

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

A Step-By-Step Guide to Electronic Filing

Below is a step-by-step guide for entering the system, preparing a document for filing, and filing a motion or brief. We suggest you go through the steps in the tutorial before trying to actually file a document for the first time.

Access the System

Users can get into the system via the Internet by going to:

www.miwd.uscourts.gov

Click on **E-Filing (CM/ECF)**

The screenshot shows the homepage of the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan. At the top, there is a header with the court's name and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Court Information, Judges' Info, For Attorneys, For Jurors, Forms, Electronic Filing, Rules Orders & Policies, and Helpful Links. The 'Electronic Filing' link is highlighted in blue. Below the navigation menu is a 'Welcome' section with a 'Welcome to the official Web site for the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan.' message. To the left of the welcome message is a vertical list of links: 'Case Locator (PACER) >>', 'E-Filing (CM/ECF) >>', 'Filing without an Attorney >>', and 'Ejuror >>'. The 'E-Filing (CM/ECF) >>' link is circled in blue. Below the welcome message is a photograph of a modern building. At the bottom of the page, there are several sections: 'Court Locations' with contact information for Grand Rapids, Lansing, Kalamazoo, and Marquette; 'Alternative Dispute Resolution'; 'Naturalization'; 'Probation & Pretrial Services'; 'Customer Survey'; 'Contact Us'; and 'News & Announcements' with a 'New Web Site' announcement.

Logging In

The next screen login is the login screen. Note that compatible browser software is listed on the login screen.

United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

accounts.gov https://ecf.nwd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl

United States District Court for the ...

CM/ECF Filer or PACER Login

Notice
This is a **Restricted Web Site** for Official Court Business only. Unauthorized entry is prohibited and subject to prosecution under Title 18 of the U.S. Code. All activities and access attempts are logged.

Instructions for filing:
Enter your CM/ECF filer login and password if you are electronically filing something with the court.

If you received this login page as a result of a link from a Notice of Electronic Filing email:
Enter your CM/ECF filer login and password. The system prompts customers for a CM/ECF login and password when attempting to view certain types of documents.

If you have trouble viewing a document:
After successful entry of your CM/ECF login, you should be able to view the document. If you receive the message "You do not have permission to view this document," viewing the document is restricted to attorneys of record in the case and the system does not recognize you as such. If the login prompt appears again, after you have entered your CM/ECF login and password, it means that the "free look" link has expired. You will need to enter your PACER login and password to view the document.

Instructions for viewing filed documents and case information:
If you do not need filing capabilities, enter your PACER login and password. If you do not have a PACER login, you may register online at <http://www.pacer.gov>.

Authentication

Login:
Password:
client code:

I understand that, if I file, I must comply with the redaction rules. I have read this notice.

Login Reset

IMPORTANT NOTICE OF REDACTION RESPONSIBILITY: All filers must redact: Social Security or taxpayer-identification numbers; dates of birth; names of minor children; financial account numbers; and, in criminal cases, home addresses, in compliance with [Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2](#) or [Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1](#). This requirement applies to all documents, including attachments.

Notice
An access fee of \$0.10 per page or \$2.40 per document with an audio attachment, as approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States, will be assessed for access to this service. For more information about CM/ECF, [click here](#) or contact the PACER Service Center at (800) 676-6366.

