



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN**

**ATTORNEY CIVIL CASE OPENING
INSTRUCTIONS**

2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

Attorneys may file new civil cases electronically. New cases may be initiated with the filing of a complaint, a notice of removal, a petition for writ of habeas corpus, or a petition to quash an IRS summons. All documents must comply with the requirements of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the [Local Rules](#), and the [Electronic Filing Procedures](#).

Sealed cases may NOT be opened without court assistance. Please contact the clerk's office at 608-264-5156 to open a sealed case.

NOTE: Your case is not considered filed until you have filed your case initiating documents.

A. Attorney Admission

Before opening or removing a civil case in the Western District of Wisconsin, you must be admitted to practice in this district or seeking admission *pro hac vice*. You may apply for admission using the court's [electronic application process](#).

B. Errors

If you believe you have made a mistake during regular business hours, stop where you are and contact the clerk's office immediately at 608-264-5156.

If you have made a mistake after hours, continue to open your case, docket your lead event, and send an email to wibd_newcases@wibd.uscourts.gov explaining the circumstances. A deputy clerk will contact you during business hours.

Please note that case initiation is not an emergency and does not necessitate a call to the clerk's office after-hours telephone number.

C. Before Opening or Removing a Civil Case

To make certain you are successful in opening your case and filing your case initiating documents, you should first gather the information and documents you need.

Complaint	Notice of Removal
Complaint ¹ (PDF)	Notice of Removal ¹ (PDF)
Civil Cover Sheet (PDF)	Civil Cover Sheet (PDF)
Summons (PDF)	Copies of state court documents (PDF) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaint• Summons (served)• Answers• Pending motions
A valid debit or credit card. With the attorney self-serve option in CM/ECF, you cannot pay the filing fee by any other means.	

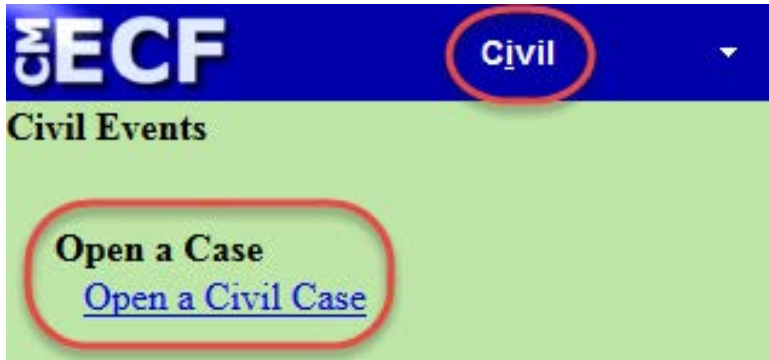
Within 24 hours of filing your case initiating documents, the clerk's office will assign a judge to your case.

¹ Any exhibits or attachments must be in PDF and filed as specified in the [Electronic Filing Procedures](#).

2. CASE OPENING

Log into CM/ECF at <https://ecf.wiwd.uscourts.gov/> using your test credentials.

Click **Civil** > **Open a Civil Case**.



After reviewing the warning message, click **Next**.

Open a Civil Case

ATTENTION: If this is your first time electronically filing a new case, we strongly recommend that you view the [Attorney Civil Case Opening Instructions](#)

Qui Tam cases (false claims) are not to be opened online. Please contact the Clerks Office at 866-241-7123 to file these cases.

- New Case - If you are filing a new case, leave the **Other court name** and **Other court number** fields blank and click **Next**.
- Removal – If you are removing a case from state court, enter the name of that court (e.g., Dane County Circuit Court), and the state court case number (e.g., 19-cv-001005). Click **Next**.

Open a Civil Case

Office Case type

Date filed: 3/12/2019

Other court name

Other court number

3. CASE STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Fill in the fields using your completed JS-44 Civil Cover Sheet.

Click **Next**.

