Exhibits 16 to 20.

08/05/2005	 3	Declaration of Roger Moore filed byBob Smith. 1 Exhibit 1# 2 Exhibit 2# 3Exhibit 3# 4 Exhibit 4# 5 6 Exhibit 6) (Entered: 08/05/2005)
08/05/2005	 4	EXHIBITS re 3 Declaration in Support filed byBob Smith. (Attachments: # 1 Exhibit 7# 2 Exhibit 8# 3 Exhibit 9# 4 Exhibit 10)(Related document(s) 3) (Entered: 08/05/2005)

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3. How do I tell how big my PDF file is?

When you have the file open in **Adobe Acrobat Reader**, you can get a document summary that will tell you a number of things about the file, including its size. Simply type **Ctrl-d** or click:

File→Document Properties→Summary

to open the Document Summary dialog box. File sizes may be listed in KB (kilobytes) or megabyte (MB). 1000KB = 1MB. ECF will reject anything 5.0MB (5,000KB), or over.

You can also look at the file size from within Windows Explorer.

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4. What are my options if my .pdf file is too big?

You have a number of simple options:

If your .pdf file was scanned, did it really have to be scanned? Only documents which exist in paper-only must be scanned, all others can (and should) be electronically converted from the original computer file. If your document exists anywhere electronically (Word, WordPerfect, Excel, website, digital photo, etc.) it is MUCH better to convert your document to .pdf rather than printing it out and scanning it. *Remember, you almost never need to scan to prove the existence of signatures.*

If your scanned document is under 50-70 pages but over 5.0MB in file size, you almost certainly scanned it at "high resolution" or "photo quality". Many scanners come from the factory set for the highest quality mode (no doubt to impress you with their detail and clarity), but this creates an enormous file size in relation to the numbers of pages. Rescan your document at LOW resolution or "draft" quality and you'll create a much smaller file size. As long as the document is legible and under 5.0MB, we are happy to accept it.

Separate files will keep you file size down so you may scan or convert your exhibits as individual files. Instead of combining exhibits A-D, make four PDF files (one for each), such as: A.pdf, B.pdf, C.pdf and D.pdf (etc)..

You may still combine small exhibits into one file, as long as that file is under 5.0MB (such as ABCD.pdf). Use your best judgment - if you have five, 1-page documents, and one 50-page document, combine the five, 1-page documents into one PDF file, and keep the 50-page document as a separate PDF.

The court allows you to e-file your documents in sections, as long as they are identified in the ECF system when you efile them. We suggest you try to divide up the document in logical places (such as between chapters or sections of the document) if possible. You may label them something like,

Exhibit A, Part 1 of 3

Exhibit A, Part 2 of 3

Exhibit A, Part 3 of 3

You may efile your exhibits as separate filings, as long as you relate the filings to the document they are attached to:

Example (Declaration with many exhibits):

E-file your Declaration all by itself, and relate it to the Motion it supports.

When complete, click on **Civil→Other Supporting Documents→Exhibits**

E-file the exhibits (in groups of 5-10) and relate them to the declaration (not to the Motion the Declaration supports).

Repeat this until all your exhibits are efiled.

Lastly, if all else fails, you may use the Manual Filing Notification process and file the documents in paper, but only if it is impossible to e-file due to size or other restrictions.

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Is there a size limit on an email submitting documents to the court?

All emails must be below 30.0MB (megabytes) in size to pass our gateway. If you email .pdf documents to the court (as with initiating documents such as complaints and their attendant documents) you may find that you are unable to attach all the exhibits to a single mail message. After ensuring that each individual .pdf file is under 5.0MB (5,000KB), you can resend as multiple emails with just a few .pdfs in each.