

**Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts
Office of Case Management Systems**

CM/ECF

Release Notes

For PACER Users

NextGen CM/ECF Release 1.7

August 2021

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Update Summary

Date	Section	Change
March 2021	All	Document created.
April 2021	2	Updated Conditional Statement
August 2021	5	Added new section - Utility function - Check PDF Document
August 2021	All	Edits implemented
February 2022	All	Updated footer

1 Introduction

This release addresses several security, technical, and functional issues reported by various courts over the last several months, as well as introduced new functionality. This release includes the following bug fixes and new functionality that are specific to District CM/ECF public/attorney users:

1. Providing PACER users who have demonstrated need with permission from the court(s) to access some or all plea or sentencing related filings in each approved court
2. External filers selecting case participants with a last name beginning with "Salt" are prevented from filing.
3. PACER users with court-ordered exemptions are incorrectly defaulting to "not exempt" for billing transactions upon accessing a court.
4. Courts may provide filers access to a new utility, Check PDF Document, which enables filers to verify that a PDF document is PDF/A compliant and will be accepted when filing in CM/ECF.

This release was tested with the browsers Firefox, IE11, Edge and Chrome.

Note: Starting in iPadOS 13, iPads no longer present themselves to web servers as distinct from full Mac computers as part of Apple's work toward merging the two platforms. This means that CM/ECF servers can no longer detect an iPad separate from a Mac accessing the application. Previously, on iPads and iPhones, CM/ECF PDFs displayed in an iframe were converted to an image of just the first page of the PDF. CM/ECF has been modified to display the entire PDF, however, Mac and iPad users will not see the CM/ECF menu. Mac and iPad users should open the PDFs in a new window or tab to retain access to the CM/ECF menu.

2 New Remote Access to Cooperator Information for Authorized PACER Users

CM/ECF has been enhanced to provide PACER users who have demonstrated need with permission from the court(s) to access some or all plea or sentencing related filings in each approved court. **This functionality is optional and is implemented at the discretion of each court.** Courts may only make a decision about providing remote access to PACER users if they have implemented the Plea and Sentencing Folder Functionality with the Docket Report provided with the NextGen District 1.6 release.

PACER user remote access requests to plea and sentencing filings will be submitted according to local court procedures. Regardless of the court procedures, all requests must include the PACER Username and PACER Account Number and identify the case number(s) which the user is requesting access. PACER users will find the Username and Account Number on the PACER Manage My Account screen illustrated below. Requests for remote access to cooperator information will be recorded in the event of requests from law enforcement agents investigating incidents of cooperator harm.



Granting a PACER user access to the criminal cases does not provide the user unlimited access to the entries and documents in the case. Access is limited to filings specified by the court. All PACER users approved for remote access will only be allowed to access the cooperator information for the duration authorized by the court in days (i.e., 7 days, 21 days, 60 days).

Courts will define the process for notifying PACER users of the court’s response to the demonstrated need access request.

For PACER users approved for remote access, CM/ECF will verify the requestor’s access permissions when the user accesses the Plea Filings and Sentencing Filings Reports through the Docket Report.

**U.S. District Court
Administrative Office of the US Courts (pvtd) (Fredericksburg)
CRIMINAL DOCKET FOR CASE #: 7:20-cr-05310-EHE-SGS All Defendants
Internal Use Only**

Case title: USA v. Luther et al Date Filed: 03/10/2020
[Plea Filings](#) [Sentencing Filings](#)

Assigned to: Edward H Eta
 Referred to: Susan G Sixteen

Defendant (1)
Andrew Luther
 also known as
 Big Snoop

represented by **George Jones**
 Office of the Federal Defender
 1 Main Street

[Docket Report – Links to Plea Filings and Sentencing Filings Reports](#)

The application will verify the PACER Username and the access expiration date applied to the request when the Plea Filings or Sentencing Filings links are selected. Users granted access to specific cases will be able to view limited content within the Plea Filings report and Sentencing Filings report (shown below). Users approved for remote access will be billed for access to the Docket Report and the PDF documents accessed within the approved remote access period.

