

READ THIS BEFORE
attempting to open a civil case.

Filing Process

Filing a civil case is a four -part process: 1) open the case, 2) file the complaint, 3) file the civil cover sheet, and 4) file the attorney appearance.

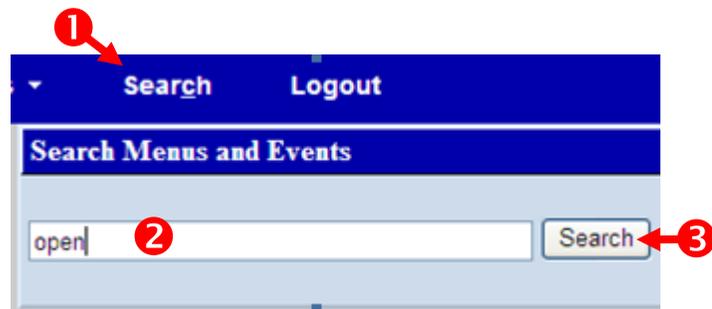
Payment of Filing Fees

- ✓ Review the General Order regarding refund of filing fees paid electronically. The full order is available at https://www.ilnd.uscourts.gov/assets/documents/forms/clerksoffice/rules/admin/pdf-orders/General_Order_16-0020.pdf. The applicable excerpt is provided at the end of this document.
- ✓ Payment for filing fees will be made through [Pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov), a service used by the District Court to process filing fees. Pay.gov is **NOT** a department of, or managed by the District Court.
- ✓ Pay.gov accepts Visa[®], MasterCard[®], Discover[®], American Express[®] and Diners Club International[®]. **Debit cards are not accepted for payment at this time.**

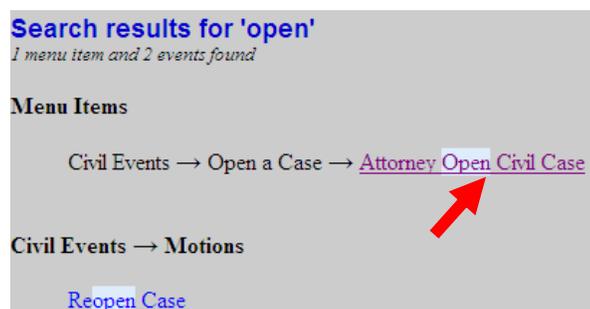
Miscellaneous

- ✓ **Do not test or practice** opening a civil case in the CM/ECF Live database. If you want to practice, contact Nicole Fratto at Nicole_Fratto@ilnd.uscourts.gov for access to the training database.
- ✓ If you are experiencing a problem, exit the case opening sequence before completing the process click on any of the options on the blue menu bar and call us at 312-582-8727.
- ✓ If you have opened a case incorrectly, **do not open another case**. Call the Help Desk at 312-582-8727 and we will resolve any issues with the first case.
- ✓ The Clerk's Office will assign a judge and designate a magistrate judge once an attorney opens a case and files the initiating documents. The filing attorney will receive an electronic notification of the assignment.
- ✓ Do not e-file a summons when opening a case. Email the summons to intake_ilnd@ ilnd.uscourts.gov **AFTER** you receive notification of the judge assignment.
- ✓ If you have any questions after reviewing these instructions please call us at 312-582-8727, or you can review a short training video at <http://www.ilnd.uscourts.gov/home/CMECF.aspx>

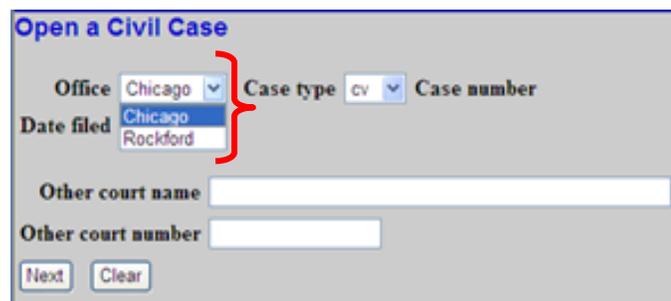
1. Click **Search** on the menu bar.
2. Type **Open** in the box.
3. Click the **Search** button.



