



STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Workers' Compensation
Administration

ONE TEAM | ONE GOAL

A Better New Mexico for Workers and Employers

Electronic Case Filing (ECF) Technical Guide

About this Guide

This guide is:

- a general description of court rules that apply to electronic filing. Any court filing may be subject to any number of court rules, orders, statutes, or other sources of legal authority that do not appear in this guide.
- provided for the convenience of WCA E-file users, and the information in this guide should not be relied upon as legal authority.
- published by the Workers' Compensation Administration and subject to periodic updates.

Who Should Use this Guide

This guide is for anyone wishing to electronically file documents in the WCA Electronic Case Filing (ECF) System.

If you are going to court without a lawyer, you may be able to file electronically, and this guide will help you do so. However, it is always recommended that you seek advice from an attorney if you are going to court in any matter. This guide is not a substitute for legal advice or a substitute for a thorough reading of the rules of court that apply to your case.

Definitions

Case Management System (CMS): The system of networked software and hardware used by the Workers' Compensation Administration (WCA) court that may receive, organize, store, retrieve, transmit, and display all relevant documents in any case before it.

Conventional Filing: The physical non-electronic presentation of documents to the clerk of the court.

DPI: Dots per inch, also known as PPI or pixels per inch is a measure of display image sharpness.

E-file Notice of Receipt (NOR): The notice generated automatically when a document is submitted through the WCA ECF System, which sets forth the time of transmission and the name of the court.

Electronic Filing (E-filing): A method of filing documents with the clerk of WCA by electronic transmission utilizing the WCA ECF System. E-filing does not include transmission by facsimile or by email.

Electronic Service (E-service): E-service is a method of serving documents by electronic transmission on any registered user in a case via the WCA ECF System.

Filing User: Includes court and clerk staff, unrepresented litigants, attorneys, or an agent whom an attorney has expressly designated to make a filing on the attorney's behalf and has limited authority to file documents electronically.

Initial Filing: The action that begins the case.

MB: Abbreviation for the unit of measure "megabyte." A megabyte is a unit of computer memory or data storage capacity.

Notification of Acceptance and Service (NOA): The notice is generated automatically when a document is accepted for E-filing through the WCA ECF System, which sets forth the worker's name, User, party or attorney transmitting the document, the title of the document, the type of document, and attorney, party, or other person meant to receive the Notice.

Notification of Rejection (NREG): The notice generated when a submission is reviewed by the clerk and cannot be accepted for filing based on the criteria set forth in Rule 11.4.4.9 A (10), (d). This notification will only be emailed to the party that submitted the pleading for electronic filing.

OCR: Abbreviation for "optical character recognition," which is the conversion of an image that contains words into text. For example, a scanned paper document is a series of images of the pages.

Registered User: A person with a user ID and password assigned by the WCA Electronic Filing Service use the Electronic Filing Service for the electronic filing or service of documents.

Service: Official notification of a filing in a court case to another party or attorney in the case.

Subsequent Filing: Documents filed into a case that already exists.

User Agreement: An agreement in a form approved by the WCA that establishes obligations and responsibilities of the user within the WCA ECF System.

User: A registered user or filing user.

Getting started

The WCA's ECF system is used to file documents online in all workers' compensation cases. The system is available 24/7/365, except when it must be taken offline for scheduled maintenance.

Learn the Rules

Before you begin e-filing, it is recommended that you review the relevant rules of the court.

- The rules for e-filing a WCA complaint can be found in [WCA Rules](#). (11.4.4.9 Filing and Service)

You must also be familiar with the WCA's claims resolution process.

Who is Required to E-file

E-filing is available for unrepresented workers and employers; but is mandatory for all represented parties. Unrepresented workers and employers are not required to e-file, but are encouraged to do so.

Which Case Types Can Be E-filed

E-Filing is available for only the forms below, including the initial filing. All cases eligible for e-filing allow subsequent filings online.

