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1.0 Introduction

For more than 80 years, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has provided an objective, independent, and impartial forum for the resolution of disputes concerning the awards of federal contracts. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014\(^1\), directed GAO to develop an electronic protest docketing system and authorized GAO to collect and use fees to offset the costs of the system.

GAO’s Electronic Protest Docketing System (EPDS) is an automated case management system that allows parties to a case to file documents over the Internet and provides GAO with the ability to make electronic documents available to the parties over the Internet. Use of EPDS is mandatory, except as set forth in the EPDS instructions available here. For example, classified material must never be filed through EPDS.

A goal of EPDS is to be easy to use; a filer creates a document using conventional word processing software and converts it to a Portable Document Format (PDF). After logging into EPDS, the filer enters basic information relating to the document, attaches the PDF file and submits it to GAO. A notice verifying receipt of the filing is automatically generated and emailed to the other case participants.

This guide is intended for representatives of protesters and intervenors, including representatives of other parties permitted by GAO to participate in a case pursuant to 4 C.F.R. § 21.3(j).

1.1 Scope

The scope of this manual is to provide instructions on utilizing the GAO EPDS. This manual does not provide information on the protest process. For information on the protest process, please visit the GAO website. If you need assistance in utilizing the EPDS, please contact GAO at 202-512-5436 or protests@gao.gov.

2.0 Getting Started

The GAO EPDS site is at: https://epdstest.edc.usda.gov/EPDS_Web/login.

By utilizing the site, users agree to following:

- You are accessing a U.S. Government information system, which includes (1) this computer, (2) this computer network, (3) all computers connected to this network, and (4) all devices and storage media attached to this network or to a computer on this network. This information system is provided for U.S. Government-authorized use only.
- Unauthorized or improper use of this system may result in disciplinary action, as well as civil and criminal penalties.
- Subject to the provisions in 4 C.F.R. §§ 21.1(g) and 21.4 and 4 C.F.R. part 81, which include procedures for protecting proprietary, confidential, and other procurement sensitive information, by using this information system, you understand and consent to the following:
  - You have no reasonable expectation of privacy regarding any communications or data transiting or stored on this information system. At any time, the government may for any lawful government purpose monitor, intercept, search and seize any communication or data transiting or stored on this information system. Accordingly, pursuant to GAO’s Electronic Protest Docketing System Instructions, the following personal identifiers should be excluded, or redacted when inclusion is necessary, from all filings, unless otherwise directed by GAO:
    1. Social Security Numbers. If an individual’s Social Security number must be included in a filing, only the last four digits of the numbers should be used.
    2. Dates of Birth. If an individual’s date of birth must be included in a filing, only the year should be used.
    3. Financial Account Numbers. If a financial account number is relevant to a filing, only the last four digits of the number should be used.
  - Any communications or data transiting or stored on this information system may be disclosed or used for any lawful government purpose.
- Your consent is final and irrevocable. You may not rely on any statements or informal policies purporting to provide you with any expectation of privacy regarding communications on this system, whether oral or written, by your supervisor or any other official, except GAO’s Chief Information Officer.
2.1 Web Browser

For the best experience, use Google Chrome, Firefox, Safari, or Internet Edge as the web browser. Please note that there are known issues that could affect your experience if using Internet Explorer (IE). For example, you may find that you are unable to enter text in response to system prompts or in certain data fields. Refreshing the web page and then attempting to enter the text may resolve the issue.

If you must use IE, follow these instructions to help mitigate performance issues.

1. In IE, click the Tools icon in the upper right corner.

2. Click Compatibility View settings.
3. Ensure the box for **Display intranet sites in Compatibility View** is unchecked.

4. Click **Close**.
2.2 Register as a Filer

Anyone wishing to file or intervene in a protest, must be a registered filer.

1. On the login page, click the **Register as a new User** button.

![Register as a new User button](image1)

2. In the **Please Select Account Type** popup, the **Account Type** default is **Protester/Intervenor**. Leave the default, and click **OK**.

