



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT Northern District of Georgia

*Honorable Thomas W. Thrash, Jr., Chief
Judge*
*James N. Hatten, District Court
Executive/Clerk of Court*

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Temporary Procedures for Electronic Filing of Sealed Documents in Criminal Matters

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia has developed the following procedures to provide an electronic means for attorneys to file sealed documents in both unsealed and sealed criminal matters. **These procedures DO NOT provide for service of the sealed document or for viewing it after filing. You therefore will need to serve the document through means outside of CM/ECF and keep a copy for your records.** These procedures are intended to be temporary and are available only until further notice. If you have any questions about these procedures, contact the docketing section at 404-215-1655.

I. [Filing in an Unsealed Criminal Matter](#)

To file a sealed document in an unsealed criminal matter, you MUST use the separate menus for sealed filings. Under the Criminal menu in CM/ECF, you now will see two new menus under the heading "SEALED Filings": "Motions-SEALED" and "Other Docs-SEALED." You MUST select an event from one of these two menus. Failure to do so will result in your filing being public, not sealed. Within those menus, only the "Notice of Filing" event and the following motion events will be available for sealing:

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Resource Links

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[11th Circuit Pattern Jury Instructions](#)
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Documents in Criminal Matters

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Select the appropriate event, and file your document. Serve the document through means outside of CM/ECF, and keep a copy for your records.

II. Filing in a Sealed Criminal Matter

You cannot file a sealed document in a sealed criminal matter using CM/ECF. Instead, you must send it as an encrypted, password protected PDF file to criminal_sealed@gand.uscourts.gov (see the instructions below). Then, serve the document, and keep a copy for your records. The document will be deemed filed as of the date it is received in the criminal_sealed email inbox.

The clerk's office will provide passwords to the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Office of the Federal Public Defender that will be valid for an individual, calendar month. If you are not an attorney with either of those offices, you must create your own password that:

- Is at least 8 characters in length;
- Is complex and contains 3 of the following 4 types of characters:
 - Uppercase letters
 - Lowercase letters
 - Numbers
 - Special characters, such as: () ` ~ ! @ # \$ % ^ & * - + = | \ { } [] : ; " ' < > , . ? /
- Does not repeat a previously used password.

You may use the same password for all criminal sealed filings during an individual calendar month. Then, you must change the password.

You must inform the clerk's office of your password for each month by calling 404-215-1649 and leaving a voice message or speaking directly to a deputy clerk

with sealed access. You must not send the password in an email.

Instructions for encrypting and password protecting a PDF file are available [here](#).

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