COMPLAINT FOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS
INFORMAL OTHER
AMENDED COMPLAINT
SUMMONS ISSUED
AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE MEDICAL INFORMATION
ENTRY OF APPEARANCE ON BEHALF OF:
INFORMAL RESPONSE
WORKER ACCEPTANCE
EMPLOYER ACCEPTANCE
WORKER REJECTION
EMPLOYER REJECTION
APPLICATION TO JUDGE
APPLICATION TO DIRECTOR
REQUEST FOR SETTING
FORMAL OTHER
FORMAL ANSWER
OBJECTION TO NOTICE OF CHANGE OF HCP
NOTICE TO TAKE DEPOSITION OF:
SUBPOENA ISSUED TO
JOINT PETITION FOR LUMP SUM PAYMENT
PETITION FOR LUMP SUM PAYMENT
MOTION
DEPOSITION OF
SUBPOENA RETURNED SERVED TO:
EXHIBIT/WITNESS LIST
NOTICE OF APPEAL
MISC. APPELLATE DOCUMENT
NOTICE OF PREMPTORY CHALLENGE

Initial Filings vs. Subsequent Filings

- An initial filing is the filing that opens a case
- A subsequent filing is any filing in a case that is already open

Set Up Your Account

If you are going to court without a lawyer and you want to participate in e-filing, you will need to submit a paper copy of the complaint packet to the WCA Clerk of the Court Office first. Once your complaint packet has been accepted you will be eligible to create an account. If you don't have an email account, you will need to create one with either your internet provider or a public email provider, i.e. yahoo.com or gmail.com.

Multiple Accounts

You may add paralegals, attorneys or assistant to receive the same email notifications sent to you from the WCA ECF system. Add the individual email address in the 'My Info' tab, in the 'Additional Notify Emails' field box.

You are responsible for removing individual email addresses that are no longer valid or you decide they no longer need to receive a copy of your notifications.

Usernames and Passwords

You are required to have a unique username and password. Usernames and passwords should never be shared, even among filers from the same law firm.

You are responsible for the use of your username and password, and documents filed with your username and password are presumed to have been filed by you. If your password is compromised, immediately change the password and notify the WCA at wca.helpdesk@state.nm.us.

User Acknowledgement Agreement

The acceptance of the user acknowledgement agreement includes your agreement to receive electronic service of filings by email in trial and mediation cases.

Computer Requirements

The WCA does not provide technical support for your computer or device. Please contact your computer support person.

PC Specifications for Windows®-Based Workstations

Operating System	Windows 7 64-bit or higher
Memory (RAM)	8GB
Web Browser	Internet Explorer® 10 or higher or Mozilla Firefox
Word Processor	MS Office 2010 or higher
Printer	Windows compliant laser printer

How to

IMPORTANT! You are required to accept e-service in any case in which you e-file. You agree to e-service by accepting the user acknowledgement form.

Plan the Timing of Your Filings

You may e-file at any time except during scheduled maintenance downtimes. The filed date and time are shown on the Notice associated with each document and are determined by the date and time zone in which the WCA is located. Your filing is not complete until you receive the Notice of Electronic Filing.

When submitting a document that is e-filed outside the normal business hours of the court, it is deemed filed as of submission, but is not deemed served until the next business day. For example, an Objection to Health Care Provider is deemed filed if electronically submitted between close of business and midnight. However, the seven day period for opposing counsel to respond does not begin until the next business day.

If you encounter a technical error in the WCA's ECF system that prevents you from filing or serving a document by deadline, you may file a motion with the court requesting the document be deemed filed or served on the date attempted. As the filer, you have the burden of showing there was a technical error, and time will only be adjusted if the error is attributed to failure of the WCA ECF system.

Avoid Filing Errors

Here are some important tips about the mechanics of e-filing documents with the WCA:

Do not add d/b/a or a/k/a to party names

IMPORTANT! Failure to file or serve a document by the deadline for reasons such as your Internet connection failing, your computer or software failing, or other reasons not attributed to the WCA ECF system are not valid reasons for time adjustments.

When you start an initial filing, you are required to type in the party names, which will be used to create the case in the case management system. The party name field has a 50-character limit.

- DO NOT append d/b/a or a/k/a or similar information to the party name in the ECF system.
- DO include it in the content of your documents; the clerk will include this information in the appropriate field when creating the case in the case management system.

Serve Filings to Other Parties

In general, when you electronically file a case:

You cannot electronically serve to anyone who doesn't have an email associated with a case in the ECF system. In that event you must serve conventionally.

If you are e-filing to a case, you are required to accept e-service in that case. To receive service electronically in cases initiated by other parties, request you be added to the case.

IMPORTANT! You must ensure the email address you use for the ECF system is functional and checked regularly. Failure to do so means you won't receive service on cases.

When you receive service by email, the filing will be available under the assigned WCA case number under the Case Info button.

