GUIDE TO
FILING A CIVIL COMPLAINT

The court currently accept complaints and accompanying documents (summonses) through ECF or conventionally (on paper). **Please do not convert the Complaint or other Initiating Document to PDF until you have added the case number and Judge that you will receive during this process. Add the case number and Judge to the complaint and all other original pleadings filed and then convert to PDF.**

This manual describes the procedures for filing a civil complaint through ECF.

1.   Select **Civil** from the blue menu bar at the top of the ECF screen.

        Select **Open Civil Case** under appropriate case opening:

Open and Assign Civil Case	used for standard case opening
Open and Assign Civil Case (sealed)	used to open sealed case
Open Case	used to open case that gets a direct judge assignment

2.	The following screen appears:	NEW SNAPSHOT

Open a Civil Case

Office Cincinnati ▾   Case type md ▾   Case Number
Date filed 9/19/2006

Lead case number [   ]   Association type consolidated ▾
Other court name [   ]
Other court number [   ]
☐ Related cases
[Next] [Clear]

a.	Office: The United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio is divided into three (3) divisions, Eastern Division at Columbus, Western Division at Cincinnati and Western Division at Dayton. The divisions are comprised of the following counties:

EASTERN DIVISION at Columbus: if the defendant(s) reside in, or if the action on which the lawsuit is based occurred in one of the following counties it is an Eastern Division at Columbus case. Athens, Belmont, Coshocton, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Hocking, Jackson, Jefferson, Knox, Licking, Logan, Madison, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Ross, Union, Vinton and Washington.

WESTERN DIVISION at Cincinnati: if the defendant(s) reside in, or if the action on which the lawsuit is based occurred in one of the following counties it is a Western Division at Cincinnati case. Adams, Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton, Highland, Lawrence, Scioto and Warren counties.

WESTERN DIVISION at Dayton: if the defendant(s) reside in, or if the action on which the lawsuit is based occurred in one of the following counties it is a Western Division at Dayton case. Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Miami, Montgomery, Preble and Shelby counties.

b.	Case type: Select cv for a civil case or mc for a miscellaneous case.

i.	The following initiating documents are to receive a civil "cv" case number:

> Complaint
> Motion to Vacate/Set Aside/Correct Sentence (2255)
> Notice of Removal
> Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus
> Petition to Enforce IRS Summons.

ii. The following initiating documents are to receive a miscellaneous "mc" case number:

> Application for Stay of Execution
> Notice to Take Foreign Deposition
> Petition to Perpetuate Testimony
> Registration of Foreign Judgment

c. Lead case number: DO NOT FILL IN

d. Association type: DO NOT CHANGE

e. Other court name: In the instance of a notice of removal, enter the name of the court, i.e. Franklin County Court of Common Pleas.

f. Other court number: Enter the county's case number.

g. Related Cases. DO NOT CHECK. Cases can only be linked as related upon the filing of the Related Cases Memorandum by the District Judges, which is initiated by the RELATED CASE INFORMATION ON THE CIVIL COVER SHEET.

You should now be finished with the initial case opening screen, check the information and click on [Next]

3. Use the civil cover sheet as a guide in filling out the next screen. Note it will be necessary to attach the civil cover sheet in PDF form when attaching the case initiating document(s). Use the drop down boxes to select the appropriate information for each field.

Open a Civil Case

Jurisdiction: 3 (Federal Question)

Cause of action: 0 (No cause code entered)

Nature of suit: 0 (zero)

Origin: 1 (Original Proceeding)

Citizenship plaintiff:

Citizenship defendant:

Jury demand: n (None)   Class action: n   Demand ($000):

Arbitration code: County: ADAMS

Fee status: pd (paid)   Fee date: 9/19/2006   Date transfer:

[Next] [Clear]

a.   Jurisdiction: Use drop down box to select appropriate jurisdiction

b.   Cause of Action: Use drop down box to select appropriate cause of action.
        Attached as Appendix A is a list of Causes of action.   LINK APPENDIX A

c.   Nature of Suit: Use drop down box to select appropriate nature of suit.

d.   Origin: Use drop down box to select appropriate origin.

e.   Citizenship plaintiff: Use drop down box to select appropriate citizenship for the
        plaintiff if the jurisdiction is Diversity.

f.   Citizenship defendant: Use drop down box to select appropriate citizenship for
        the defendant if the jurisdiction is Diversity.