CM/ECF has been tested with Firefox and Internet Explorer 8 and 9

Done

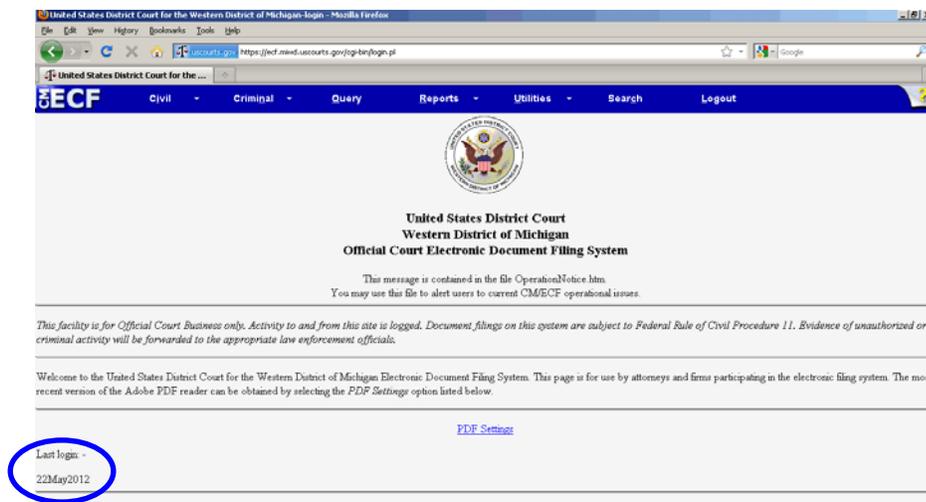
Start United States District... 12:21 AM

- Review the Important Notice of Redaction Responsibility, then check the box affirming that you have read the notice and that you understand your responsibility.
- Enter your Login and Password in the appropriate data entry fields. Then click on the **Login** button to transmit the information to the system. If an error is made before you've submitted the screen, the **Reset** button allows you to clear the Login and Password entries so they may be re-entered.
- If an invalid combination has been submitted, the system responds with an error message. Click on the browser back arrow, then re-enter your Login and Password.
- The entry of a valid Login and Password combination prompts the system to display the main menu.
- Public Access, or PACER users (those that have not registered as e-filers) may use your PACER login to view docket sheets and

documents. Logging in using your PACER login will give you a similar menu to that shown below, except the **Civil** and **Criminal** options will not appear.

- Registered electronic filers must use your ECF login to *file* documents electronically. Logging in using your electronic filing login will display all the options that appear on the blue menu bar below.

The following screen is the **main menu**:



Note that the date ***you last logged into the system*** appears at the bottom left of this screen.

***Last login: -
22May2012***

You should review this information each time you log in for security reasons. If you believe or suspect someone is using your login and password without permission, change your password immediately, then contact the Court's Help Desk via telephone at (616) 456-2206 or toll free at (800) 290-2742, or via email at ecfhelp@miwd.uscourts.gov as soon as possible.

Menu



The **Civil** option permits the filing of documents in a civil case.

The **Criminal** option permits the filing of documents in a criminal case.

Basic Steps

There are four basic steps involved in filing a document:

- (1) selecting a menu item (document event type);
- (2) entering the case number for which the document is to be filed;
- (3) designating the parties filing the document; and
- (4) specifying the PDF file name for the document to be filed.

Each screen has the following two buttons:

-  clears **all** characters entered in that particular box.
- NEXT accepts the entry just made and displays the next entry screen, if any.

Correcting a Mistake

During the filing process, use the **browser back** button on the browser toolbar to go back and correct an entry made on a previous screen.



However, once the document is transmitted to the Court (the final submit button is clicked), **only the Court can make changes or corrections.**

Attention!! Pressing the NEXT button on this screen **COMMITTS THIS TRANSACTION. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue.**
Have you redacted?

NOTE: To abandon a filing altogether (and start over), click on one of the options on the CM/ECF blue menu bar running at the top of the screen.

Signatures

Attorneys

An attorney's use of the court-issued login and password to submit documents over the ECF system serves as the attorney's signature on all electronic documents filed with the Court, as well as the attorney's signature for purposes of Fed R. Civ. P. 11 and for all other purposes under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Local Rules of this Court.

Multiple Signatures

The filer of any document requiring multiple signatures (e.g., stipulations, joint status reports) must list on the document all of the names of other signatories by means of an "s/ ____" block for each. By submitting such a document, the filer certifies that each of the other signatories has expressly agreed to the form and substance of the document and that the filer has their actual authority to submit the document electronically. The filer must maintain any records evidencing this concurrence for subsequent production to the Court if so ordered or for inspection upon request by a party until one year after the final resolution of the action (including appeal, if any).

Service of Electronically Filed Documents

Summons and Initial Pleading

Service of the summons and complaint or other initial pleading must be made by one of the methods allowed by Rule 4 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and may not be made electronically.

