

September 09, 2025  
LAURA A. AUSTIN, CLERK  
BY: s/ S. Neily, Deputy Clerk

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

IN RE:	AMENDED ORDER	)	
	REGARDING PROCEDURES	)	AMENDED STANDING ORDER
	FOR THE FILING OF	)	No. 2025-9
	SEALED DOCUMENTS	)	

In response to recent cyberattacks directed at public and private sector computer systems, including attacks directed at the judiciary, information technology specialists have advised this Court of the need to take additional steps to better secure our case management system. Public users enjoy direct access to this Court's electronic filing system through PACER and CM/ECF, and while this access creates cybersecurity vulnerabilities, there is a vital need to preserve the integrity of this critical public resource.

The Court **FINDS** that the best way to secure our case management system and ensure continued constitutional and common-law access to all public Court records is to require that all sealed documents be filed only in paper format or sent to the Clerk's office or chambers staff only by encrypted email. These measures will preserve the integrity of the PACER and CM/ECF systems by shielding documents properly designated as non-public from unauthorized electronic access by nefarious actors.

Importantly, this Amended Standing Order does not change the criteria that permit a document to be filed under seal; instead, it changes the process for filing a sealed document. As contemplated by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5(d)(3)(A) and Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 49(b)(3)(A), the Court finds that good cause exists to adopt this updated filing procedure.

Accordingly, it is hereby **ORDERED** that, effective as of the date of this Amended Standing Order, and until such time as the Court orders otherwise, all sealed documents shall be transferred by attorneys, parties, and by court staff in one of only two permissible ways. The first is by utilizing the

“hard copy” handling requirements applicable to documents treated as Highly Sensitive Documents (“HSD”). These handling requirements are set forth in Paragraph 4(b)–(d) of Standing Order No. 2024-5 providing the procedure for the filing, service, and management of HSD. The second is by sending sealed documents using encrypted email. Encrypted email is specific technology, and the use of unencrypted email deemed or marked “confidential” or other similar terms does not comply with this order. Regardless of the method of submission, all documents submitted as sealed documents or proposed sealed documents shall contain sequentially numbered pages. If directed by any judge, the Clerk may return documents that are not sequentially numbered to the filer for numbering and refile.

The Clerk’s Office of this Court will be available to assist counsel and pro se parties and answer questions regarding the updated procedures for submitting sealed material.

Rules governing sealing materials can be found in Local General Rule 9. To the extent that Local Rule conflicts with this Amended Standing Order, this Amended Standing Order governs. If sealed materials that do not qualify as HSD are handled following the HSD hard copy filing procedures, these materials should nonetheless be referred to in relevant submissions as “Sealed” documents rather than as “Highly Sensitive Documents.” Any materials that are permissibly filed under seal without the need for an accompanying motion to seal, such as a Fed. R. Crim. Pr. 35 motion for reduced sentence, may continue to be filed under seal without a motion.

Any questions about how a sealed document should be filed with the Court pursuant to this Amended Standing Order should be directed to the Clerk’s Office in Roanoke, at 540-857-5100.

It is **SO ORDERED**.

Entered: September 9, 2025.

*/s/ Elizabeth K. Dillon*  
Elizabeth K. Dillon  
Chief United States District Judge