4. Click **Attorney Open Civil Case**.



5. Select the division (office) where you are filing the case. In this example, the case is being filed in Chicago.
6. Click **Next**.



To view the divisional map, click the link below.

http://www.ilnd.uscourts.gov/CLERKS_OFFICE/GeneralInfo/Districtmap.htm

7. Select the appropriate responses. Your responses should reflect the Civil Cover Sheet.

To select a Cause of action or Nature of suit click the ▼ and scroll down to the correct item.

To use the filter option, type the section number in the filter box. For example, if you type 28: you will advance to the 28: section

Demand amounts should be entered as follows:

8. Click **Next**.

75,000 enter **75**
100,000 enter **100**
1,000,000 or over enter **9999**

9. Enter the filing party name. If the party is a business, enter the complete business name in the **Last/Business Name** field.

Only the first initial of each name should be uppercase, as illustrated in the above example.

10. Click **Search**.

Party Name Displays

In this example, the party name exists in the database.

11. Select the party name and then click **Select Party**.

- 12. A. Select the party role.
- B. Add party text as desired.
- C. Click **Add Party**.
- D. Go to step 16.

Party Information
Willie Coyote

Title

Role **Plaintiff (pla.pty)**

Pro se **No**

Prisoner Id Unit

Party text

Start date **10/9/2009** End date

Corporation **no** Notice **yes**

Add Party

Party Name Does NOT Display

- 13. In this example, the party name does not exist in the CM/ECF database. Click **Create New Party**.

Search for a party

Last / Business Name **Cartwright** First Name **Ben** Middle Name

Search

Search Results

Select Party **Create New Party**

Search returned no results. Please try again or create a new party.

- 14. A. Select the party role.
- B. Enter any descriptive text if desired. For example, “President of an Illinois Corporation”.
- C. Click **Add Party**.

Party Information
Ben Cartwright

Title

Role **Defendant (dft.pty)**

Pro se **No**

Party text

Start date **10/5/2009** End date

Corporation **no** Notice **yes**

Add Party

Do not add any information on the party other than the role, name and party text.

15. The party name displays on the party tree in the left pane.

If this party was added in error, click  next to the party name.

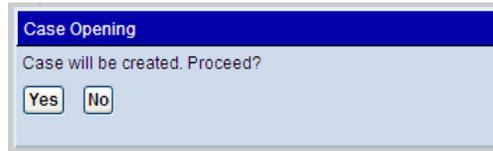
To add an alias for this party click  next to the party name.



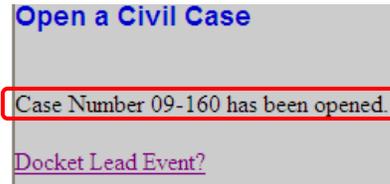
16. Once all plaintiffs/defendants have been entered, click **Create Case**.

*****NEVER click the browser Back button while working on screens that display the participant tree. Doing so will cause all progress to be lost! Data is not saved until the user clicks the Create Case button.**

17. Click **Yes**. The case is opened and a case number assigned.



WRITE DOWN the case number shown on the screen for future reference.