9:20-cr-00902-1 USA v. Wallace et al
 Date filed: 02/27/2020
 Date of last filing: 02/27/2020

Plea Filings

Date Filed	#	Docket Text
02/27/2020	P-642098	Minute Entry for proceedings held before Judge Xavier R. Xi: PSF Plea and Sentence Hearing held on 2/27/2020. Carolyn Y Wallace (1) Plea of nolo contendere and sentencing on Count Complaint Carolyn Y Wallace (1) Plea of guilty and sentencing on Count Complaint Carolyn Y Wallace (1) Dismissed counts Count Complaint (Court Reporter rabee.) (Attachments: # 1 Supplement) (Bailey, SysadminPVT) [7:20-mj-07000-XRX] (Entered: 02/27/2020)
02/27/2020	P-642102	PSF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS on Plea of Guilty as to Carolyn Y Wallace Objections to R&R, due by 03/09/2020 (Bailey, SysadminPVT) [7:20-mj-07000-XRX] (Entered: 02/27/2020)
02/27/2020	P-642105	PSF ORDER Rejecting Plea Agreement as to Carolyn Y Wallace (Bailey, SysadminPVT) [7:20-mj-07000-XRX] (Entered: 02/27/2020)

[Docket Report - Plea Filings \(Displays filings specified by the court for remote public access\)](#)

8:19-cr-05250-CBC-NNN-2 USA v. Garcia et al
 Date filed: 02/19/2019
 Date of last filing: 02/10/2020

Sentencing Filings

Date Filed	#	Docket Text
08/14/2019	S-638929	PSF PRESENTENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT (Sealed) as to Marcos Araujo Dias (Toups, SysadminPVT) (Entered: 01/29/2020)
08/28/2019	S-638991	Minute Entry for proceedings held before Christine B Chi: PSF Sentencing held on 8/28/2019 for 1. (Court Reporter rah.) (Toups, SysadminPVT) (Entered: 01/29/2020)
08/29/2019	S-638994	PSF SENTENCING MEMORANDUM by Marcos Araujo Dias (Toups, SysadminPVT) (Entered: 01/29/2020)
08/30/2019	S-638997	PSF MOTION to Reduce Sentence by Marcos Araujo Dias Responses due by 9/16/2019 (Toups, SysadminPVT) (Entered: 01/29/2020)

[Docket Report - Sentencing Filings \(Displays filings specified by the court for remote public access\)](#)

If the expiration date is exceeded or the user looks at other criminal cases, the PACER user will see the court's or application's standard message.

NOTICE: The contents, if any, are available remotely only to select parties defined by the court or judge.

[Docket Report – Plea/Sentencing Filings No Access Message](#)

3 Filers Selecting Case Participants with Last Name "Salt"

Attorneys selecting a case participant with a last name starting with the characters "salt" receive the error "Ciphertext does not begin with a valid header for 'randomiv' header mode" while docketing. Encountering case participant last names such as "Salter" or "Saltman" caused the software to assume certain processes had occurred, when the processes were not actually completed. The incomplete process resulted in the error message being displayed to the filer.

The software has been modified to prevent the error.

4 PACER Court-Ordered Exemptions Defaulting to “Not Exempt”

There were two issues identified with NextGen 1.5 processing of PACER users that have a court ordered exemption for specific courts.

1. The PACER Service Center reported that when a user logs into CMECF via PACER, if that user is configured to be default exempt through a court order in PACER (either for that specific court or for all courts), CMECF is not treating that user as exempt by default. The user has the ability to modify their exemption status using the PACER toggle, however, they may not see the "not exempt" indicator until they have accrued multiple billed transactions, resulting in PACER over-billing.
2. During additional investigation of the court order exemption issue, it was determined that a PACER user with a court-specific exemption could take actions that would provide themselves exempt access to all courts, rather than the court ordered exemption for a specific court. This could result in PACER under-billing.

The software has been modified to recognize the exemptions specified by specific courts as identified by the PACER Service Center when the user accesses each court.

5 Utility Function – Check PDF Document

Courts may provide filers access to a new utility which enables filers to verify that a PDF document is PDF/A compliant and will be accepted when filing in CM/ECF. The optional utility will be available to filers on the menu(s) of the court's choosing. Users will be prompted to upload a PDF file and click Next to begin the verification process.

After the application verifies the file, the user will receive a success message (default or court customized) or one of three error messages.

Success - default message

Error message options:

- The document contains code which may cause an external action (such as launching an application). This PDF document cannot be accepted.
- The document is not a well-formed PDF document (no further information is available). The document contains code which may cause an external action (such as launching an application). This PDF document cannot be accepted.
- The document has security measures in effect, such as password protection or access restrictions. This PDF document cannot be accepted.