



**US District Court
District of Montana
Contract Court Reporters
Electronic Storage of Notes & Audio Files**



The following procedures encompass storage of steno notes and applicable criminal case audio files. In accordance with Title 28 U.S.C. § 753(b), also known as the Court Reporter Act, court reporters are required to file with the Clerk of Court either a transcript or an electronic sound recording of all arraignments, pleas, and proceedings in connection with the imposition of a sentence in criminal cases. The Act also requires federal court reporters to certify their original shorthand notes and file them with the Clerk.

Today's technology allows for the use of paperless stenograph machines and the creation of electronic audio files. To ensure the files are accessible to the Court, standards relative to the file format, naming convention and preferred media are outlined below:

- Court reporters shall print/save the steno notes to an Adobe Acrobat PDF file.
- Audio files must be saved in a WAV file format.
- When saving files, meaningful file names must be used that include the date of the hearing and the case number, case title, or presiding judge. When saving a shorter, individual file, the preferred format is YYYY-MM-DD followed by the case number or case title. The preferred format for an entire day would be YYYY-MM-DD followed by the presiding judge's name. For example:

Individual File	2011-10-3 USA v Smith.wav
Entire Day	2011-10-3 Cebull.pdf

- Contract court reporters shall submit both steno notes and audio files to the courtroom deputy immediately after the hearing. A USB drive is available in all courtrooms to accommodate this process.
- A certification must accompany the steno notes and audio files. It is recommended that reporters utilize the fillable PDF forms the Court has created for the certification process available on our website at <http://www.mtd.uscourts.gov/court-reporters-transcribers-0>. Certifications must include the date and type of hearing, the case number, the presiding judge, the filename, and the file type. Certifications must also include text stating that these files represent the true and correct record of the proceedings. All certifications must be signed and dated (/s/ is accepted as the reporter's signature).

The steno notes will be stored on one of the district network servers. It should be noted that this storage method is for purposes of complying with the Court Reporter Act to maintain steno notes and criminal audio files for a certain period of time. It is not meant to replace any archival system that reporters use.