

UPDATED GUIDANCE AS TO PDF-RELATED FUNCTIONALITY FOR PUBLIC FILERS IN NEXTGEN CM/ECF

This document provides an overview of PDF-related functionality for the Eastern District of North Carolina NextGen CM/ECF system. The topics covered include:

- PDF Definition and Software
- Converting Documents to PDF
- Making PDF documents Text Searchable
- Viewing a PDF Document Prior to Upload
- Document Size Requirements
- PDF Content Criteria
- How to Flatten a PDF
- Viewing Combined PDFs in CM/ECF NextGen

Introduction

NextGen CM/ECF includes modified functionality related to uploading and viewing PDF documents. In some instances, PDFs that were previously allowed to be uploaded will no longer be allowed to be uploaded in NextGen versions 1.6 and higher. This document provides information about preparing and uploading PDFs in NextGen CM/ECF.

PDF Definition

“The Portable Document Format (PDF) is a file format developed by Adobe to present documents, including text formatting and images, in a manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems.” (from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PDF>).

A document created with almost any word-processing program can be converted to PDF. Scanned documents can also be converted to PDF. The PDF program, in effect, captures the original document and allows anyone to open the converted document across a broad range of hardware and software with the layout, format, links and images intact. For more information on PDF, visit the websites of PDF vendors such as Adobe Acrobat, FinePrint, Kofax Power PDF (once known as Nuance) and/or PrimoPDF.

PDF Software

Filing users must have PDF capability both to view and to create electronically filed documents. To view documents that have been electronically filed with the clerk's office, filing users must install software that can display PDFs. One example is the Adobe Acrobat Reader.

To create documents in PDF, filing users must have software that converts electronic files from any application to PDF. All new documents prepared for CM/ECF cases must be converted to PDF before they are entered into CM/ECF. Several examples are noted on the previous page.

Converting Documents to PDF

Converting documents to PDF requires software that can save a document to PDF format.

Documents created on a user's desktop may be directly converted to PDF format. Refer to the instructions provided by your PDF writing program. One example of the conversion process is noted below. This example uses Adobe Acrobat.

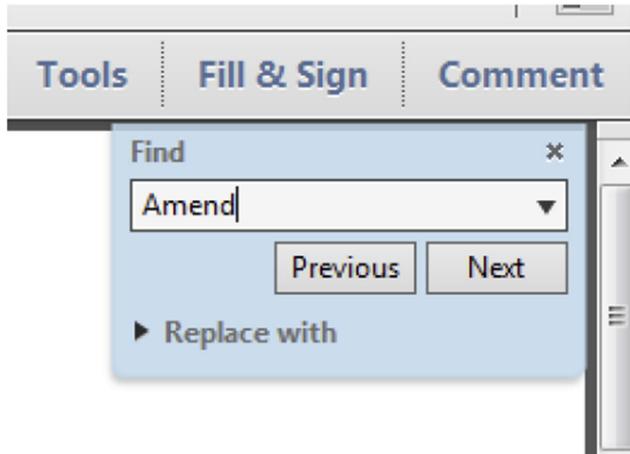
1. Create your document in your word-processing program.
2. Save your document.
3. With your document still open, click on "Print" > "Print As" > Choose the PDF writing program loaded on your computer. (The system is not actually printing the document. It is converting it to PDF format in the background.)
4. Save this "printed" PDF and upload this version of the document when filing in CM/ECF.

Documents not created on a user's desktop must be scanned and converted to PDF format.

1. Select the dpi setting of 300.
2. Select the OCR (Optical Character Recognition) setting.
3. Select the Black and White document setting.
4. Scan your document and save. This is the version of the document to use when filing in CM/ECF.

Making Documents Text Searchable

To determine if your PDF is text searchable, hit Ctrl + F on the keyboard and search for a word that is contained in the document.

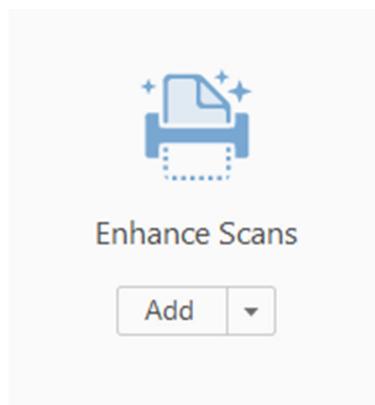


**JOINT MOTION TO AMEND
SCHEDULING ORDER**

If the document is text searchable, it will find the word in the document.

