

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Prince Paul Raymond Williams v. Professional Courier and
Newspaper Distribution, d/b/a Brandt Brothers, et al.

Williams v. Professional Courier · No. 1:25-cv-00973-KES-HBK · Decided January 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California denied without prejudice a pro se plaintiff’s motion for permission to use the court’s electronic filing system. The court held that convenience, cost savings, and generalized access concerns did not establish sufficient grounds for an exception to the local rules prohibiting pro se electronic filing, while allowing the plaintiff to renew the request if circumstances changed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Helena M. Barch-Kuchta
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	January 12, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00973-KES-HBK
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se plaintiff moved for permission to use the court's electronic case filing system. The magistrate judge denied the motion without prejudice.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the applicable Eastern District of California Local Rules governing pro se access to electronic filing and evaluated whether plaintiff provided sufficient grounds for an exception.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- access to courts
- electronic filing

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether a pro se plaintiff established sufficient grounds under the Eastern District of California Local Rules to obtain an exception permitting access to CM/ECF.
2. Whether convenience, cost savings, and generalized concerns about access to the courts justified permitting a pro se plaintiff to file electronically.

HOLDINGS

1. A pro se plaintiff may not use electronic filing absent judicial permission, and plaintiff's stated reasons did not provide a sufficient explanation to justify an exception from the Eastern District of California Local Rules.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Plaintiff's motion for access to the Court's electronic case filing system (Doc. 4) is DENIED without prejudice.” (at 3)

“Any person appearing pro se may not utilize electronic filing.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, proceeding pro se and asserting indigency, sought permission to use CM/ECF, arguing that electronic filing would reduce printing and copying costs, help him meet deadlines, and safeguard his constitutional rights. No defendant had been served, plaintiff had successfully filed multiple documents, and the docket showed that he had not missed a court-ordered deadline. The case remained in its early procedural stages after the court found that the first amended complaint failed to state a cognizable claim.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed this action and moved for permission to use CM/ECF before any defendant had been served. The court had previously determined that plaintiff's first amended complaint failed to state a cognizable claim and directed him to file a second amended complaint. The court denied the electronic-filing motion without prejudice, allowing plaintiff to renew it if the case progressed or circumstances changed.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Lucero v. Pennella, Case No. 1:18-cv-01448-LJO-SAB, 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 188219, 2018 WL 5793429, at *2 (E.D. Cal. Nov. 2, 2018)

OPINION

Prince Paul Raymond Williams v. Professional Courier and Newspaper Distribution, d/b/a Brandt Brothers, et al.

PER CURIAM.

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8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

9 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10 11 PRINCE PAUL RAYMOND WILLIAMS, Case No. 1:25-cv-00973-KES-HBK 12 Plaintiff,
ORDER DENYING PRO SE PLAINTIFF'S

MOTION FOR ELECTRONIC FILING

13 v. PERMISSION WITHOUT PREJUDICE

14 PROFESSIONAL COURIER AND (Doc. 4)

NEWSPAPER DISTRIBUTION, d/b/a

15 Brandt Brothers, et al., 16 Defendants. 17 18 19 Pending before the Court is pro se Plaintiff's
motion seeking permission to utilize the 20 Court's case management and electronic filing system
(CM/ECF) filed on August 13, 2025. 21 (Doc. 4). Plaintiff argues "[d]enial of filing mechanisms
impedes the fundamental right of 22 access." (Id. at 1). Plaintiff lists the following reasons in
support of his motion: (1) as an 23 indigent litigant he cannot afford the printing and copying
costs; (2) electronic filing will ensure 24 he is able to timely respond to pleadings and not miss
deadlines; and (3) electronic filing will 25 "safeguard" his constitutional rights. (Id. at 2-3). 26 The
Court utilizes CM/ECF, which requires attorneys to adhere to electronic procedures 27 set forth in
the Court's Local Rules to file documents electronically. L.R. 133(a) (E.D. Cal. 28 2025). The
Local Rules specifically prohibit pro se parties from utilizing electronic filing except 1 with the
permission of the assigned Judge or Magistrate Judge. L.R. 133(b)(2); L.R. 183(c). Any 2 request
from a pro se party to utilize electronic filing "shall be submitted as stipulations as 3 provided in
L.R. 143." L.R. 133(b)(3). If the moving party cannot obtain a stipulation, the 4 request must
include "an explanation of the reasons for the exception." Id. 5 The Court acknowledges that
Plaintiff cannot obtain a stipulation since no defendant has 6 been served in this action. Having
reviewed Plaintiff's stated reasons, the Court finds Plaintiff 7 has not stated a sufficient
explanation as to why he should be exempted from the Court's Local 8 Rules. Plaintiff's argument
that access to CM/ECF would be more convenient and cost-effective 9 is insufficient to warrant
granting Plaintiff e-filing access. See *Lucero v. Pennella*, Case No. 10 1:18-cv-01448-LJO-SAB,
2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 188219, 2018 WL 5793429, *2 (E.D. Cal.

11 Nov. 2, 2018) (denying motion for reconsideration on an order denying CM/ECF access where
12 pro se plaintiff argued conventional filing was too costly and inconvenient). Plaintiff's 13
proposition that he will be denied access to the court if not granted e-filing privileges is without 14
substance. A review of the docket reflects the Court has received multiple filings from Plaintiff 15
and Plaintiff has not missed a court-ordered deadline. Indeed, the Court affords additional time 16
when setting case management deadlines in cases with pro se litigants and it generously grants 17
extensions of time to pro se litigants when requested. Consequently, there is no evidence to 18
suggest Plaintiff is disadvantaged in his ability to litigate this case because he does not have 19

access to CM/ECF. 20 Further, this case is in the early procedural stages. The Court recently found the first 21 amended complaint failed to state a cognizable claim and directed Plaintiff to file a second 22 amended complaint. Thus, while the Court is sensitive to the challenges Plaintiff faces as a pro se 23 litigant, Plaintiff has failed to present sufficient grounds justifying an exemption from 24 conventional filing at this time to deviate from the Local Rule that “[a]ny person appearing pro se 25 may not utilize electronic filing.” L.R. 133(b)(2). Should this case progress and the 26 circumstances change, Plaintiff may renew his motion at a future time. 27 //// 28 //// 1 Accordingly, it is ORDERED: 2 Plaintiff's motion for access to the Court's electronic case filing system (Doc. 4) is 3 | DENIED without prejudice. 4 ° Dated: _ January 12, 2026 Mibu □ Zh fare Hack

6 HELENA M. BARCH-KUCHTA

4 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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