Although the e-service notification email is forwarded to the recipient at the time of the e-service submission, the document(s) attached to the e-filing will not be file stamped until the Clerk has processed and accepted it for filing.

When e-service is used within the ECF system, service is complete upon transmission of the document as confirmed by the Notice of Electronic Filing associated with the document. The three (3) day extension of time for when a party is served by mail does not apply when service is made by e-service.

Cancel a Filing

You can cancel a filing after you've submitted it, but only before the clerk opens it for review.

Know What Emails to Expect

As your filing progresses, emails will be sent to your inbox and the inbox of anyone you've designated to receive an administrative copy (e.g., paralegal, assistant, etc.).

Keep your eyes open for messages with the following subject lines after you've submitted a filing (most actual messages will include case numbers too):

- E-file Notice of Receipt
- Notification of Acceptance and Service
- Notification of Rejection

The email for the Notification of Acceptance for Filing will state that you must log onto ECF to view the filed pleading.

Mandatory E-filing

As of January 1, 2018, the following documents filed by an attorney in any case must be filed electronically. Any unrepresented workers and employers may volunteer to file their cases electronically.

Due Dates

Electronic filing has no impact on the calculation of due dates.

Number of Copies

The number of copies required has been eliminated. You need to file only one copy of any document regardless of whether the document is e-filed or conventionally filed.

Preparing documents to be e-filed

Formatting documents

All Documents Must be Submitted as PDF

- **Ideal:** Save or export the source document to PDF format electronically
- **Acceptable:** Scan paper documents to PDF

Unlike scanning a document, exporting to PDF preserves the text of the source document, making it searchable and resulting in a smaller file size. Many word processing programs can save a document in PDF format, and there are several free websites that will convert files to PDF.

Scanning should only be used if you do not have an electronic source document. You may also combine a scanned document with an exported document if necessary.

Fillable PDF Forms

Some documents that you wish to e-file may be available as fillable PDF forms, such as the Complaint form packets.

While it is possible to save your form entries in a fillable PDF—if you have the right software or the PDF has the right features—you cannot upload a saved fillable PDF to the ECF system. If you do, one of the following two problems may occur. Either:

- The form entries will be missing, OR
- The form entries will be editable

To prepare a fillable PDF for e-filing, you must print a copy of it to PDF format instead of saving it to PDF format. Instructions on how to print to PDF vary depending on your computer's operating system and your PDF software.

Scanned PDF Requirements

Use the following settings when scanning:

- Resolution of 300 DPI (dots per inch, also PPI or pixels per inch)
- For black and white: Scan to PDF or Tagged Image File Format with Group 4 compression (TIFF with G4 compression)
- Color scan is not accepted
- If scanning to TIFF, JPG, or PNG, convert to PDF before uploading

Viewability and Legibility

- Every document must be viewable in its entirety with PDF viewing software.
- Corrupt or incomplete files may be rejected, so verify that your files are complete and not corrupted.
- Documents must be readable, including only legible text and viewable images. You are responsible for making sure the scanning process does not diminish the readability of the document.

Limits on File Size

- 7 MB limit on each document

Filings that exceed these limits cannot be submitted. If a document exceeds 7 MB, you must break it into separate documents with each file clearly labeled, in order (“WCA Case Number File 1 of 3,” “WCA Case Number File 2 of 3,” etc.) in the comments field.

Page Size and Layout

Documents you prepare should meet the following specifications:

- 8.5” x 11” page size
- Portrait orientation
- 1” top margin free of text and other markings (except required header)

Prohibited Items

Documents must not contain:

- Encryption, password protection, or other features that limit access
- Unreadable words or images
- Invalid or corrupted tables
- Embedded files
- Any other form of information that cannot be readily viewed in its entirety with PDF viewing software

Bullet Points and Other Special Characters

Sometimes special characters in a document don’t convert well into PDF format and may cause the document to be rejected. This is unusual and can typically be fixed by tweaking the settings in your PDF software or converting to PDF by another method. The system can process any character that can be typed on a standard English keyboard, including these symbols:

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File Names

- Files must be in PDF format and end with .pdf extension
- File names may not exceed 40 characters includes spaces.

Filings with documents that do not comply may be rejected.

Signatures

All e-filed documents must include a person's signature. Sign a document using either:

- A graphic image of a handwritten signature
- An actual signature on a scanned document
- The indicator "s/" followed by the person's name

A document that is signed and e-filed is subject to the WCA rule 11.4.4.9. B. Electronic Filing.