![Please Select Account Type](image2)

3. In the **Register as Protester/Intervenor Representative**, complete all fields.

![Register as Protester/Intervenor Representative](image3)
4. Click the checkbox next to **I have reviewed and agree to abide by GAO's Bid Protest Regulations and EPDS Instructions, which are available here.**

5. Click **Register.**
6. At initial log in, the **Rules of Behavior** will display also. Read the rules, and then click **I Agree** to complete the registration process.

![Rules of Behavior](image)

7. If your registration is successful, a **Success** pop-up window will appear. Click **OK**.

![Success](image)

If there are issues with your registration, check the fields for error messages.
8. The system will send you an email with a temporary password. When you log on to the system the first time, the system will require you to change your password.

2.3 Initial Log In

To log in to the system the first time:

1. You will be issued a temporary password when your EPDS account is initially created. Upon logging into the system the first time, you will be prompted to create a password. For subsequent log in activity, enter your EPDS-registered email address and newly created password in the appropriate fields. Click **Sign me in**.

2. Upon your **initial log in**, the system will prompt you to update your password. Click **OK** to proceed.
3. Update your password by entering a **New Password** and confirming it.

Passwords must be between 12 and 24 characters in length, and contain **one character from each of the following four categories:**

- English uppercase characters (A to Z)
- English lowercase characters (a to z)
- Base 10 digits (0 to 9)
- Special characters (For example, #, $, and ^)

4. Click **OK** in the success message pop up to finish.

5. If your session remains inactive for 20 minutes, the system will require you to log back in again. You can only be logged in to one session at a time.

### 2.4 On-going Log In

After completing the initial log in steps, the process for subsequent log ins follow steps 2 through 4 in section 2.3, as depicted below.
1. Enter your EPDS account email and password. Click **Sign me in**.

![EPDS Login Screen]

2. If your session remains inactive for 20 minutes, the system will require you to log back in again. You can only be logged in to one session at a time.
3.0 Application Introduction

This section provides a high-level description of the EPDS features.

1. Click the menu icon to show or hide the site navigation.

2. In the site navigation, click Active Cases to view your current protest cases and return to your Dashboard. See section 4.0 Dashboard/Active Cases for more information.
3. Click **File New Protest** to file a new protest. See section 5.1 New Cases and Subsequent Filings for more information.

![File New Protest](image)

4. Click **Request to Intervene** to request to join a case pursuant to 4 C.F.R. §§ 21.0(b) or 21.3(j). See section 6.0 Request to Intervene for more information.

![Request to Intervene](image)

5. Click the **Help** menu (upper right corner) to access **User Guides, FAQs, Contact Us**, and **Feedback** information.

![Help Menu](image)
6. Click your name to access the Manage User Profile or Logout options. See section 9.1 Manage Profile for information on modifying your profile.

![User Profile Navigation]

7. The breadcrumb navigation displays under the Help and user name. This navigation makes it easier to understand where you are on the site.

![Breadcrumb Navigation]

For instance, this breadcrumb navigation shows that the user is on the dashboard of the site, which displays the user’s active cases.
4.0 Dashboard/Active Cases

The default view is the dashboard, which displays your active cases.

4.1 Modify Dashboard

There are several ways to modify the dashboard.

1. **Show More Entries**: click the drop-down entries to change the view to display 25 (default), 50, 100 or 150 entries (cases).
2. **Filter Entries:** type in a filter parameter in the **Filter Records** field. The records will filter as you type. You can filter by any protest variable (B-Number, agency, due date, etc.). The filter will search all fields for any filter parameter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B-Number</th>
<th>Protesting Corporation</th>
<th>Filing Date</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>EPDS Case #</th>
<th>Case Type</th>
<th>Case Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45123-1</td>
<td>HP</td>
<td>Nov 12 2013 17:50 EST</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>02/02/2015</td>
<td>A-7802</td>
<td>PROTEST</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53487-8</td>
<td>Visions Company</td>
<td>Dec 21 2013 09:00 EST</td>
<td>Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency</td>
<td>05/12/2010</td>
<td>A-45127</td>
<td>PROTEST</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Modify Columns:** click the **Show/hide columns** button to select which columns to show.