        NOTE: the system will verify the accuracy of combinations entered on the first
        half of this screen. For example, if an invalid Nature of Suit and Jurisdiction
        combination is selected, the following screen will appear:

Microsoft Internet Explorer

⚠ Invalid Nature of Suit/Jurisdiction combination [160/1]. Valid Jurisdiction code(s) for
Nature of Suit [160] are [3,4,5,]

[OK]
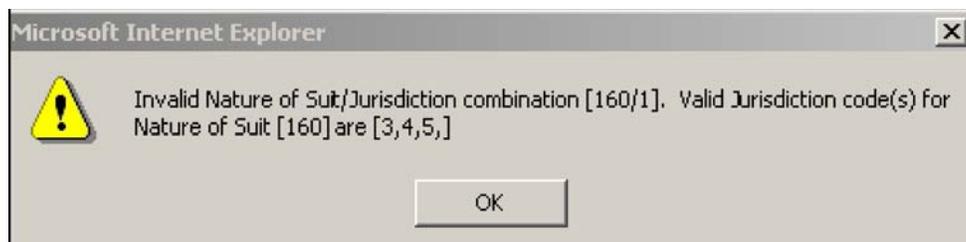
g. Jury Demand: Use drop down box to select appropriate jury demand request.

h. Class Action: DO NOT FILL IN THIS FIELD.

i. Demand: Enter amount in thousands (eg. 1000 would be $1,000,000 demand). Do NOT exceed 4 digits. $9,999,000 or higher should be 9999.

j. Arbitration Code: DO NOT FILL IN THIS FIELD.

k. County: Use drop down box to select appropriate county.

l. Fee status: Use drop down box to select appropriate fee status.

m. Fee date: Defaults to current date and there should be no need to change it.

n. Date transfer: DO NOT FILL IN THIS FIELD.

When finished entering the information click on [Next].

4. Adding Parties. (NOTE: Minor children **MUST** be entered using only their initials.)

Open a Civil Case

Search for a party
Last/Business name [   ]
[Search] [Clear]

a. Searching for a Party: You must perform a search to see if your party is already on the ECF system. Type the first few letters of the party's last name for an individual or the first few letters of the company name. Click [Search].

Search for a party
Last/Business name [   ]
[Search] [Clear]

Party search results
Smith, Alexander
Smith, Cathy E
Smith, John Q
Smith, Karen
Smith, Todd
Smithers, Ralph A

[Select name from list] [Create new party]

If a match is found, ECF will display a list of party names. If the name of the party you represent appears in the list, click on it and then click on [Select name from list].

Search for a party

Last/Business name [_____]

[Search] [Clear]

Party search results

No person found.

[Create new party]

If a match is not found, or your party does not appear in the list, click [Create new party].

ECF will display the following Party Information screen:

Party Information

Todd Smith

Title [_____]

Role [Plaintiff (pla:pty) ▼]   Pro se [no ▼]

Prisoner Id [_____]   Office [_____]

Unit [_____]   Address 1 [_____]

Address 2 [_____]   Address 3 [_____]

City [_____]   State [___] Zip [_____]

County [_____ ▼]   Country [_____]

Phone [_____]   Fax [_____]

E-mail [_____]

Party text [_____]

Start date [9/19/2006]

[Alias...] [Corporate parent...] [Review...]   Add all aliases and corporate parents before clicking the Submit button.

[Submit] [Cancel] [Clear]

When entering party information, please note the following:

> ➤ Company: Enter the entire company name in the Last name field.
> ➤ Individual: Fill out the Last name, First name, Middle name and Generation (i.e. Jr., Sr., III) fields as appropriate.
> ➤ Parties should be entered in the manner in which they are captioned on the document being filed.
> ➤ County or City: Enter in the Last name field the COUNTY or CITY first (i.e. Columbus, City of, or Franklin County, etc.).
> ➤ State: Use Ohio in front of office (i.e. Ohio Attorney General, Ohio Department of Family Services)

Role: verify that the correct party role is entered in this box, if incorrect, please choose the correct party role from the drop down list.

Alias: If the party has an alias, click on the Alias button.