***If you have opened a case incorrectly
STOP
and call the Help Desk at 312-582-8727.
We will resolve the issues with the case.
DO NOT open another case!***

If you are **NOT** filing In forma Pauperis:

1. Click **CIVIL** on the menu bar.
2. Click **Complaints**.



If you **ARE** filing an In forma Pauperis motion or application:

1. Click **CIVIL** on the menu bar.
2. Click **Other Initiating Documents**



3. Enter the assigned case number if the number that displays is incorrect, then click **Next**.

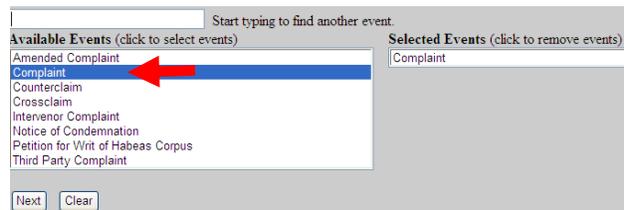
A screenshot of a web form titled 'Complaints'. Below the title, there is a label 'Civil Case Number' above a text input field. The input field contains the text '1:09-cv-160'. Below the input field, there are two buttons: 'Next' and 'Clear'.

- Verify that the case number and title are correct, and click **Next**.



If you are NOT filing In forma Pauperis:

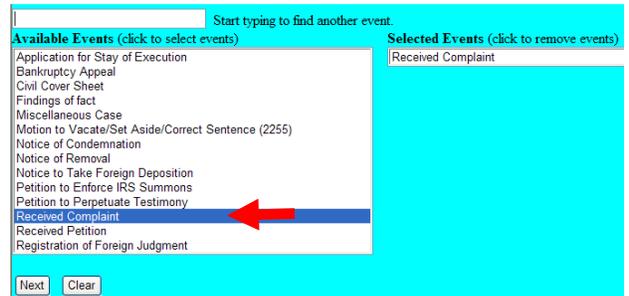
- Select **Complaint** and click **Next**.



To deselect an event, click on its name in the Selected Events box.

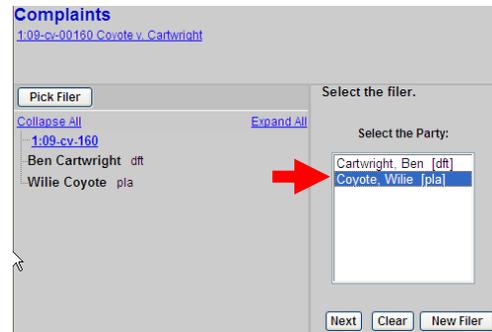
If you ARE filing an In forma Pauperis motion or application:

- Select **Received Complaint** and click **Next**.



- Select the filing party and click **Next**.

If you forgot to add a plaintiff, click **New Filer** and follow steps 9-14 in the *Open a Case* section of this guide.



7. If this is the first time that you are filing on behalf of party, the Attorney/Party Association screen displays.
 - A. Check the **Lead** box if you are the lead attorney.
 - B. Click **Next**.

Complaints
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

The following attorney/party associations do not exist for the above case (s).

Please check the box on the left of the screen for associations which should be created.

If the association should *not* be created, be sure the box is *unchecked*<

Willie Coyote (pty:pla) represented by Ryan Crowe (aty) **Lead** Notice

Next Clear

8. Select the party that the filing is against and click **Next**.

If you need to add a filing party, click New Party and repeat steps 14-17 of Opening a Case.

Complaints
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Pick Party

Please select the party that this filing is against.

Select the Party: OR Select a Group:

Coyote, Willie [pla]
Cartwright, Ben [dft]

No Group
 All Defendants
 All Plaintiffs
 All Parties

Next Clear New Party

9. Click **Browse**.

Complaints
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Select the pdf document and any attachments.

Main Document
I

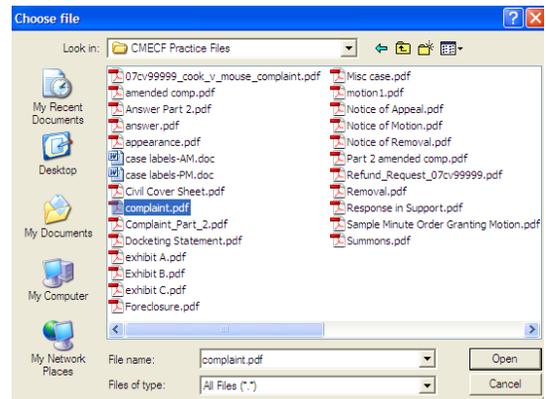
| Attachments | Category | Description |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Next Clear

10. Select the PDF version of the complaint that you want to file and click **Open**.

To preview the file being uploaded:

- A. Right-click on the file name
- B. Select **Open with Acrobat**.
- C. View the document.
- D. Close the document.