4. **Sort Columns:** click the column headings to sort entries ascending or descending in that column.
5.0  Case Information

5.1  File a New Protest

Follow the instructions below to file a new protest.

If you are filing a supplemental protest, please refer to section 5.4.1 Submit New Documents, and select ‘Supplemental Protest’, or ‘Comments & Supplemental Protest’ if appropriate, as the Type of document.

1. From the dashboard, click File New Protest on the site navigation.

2. Read the Warning, and then click Yes on the pop-up window.
3. Complete all fields in the **New Protest Information** form. Additional instructions for completing individual fields follow.
4. **Size Status**: To determine the protester’s size for a procurement, the filer should locate the solicitation’s applicable North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code and consult the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) size standards in Title 13, Part 121 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). If the applicable size for the procurement at issue is unknown, select **Large**. This information is collected for statistical purposes.

5. **Solicitation Number**: This number is found on the solicitation on which you are filing a protest.

6. **Agency Tier 1**: Select the primary agency that issued the solicitation. This is found on the solicitation. Where the solicitation is issued by an agency or department of a primary agency, select an **Agency Tier 2**. For example, if the solicitation was issued by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, which is an agency of the Department of Commerce, first select **Department of Commerce** as the **Agency Tier 1**. Then a new field titled **Agency Tier 2** will appear. From that drop down menu, select the **National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration**.
7. **Upload Protest Document**: Only PDF and Excel files can be attached. Click **Add File**.

A pop-up window will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it, and click **Open**.

8. If you need to add additional documents associated with the protest, click **Yes** for the question, **Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?** A pop-up window will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it, and click **Open**.

9. If appropriate, click **Yes** for the question, **Do any of these documents contain information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public?** See section 7.0 Protected Material for more information.
10. Add comments to the **Comments** field if needed. Click **Submit**

![Comment Field](image)

11. Click **Yes** on the **Warning** pop-up to be directed to Pay.gov to pay the filing fee.

![Warning Pop-up](image)

12. Select the payment method you are using, and click **Continue**. This example, demonstrates using a credit card for payment.

![Payment Method](image)

13. Complete the form and process for the selected payment method.

14. Once the payment is processed, the site will return you to the EPDS.
15. Click **OK** on the **Payment Success** pop-up window.

If the payment was unsuccessful after three attempts, you will be directed back to EPDS. If you believe that the unsuccessful attempts were the result of inputting incorrect information or you would like to attempt a different payment method, please resubmit your payment beginning with **Submit** on step 5. If you believe that the error is the result of a technical failure of either EPDS or Pay.gov, please refer to the EPDS instructions available [here](#).

16. The new protest will appear in the **Active Cases/Dashboard**, but **will not** have a B-Number.

17. EPDS will automatically generate two emails when a new protest is filed. First, the **filer** will receive a confirmation of receipt of payment of the filing fee email:
18. Next, the system will automatically generate an email notifying the **procuring agency** that a new protest has been filed pursuant to GAO’s responsibility under 31 U.S.C. § 3553(b)(1). The filer will be copied on the email to the agency.

19. Once GAO assigns an attorney to the protest, GAO will prepare a case acknowledgement package that includes, among other information, the B-Number assigned to the case. The acknowledgement package will be available on the dashboard, and users who have not turned off email notifications for the case, will receive an email notification that the acknowledgement package has been created by GAO.

### 5.2 View an Active Case/Case Docket Sheet

To see an active case by viewing the **Case Docket Sheet**, click on the **B-Number** link or the **EPDS Cntrl #** link.
5.3 Case Docket Sheet Overview

The top part of the Case Docket Sheet provides the case information. This information cannot be edited except by GAO. Please see the following clarification on select items in the case information section.

1. **B-Number**: This field shows the number(s) that GAO assigns to your case. All filings in a case should reference the assigned B-Number(s).

2. **Intervenor(s)**: This field shows any intervenors permitted by GAO to participate in the case pursuant to 4 C.F.R. §§ 21.0(b) or 21.3(j).

