



## Sealed Documents Reference Guide

### General:

- To protect the security of sealed and restricted filings, our Court has issued new mandates for secure handling of sealed documents. Please see the Court's [Standing Order Regarding Procedures for Access and Management of Sealed Documents](#).
- Parties in the case who are registered users (and their secondary email accounts) will receive a redacted NEF, as notification that a sealed document has been filed. The redacted NEF will **not** provide access to the documents.
- If a sealed document has been incorrectly filed, the document will need to be replaced or refiled. Please reach out to the Clerk's Office ASAP.
- Please submit Sealed Proposed Orders to the appropriate Chambers in CM/ECF using: Civil Events > CyberClerk > Submit Document to Court > Submit Proposed Document to Judge.

### Box.com:

- To receive successful service of both documents that you file with the Court and documents issued by the Court, you **MUST** have a working box.com account.
- Once service has been made to your box.com account, you have **14 days** to download the document before it expires. Saving sealed documents to a separate folder within Box does **NOT** preserve them; you must download them to *your* internal server. **Please download documents immediately upon receipt to avoid losing access.**
- Sealed documents filed prior to 11/3/2025 are not currently able to be provided to a Box account and will instead be sent via encrypted email.
- Secondary email accounts associated with the attorney's ECF account will only receive Box notifications if added to the attorney's primary Box account.

### Sealed Document Service:

- **Because sealed documents filed in CM/ECF are no longer accessible electronically in PACER, service cannot be accomplished through ECF.** The filing party/parties must serve sealed documents by other appropriate means as provided by the Federal Rules of Procedure. See Fed.

R. Civ. P. 5 & Fed. R. Crim. P. 49 outlining the rules governing service "by other means" and requirements for filing certificates of service.

- If you have not been served by opposing counsel, please reach out to the filing attorney regarding service.

#### **Restricted Documents:**

- Do not necessitate a sealed document request. Documents with a viewing restriction **are not sealed** (plea agreement, bond documents, writ documents, social security documents, medical records, etc.). These documents will **not** be sent to Box. The attorney of record must login to PACER to view and download. Please download the document(s) for future access- your 'one free look' is only available for 15 days after filing.

#### **Attorney Filed Sealed Documents:**

- If you file a sealed document electronically, a copy of the document will automatically be served to your Box email address.
  - Please distribute any necessary documents to support staff when received.
  - Support staff will be directed back to you for copies of documents originating from your office after 11/3/2025.
- Sealed documents filed by counsel **must** be served by the filing party.

#### **Probation Filed Sealed Documents:**

- The US Probation Office is serving sealed documents (Presentence Reports, Pretrial Reports, etc.) that originate from their office via Box to the email address associated with the attorney(s) of record in ECF. *Secondary email addresses will receive an NEF that a sealed document has been filed but will not have access to the document.*

#### **Court Filed Sealed Documents:**

- The Clerk's Office is serving any sealed Orders and other Court-generated documents by secure electronic means to active attorneys of record from our office via Box to the email address associated with the attorney(s) of record in ECF. *Secondary email addresses will receive an NEF that a sealed document has been filed but will not have access to the document.*
- Sealed documents filed prior to 11/3/2025 are not currently able to be provided to a box.com account and will instead be sent via encrypted email.

**Copies of Historical Sealed Documents filed (prior to 11/3/2025):**

- Please search your records for documents before submitting a sealed document request.
- For **Court generated and attorney filed documents**, contact the Clerk's Office via [Contact Us | Western District of North Carolina | United States District Court](#) and select the Sealed Document Copy Request option.
- For **Probation generated documents**, please email [rhonda\\_snincak@ncwp.uscourts.gov](mailto:rhonda_snincak@ncwp.uscourts.gov) or [Brooklyn\\_Helms@ncwp.uscourts.gov](mailto:Brooklyn_Helms@ncwp.uscourts.gov).