Search for an alias

Last/Business name [   ]

[Search] [Clear]

Searching for an Alias. You would follow the same criteria for entering an alias name as you did for a party name.

After selecting an alias name or clicking on the [Create new alias] button, the following screen appears:
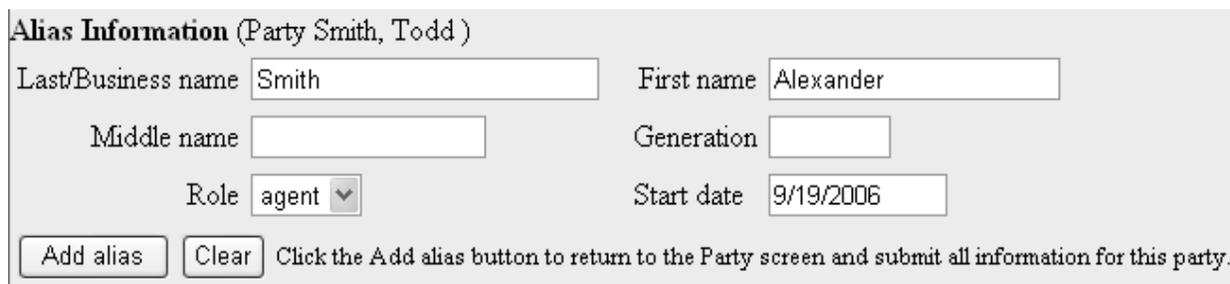
Alias Information (Party Smith, Todd)

Last/Business name	Smith	First name	Alexander
Middle name		Generation	
Role	agent	Start date	9/19/2006

[Add alias] [Clear] Click the Add alias button to return to the Party screen and submit all information for this party.

Below is a listing of the roles:
    agent = agent of
    aka = also known as
    dba = doing business as
    fdba = formerly doing business as
    fka = formerly known as

nee = born

nka = now known as
obo = on behalf of
other = other
rpi = real party in interest
ta = trading as

Select the alias Role in the drop down box and click on [Add alias], this will take you back to the party information screen.

Corporate parent: DO NOT USE. However, you are still required to file a corporate disclosure statement.

Repeat this process for each party. When you have finished adding all parties, click on the [End party selection] button. The case has now been assigned a case number and the following screen will appear:

Open a Civil Case

Case Number 06-87 has been opened.

Docket Lead Event?
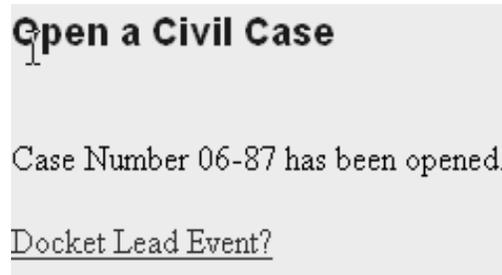
5.   The case is now open in the system. **Please do not convert the Complaint or other Initiating Document to PDF until you have added the case number and Judge that you have just received. Add the case number and Judge to the complaint and all other original pleadings filed and then convert to PDF.**

If you are filing an Application to proceed in forma pauperis, do not click on docket lead event. Instead select Civil (blue bar) - Motions - Proceed In Forma Pauperis

Clicking on "Docket Lead Event" takes you to the Complaints and Other Initiating Documents screen.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

Amended Complaint
Application for Stay of Execution
Application for Writ of Garnishment
Bankruptcy Appeal
Case Transferred In - District Transfer
Case Transferred In - Divisional Transfer
Complaint
Counterclaim

[Next] [Clear]

Select the appropriate case initiating document and click on [Next].

Enter the case number in the following screen and click on [Next].

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

Case Number

06-87   99-12345, 1:99-cv-12345, 1-99-cv-12345, 99cv12345, or 1:99cv12345

[Next] [Clear]

The system may identify more than one case with that number. Select the appropriate case by clicking on the box next to the case number. After the correct case number has been selected, click on [Next].

6.   On the next screen, select the filer and click on [Next].

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

Select the filer.