Open a Civil Case

Jurisdiction 3 (Federal Question)

Cause of action

Nature of suit 0 (zero)

Origin 1 (Original Proceeding)

Citizenship plaintiff

Citizenship defendant

Jury demand n (None) **Class action** n (No Class Action Alleged) **Demand (\$000)**

Arbitration code **County** Dane

Fee status pd (fee due) **Fee date** 3/12/2019 **Date transfer**

Jurisdiction	1 (U.S. Government Plaintiff) 2 (U.S. Government Defendant) 3 (Federal Question) – Default 4 (Diversity) – Must enter citizenship of parties for a diversity case 5 (Local Question) – For court use only
Cause of action	Choose the U.S. civil statute under which you are filing
Nature of suit	Choose the primary nature of suit
Origin	1 (Original Proceeding) – When filing an original complaint 2 (Removal from State Court) – When filing a notice of removal
Citizenship	Completed only when the selected jurisdiction is diversity
Jury demand	Modify this field only if a jury demand is included on the JS-44 Civil Cover Sheet and in the initiating document
Class action	n (No Class Action Alleged) y (Class Action Alleged)
Demand	Enter demand amounts using the following parameters: 75, 000 – Enter as 75 100,000 – Enter as 100 1,000,000 or over – Enter as 9999

Arbitration Code	Leave blank
County	County of residence of the first listed plaintiff. If the United States is the plaintiff, enter the county of residence for the first listed defendant.
Fee status	pd (fee due) – Default setting, filing fee is required fp (<i>in forma pauperis</i>) – Plaintiff will move to proceed <i>in forma pauperis</i> none (no fee required) – Reserved for the United States
Fee date	Leave default
Date transfer	Leave blank

4. ADDING PARTIES

For additional guidance, see [Searching for and Adding Parties](#).

There are two buttons on the left panel – **Add New Party** and **Create Case**. Parties are displayed in the left panel as they are added on the right.

In the right panel, **Search for a party**, includes three fields: **Last / Business Name**, **First Name**, and **Middle Name** and the **Search** button.

The screenshot shows the 'Open a Civil Case' interface. On the left, there are buttons for 'Add New Party' and 'Create Case', along with 'Collapse All' and 'Expand All' links. Below these is a list item '3:19-cv-?????'. On the right, the 'Search for a party' section contains three input fields: 'Last / Business Name', 'First Name', and 'Middle Name', each with a lock icon. A 'Search' button is located below these fields.

A. Searching for a Party

To add a party, always begin with a search of the party name. Please note:

- Searches are not case sensitive.
- Do not use punctuation or spaces in the search boxes.
- Use an asterisk (*) before or after a partial name when the spelling of a name is not certain. For example, Smy* for Smyth instead of Smith. Scroll through the entire list of results.
- Social Security Cases – Begin by searching for the last name “Saul.” The defendant is ALWAYS Andrew Saul or Andrew M. Saul. DO NOT create a new party for a social security defendant.

Once you find the correct party name, select it from the list.

Click **Select Party**.

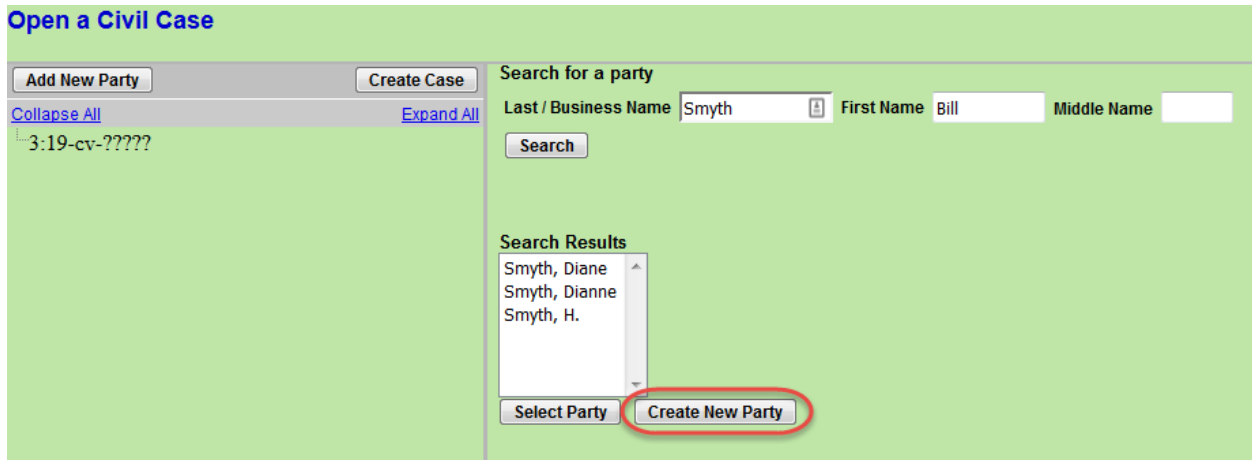
This screenshot shows the same interface as the previous one, but with search results displayed. The 'Last / Business Name' field contains 'Smy*' and the 'Search' button is circled in red. Below the search fields, a 'Search Results' dropdown menu is open, listing 'Smyth, Diane', 'Smyth, Dianne', and 'Smyth, H.'. The 'Select Party' button at the bottom is also circled in red.

