

GUIDANCE REGARDING MOTIONS TO SEAL

FORM AND CONTENT: All motions must conform with LR Cv 5 and LR Cr 47. Documents to be sealed that accompany a motion to seal must be stamped or clearly labeled by the party on the cover, “FILED UNDER SEAL.” Any redacted documents submitted with a filer’s motion to seal must also be stamped or clearly labeled by the party on the cover, “REDACTED COPY.” Parties cannot seal otherwise public documents merely by consent or by labeling them sealed. A motion to seal seeking leave of court must be filed.

CASES WITH PROTECTIVE ORDERS: In general, a protective order does not relieve a party from complying with LR Gen 102. Filers should carefully read the protective order to make certain what requirements are set forth within the order. Documents filed under seal pursuant to a protective order must be stamped or clearly labeled by the party on the cover, “FILED UNDER SEAL PURSUANT TO PROTECTIVE ORDER.”

SERVICE OF SEALED DOCUMENTS: Sealed documents filed in CM/ECF are not accessible or viewable within the system, and service cannot be accomplished through CM/ECF. Instead, parties must serve sealed documents conventionally by other appropriate means as provided by the Federal Rules of Procedure and the Court’s Local Rules. (See, Fed. R. Civ. P. 5, Fed. R. Crim. P. 49, LR Gen 102¹, LR Cv 5.1, and LR Cr 49.)

VIEWING SEALED/RESTRICTED DOCUMENTS: Sealed documents are not viewable or accessible within CM/ECF, and parties must maintain copies of sealed filings outside of CM/ECF. A party who requires a copy of a previously filed sealed documents must contact the Clerk’s Office to request a copy. The Clerk’s Office will confirm that the party making the request has permission to access the document and will then provide the document(s) by either secure electronic means or by U.S. Mail. Requests for paper copies of sealed documents will be subject to the current docket copy fee rate as set by the [District Court Fee Schedule](#).

FILING REDACTED/UNREDACTED DOCUMENTS: The Court encourages the limited sealing and restriction of documents. All filings with the Court – including attachments – must comply with Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2 or Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1: Social Security or taxpayer-identification numbers, dates of birth, names of minor children, financial account numbers, and home addresses in criminal cases may not appear, except as allowed by applicable rule. Although attorneys are required to redact this information from pleadings, it does not mean that the pleading(s) should be filed under seal. If the redacted information is not material to a filing, a party does not need to separately file a motion to seal and an unredacted version of the document unless otherwise ordered by the Court.

If the redacted information is material to a filing, a party must file a motion to seal along with an unredacted version of the document, and a redacted version that excises the confidential information. Parties should not separately electronically file the redacted version.

¹ The Court has adopted an emergency amendment to LR Gen 102. For more information, see the Court’s General Order Regarding Emergency Amendments to the Local Rules of September 18, 2025.

FLATTENING A PDF: Flattening a PDF document before filing it in CM/ECF prevents other users from manipulating or editing the PDF document and ensures that all document content can be viewed on any device. Further, certain versions of Adobe Acrobat and other PDF editing software may cause document image quality issues when a PDF document is electronically filed through CM/ECF. As a result, all PDF documents should be “flattened” before filing through CM/ECF.

The easiest way to flatten a PDF document is by selecting, “Print to PDF” and saving the flattened document before filing. *(The Adobe PDF printer is generally installed automatically with Adobe Acrobat. Further, numerous free PDF printer drivers are available for download from the Internet.)*