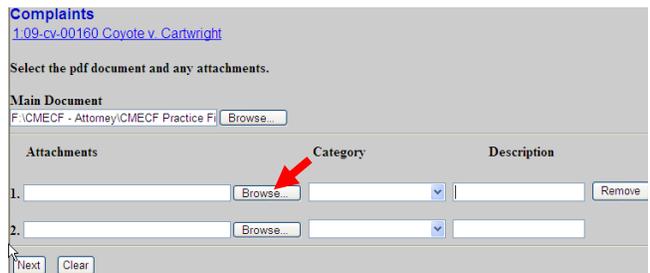


READ THIS

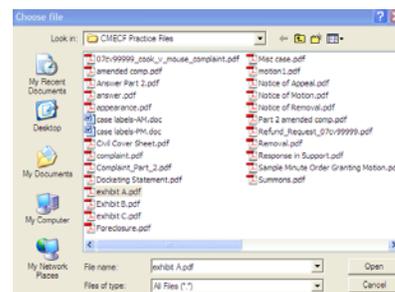


- > **ONLY the complaint is uploaded at this time.**
- > **Exhibits in support of the complaint may be included as attachments.**
- > **File the Civil Cover Sheet separately and the Attorney Appearance separately.**

11. To include an attachment (such as an exhibit, or if the complaint is divided into sections) click **Browse** next to the first available blank box and select the file.



12. Select the PDF to be attached and click **Open**.



Opening a Civil Case Part II – File the Complaint

13. Select a category and/or enter a brief description of the attachment.

Complaints
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Select the pdf document and any attachments.

Main Document
F:\CMECF - Attorney\CMECF Practice Fi [Browse...]

| Attachments | Category | Description |
|--|------------|---------------------------|
| 1. F:\CMECF - Attorney\CMECF Practice Fi [Browse...] | Supplement | Complaint Part 2 [Remove] |
| 2. [Browse...] | | |

[Next] [Clear]

File the Civil Cover Sheet separately and the Attorney Appearance separately – NOT as attachments.

14. To add additional attachments click **Browse** next to the first available blank box and select the file.

15. Once all files are uploaded click **Next**.

Complaints
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Select the pdf document and any attachments.

Main Document
F:\CMECF - Attorney\CMECF Practice Fi [Browse...]

| Attachments | Category | Description |
|--|------------|---------------------------|
| 1. F:\CMECF - Attorney\CMECF Practice Fi [Browse...] | Supplement | Complaint Part 2 [Remove] |
| 2. [Browse...] | | |

[Next] [Clear]

16. Type **Jury Demand** if applicable and click **Next**.

In this example, a Jury Demand is included.

Complaints
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

If this complaint includes a jury demand, type **Jury Demand** in box : [Jury Demand]

[Next] [Clear]

17. Select **N**.

A credit card is required to pay the filing fee through pay.gov unless you are filing on an IFP application and your response is **Yes**.

Complaints
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Is this filed with an Application to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees?
or
Is this application filed on behalf of the USA?

Yes
 No

[Next] [Clear]

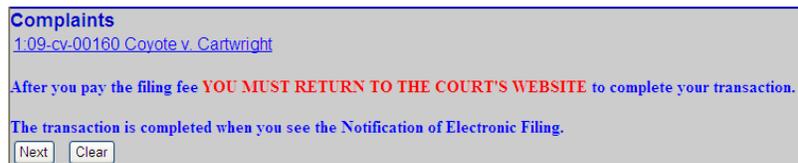
18. Click **Next**.