Subsequent Pleadings and Papers

Electronically filed documents are served on other registered counsel in the case through the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) that is produced at the conclusion of a filing and is sent immediately via email to all counsel. Service upon unregistered counsel and pro se parties must be accomplished through traditional means (on paper), by one of the ways allowed by Rule 5 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Traditionally filed documents must also be served by one of the ways allowed by Rule 5 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. **NOTE: If an electronically filed document must be served traditionally, print the PDF version you filed electronically and serve that.** Otherwise, line numbers and other formatting may not match the official, filed version of your document. Additionally, the electronically filed document will include PageID numbers in the document header, which are a unique page identification within the case record that can be referenced by all.

Method of Electronic Service

When a document is filed electronically by a party, the Court's system will generate a Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF), which will be transmitted by the Court via e-mail to the filer and all attorneys who are registered as e-filers. The NEF will contain a hyperlink to the filed document. The party filing the document electronically should retain a paper or digital copy of the NEF, which serves as the Court's date-stamp and proof of filing. Transmission of the NEF for an electronically-filed document to the registered email address constitutes service of a pleading, paper, order or notice upon any attorney who is a registered e-filer in the case. After issuance of the NEF, the general public as well as any party to the litigation may access and download the filed document on the Court's PACER system except that access to certain types of cases (e.g., Social Security, Immigration) is restricted to attorneys of record. Note that in addition, access to some documents may be restricted to certain parties in the case.

Only service of the NEF by the Court's system is sufficient to constitute electronic service; transmission of a document by one party to another by regular e-mail does not constitute service.

Effect on Time Computation

Electronic service under Local Civil Rule 5.7 is complete upon transmission. The additional three days to do an act after service of a document under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 6(d) applies when service is made electronically.

Filing Initial Papers

You must file the initial pleadings (complaint or petition) and make payment of initial filing fees electronically. Refer to the [Civil Case Opening guide](#) on this website for detailed instructions.

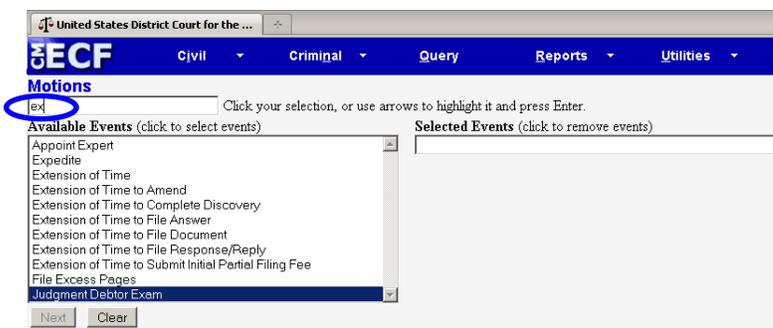
Filing a Motion or Application¹

Select **Civil** from the bar at the top of the main menu to bring up the **Civil Events** window.



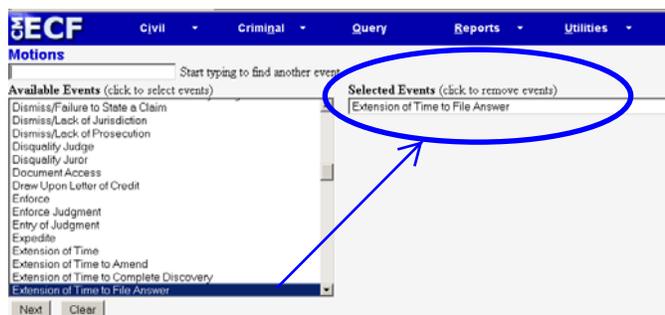
Click on **Motions** under **Motions and Related Filings**

Select the type of motion relief sought. In the small window above the available events, start typing characters of a key word to refine the list.



Otherwise, use the up and down arrows and/or drag the scroll bar down to find the type of motion or application to be filed, and click on it.

To select multiple motion reliefs, search for and click to select an additional relief(s).