Select the Party: OR   **Select a Group:**

Add/Create New Party

HHS [Defendant]
Smith, Todd [Plaintiff]

- ◉ No Group
- ○ All Defendants
- ○ All Plaintiffs
- ○ All Parties

[Next] [Clear]

7. At this point the Attorney/Party Association screen appears.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

The following attorney/party associations do not exist for this case.
Please check which associations should be created for this case:

☑ Todd Smith (pty:pla) represented by attylw (aty)   ☑ Lead   ☑ Notice
[Next] [Clear]

This screen is to create the association between the party and the attorney. If you DO NOT want to create the association, uncheck the boxes. The box before the "party" will put the attorney on the docket sheet. The box before "notice" will flag the attorney to receive e-notices. The box before "lead" puts "Lead Attorney" on the docket sheet. Click on [Next].

8. On the next screen select the party that the filing is against.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

Please select the party that this filing is **against**.

Select the Party: OR Select a Group:

HHS [Defendant]
Smith, Todd [Plaintiff]

Add/Create New Party

⦿ No Group
◯ All Defendants
◯ All Plaintiffs
◯ All Parties

[Next] [Clear]

To select more than one defendant, press and hold down the CTRL key and click on each of the desired parties or you can click on the radio button before "All Defendants." After selecting the defendants, click on [Next].

9. You are now ready to browse and attach your case initiating document.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

Select the **pdf** document (for example: C:\199cv501-21.pdf).
Filename

[   ] [Browse...]

Attachments to Document: ⦿ No ◯ Yes

[Next] [Clear]

All documents that you intend to file in ECF must be in PDF format and 2 MB or less. ECF will not accept documents that are not in PDF format or more than 2 MB. Click on the [Browse] button. Navigate to the appropriate directory and file name to select the

PDF document you wish to file. Right click the file and select open to view. Once you have verified the document is correct, close Adobe Acrobat and click on the [Open] button. ECF closes the File Upload screen and inserts the PDF file name and location in the Filename box.

Attach any exhibits by clicking on the Yes radio button. Click on [Next].

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

Select one or more attachments.
1) Enter the **pdf** document that contains attachment (for example: C:\appendix.pdf).
Filename

[   ] [Browse...]

2) At your option, select a document category, enter a description, and select a type.
Category   **Description**
[▼] [   ]

3) Add the filename to the list box below. If you have more attachments, go back to Step 1. When the list of filenames is complete, click on the Next button.

[Add to List]

[Remove from List]

[Next]

Again, click on the [Browse] button. Navigate to the appropriate directory and file name to select the PDF document you wish to file. Right click the file and select open to view. Once you have verified the document is correct, close Adobe Acrobat and click on the [Open] button. ECF closes the File Upload screen and inserts the PDF file name and location in the Filename box. Either select the appropriate category in the drop down box or type the description of the document in the "description" box. Then click on [Add to List]. Once you are finished adding attachments, click on [Next].

NOTE: If you are filing a Petition for Removal, please make each of the state court documents a separate attachment to the petition.

10.   ECF will prompt you with the following question:

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

Is this filed with an Application to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees Y/N? [   ]

[Next]   [Clear]

a. If you are filing an application to proceed in forma pauperis or the application has been previously granted, enter a "y", otherwise answer "n". If you answered "y", skip Step 10(b) and proceed to Step 11.

b. If you entered "n" in the above screen, you will be presented with screens to process payment of the civil case filing fee. The first screen states the fee amount. Click on [Next].

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

Fee: $350

[Next] [Clear]

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

Online Payment   Return to your originating application

Step 1: Enter Payment Information   1 | 2

Pay Via Plastic Card (PC) (ex: American Express, Diners Club, Discover, Mastercard, VISA)

Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk *

Account Holder Name: attylw *
Payment Amount: $350.00
Billing Address: *
Billing Address 2:
City:
State / Province: ——
Zip / Postal Code:
Country: United States
Card Type: * VISA MasterCard AMEX Diners Club International DISCOVER
Card Number: * (Card number value should not contain spaces or dashes)
Security Code: (On the back of your Card, find the last 3 digits) Help finding your security code
Expiration Date: * / *

Select the "Continue with Plastic Card Payment" button to continue to the next step in the Plastic Card Payment Process.

[Continue with Plastic Card Payment] [Cancel]

Note: Please avoid navigating the site using your browser's Back Button - this may lead to incomplete data being transmitted and pages being loaded incorrectly. Please use the links provided whenever possible.

