

Master Sealed Event–Quick Reference Sheet

- The District of Arizona currently uses the "Master Sealed Event"¹ (“MSE”) method of storing certain documents involving cooperation that are filed in non-1326 felony cases. Use of this procedure calls for eligible documents to be sent to the Clerk's Office via an e-mail transmission. [If defense counsel is not confident in the security of an email transmission, they must submit their documents in paper form to the Clerk’s Office.]
- The MSE is docketed in each case during case opening. It is a sealed event that is not visible to counsel or the public.
- Plea hearings will not be sealed in these cases. Both the minute order setting the plea hearing and minutes of the hearing will be docketed publicly. Sentencings will be set as public hearings, therefore Motions to Continue Sentencing should be filed publicly and should not mention the cooperation.
- In cooperation cases, both a public plea agreement and a sealed addendum will be submitted. Only the sealed addendum will be docketed in the MSE.
- The only documents to be filed in the MSE in criminal cases involving cooperation are as follows: (Separate motions to seal will not be necessary.)
 - Plea Agreement Addendum (containing the case number and caption)
 - 5K Motions and Responses
 - Sentencing Memo (that references cooperation) and Response
 - Sealed portions of change of plea and sentencing transcripts that discuss defendant’s cooperation
 - Rule 35 Motions and Responses
 - Motions to Continue Sentencing that reference cooperation
- Motions to Continue Sentencing should be filed as public documents unless it is necessary to discuss the defendant’s cooperation. If cooperation must be addressed in the motion, then the Motion to Continue should be submitted to the master sealed email box.
- Documents for the MSE should be emailed to the appropriate court office as follows:
Phoenix: phxcoopseal@azd.uscourts.gov
Tucson: tuccoopseal@azd.uscourts.gov
- Documents must be in a text-searchable PDF format and may not exceed 10MB in size. Documents with attachments should be submitted as one document.
- If transcripts of the plea or sentencing are ordered, the court reporter will prepare a public transcript that will not include the cooperation discussion. A sealed transcript of the cooperation portion will be prepared and filed in the MSE.

¹ Every document filed in ECF is assigned a number, resulting in missing entries and missing document numbers associated with documents filed under seal. To avoid the obvious gaps in document numbering and to avoid the unexplained disappearance of a cooperating defendant from the public docket around the time of a plea hearing, the Clerk’s Office established a standard, master sealed event (MSE) that is docketed in all non-1326 felony cases. This sealed event, which causes a numbering skip on the public docket at the onset of each case, is used to house eligible documents relating to a cooperating defendant(s). Every plea agreement is filed publicly and will reference the possibility of an addendum. If an addendum actually exists, as it would in a cooperation case, it is placed in the MSE. Subsequent documents relating to cooperation, as described herein, will also be filed in the MSE by the Clerk of Court.