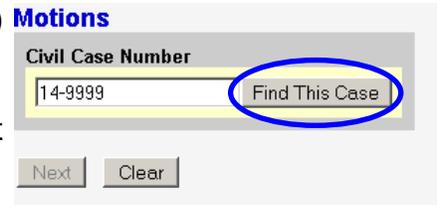
Notice that the items selected appear on the right side of the screen under the **Selected Events** field. (NOTE: If an item appears there inadvertently, click it to remove it before proceeding.)

Click **NEXT**.

¹This instruction explains filing a motion in a civil case, however, filing a motion in a criminal case is a similar process.

Enter the case number (or portion thereof) and click the **Find This Case** button.

Select the desired case from any case list that may be presented, then click Next.



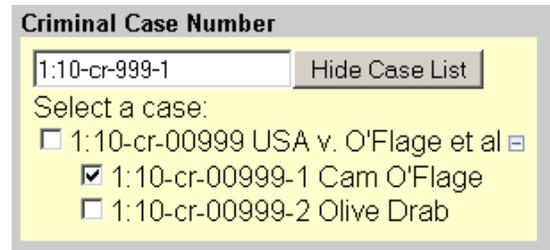
Motions
Civil Case Number
14-9999 Find This Case
Next Clear

CRIMINAL CASE NUMBERS

At this time it is important to take a side-step and discuss *criminal case numbers*. This reference mentioned that most of the steps in filing a document in a civil case are the same as filing in a criminal case. This is one exception – ***the point of entry of the criminal case number is an important step to cover.***

In a multi-defendant criminal case, it is very important to select the appropriate case within which to file the document. Your selection here *determines which individual defendant case or cases the document will be filed in, and which docket or dockets will be updated to reflect this filing.* Often, criminal filings pertain to only one defendant, so if that is the situation, then the document should be filed in only that particular defendant's case.

ALL defendants' cases →
Defendant O'Flage's case only →
Defendant Drab's case only →



Criminal Case Number
1:10-cr-999-1 Hide Case List
Select a case:
 1:10-cr-00999 USA v. O'Flage et al
 1:10-cr-00999-1 Cam O'Flage
 1:10-cr-00999-2 Olive Drab

In the example above, the filing is with regard to defendant O'Flage. Note that we have selected defendant Cam O'Flage's case only.

If a filing pertains to some, but not all defendants in a multi-defendant case, select the boxes next to each appropriate defendant.

Now back to our civil filing....

If the number is entered incorrectly, click to re-enter.

When the case number is correct, click on NEXT.

Recheck whether the case number is correct, based upon the case caption at the top of the screen. If it is incorrect, click on the **browser back** button to re-enter the case number.



The next screen prompts you to select or add the name of the party for whom you are filing the motion:



Click on the down arrow to the right of the box to scroll through the list (if necessary). If the name you're looking for appears, click on it to select it, and then click **Next**. Skip ahead to Page 11.

If the party name does not appear

First, ensure you are in the correct case. Check the case number and short case title at the top of the screen. If it is the correct case, call the ECF Help Desk at (616) 456-2206 or toll free at (800) 290-2742. The Clerk will advise you regarding the appropriate steps to take, depending on the particular circumstances.

If appropriate, click on **New Filer**.



The screenshot shows the ECF Motions interface for case 1:14-cv-09999-PLM Snow v. Spring. The 'Search for a party' section is active, with a search dropdown menu open. The dropdown lists several names: 'Fall, Belinda L.', 'Fall, Elmer' (highlighted), 'Fallah, Mohammad Javad', 'Fallon, Colleen E.', 'Falls, Barbara S.', and 'Falls, Douglas Milton'. Below the dropdown are buttons for 'Select Party' and 'Create New Party'.

To add a new party to the case, realize that the party may exist in the database even if not yet linked to the case. On the **Search for a party** screen, enter search clues. When searching, type a minimum of the first two letters of the business or individual's last name.

Note: Business names that begin with small words such as “The” or “A” will be in the database with these words at the end of their name separated by a comma (e.g., Michigan Network, The).

Click on **Search**.

A list of party names that match the search clues previously entered are displayed. If the name of the party appears, click to select it and click on **Select Party**.



This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the ECF Motions interface with the 'Search for a party' dropdown menu open and 'Fall, Elmer' highlighted.

If the party's name is not on the list or the search returns **No Person found**, click on  , and enter the information requested.