To make an existing PDF text searchable:

On the tool bar, go to **Tools >**



 **Enhance Scans** ▾

 Back to Document

 Comment

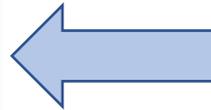
 Edit PDF

 Optimize PDF

 Redact

 Stamp

 Compare Files



 **Optimize PDF** ▾

 Back to Document

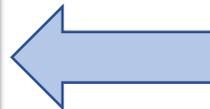
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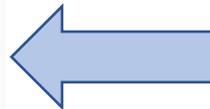
 Compare Files

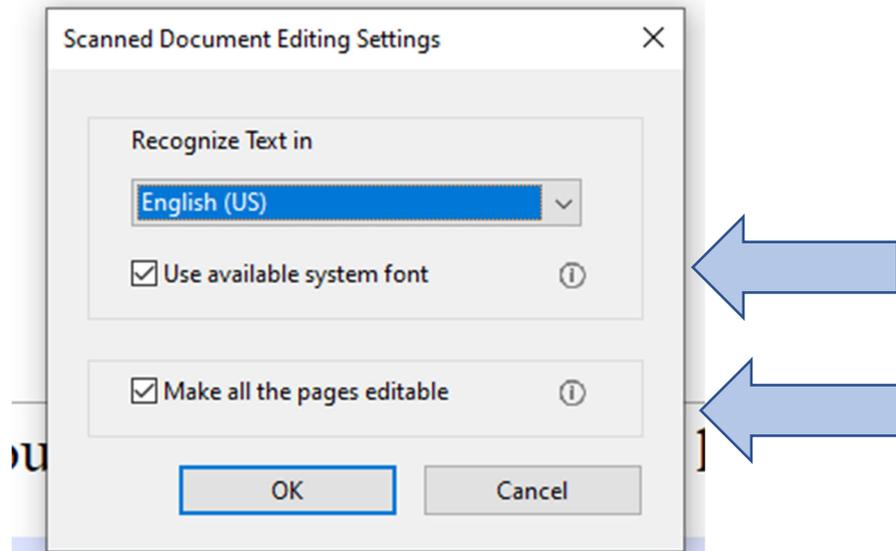


SCANNED DOCUMENTS

 Settings

Recognize text





Click "OK".

The PDF should now be text searchable.

Viewing a PDF Document Prior to Upload

Once a document has been converted to PDF, you should view it as a PDF document on your work device to ensure that the conversion worked correctly and that you converted the correct document.

To view a PDF document:

1. Open the PDF reader on your computer.
2. Select "File" on the menu bar and choose "Open" from the drop-down window.
3. Click on the location and file name of the PDF document you wish to view.
4. Click on the View menu for other options for viewing the displayed document. Choose the option that best suits your viewing needs.

Document Size Requirements

The Eastern District of North Carolina has a maximum individual document size limitation of 50 megabytes. There is also a maximum merge file size (main document plus any attachments) of 60 megabytes. Any filings larger than this will ultimately be rejected by the system, even though the program will appear to allow a filer to upload file sizes in excess of these limitations!

If you have a document or filing that is larger than the maximum file size defined by the court, you can break the document or filing into smaller PDF documents and file those smaller PDF documents together in one event with a main document and the remaining documents as separate attachments to the main document.

Filers are encouraged to create their PDF documents and note the file sizes before logging into CM/ECF. CM/ECF does not provide an interactive warning to let a filer know how many megabytes are being used while documents are being uploaded into the system. The filer must be aware of this information on their own.

PDF Content Criteria

The following list describes PDF content that will or will not be accepted by NextGen CM/ECF. If a filer tries to upload a PDF with prohibited content, it will be rejected. The simplest way to address most PDF upload rejections is to flatten the PDF and then upload it. Instructions for flattening documents are in the next section.

PDFS with the following content will be rejected:

- Does not comply with PDF format standards
- Encrypted or password protected
- Contains scripts which can launch an external application
- Contains internal attachments
- Contains audio or video content
- Created with Mac OS X using a fillable form in the Safari browser
- Crated with Mac OS X using MS Word and selecting the option "Best for printing"

PDFS with the following content will be accepted:

- Contains hyperlinks to external web sites

- Meets the PDF-A standard (PDF-A is NOT required by the Eastern District of North Carolina)
- Contains optical character recognition (OCR) meta-data
- Comprised of scanned documents (Set your scanner to 300 dots-per-inch (dpi) and black and white and OCR enabled.)
- Created with Mac OS X using a fillable form in the Chrome browser
- Created with Mac OS X using MS Word and selecting the option, “Best for Electronic Distribution”

How to Flatten a PDF

The simplest way to address most PDF upload rejections is to flatten the PDF and then upload it into CM/ECF.

1. Open your PDF in Adobe Acrobat or another tool that lets you work with PDF documents.
2. Print the PDF file to your PDF printer (File > Print > Select Adobe PDF or another PDF printing program you have listed in the drop-down list).
3. Save this “printed” PDF and upload it for filing in CM/ECF.

NOTE: in Kofax Power PDF (formerly known as Nuance), use the Flatten File feature found at Advance Processing > Flatten File.

Viewing Combined PDFs in CM/ECF

CM/ECF allows users to view multiple PDFs in a combined view in the docket entry and on the docket report. In some instances, a PDF that can be viewed individually might not render correctly when combined with other PDFs. In such instances, you will have to view the PDFs individually.