3. **Consolidated Protests**: If GAO has consolidated the case with another pending case(s), this field shows the title and B-Number(s) of the other case. After cases are consolidated, a filing made in one case will automatically be filed in the joined case(s). Although a user can see and access the documents in all joined cases (subject to the terms of any applicable protective order(s)), **any filings must be made in the filer’s own case.**

   For example, GAO has consolidated the protests of Protester A and Protester B. **Protester A**, subject to the terms of any applicable protective order(s), can access and...
view the docket for **Protester B’s** case. However, to file anything in the consolidated cases, **Protester A** must file the document in **Protester A’s** case only.

4. **GAO Attorney Name**: This field shows the GAO-assigned attorney for the case.

5. **Days Remaining**: For cases subject to 4 C.F.R. § 21.9, this field shows the number of days remaining for GAO to issue a final decision. For all other cases, this field is inapplicable.

6. **Case Status**: Case status will be **Open** or **Closed**. If a case has been closed for more than 60 days, filers will no longer have access to open or download files from the docket.

7. **Protective Order Issued?**: This field shows whether or not GAO has issued a protective order for the case pursuant to 4 C.F.R. § 21.4.

The bottom part of the **Case Docket Sheet** shows the records attached to this protest. Records can include documents or docket entries created by GAO. This section can be sorted by the **Index**, **Filer**, and **Protected** columns. Additionally, you can filter or search the records by using the **Filter Records** field.

### 5.3.1 Alerts

Any new records on the **Case Docket Sheet** are identified with an alert icon that will display in the **Alerts** column (see the image below). The Alert icon will remain visible until the new record is opened.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Alerts</th>
<th>Type of Filing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>⚠️</td>
<td>Protest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>⚠️</td>
<td>Notice Of Case transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledgement Package with Protective Order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.2 Opening Attachments

Records that contain attachments can be opened by clicking the link in the Type of Filing column; the attachments can be viewed and downloaded. If a protective order has been issued for a case, parties not admitted to the protective order will not be able to access documents containing protected material. Please refer to section 7.5 Protective Order for more information.

5.4 Case Docket Sheet Actions

While viewing the Case Docket Sheet page, there are four actions you can perform (available in the menu on the left side of the page).

1. Return to the dashboard to view Active Cases.
2. Submit New Documents for the current case.
3. View all parties to the case and their respective representatives with access to the case and add secondary representatives in the Parties screen.

4. Set your Email Preferences.

5.4.1 Submit New Documents

New documents submitted will be automatically attached to the currently viewed case and a new record will be entered for that case. Follow the instructions below to submit new documents.

1. In the site menu, click Submit New Documents.

2. Complete the items on the Submit New Documents screen. Additional instructions for completing individual fields follow.
3. Select the **Type of document** from the dropdown menu. The available options will vary depending on the type of case and the case status (open, closed, complete). The following example displays the **Type of document** menu choices for a ‘Protest’ case with an ‘Open’ status.

![Type of document menu choices example]

4. If you select a document type with an underscore (i.e., a blank), a pop-up window will ask you to fill in the blank. Type in a brief description of the document, and click **OK**.

![Response to blank field example]
5. Click **Add File** under **Upload Primary Document**.

A pop-up window will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it (only PDF and Excel files can be attached), and click **Open**.

6. Once a document is added, you can add additional documents by clicking **Yes** for the question, **Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?**

7. If appropriate, click **Yes** for the question, **Do any of these documents contain information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public?**
8. Add comments to the **Comments** field if needed. Click **Submit**.

![Image of the Comments field](image)

### 5.4.2 Parties

The **Parties** screen shows all the different parties associated with the case. Each party is allowed to have **up to four representatives** who can access or file documents in EPDS. Follow the instructions below to add a secondary representative.
1. In the Parties screen, click + Add 2nd Rep. in the Primary Representative box (this example is shown from the intervenor perspective).

2. Enter the email for the secondary representative you would like to invite to join the case, and click Send Invite.
3. In order to invite a secondary representative to join a case, the individual must have an EPDS user account. If the individual has an EPDS user account, the system will send them an email inviting them to join the case. Upon logging into EPDS, the invitee will be prompted to indicate whether they would like to join the case.