If you selected a party that is already in the database, review the party information and be sure to select the party's role in this filing. Click on the white box to the right of **Role** and select the correct role, i.e., plaintiff, defendant, etc. If you do not select a role, it will default to a role type of defendant.

Click on **Add Party**.

Note: Party text is additional information about the party as it is listed on the pleading (e.g., in his or her individual and official capacity). Party text will appear on the docket sheet next to the party's name.

The next screen prompts you to select the PDF filename of the document being filed.

The file MUST be in a PDF format with a .pdf suffix. If not, it will not be accepted by the system.

If an attempt is made to upload a file that is not a PDF, or to make a standard docket entry without also submitting a document, an error message will appear.

To Submit a PDF Document



The screenshot shows the WDMI ECF system interface. At the top is a blue navigation bar with the ECF logo and menu items: Civil, Criminal, Query, Reports, Utilities, Search, and Logout. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Motions" and the case name is "1:14-cv-09999-PLM Snow v. Spring". The status is "CASEREFERRED". The instruction reads: "Select the pdf document and any attachments." There is a "Main Document" field with a "Browse..." button circled in blue. Below this, the instruction says: "Identify each attachment below. Select a Category, enter a Description, or both: (e.g., Selecting the Category: Exhibit, and entering a Description: A, results in an identification of Exhibit A)". There is a table with columns for Attachments, Category, and Description. The first row is labeled "1." and has a "Browse..." button in the Attachments column. At the bottom of the form are "Next" and "Clear" buttons.

At the **Main Document** field, click on the  button to navigate to the appropriate directory on your computer or network. When the appropriate

file is found, click on the file name to select the document to be filed.

NOTE: Take a moment to verify that the document you are about to file is the correct document. After the file is selected, **right click** on the file name to bring up a quick menu and left click on Open. The PDF document will open and can be viewed to verify that it is the correct document. You must close the document before attempting to file it (click on File >> Close or click on the lower “X” in the upper right corner).

If there are no attachments to the motion, click on **Next**. (NOTE: Documents in support, e.g., attachments/exhibits, are typically attached to the brief or memorandum in support of a motion, which may be a separate filing.)

Attachments to Documents

Attachments are typically documents that the filer did not produce². These are items that support and/or are referenced in the document that you produced, and they either exist on paper that you must scan into PDF format in order to e-file, or you may have received them from someone else in PDF format. To provide some examples, attachments might be things such as a contract, unpublished case law, an excerpt of a deposition, a blueprint, an excerpt of an employee handbook, etc.). To file attachments:

- Click under the attachments heading.
- Upload the attachment.
- Select a Category, enter a Description, or use both in combination to describe the attachment. (e.g., Category: Exhibit, Description: A)
- Continue to the next line below, and click Browse, upload, and describe each attachment to the document. When all attachments are loaded.
- Click **Next**.

NOTE: Refer to the Local Rules regarding file size limitations.

²Sometimes attachments are documents that the filer produced. Examples of these are items such as: proposed orders, summons to be issued, proposed documents for which leave of court is required prior to filing, etc.

In summary, a document upload screen that looks like this:

Results in a docket entry that looks like this:

And when the Court and other users click on the document in CM/ECF to view it, a user-friendly, navigable format is presented.

Because the filer identified each attachment with a useful, clear and concise description, all users are able to click directly to the attachment they wish to view.

Document Selection Menu			
Select the document you wish to view.			
Document Number:	7	1 page	6 kb
Attachment	Description		
1	Exhibit A - Denial Letter	1 page	5 kb
2	Exhibit B - Receipt	1 page	5 kb
3	Exhibit C - Contract	1 page	5 kb
4	Blueprints	1 page	6 kb
View All or Download All		5 pages	26 kb

