



Civil Case Opening Reference Guide

Opening a case correctly from the outset is essential to ensuring smooth case management. Quality Control (QC) notices often result from incomplete, inaccurate, or improperly formatted documents or case data. Repeated errors create increased workload on our support staff and may delay case processing.

As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining the Court's high docketing standards, we have created tips and best practices for properly opening new civil cases electronically.

Before docketing:

- Double-check the details and review your documents before submission:
 - Are your pleadings signed properly with an s/ signature that corresponds to your ECF filing account? (ECF user and s/ signature must match).
 - Does the contact information in your signature block match the ECF contact information we have on file? If not, please review [Maintain NextGen CM-ECF Account.pdf](#) for details on updating.
 - Are your PDF documents complete and flattened appropriately? See Flattening PDF Forms for further instruction.

While docketing:

- Do not attempt to open the same case twice and do not click the back button once you begin the filing process. **Your information may be lost and/or your credit card may be billed twice.**
- Verify the county of jurisdiction for your new case. Please note the difference between Jurisdictional County and Statistical County selections.
 - **Jurisdictional** County (See [District Map](#)): Determines which divisional office is appropriate to handle the case. *Defendant's county of residence or county in which the lawsuit is based.* If filing a Notice of Removal, select the divisional office corresponding to the county from which the case was removed.

Please note the OFFICE of the appropriate county for selection on the next screen

ASHEVILLE = Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherfordton, Swain, Transylvania, Yancey

CHARLOTTE = Anson, Gaston, Union, Mecklenburg

STATESVILLE = Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Caldwell, Catawba, Iredell, Lincoln, Watauga, Wilkes

- **Statistical** County: Enter the **county of residence of the first listed plaintiff**, unless involving a U.S. government plaintiff or land condemnation action.

- Do not enter party information in CAPS.
- When filing a Notice of Removal, remember to add the attorney for plaintiff(s) or add plaintiff as a pro se party and provide a known address.
 - Only add addresses for parties appearing pro se. **Please do not enter addresses for any party that is represented by counsel.**
- Prepare all necessary documents (including corporate and citizenship disclosure forms when appropriate) and convert each as a separate, **flattened** pdf.
- When docketing a Corporate Disclosure Statement, search for and add corporate parents or other affiliates when prompted:

Search for a corporate parent or other affiliate

Last/Business name

- When filing attachments, use the Category drop-down function to select an attachment category and then *further* identify your Exhibit, Appendix, Affidavit, etc. in the Description text box to the right. You may also opt to not select from the drop down and only type in your exhibit information in the Description text box "Exhibit 1." Choosing **one** of the options will prevent duplicative text: (1) Exhibit Exhibit 1, # (2) Exhibit Exhibit 2.

Attachments	Category	Description
1. <input type="button" value="Choose File"/> Exhibit 1.pdf	Exhibit	1 <input type="button" value="Remove"/>
2. <input type="button" value="Choose File"/> Exhibit 2.pdf	Exhibit	2 <input type="button" value="Remove"/>
3. <input type="button" value="Choose File"/> Exhibit 3.pdf	Exhibit	3 <input type="button" value="Remove"/>

- When filing a Social Security case, the Commissioner of Social Security should be added as the Defendant and **SSA Noticing** and **US Attorney-Social Security Noticing** groups should be added as interested parties.
- Submit summons for issuance by the Clerk's Office. Do not file the proposed summons in the case docket. See Submitting Summons for Issuance notes if you are unfamiliar with using CyberClerk.
- Finally, ask *before* you submit. When in doubt, please reach out to the Clerk's Office before filing. We are happy to help!

After docketing:

- Upon receipt of your Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF), view **and save** your document when accessing the first time. Links on NEFs do expire. Your 'one free look' is only available during the first 15 days after the docket entry is made. Accessing the same document again will result in additional charges.
- If you do receive a QC notice, please understand we are doing our best to catch errors before they become increasingly problematic. Our QC process helps us improve the accuracy of filings and associated internal reports, prevent missed deadlines and be proactive in our case management. We greatly appreciate your attention to detail and hope you find these tips helpful when filing!