If the person selects **Yes**, they will automatically have access to the case. If the person declines, they will not have access to the case. If the person accidentally declined to join the case, the party’s primary representative can send the individual another invitation by following steps 1 and 2 above.

4. If the individual does not have an EPDS user account, a pop-up menu will appear with a notification that no such user account exists. Once the individual creates a user account, they can be invited to join the case by following steps 1 and 2 above.

5. Once the secondary representative accepts the invitation to join a case, his or her information will appear on the **Parties** page in the **Secondary Representative** box.
5.4.3 Email Preferences

All service of filings and notices of case developments will occur by postings to the case docket sheet. When a filing or other case development occurs in EPDS, **the default setting is that the system will send all parties an email notification.**

---

**EPDS <epds@gao.gov>**

Electronic Protest Docket System :B-123498.2--HTG

To

**********Please do not reply to this message. Replies to this message are routed to an unmonitored mailbox.**********

This email is an automated notification, which is unable to receive replies. For assistance, please contact GAO's Procurement Law Control Group at (202) 512-4788 or protests@gao.gov.

New File has been submitted to your case

**Docket Number:** 0

**Filing Date:** Apr 05 2016 10:47:52 EDT

**Docket Entry Title:** Supplemental Protest

Please Login to your [Case Docket Sheet](#) to see more details

---

Users are strongly encouraged to keep email notifications activated for each case. Users bear sole responsibility for learning of any new filings or case developments.

**Deactivate Email Notifications**

1. On the left side navigation, click Email Preferences.
2. Click Yes on the pop-up box.

![Email Preferences](image)

3. Click Ok on the Warning pop-up.

![Warning](image)

4. Click OK on the Success pop-up.

![Success](image)

**Reactivate Email Notifications**

1. On the left side navigation, click Email Preferences.
2. **Click Yes** on the **Email Preferences** pop-up box.

![Email Preferences pop-up](image)

3. **Click OK** on the **Success** pop-up.

![Success pop-up](image)
6.0 Request to Intervene

Parties can seek to intervene in a case pursuant to 4 C.F.R. § 21.0(b) or per an invitation from GAO pursuant to 4 C.F.R. § 21.3(j). Before intervening, users must know the B-Number for the protest. To find the B-Number, go to GAO Bid Protests search page, where you can search for a case by protester, agency, and/or solicitation number. Follow the instructions below to file a request to intervene in a pending case.

1. From the dashboard, click **Request to Intervene** on the left side navigation.

2. Enter the protest **B Number**.

3. Click **Search**.
4. When the results load, click **Yes** for the question, **Do you want to request access to this case?**

5. Complete the **Request to Intervene** form and upload any related files (only **PDF** and **Excel files** can be attached). Click **Submit**.
6. Click **OK** on the **Success** pop-up window.

   ![Success Pop-up Window]

   You have successfully submitted a request to intervene.

   ![OK Button]

7. The case will appear in your **Active Cases/Dashboard**. However, you **will not** be able to access the docket and associated filings and case developments until GAO approves your intervention request.

   ![Active Cases/Dashboard]

   ![Filter Records]
7.0 Protected Material

Often protests and associated filings and materials contain a company’s proprietary or confidential data, or the agency’s source-selection-sensitive information that cannot be released publicly. This guide will collectively refer to that information as ‘protected material’. The following provides an overview of the EPDS features for properly marking and safeguarding protected material, as well as how to prepare redacted versions that are publically releasable.

7.1 New Cases and Subsequent Filings

In addition to conspicuously marking the document being filed, when filing a new protest (or other case type) and any subsequent filings in a case, EPDS will prompt the filer to answer the following question:

The filer should select Yes if the filing includes any information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public. When a filer marks a document as containing information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public, only the party that made the filing, GAO, and authorized representatives of the agency will be able to access the filing.