Refining the Description of the Document

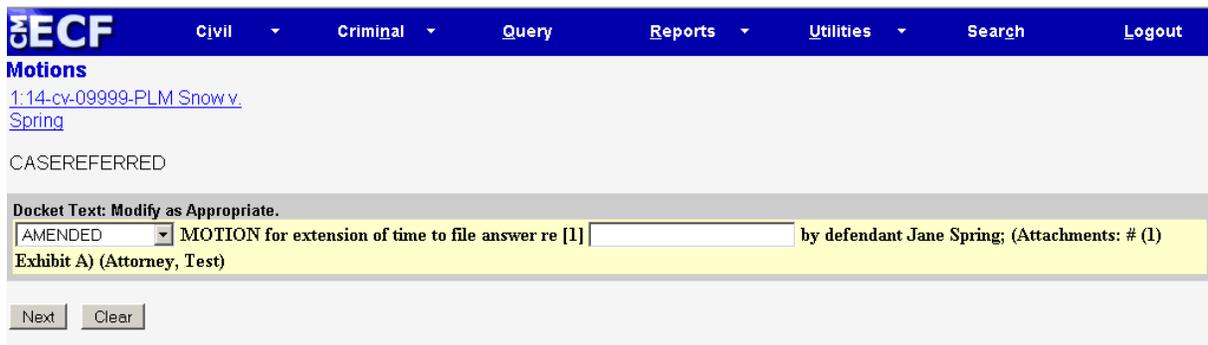
If presented, click on the drop-down list and select a modifier, if it is necessary and/or appropriate to the filing. Using this modifier is not always necessary.



The screenshot shows the ECF Motions interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the ECF logo and menu items: Civil, Criminal, Query, Reports, Utilities, Search, and Logout. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Motions" and the case name is "1:14-cv-09999-PLM Snow v. Spring". The status is "CASEREFERRED". The "Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate." section shows a dropdown menu with the following options: FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH, FIFTH, AMENDED, ANNUAL, CONSENT, CORRECTED, COUNTER, CROSS, EMERGENCY, FINAL, INTERIM, JOINT, MONTHLY, PRO SE, PROPOSED, and QUARTERLY. The selected option is "Test". The docket text is "MOTION for extension of time to file answer re [1] by defendant Jane Spring; (Attachments: # (1) Test)".

Some events present a white free-text box. In the free-text box, type in any additional description, if appropriate. This will not be necessary for every filing.

NOTE: Avoid special characters such as the tilde (~) and asterisk (*). If a special character(s) is present in the docket text, the clerk will remove it because it can cause system processing issues when the Court refers to and/or rules on the filing.



The screenshot shows the ECF Motions interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the ECF logo and menu items: Civil, Criminal, Query, Reports, Utilities, Search, and Logout. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Motions" and the case name is "1:14-cv-09999-PLM Snow v. Spring". The status is "CASEREFERRED". The "Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate." section shows a dropdown menu with the selected option "AMENDED". The docket text is "MOTION for extension of time to file answer re [1] by defendant Jane Spring; (Attachments: # (1) Exhibit A) (Attorney, Test)". Below the docket text, there are "Next" and "Clear" buttons.

For example, if the brief in support of this motion is incorporated into the same document with the motion, it is helpful to add in the white free-text box:

with brief in support

Click on the NEXT button (Note: This has not yet committed the filing to the Court)

To **modify** a previous screen, click on the back browser button at the top of the browser toolbar as many times as necessary to find the screen to be modified.

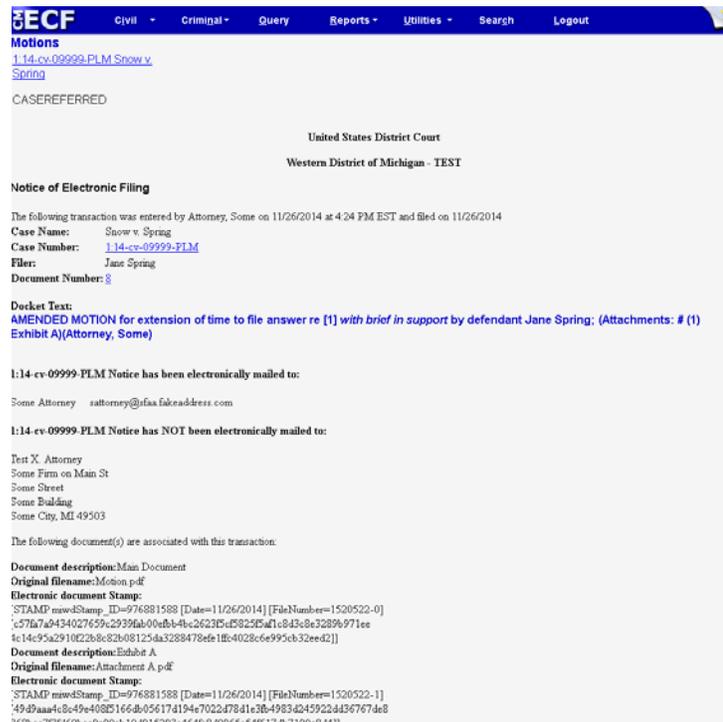
To **abort** the entry altogether, click somewhere on the blue menu bar.

