

Northern District of Florida
CM/ECF Attorney User Guide
Chapter 9

Documents Requiring Original Signatures

Documents that must contain original signatures or require either verification or an unsworn declaration under any rule or statute shall be filed electronically in PDF format. The originally executed paper documents must be maintained by the filer for a period of two years or until the appeal time has expired, whichever is greater.

Documents Submitted in Paper Format

All documents submitted in paper form must contain an original signature. Electronic signatures are only applicable to e-filed documents. Since electronic filing is mandatory, documents that may be filed in paper include sealed items, filings by pro se parties, or exhibits introduced at a trial or hearing. Exceptions can be made in cases where an attorney has been newly admitted and has not yet registered for CM/ECF or if an attorney is experiencing technical difficulties. Please contact the Clerk's Office for further details if you require a temporary exemption from electronic filing to be granted by the applicable judge.

Documents Requiring Electronic Signatures

Signatures for electronically filed documents are discussed within Northern District Local Rule 5.1. A document filed by an attorney must include a signature block with the attorney's handwritten or electronic signature, typed name, bar number, street and email addresses, and telephone number. The signature block must identify by name or category the parties on whose behalf the document is filed. The signature block itself should contain the information noted in the Local Rules; the court also requests the addition of your email address to the signature block.

EXAMPLE: s/Attorney's Name
Attorney's Name
Bar #
Firm Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Office Phone #
Fax #
Email address

Filing on the Behalf of Another Attorney

Northern District of Florida Local Rule 5.4(C) states:

An attorney who electronically files a document with the attorney's handwritten or electronic signature—or who authorizes another person to electronically file such a document—is responsible for the document just as if it had been filed in hard copy with the attorney's handwritten signature. And a party is responsible for a document electronically filed on the party's behalf with the party's or an attorney's handwritten or electronic signature, just as if the document had been filed in hard copy with the party's or attorney's handwritten signature.

Northern District of Florida Local Rule 5.4(G) states:

The attorney who authorizes the electronic filing of a document is responsible for it under this rule regardless of whether the attorney actually makes the electronic filing or authorizes another person to do so. And the attorney must ensure that the document is accurately docketed.

Joint Pleadings

In the case of a stipulation or other document to be signed by two or more persons, it is suggested that the filing party confirm that all content of the document is acceptable. Electronic signatures from all parties agreeing

should be on the pleading before the filing is made. The filing should indicate that it is a joint pleading.

Sealed Documents/Cases

Sealed documents cannot be filed by an attorney electronically and must be submitted to the clerk in paper format. In addition, attorneys cannot file documents in sealed cases and must submit related pleadings to the Clerk of Court in paper format for filing. See Local Rule 5.5.