1. As shown in the example below, authorized users can access a protected filing by clicking the title in the Type of Filing column. The title is an active hyperlink that opens the protected document.
2. A user without access (such as an Intervenor), can see that a protected filing has been posted to the Docket. However, the user **can not** open the filing because the title is **not** an active hyperlink for them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Alerts</th>
<th>Type of Filing</th>
<th>Filer</th>
<th>Protected?</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Protect</td>
<td>PROTECTOR (Environmental Today)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Apr 01, 2014 17:18:55 EDT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supplemental Protest</td>
<td>GAO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Apr 01, 2014 18:53:20 EDT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>PROTECTOR (Environmental Today)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Jul 11, 2014 19:00:52 EDT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WARNING**

Because the docket will always be viewable by any party to a case, the **parties should refrain from submitting any protected material on the docket**. Rather, any protected material should be set forth in a document that is properly marked as containing protected material and uploaded to EPDS with the designation that the document contains information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public.

As discussed below, if GAO determines that it is appropriate to issue a protective order, counsel who are admitted to the protective order will also be able to access documents marked as containing information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public on the docket.

### 7.2 Redacted Versions of Filings

GAO’s Bid Protest Regulations require that a party submit redacted (or publically releasable) versions of new protests that were marked as containing protected material.

For new protests, new requests for reconsideration, new requests for a recommendation of entitlement to costs, or new requests for a recommendation of reimbursement of costs, the **Submit New Documents** link from the case docket sheet will include a **Final Redacted** version in the **Type of Document** dropdown menu. The example below demonstrates how to file a redacted protest.
1. After filing a protest that was marked as containing information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public, select the appropriate protest from the dashboard.

2. Click **Submit New Documents** on the left side menu.

3. Select **Final Redacted Protest** as the **Type of document**.
4. Click **Add File** under **Upload Primary Document**.

A pop-up window will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it (only **PDF** and **Excel files** can be attached), and click **Open**.

5. Once a document is added, you can add additional documents by clicking **Yes** for the question, **Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?**

6. Add comments to the **Comments** field if needed. Click **Submit**.
7. The **Final Redacted Protest** is marked as **not** containing information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public and will be accessible by all authorized users with access to the case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
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<th>Protected?</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>(redacted)</td>
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</table>

**7.3 Redacted Subsequent Versions of Filings**

For all subsequent versions of filings in a case, when the parties agree to a final redacted version of a filing, follow the instructions below.

**NOTE**

Parties should exchange proposed redacted versions of filings and correspond in good faith to prepare final agreed-to redacted versions of filings outside of EPDS. **Only the final redacted version agreed to by all parties should be filed in EPDS.**

1. Click **Submit New Documents** on the left side menu.
2. Select **Final Redacted Version Of ___** as the **Type of document**.

3. In the pop-up window, provide a brief description of the document. In the example below, the final redacted version being filed is of the protester’s comments. Click **OK**.

4. Click **Add File** under **Upload Primary Document**.

   A pop-up window will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it (only **PDF** and **Excel files** can be attached), and click **Open**.
5. Once a document is added, you can add additional documents by clicking Yes for the question, Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?

6. Add comments to the Comments field if needed. Click Submit.
7. Read the warning and click Yes on the Warning pop-up box if the document you have uploaded is acceptable for public viewing. If you need to upload a different document instead, click No to return to the upload page.

8. The final redacted version of the protester’s comments is marked as not containing information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public. It will now be available to be accessed by all authorized users with access to the case.

7.4 Redacted Versions of GAO’s Decisions

If GAO issues a protected decision, parties with authorized access to the protected decision can submit proposed redactions.

1. Click Submit New Documents on the left side menu.
2. Select \textit{Proposed Redactions to GAO Decision} from the \textit{Type of document} dropdown menu.

![Type of document dropdown]

3. Click \textit{Add File} under \textit{Upload Primary Document}.

![Add File button]

A pop-up window will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it (only \textit{PDF} and \textit{Excel files} can be attached), and click \textit{Open}.
4. Once a document is added, you can add additional documents by clicking Yes for the question, Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?

5. Add comments to the Comments field if needed. Click Submit.

6. All Proposed Redactions are automatically marked by the system as having proprietary information. Only appropriate parties will be able to view these documents.

