

Getting Prepared for NextGen CM/ECF

Over the past year, several appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts throughout the country have implemented the next generation (NextGen) CM/ECF system. While most courts have not yet set a date for when they will switch to NextGen, you can begin preparing now by upgrading your PACER account.

This following will walk you through the who, what, when, where, why, and how of NextGen and upgraded PACER accounts.

What Has Changed?

- **Usernames:** You will choose the username (8 or more characters) for your upgraded PACER account.
- **Logins:** You will enter the same username and password for both e-filing and PACER access.
- **Security:** Accounts now require more complex passwords and a more secure password reset process.
- **Manage My Account:** There is a new look and new functions under the Manage My Account link on pacer.gov.
- **Firm Billing:** Groups can pay for multiple PACER accounts in one bill.

Who Should Upgrade?

Anyone can upgrade at any time, but the following users **MUST** upgrade their PACER accounts:

- PACER-only users who need to make changes to their accounts
- E-filers in courts that are converting to NextGen CM/ECF

Why Have These Changes Been Made?

The implementation of NextGen CM/ECF and the need for upgraded PACER accounts came about for two reasons:

- 1) Users requested the ability to have one login for all access (PACER and e-filing).
- 2) Security improvements were necessary in order to keep PACER in line with industry standards.

When Should I Upgrade?

You can upgrade anytime, but if your court has already announced that it plans to implement NextGen CM/ECF, you should upgrade your account before the conversion.

Continue to check your court's website for more information on when it will convert.

Group Billing in NextGen: PACER Administrative Account

With the implementation of NextGen, users who e-file will need their own PACER accounts. Organizations can streamline the process of managing their accounts by setting up a PACER Administrative Account (PAA).

Using the PAA, you can create consolidated billing for all the accounts in your organization, allowing you to manage and pay for all charges on one bill.

You may notice some updated features if you already have a PAA:

- Since all users need their own accounts, you may have to set up an account on behalf of other users. When doing this, remember to use the correct email address and date of birth to avoid any issues with identifying the account.
- New employees should now provide a last name and 7-digit PACER account number. If they do not have a PACER account, they need to create one and then provide this information so you can add them to your PAA.
- If you need to remove an attorney from your PAA, you can unlink the account so that you are no longer responsible for PACER charges after they leave.

To register for a PAA, go to pacer.gov/register. Under Firm Billing, click Register Now.

NextGen Resources

Here are some helpful NextGen links:

NextGen Help Page —
<https://www.pacer.gov/nextgen>

Electronic Learning Modules —
<https://www.pacer.gov/ecfcbt/cso/index.html>

NextGen FAQs —
<https://www.pacer.gov/psc/hfaq.html>

Court Links Page (“NextGen” noted next to converted courts) —
<https://www.pacer.gov/psco/cgi-bin/links.pl>

Billing Information

- ◇ PSC accepts Discover, VISA, MasterCard, and American Express. Log in to Manage My Account at pacer.gov to pay by credit card.
- ◇ The PSC federal tax ID number is 74-2747938.
- ◇ A fee of \$53 will be assessed if your payment is returned.
- ◇ Accounts with credit cards on file will be auto-billed up to 7 days prior to the due date.

PSC Information

PSC hours are 8 AM—6 PM CT, Monday through Friday. Email pacer@psc.uscourts.gov or call (800) 676-6856.

The PSC will be closed for the following federal holidays:

- MLK Jr. Birthday:** January 18
- Presidents’ Day:** February 15
- Memorial Day:** May 30
- Independence Day:** July 4
- Labor Day:** September 5
- Columbus Day:** October 10
- Veterans Day:** November 11
- Thanksgiving Day:** November 24
- Christmas Day:** December 25

Upgrading and Converting in NextGen: Lessons Learned

In recent months, as more courts have switched to NextGen, some users have encountered issues that can affect account access and registration. The following table outlines why these issues occur, and how to avoid them when your court converts.

Action	Consequence	Solution
You rely on your web browser to keep track of your login and password information.	When you try to link your e-filing and PACER accounts, you will not have all the information you need to complete this process.	Make sure both sets of credentials (e-filing and upgraded PACER account login and password) are easily accessible before trying to link the accounts.
Your password has more than 8 characters or contains special characters. You have upgraded your PACER account, but your court has not converted.	Longer passwords used with upgraded PACER accounts and some special characters will not work on the court login page.	Use the Case Search Sign In link at pacer.gov , or change your password.
The username for your upgraded PACER account is the same as your e-filing username.	The system will not allow you to link these two accounts with the same username.	Make usernames similar but not identical by adding an extra letter, number, or special character to one.
When you link PACER and e-filing accounts for someone else, you mistakenly link one user’s PACER account to a different user’s e-filing account.	Neither user will be able to access their accounts as needed.	When you get to the linking screen, double-check the accounts to ensure you’re linking the correct accounts.
When you upgrade your firm or group’s PACER Administrative Account (PAA), you change the account credentials.	All users in the group get locked out of their PACER accounts because they do not have the new credentials.	Users who e-file should register for their own upgraded PACER account. The PAA administrator will then add that account to the PAA.
You register for an upgraded PACER account on behalf of each user on a PAA, but you use the same email address (usually your own) for each account.	The same email address on multiple accounts gets flagged by PSC and causes the registration to be stopped for review, creating a slow registration process and possibly hindering progress for a user password reset.	Enter each user’s correct email address when registering for an upgraded PACER account.
You wait until after the court converts to NextGen to upgrade your PACER account.	You experience long wait times when calling PSC.	Upgrade your PACER account as soon as the court announces it will convert. This provides plenty of time to receive technical assistance before PSC is flooded with calls after the conversion.