The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Complaints" with a blue header. Below the header, the case number "1:09-cv-00160" and the case name "Coyote v. Cartwright" are displayed in blue text. Below this, the fee amount "Fee: \$350" is shown. At the bottom of the interface, there are two buttons: "Next" and "Clear".

19. Click **Next**.

Remember! You must return to the court's website to complete the transaction.

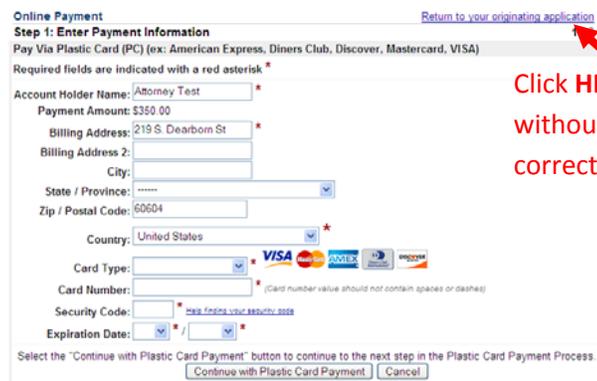


The screenshot shows the "Complaints" page with the case details "1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright". Below the case details, there is a red instruction: "After you pay the filing fee **YOU MUST RETURN TO THE COURT'S WEBSITE** to complete your transaction." Below this, there is a blue instruction: "The transaction is completed when you see the Notification of Electronic Filing." At the bottom, there are "Next" and "Clear" buttons.

20. Wait for the processing screen to display.

21. Follow the prompts and enter your credit card information.

The payment amount displayed reflects the appropriate fee for the type document being filed.



The screenshot shows the "Online Payment" form for "Step 1: Enter Payment Information". The form is titled "Pay Via Plastic Card (PC) (ex: American Express, Diners Club, Discover, Mastercard, VISA)". It includes fields for "Account Holder Name" (Attorney Test), "Payment Amount" (\$350.00), "Billing Address 1" (219 S. Dearborn St), "Billing Address 2", "City", "State / Province", "Zip / Postal Code" (60604), "Country" (United States), "Card Type" (with logos for VISA, AMEX, DISCOVER, and MASTERCARD), "Card Number", "Security Code", and "Expiration Date". A red arrow points to a link "Return to your originating application" in the top right corner. Below the form, there are "Continue with Plastic Card Payment" and "Cancel" buttons.

Click **HERE** to exit without paying and correct any mistakes.

22. To have a receipt emailed to you, enter your email address in both boxes.

23. Check the box authorizing the charge. If this box is not checked the filing fee cannot be processed.

24. Click **Submit Payment**.

The screenshot shows a 'Payment Summary' form with three main sections: Address Information, Account Information, and Payment Information. Below these are fields for Email Confirmation Receipt and an Authorization and Disclosure section. Red arrows point to the email address fields and the authorization checkbox. Red callout boxes provide instructions: 'Enter email address for receipt.' and 'Check this box to authorize the charge.'

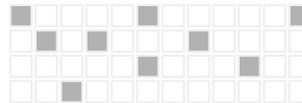
| Address Information | Account Information | Payment Information |
|---|---|---|
| Account Holder Name: Attorney Test 219 S. Billing Address: Dearborn Billing Address 2: City: State / Province: Zip / Postal Code: 60600 Country: USA | Card Type: Visa Card Number: *****1111 | Payment Amount: \$1.00 Transaction Date 04/17/200 and Time: EDT |

Email Confirmation Receipt
To have a confirmation sent to you upon completion of this transaction, provide an email address and confirmation below.
Email Address: paula_rogers@lnd.uscourts.gov
Confirm Email Address: paula_rogers@lnd.uscourts.gov
CC:

Authorization and Disclosure
Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk *
I authorize a charge to my card account for the above amount in accordance with my card issuer agreement.
Press the "Submit Payment" Button only once. Pressing the button more than once could result in multiple transactions.

