

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA

PROCEDURES FOR THE  
FILING OF SEALED DOCUMENTS

AMENDED  
STANDING ORDER NO. 41

In response to recent cyberattacks directed at public and private sector computer systems, including attacks directed at the judiciary and the CM/ECF system, good cause exists to modify the procedures used in this district for the storage of sealed documents. This Standing Order does not change the criteria that permit a document to be filed under seal. *See* M.D.N.C. L. Civ. R. 5.4. Instead, it changes the procedures for how sealed documents are stored, served, and accessed.

Now, therefore, it is **HEREBY ORDERED** that, effective immediately and continuing until such time as the Court may order otherwise:

1. **Electronic Access to Sealed Documents.** All sealed documents **SHALL** be filed in CM/ECF unless exempted by Local Rule 5.3. Once filed, these documents will no longer be accessible or viewable by electronic means.

2. **Service of Sealed Documents.** Because sealed documents filed in CM/ECF are no longer accessible or viewable electronically, service of those documents cannot be accomplished through CM/ECF. Rather, parties **SHALL** serve sealed documents by other appropriate means. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 5; Fed. R. Crim P. 49. The Court will serve sealed orders and notices in paper form by mail or through a secured electronic process implemented by the Clerk of Court.

3. **Additional Copies of Sealed Documents.** Any party with the right to access a sealed document in a case can obtain additional copies by contacting the Clerk's Office to request a paper copy. Applicable copy fees will be charged for such requests.

4. **Highly Sensitive Documents.** Sealed documents that are defined as highly sensitive documents will continue to be subject to the procedures of Standing Order 18.

5. **Criminal Sentencing-Related Documents.** The Probation Office, U.S. Attorney's Office, and defense counsel **SHALL** resume filing draft presentence investigation reports and objections thereto in CM/ECF as required by Local Criminal Rule 32.2. In a supervised release violation matter (including a judicial compliance hearing), the Probation Office **SHALL**, upon request, release the underlying final presentence investigation report and statement of reasons directly to defense counsel who is appointed or retained on the violation.

This order supersedes the previous version of this Standing Order and any and all inconsistent orders in individual cases, the Local Rules, and CM/ECF procedure manuals and guidance.

This the 24<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2026.

FOR THE COURT:



Catherine C. Eagles  
Chief/Senior United States District Judge