7. GAO will evaluate the proposed redactions. GAO will either correspond further with the parties regarding their proposed redactions, or will proceed to issue a Public Decision that will be accessible on the docket and available to all authorized users with access to the case.
7.5 Protective Order

GAO may, in appropriate cases, issue a protective order that will allow authorized counsel access to all materials in a case that are marked as containing protected material. For additional information regarding GAO’s protective order process, please review GAO’s Bid Protests at GAO: A Descriptive Guide, and Guide to GAO Protective Orders.

1. The default setting in EPDS is that a case will not have a protective order. As shown on the docket, the case below does not have a protective order.

2. When GAO issues an acknowledgement package with a protective order or a notice of protective order, the protective order will be available for download on the docket. Also, the protective order issued field on the docket will change to Y.
7.5.1 Submitting an Application for Admission

Follow the instructions below to submit a protective order application(s):

1. From the Docket for a case, click Submit New Documents.

2. On the Submit New Document screen, click the drop-down arrow for Type of document and select the appropriate protective order option.

3. Under Upload Primary Document, click Add File. A pop-up menu will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it (only PDF and Excel files can be attached), and click Open.
4. Once a document is added, you can add additional documents by clicking Yes for the question, **Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?**

5. Add comments to the **Comments** field if needed. Click **Submit**.

7.5.2 **Agree to a Protective Order Admission**

Once a party’s representative(s) submits his or her protective order application(s), the other parties will receive an email that an application has been submitted and they should indicate on the case docket sheet whether they have any objections. If the party has no objections, they should submit a document according to the following instructions.
1. While on the Docket, click **Submit New Documents** on the left side menu.

![Submit New Documents](image)

2. On the **Submit New Document** screen, click the drop-down arrow for **Type of document** and select **No Objection to ___**.

![Type of document](image)

3. In the pop-up window, type **protective order application**, and click **OK**.

![Protective order application](image)
4. Add comments to the **Comments** field if needed. Click **Submit**.

![Comments Field](image)

5. The party’s non-objection will appear on the docket.

![Docket Entry](image)

### 7.5.3 Objection to a Protective Order Application

If a party has an objection to a pending application for admission to the protective order, they should submit a document according to the following instructions.

1. While on the Docket, click **Submit New Documents** on the left side menu.
2. On the **Submit New Document** screen, click the drop-down arrow for **Type of document** and select **Objection to _____**.

![Type of document drop-down menu]

3. In the pop-up window, type protective order application, and click OK.

![Pop-up window for objection to protective order application]

4. Under **Upload Primary Document**, click **Add File**.

![Upload Primary Document dialog box]

A pop-up menu will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it (only **PDF** and **Excel files** can be attached), and click **Open**.
5. Once a document is added, you can add additional documents by clicking Yes for the question, **Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?**

6. If appropriate, click Yes for the question **Do any of these documents contain information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public?**

7. Add comments to the **Comments** field if needed. Click **Submit**.

8. The party’s objection will appear on the docket.
7.5.4  Admission to a Protective Order

GAO must approve the request to admit a party’s representative(s) to a protective order. Once a party’s representative(s) has access to the protective order, that representative(s) will have access to all documents on the docket, including documents marked as containing information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not subject to public release.

NOTE

EPDS only allows up to four representatives for a party with the ability to upload or download filings. Additional representatives, however, may be admitted to the protective order and subsequently have access to protected material.

7.5.5  Revocation of Access

GAO may, in appropriate circumstances, revoke a party’s access to the protective order. In such cases, the user will no longer have access to documents marked as containing information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not subject to public release.

GAO has created an additional precaution to limit the potential inadvertent disclosure of protected materials to users not admitted to the protective order. Those users not admitted to the protective order will not be able to access documents (other than certain administrative materials issued by GAO or documents submitted by the parties that, by their nature, do not include protected material (e.g., protective order applications)) regardless of whether they are marked as containing information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not subject to public release. Rather, it is the filer’s responsibility to prepare and file a final redaction version of all filings. See section 7.2 Redaction Versions of Filings.
8.0 Closed Case Actions

After a case is closed, the left navigation options in the Case Docket Sheet change and include additional options.