B. Adding a New Party

If the party you need to add is not found using the search feature, you need to create a new party.

Enter the last and first name of the party, or the name of the business or entity, review spelling, capitalization, etc.

Click **Create New Party**.



5. PARTICIPANT SCREEN

Make certain the party's name is spelled correctly.

Select a **Role** for the party (Plaintiff, Defendant, etc.).

If you need to add descriptive text for a party (office, estate, etc.), use the **Party text** field.

Leave all the other fields blank. **Do not enter address information.**

Click **Add Party**.

The screenshot shows the 'Open a Civil Case' interface. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'Add New Party' and 'Create Case' buttons, and a list of cases including '3:19-cv-?????'. The main area is titled 'Party Information' and contains several fields: 'Last name' (Smyth), 'First name' (Bill), 'Middle name', 'Generation', 'Title', 'Role' (a dropdown menu currently showing 'Defendant (dft:pty)'), 'Party text' (a text area), 'Start date' (4/18/2019), 'End date', 'Corporation' (no), and 'Notice' (yes). A red circle highlights the 'Add Party' button at the bottom left of the form.

When the party is added to the case, you will see the party added to the left panel.




The screenshot shows the 'Open a Civil Case' interface after a party has been added. The 'Party text' field now contains 'Bill Smyth pla'. The 'Add Party' button is no longer visible. The left sidebar now shows the case '3:19-cv-?????' with a list of parties: 'Bill Smyth pla' (with edit and delete icons) and 'Acme Corporation dft' (with edit and delete icons). Each party has sub-options for 'Alias', 'Corporate Parent or other affiliate', and 'Attorney'. The right panel is titled 'Search for a party' and contains search fields for 'Last / Business Name', 'First Name', and 'Middle Name', along with a 'Search' button.


The right panel defaults back to **Search for a party**.


DO NOT CLICK THE BACK BUTTON IN YOUR BROWSER TO CORRECT ERRORS. YOU WILL LOSE YOUR WORK.


6. EDITING PARTIES

Icons are displayed next to the parties in the left panel. Use these icons to correct any errors.

-  = Edit the party
-  = Delete the party
-  = Add Alias, Corporate Parent, or other affiliate for the selected party

Edits to the **Role** or **Party text** fields are made with the  icon.

A mistakenly-added party may be deleted with the  icon.

A party alias may be added or edited using the  icon. There are many types of aliases from which to choose:

Alias Type	Translation
agent	agent of
aka	also known as
dba	doing business as
est	estate of
fdba	formerly doing business as
fka	formerly known as
gal	guardian ad litem
nee	born

Alias Type	Translation
nfr	next friend
nka	now known as
obo	on behalf of
other	other
rec	receiver
rpi	real party in interest
suc	successor
ta	trading as

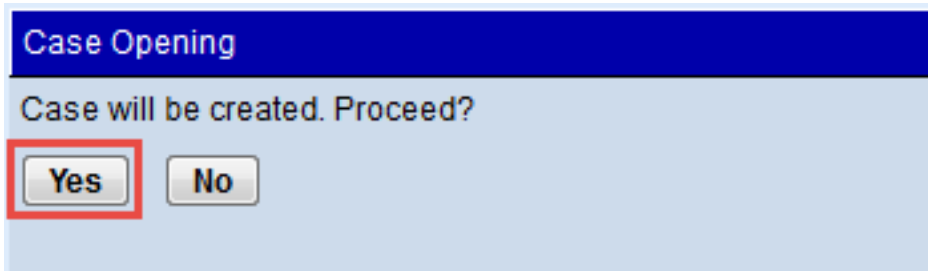
7. CREATING THE CASE

After you verify that all parties are added to the case, click **Create Case**.



A message displays confirming the case opening.

Click **Yes**.



Insert the assigned case number on your documents before filing in CM/ECF. Now you are ready to file your case initiating documents.

Click **Docket Lead Event?**

Open a Civil Case

Case Number 19-13 has been opened.

[Docket Lead Event?](#)

File your case initiating documents according to standard document filing practice. If you run into any issues, contact the clerk's office at 608-264-5156.

NOTE: If you inadvertently missed adding a party to the case, you are given another chance to add parties when filing your case initiating documents.

WARNING: If you believe you have made a mistake during regular business hours, stop where you are and contact the clerk's office immediately at 608-264-5156.

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