

FILING AND SERVICE

Electronic Filing and Service by Counsel

The Fourth Circuit adopted mandatory electronic filing by counsel for all cases effective June 1, 2008. Therefore, counsel must register for electronic filing and file and serve documents through the court's CM/ECF system. Counsel unable to file electronically may request exemption for good cause shown in a particular case. Counsel appointed in the district court who wish to withdraw from CJA representation on appeal may file a motion to withdraw in paper form instead of registering for electronic filing for the sole purpose of withdrawing from the case. Electronic filing is complete at the time and date stated in the notice of docket activity.

CM/ECF automatically serves case participants who have registered with the court for electronic service; participants who do not receive electronic service through CM/ECF must be served by counsel as otherwise authorized by Fed. R. App. P. 25(c). A service preference report is available from the CM/ECF reports menu that identifies which participants counsel must serve outside CM/ECF. In addition, the notice of docket activity received upon completion of filing identifies the participants who must be served conventionally. Sealed documents, case initiating documents (e.g., petitions for review, petitions for mandamus), and manual filings (not available in electronic form) are not served through CM/ECF and must be served by counsel as otherwise authorized by Fed. R. App. P. 25(c).

Paper Filing and Service by Pro Se Litigants

Pro se litigants are not required to file documents electronically. If they wish to use electronic filing in their pending case, they may do so after completing the electronic filing registration requirements. Pro se documents filed in paper form should be addressed to: Patricia S. Connor, Clerk, United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, 1100 E. Main Street, Suite 501, Richmond, Virginia, 23219-3517.

Filing is not timely unless the clerk **receives** the papers within the time fixed for filing. Fed. R. App. P. 25(a). However, a paper filed by an inmate is timely if evidence, such as a postmark, date-stamp, or sworn inmate declaration of date of deposit with prepaid postage, shows that the paper was deposited in the institution's internal mailing system on or before the last day for filing. Briefs are timely filed if placed in first-class mail or dispatched to a third-party courier within the time fixed for filing.

Litigants who file documents in paper form, outside CM/ECF, must also serve those documents outside CM/ECF. In accordance with Fed. R. App. P. 25(c), service outside CM/ECF may be by (i) personal delivery, (ii) mail, or (iii) third-party commercial carrier for delivery within three days, or (iv) by email outside CM/ECF with the written consent of the person served.

Certificates of Service

For registered users filing through CM/ECF, a certificate of service is not required if all service was through CM/ECF. If any service was accomplished outside CM/ECF, a certificate of service is required certifying the date and manner of service and the names and addresses of persons served outside CM/ECF. For sealed documents, a certificate of service is included on the Certificate of Confidentiality form for this purpose.

Parties not filing through CM/ECF must file a certificate of service with their document certifying the date and manner of service and the names and addresses of persons served outside CM/ECF. Service on a party represented by counsel must be on all counsel of record, except as provided by rule or order. Fed. R. App. P. 25(b).

If service was by fax or e-mail, the certificate must provide the fax number or e-mail address of the person served. Fed. R. App. P. 25(d). When a brief or appendix is filed by mailing or dispatch, the certificate of service must also state the date and manner by which the document was mailed or dispatched to the clerk. Fed. R. App. P. 25(d)(3).

Computation of Time

In computing any time period stated in days or a longer unit of time, “(A) exclude the day of the event that triggers the period; (B) count every day, including intermediate Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays; and (C) include the last day of the period, but if the last day is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the period continues to run until the end of the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.” Fed. R. App. P. 26(a)(1).

In computing a time period stated in hours, “(A) begin counting immediately on the occurrence of the event that triggers the period; (B) count every hour, including hours during intermediate Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays; and (C) if the period would end on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the period continues to run until the same time on the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.” Fed. R. App. P. 26(a)(2).

Deadlines Running from Service of a Document

Whenever a party is required or permitted to act within a prescribed period after service of a paper upon that party, three days are added to this prescribed period unless the paper is delivered on the date of service stated in the proof of service. Fed. R. App. P. 26(c). A paper that is served electronically **is treated as delivered on the date of service**; thus, three days are not added to deadlines running from electronic service of a document. Fed. R. App. P. 26(c) (effective Dec. 1, 2016).

Specific Documents (chart)

Type of Document	How to File
Case initiating documents-- petitions for permission to appeal, petitions for review, applications for enforcement, petitions for mandamus or prohibition, motions to authorize successive habeas petitions	Case initiating documents can be submitted to the court in any of the following ways: (1) upload electronically through CM/ECF utility to submit new case; or (2) mail to Clerk's Office, 1100 E. Main St., Suite 501, Richmond, VA 23219. Additional copies are not required for filing, but documents must be served conventionally.
Notice of appeal	File electronically in district court.
Initial forms -- appearance of counsel, disclosure statement, docketing statement, transcript order form	File electronically in court of appeals. Send copy of transcript order to court reporter and district court and attach copy to docketing statement filed in the court of appeals. In CJA cases, submit all transcript authorization requests through the district court's eVoucher system.
Motions, responses, replies	File electronically in court of appeals. Exhibits should be filed as part of the Motion or Response/answer event, clearly identified by letter or number.
Formal briefs	File electronically in court of appeals using BRIEF event. Filing of paper copies is not required unless ordered by the court. Service of paper copies on opposing counsel is not required.
Sealed version of formal briefs	File electronically in court of appeals using SEALED BRIEF event; also file a certificate of confidentiality . Filing of paper copies is not required unless ordered by the court.
Joint Appendix Supplemental Appendix	File electronically in court of appeals using JOINT APPENDIX or SUPPLEMENTAL APPENDIX event. Service of paper copies on opposing counsel is not required.
Sealed joint appendix Sealed supplemental appendix	File electronically in court of appeals using SEALED JOINT APPENDIX or SEALED SUPPLEMENTAL APPENDIX entry; also a certificate of confidentiality . Filing of paper copies is not required unless ordered by the court, but sealed appendices must be served on opposing counsel outside CM/ECF.

Certificate of confidentiality or motion to seal	File electronically in court of appeals using entry Certificate of Confidentiality or MOTION/Seal . File paper copies with any paper copies of sealed briefs or appendices ordered by the court
Informal briefs	File electronically in court of appeals and serve pro se litigants outside CM/ECF. Most pro se litigants are not registered as filing users and therefore must be served conventionally.
Notices regarding availability for argument	File electronically in court of appeals
Acknowledgments of oral argument notification	File electronically in court of appeals
Supplemental authorities, status reports, memoranda, correspondence	File electronically in court of appeals
Petitions for rehearing and rehearing en banc	File electronically in court of appeals
Bills of cost and objections to bills of cost	File electronically in court of appeals
CJA and other financial vouchers	File CJA vouchers in CJA eVoucher. File assigned counsel vouchers via email to 4cca-cja@ca4.uscourts.gov .

Related Links

- [Rule 25, Filing and Service \(with Local Rules\)](#)
- [Rule 26, Computing and Extending Time \(with local Rule\)](#)
- [Case Information & eFiling](#)
- [Declaration of Inmate Filing](#)
- [CJA eVoucher](#)