Give **final approval** to the entry by following instructions on the screen:

The screenshot shows the ECF (Electronic Case Filing) interface. At the top is a blue navigation bar with the ECF logo and menu items: Civil, Criminal, Query, Reports, Utilities, Search, and Logout. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Motions". The main content area shows a docket entry for "1:14-cv-09999-PLM Snow v. Spring" with the status "CASEREFERRED". A highlighted yellow box contains the docket text: "AMENDED MOTION for extension of time to file answer re [1] with brief in support by defendant Jane Spring; (Attachments: # (1) Exhibit A)(Attorney, Some)". Below this, a red warning message states: "Attention!! Pressing the NEXT button on this screen COMMITS THIS TRANSACTION. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue." Underneath the warning, the source document path is listed: "Motion.pdf pages: 1" and "Attachment A.pdf pages: 1". At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Next" and "Clear".

If the entry is correct, click on the **NEXT** button. Upon clicking NEXT on this screen, the document is filed. At that point, DO NOT click the browser back button, or an error will occur.

After final approval is given, the subsequent screen displays the **Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF)**.



This screen is confirmation that the system has received the entry, that the document is filed, and the document is now an official Court document. It also provides the date and time your transaction was received by the Court, and the document number assigned to the document. For future reference, please note this number on the PDF document file. Scroll down to view the entire receipt.

The party filing the document should **retain a digital or paper copy of the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF)**, which serves as the Court's date-stamp and proof of filing.

The NEF will list all parties being served electronically. Their names and e-mail addresses are listed under **"Notice has been electronically mailed to the following attorneys, and no further service upon them is required if the document has been electronically filed:"** and service upon these parties is now complete. The NEF may also list attorneys and pro se parties that will NOT be electronically served. If any attorney is not a registered user of the system, or if a pro se party is involved in the case, it is your responsibility to serve that attorney or pro se party in the traditional manner.

Submitting a Proposed Order

Proposed orders may be submitted electronically. All proposed orders submitted electronically must be in PDF format and must be: (1) attached as an exhibit to a motion or stipulation; or (2) contained within the body of a stipulation; or (3) submitted separately. If the judge approves the proposed order, it will be re-filed electronically under a separate document number.

Use the document attachment Category type of “Proposed Order” to identify your document as 'proposed'. NOTE: DO NOT include the *Proposed* language within the document itself.

Filing Proposed Documents

If the document you wish to file requires leave of Court, such as an amended complaint or a document to be filed out of time, the proposed document shall be attached as an exhibit to the motion or brief. If leave to file is granted, the clerk of court will electronically file your document.

NOTE: DO NOT use the “proposed” language on the document itself; instead, use the document attachment Category type of “Proposed Document.”

Filing Other Types of Documents

To file a document other than a motion or application, make the appropriate selection from the ‘**Civil**’ or ‘**Criminal**’ menu. Most filings can be made from an event specific to the filing. If a clear selection is not easily identified, employ the **Search** feature on the blue menu bar to assist in locating an event. Type a key word or portion thereof, and click Search. The system will display any matches it finds to the search criteria. From the results, click the desired item, which will initiate the e-filing process. If any questions arise, our Help Desk is available to assist. Most electronic filing events will present screens that will be very similar to those described above for filing a motion.

Documents Required on Paper

A very limited number of documents may not be filed electronically. Refer to the Local Rules for guidance.