Fill in required fields of the Online Payment - Step 1 screen and click on [Continue with Plastic Card Payment].

Online Payment   Return to your originating application
Step 2: Authorize Payment   1 | 2

Payment Summary   Edit this information

Address Information	Account Information	Payment Information
Account Holder Name: attylw	**Card Type:** Master Card	**Payment Amount:** $350.00
Billing Address: 100 E Fifth Street	**Card Number:** ***********5100	**Transaction Date and Time:** 09/19/2006 13:43 EDT
Billing Address 2:	**Expiration Date:** 1 / 2007	
City: Cincinnati		
State / Province: OH		
Zip / Postal Code: 45202		
Country: USA		

Email Confirmation Receipt

To have a confirmation sent to you upon completion of this transaction, provide an email address and confirmation below.

Email Address: [_____]

Confirm Email Address: [_____]

CC: [_____]   *Separate multiple email addresses with a comma*

Authorization and Disclosure

Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk *

I authorize a charge to my card account for the above amount in accordance with my card issuer agreement. ☐ *

Press the "Submit Payment" Button only once. Pressing the button more than once could result in multiple transactions.

[Submit Payment]   [Cancel]

Note: Please avoid navigating the site using your browser's Back Button - this may lead to incomplete data being transmitted and pages being loaded incorrectly. Please use the links provided whenever possible.

Fill in the required fields on Online Payment - Step 2 screen and click on [Submit Payment].

11. Depending on the city, case type and other statistical factors, you may be presented with a series of Yes/No questions. Please answer all these questions either "y" or "n".

12. You are now presented with the Docket Text screen.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate.

COMPLAINT [_____] against HHS (Filing fee $ 350 receipt number 13334.) , filed by Plaintiff Todd Smith, Defendant HHS. (Attachments: # (1) Exhibit A) (attylw,)

[Next]   [Clear]

Fill in any information in the "free-text" box you feel is necessary and click on [Next].

13. You will be given one last chance before committing to the transaction. REDO

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

Docket Text: Final Text
COMPLAINT against HHS (Filing fee $ 350 receipt number 13334.), filed by Plaintiff Todd Smith, Defendant HHS. (Attachments: # (1) Exhibit A)(attylw,)

Attention!! Pressing the NEXT button on this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue.

[Next] [Clear]

14. Once you have selected the [Next] button, the document is filed and you will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
1:06-cv-00087 Smith v. HHS

U.S. District Court - Southern District of Ohio

VERSION 2.5 TESTING SYSTEM

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was received from attylw, entered on 9/19/2006 at 1:54 PM EDT and filed on 9/19/2006
Case Name: Smith v. HHS
Case Number: 1:06-cv-00087-HJW
Filer:
Document Number: 1

Docket Text:
COMPLAINT against HHS (Filing fee $ 350 receipt number 13334.), filed by Plaintiff Todd Smith, Defendant HHS. (Attachments: # (1) Exhibit A)(attylw,)

The following document(s) are associated with this transaction:

Document description:Main Document
Original filename:n/a
Electronic document Stamp:
[STAMP dcecfStamp_ID=1040326259 [Date=9/19/2006] [FileNumber=6585-0] [
350f8e2b537e49834d7692bb2e59f8d72763d8af34ec3782ecf60466b4c3159dadd98c
dc7d685f8fcb61f6dc889566f2753937b65c6b0447888bc0df58ce8609]]
Document description:Exhibit A
Original filename:n/a
Electronic document Stamp:
[STAMP dcecfStamp_ID=1040326259 [Date=9/19/2006] [FileNumber=6585-1] [
9e5801bacac5ecd2f3be54c69e9948516b499a8d9bf7bd47093d3ce41bb8a96f126ad0
446221f4b54eb91095c491fba49817d8ecbed538e7905977edefc5410d]]

1:06-cv-87 Notice will be electronically mailed to:

1:06-cv-87 Notice will be delivered by other means to:

15. For corporate parties filing initiating documents, you need to next docket your Disclosure of Corporate Affiliations form as required by Rule 7.1 of the F.R.Cv.P.

Counsel will receive summons by e-mail. They should fill out the suumons, print them and serve with other case opening documents in accordance with Rule 4 of the F.R.Cv.P.