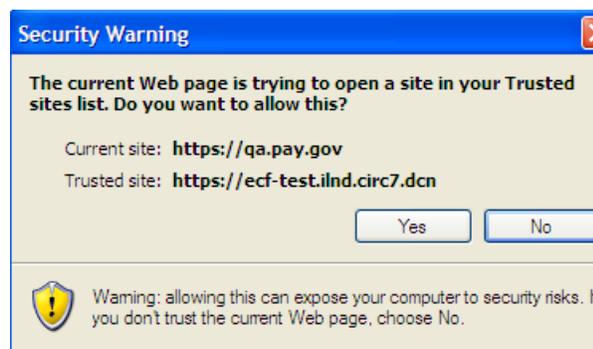
25. Wait until your credit card charge has been processed.

Your request is being processed. Please wait.



26. Click **Yes** to return to CM/ECF.

If you do not select yes, you will not return to the Court's website to complete your transaction. Your credit card will be billed, but your complaint will NOT be filed.



27. Add any desired text to the docket entry and click **Next**.



Complaints
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate.

COMPLAINT filed by Buggsy Bunny; Filing fee \$ 350, receipt number 0752-173046.
(Crowe, Ryan)

Next Clear

If you have made a mistake, DO NOT BACK UP, instead call the Help Desk at (312) 582-8727 immediately.

28. Verify that the docket entry is correct and that you uploaded the correct file.

29. Click **Next**.

Verify that this is the file that you intended to upload. →



Complaints
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Docket Text: Final Text
COMPLAINT filed by Buggsy Bunny; Filing fee \$ 350, receipt number 0752-173046.(Crowe, Ryan)

Attention!! Pressing the NEXT button on this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue.

Source Document Path (for confirmation only):
F:\CMECF - Attorney\CMECF Practice Files\complaint.pdf pages: 7

Next Clear

Wait for the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) to display. Make sure that you either print a copy of the NEF for reference or write down the case number and document number. You will need these numbers in the event that the clerk's office requests that you resubmit any PDF documents.

Once you have e-filed the complaint you may then e-file the Civil Cover Sheet and e-file the Attorney Appearance separately.

Shown below is a sample receipt generated by Pay.gov. To generate a receipt you must enter your email address at the prompt on the Pay.gov screen.

Complaints

[1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright](#)

United States District Court

Northern District of Illinois - **CM/ECF TEST, Ver 4.0.2**

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was entered by Crowe, Ryan on 10/28/2009 at 11:44 AM CDT and filed on 10/28/2009

Case Name: Coyote v. Cartwright

Case Number: [1:09-cv-00160](#)

Filer: Buggsy Bunny

Document Number: [2](#)

Docket Text:

COMPLAINT filed by Buggsy Bunny; Filing fee \$ 350, receipt number 0752-173046.(Crowe, Ryan)

1:09-cv-00160 Notice has been electronically mailed to:

Ryan Crowe anita_baugard@ilnd.uscourts.gov

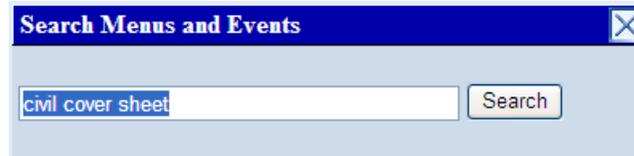
1:09-cv-00160 Notice has been delivered by other means to:

Willie Coyote

1. Click **Search** on the main menu.

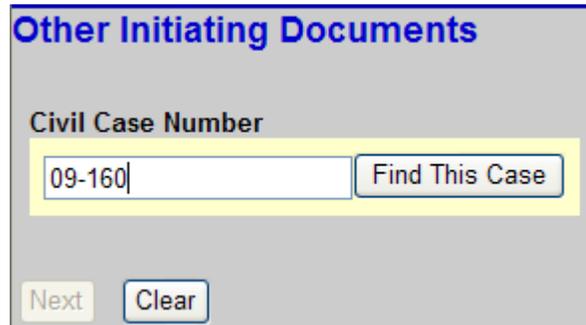


2. Type **civil cover sheet** in the box, and click **Search**.

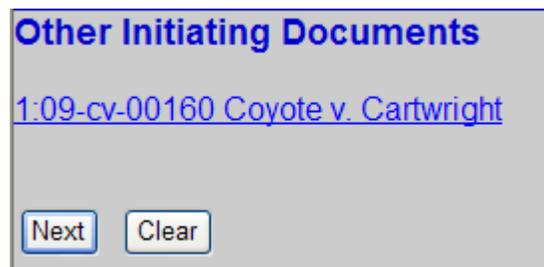


The search function works with any type of document or pleading. Simply type in the type of pleading and click **Search**.

3. Enter the case number.
 - A. Click **Find This Case**.
 - B. Click **Next**.



4. Click **Next**.



5. Select **Civil Cover Sheet**.
6. Click **Next**.

Other Initiating Documents
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Start typing to find another event.

Available Events (click to select events)

- Bankruptcy Appeal
- Civil Cover Sheet**
- Findings of fact
- Miscellaneous Case
- Motion to Vacate/Set Aside/Correct Sentence (2255)
- Notice of Removal
- Notice to Take Foreign Deposition
- Petition to Enforce IRS Summons
- Petition to Perpetuate Testimony
- Received Complaint
- Received Petition
- Registration of Foreign Judgment

Selected Events (click to remove events)

- Civil Cover Sheet

Next Clear

7. Click **Browse** and select the document you are filing.
8. Click **Next**.

Other Initiating Documents
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Select the pdf document and any attachments.

Main Document
F:\CMECF - Attorney\on_line_docs\civil c\ Browse...

| Attachments | Category | Description |
|--------------|----------|-------------|
| 1. Browse... | | |

Next Clear

9. Click **Next**.

Other Initiating Documents
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Next Clear

10. Verify that the information is correct and click **Next**.

Other Initiating Documents
1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright

Docket Text: Final Text
CIVIL Cover Sheet (Rogers, Paula)

Attention!! Pressing the NEXT button on this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue.

Source Document Path (for confirmation only):
F:\CMECF - Attorney\on_line_docs\civil cover sheet.pdf pages: 11

Next Clear

Other Initiating Documents

[1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright](#)

United States District Court

Northern District of Illinois - CM/ECF TEST, Ver 4.0.3

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was entered by Rogers, Paula on 12/29/2009 at 1:32 PM CST and filed on 12/29/2009

Case Name: Coyote v. Cartwright

Case Number: [1:09-cv-00160](#)

Filer:

Document Number: [6](#)

Docket Text:

[CIVIL Cover Sheet \(Rogers, Paula\)](#)

1:09-cv-00160 Notice has been electronically mailed to:

Ryan Crowe anita_baugard@ilnd.uscourts.gov

1:09-cv-00160 Notice has been delivered by other means to:

The following document(s) are associated with this transaction:

Shown above is a partial sample of the electronic notice of electronic filing. This notice provides a direct link to the document being filed. For ECF users this constitutes service. This notice is emailed to all parties who are electronic filers.

Judicial Conference of the United States policy permits attorneys of record and parties in a case (including pro se litigants) to receive on free electronic copy of all documents filed electronically. PACER access fees apply to all other users. The “free look” does not apply when viewing documents in cases for which you are not a participant.

Each attorney of record in a case (including pro se litigants) will receive an email message containing a hyperlink to a document that has been filed. If you login to CM/ECF or PACER without using the email link there will be a charge. One free copy is available to each attorney of record. PACER fees will apply to secondary email addresses. The hyperlink to access the document will expire after the earlier of these two events: the first use or 15 days. If you login to CM/ECF or PACER without using the email link there will be a charge.

