

Electronic Access, Filing, and Service of Sealed and Restricted Documents January 2026

In accordance with guidance from the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, the Southern District of Georgia is implementing new procedures for the storage and service of electronically filed restricted documents, including sealed documents, beginning January 15, 2026. As such, the following procedures immediately apply to filings in Civil, Criminal, and Miscellaneous cases.¹

These procedures apply to two general groups of documents:

1) “Sealed”

Sealed documents are filings that have been officially sealed by order, statute, or local rule.

2) “Restricted”

Restricted documents are filings that are designated restricted *ex parte*, party-specific access, etc.

WHAT REMAINS THE SAME

Restricted documents should be filed in the court’s CM/ECF system in accordance with Local Rules and Administrative Procedures. These documents should not be emailed or transmitted to the Court outside of CM/ECF.

Users will continue to receive a Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) when case activity occurs.

WHAT’S NEW

While the docket text for restricted documents will be publicly available², the PDF copy of the document is not accessible or viewable by any non-court users. Users should avoid clicking the link in the NEF to prevent being charged a fee by PACER for viewing a blank placeholder file.

New Service Procedures:

When filing a sealed or restricted document, counsel is responsible for serving the document on all appropriate parties in a manner of service outlined by the Federal Rules of

¹ Pro Se parties must still comply with the [Administrative Procedures for Electronic Filing](#) and submit all documents in paper form.

² The docket text is publicly available unless the case is SEALED or the docket text has been ordered SEALED.

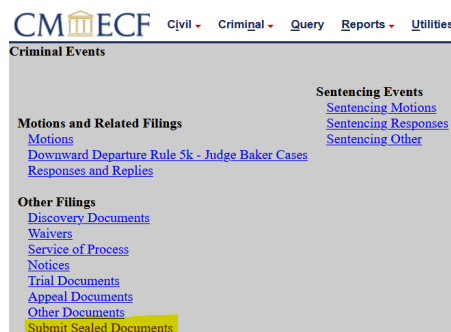
Procedure, as the CM/ECF system no longer allows parties to have access to the document in CM/ECF.

Parties are advised to immediately retain the original served document in a secure manner. If a party with access to the document needs a second copy, they can request a copy by emailing the appropriate Judge's CRD. Restricted documents will not be mailed absent an order by the Court.

New Procedures for Transmitting SEALED Filings:

Any documents or cases deemed by order, statute, or local rule as "Sealed" should be filed with the Court as provided below. Please contact the U.S. District Court Clerk's Office with any questions related to this new procedure.

- 1) Sealed documents, along with any required Motion(s) to Seal and proposed order(s), must be delivered for filing by either:
 - a. Transmitting the documents to the appropriate Judge's Courtroom Deputy Clerk via Box.com link provided in CM/ECF.
 - i. In CM/ECF, go to Civil or Criminal Menu -> Utilities -> Miscellaneous -> Submit Sealed Documents.



- ii. Choose the appropriate division subfolder (e.g., Submit Sealed Documents in Augusta Criminal Cases)



- iii. File should be saved using one of the following:
 1. **If case number is UNKNOWN** (new sealed complaint, etc.):
Abbreviated caption "ptlf v. deft," e.g.
Doe v. Jones

2. If case # is KNOWN


Entire CM/ECF Case Number

(div/yr/casetype/case#/presiding judge/referral judge/deft #), e.g.

425-cr-00005-RSB-CLR-19.pdf

425-cv-00024-RSB-CLR.pdf


iv. Upload the file to the box and click submit:




GASD - Submit Augusta Case Sealed Documents

This is a restricted government system for official judiciary business only. All activities on this system for any purpose, and all access attempts, may be recorded and monitored or reviewed by persons authorized by the federal judiciary for improper use, protection of system security, performance of maintenance, and appropriate management by the judiciary of its systems. By using this system or any connected system, users expressly consent to system monitoring and to official access to data reviewed and created by them on the system. Any evidence of unlawful activity, including unauthorized access attempts, may be reported to law enforcement officials.

Upload files *




Drag and drop files
[Select Files](#)



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Upload files *

 125-cr-00025-JRH-BKE-012.pdf 45.2 KB X

[Add another file](#)

v. Email the appropriate Judge's CRD to alert them that the file has been uploaded.

b. Encrypting the document(s) and transmitting via email to the appropriate Judge's Courtroom Deputy Clerk.

It is imperative that sealed documents be encrypted to help prevent unauthorized access and to reduce risk if an email is intercepted or misdirected. If you choose to send the document to the Court via email, it must be encrypted. Please see this [reference guide for Sending Encrypted Court Documents by Email](#) for further instructions.

c. Hand delivering the document(s) to a staffed divisional office for the District Court Clerk's Office (Augusta, Brunswick, Savannah).