To avoid PACER charges:

- > Download a copy of the notice to your own computer the first time that you view the document.
- > Print out a hard copy the first time that you view the document.

Important Points to Keep in Mind

- ✓ ECF requires that each attorney file his or her own appearance. ECF will only accept **one appearance** per entry.
 - ✓ An attorney who has logged in as an e-filer **may not** file the appearance of another attorney. For example, attorney Scott Glenn may file an appearance for himself, but not for attorney Julia Roberts.
-

1. Click **Search** on the main menu.



2. Type **Appearance** in the box.
3. Click **Search**.



The search function works with any type of document or pleading. Simply type in the type of pleading and click **Search**.

4. Click **Attorney Appearance**.



The system displays all available events for the document or pleading.

5. Enter the case number, then click **Find This Case**.
6. Click **Next**.

The screenshot shows a window titled "Notices" with a "Civil Case Number" label. Below the label is a text input field containing "09-160" and a "Find This Case" button. At the bottom of the window are "Next" and "Clear" buttons.

7. Click **Next**.

The screenshot shows the "Notices" window displaying the case details "1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright" as a blue hyperlink. Below the details are "Next" and "Clear" buttons.

8. Click **Browse** and select the document being filed.
9. Click **Next**.

The screenshot shows the "Notices" window for case "1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright". It prompts the user to "Select the pdf document and any attachments." Under "Main Document", there is a "Browse..." button. Below is a table for "Attachments" with columns for "Attachments", "Category", and "Description". A "Next" and "Clear" button are at the bottom.

10. Select the filing party and click **Next**.

The screenshot shows a "Pick Filer" window. On the left, there is a list of parties: "Bugsy Bunny pla", "Ben Cartwright dft", and "Wilie Coyote pla". On the right, under "Select the filer.", there are options to "Select the Party:" (with "Bunny, Bugsy [pla]" selected) and "Select a Group:" (with "No Group" selected). "Next", "Clear", and "New Filer" buttons are at the bottom.

11. Click **Next**.

Notices
[1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright](#)

Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate.
ATTORNEY Appearance for Plaintiff Buggsy Bunny by Paula Rogers (Rogers, Paula)

12. Verify that the information is correct and click **Next**.

Notices
[1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright](#)

Docket Text: Final Text
ATTORNEY Appearance for Plaintiff Buggsy Bunny by Paula Rogers (Rogers, Paula)

Attention!! Pressing the NEXT button on this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue.

Source Document Path (for confirmation only):
F:\CMECF - Attorney\on_line_docs\Attorney Appearance.pdf pages: 11

Notices

[1:09-cv-00160 Coyote v. Cartwright](#)

United States District Court

Northern District of Illinois - **CM/ECF TEST, Ver 4.0.3**

I

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was entered by Rogers, Paula on 12/29/2009 at 1:51 PM CST and filed on 12/29/2009

Case Name: Coyote v. Cartwright

Case Number: [1:09-cv-00160](#)

Filer: Buggy Bunny

Document Number: [7](#)

Docket Text:

ATTORNEY Appearance for Plaintiff Buggy Bunny by Paula Rogers (Rogers, Paula)

1:09-cv-00160 Notice has been electronically mailed to:

Paula Rogers paula@yahoo.com, lawyer1234@yahoo.com

Ryan Crowe anita_baugard@ilnd.uscourts.gov

1:09-cv-00160 Notice has been delivered by other means to:

Shown above is a partial sample of the electronic notice of electronic filing. This notice provides a direct link to the document being filed. For ECF users this constitutes service. This notice is emailed to all parties who are electronic filers.

Judicial Conference of the United States policy permits attorneys of record and parties in a case (including pro se litigants) to receive on free electronic copy of all documents filed electronically. PACER access fees apply to all other users. The “free look” does not apply when viewing documents in cases for which you are not a participant.

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