These new menu items include:

1. File a Request for Reconsideration
2. File a Request for Entitlement
3. File a Claim for Costs

The following sections provide additional details on these options.

8.1 File a Request for Reconsideration

When GAO issues a decision on a case, parties who have not disabled notifications will be notified by email of the decision. Additionally, a case status of Closed is displayed in the Case Status column of the dashboard and the upper right corner of the case docket sheet.
Follow these instructions to file a request for reconsideration.

1. Click **Request for Reconsideration** on the Docket menu.

2. Complete the fields on the **Request for Reconsideration** document screen. Additional instructions for completing individual fields follow.
3. Click **Add File** under **Upload Request for Reconsideration Document**.

A pop-up window will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it (only **PDF** and **Excel files** can be attached), and click **Open**.

4. Once a document is added, indicate whether additional documents will be loaded by clicking **Yes** or **No** for the question, **Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?**

5. If appropriate, click **Yes** for the question, **Do any of these documents contain information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public?**
6. Add comments to the **Comments** field if needed. Click **Submit**.

![Screenshot of the Upload Request for Reconsideration Document interface]

7. The new request for reconsideration will appear in the **Dashboard**.

![Screenshot of the Dashboard interface]
8. The system will automatically generate an email notifying the procuring agency that a new request for reconsideration has been filed. The filer will be copied on the email to the agency.

```
Wed 4/27/2016 12:36 PM

EPDS <epds@ga.gov>

Electronic Protest Docket System: NOTICE OF NEW REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

To: [Redacted]

*******Please do not reply to this message. Replies to this message are routed to an unmonitored mailbox.**********

This email is an automated notification, which is unable to receive replies. For assistance, please contact GAO’s Procurement Law Control Group at (202) 512-4788 or protests@ga.gov.

GAO is notifying you that the following request for reconsideration has been filed with our Office:

Protester: [Redacted]
Solicitation Number: unknown
Time of Filing: Apr 27 2016 14:36:00 EDT
B Number: TBD
EPDS Tracking Number: A-MQH11.3.4

Additional instructions from our Office will be forthcoming and available on the protest docket sheet for the case.

Please Login to your Dashboard to see more details
```

9. Once GAO assigns an attorney to the request for reconsideration, GAO will prepare a case acknowledgement package that includes, among other information, the B-Number assigned to the case. The acknowledgement package will be available on the docket, and users who have not turned off email notifications for the case will receive an email notification that GAO has posted the acknowledgement package.
8.2 File an Entitlement Request

When GAO issues a decision on a case, parties who have not disabled notifications will be notified by email of the decision. Additionally, a case status of Closed is displayed in the Case Status column of the dashboard and the upper right corner of the case docket sheet.

Follow these instructions to file a request for a recommendation of entitlement to costs.

1. Click Request for Entitlement on the Case Docket menu.
2. Complete the fields on the **Request for Entitlement** document screen. Additional instructions for completing individual fields follow.

![Request for Entitlement Document](image)

Pursuant to 4 C.F.R. § 21.8(e), if the agency decides to take corrective action in response to a protest, the protester may request that GAO recommend that the agency pay the protester the reasonable costs of filing and pursuing the protest, including attorneys’ fees and consultant and expert witness fees.

**Upload Request for Entitlement Document (Only PDF & Excel documents can be attached)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Do any of these documents contain information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public?

- **Yes**
- **No**

**Comments**

250 characters remaining

Submit

3. Click **Add File** under **Upload Request for Entitlement**.

![Add File](image)

A pop-up window will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it (only **PDF** and **Excel files** can be attached), and click **Open**.
4. Once a document is added, you can add additional documents by clicking Yes for the question, Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?

5. If appropriate, click Yes for the question, Do any of these documents contain information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public?

6. Add comments to the Comments field if needed. Click Submit.
7. The new request for entitlement will appear in the Dashboard, with an assigned **B-Number**.

![Dashboard Image]

8. The system will automatically generate an email notifying the procuring agency that a new request for entitlement has been filed. The filer will be copied on the email to the agency.

```
********** Please do not reply to this message. Replies to this message are routed to an unmonitored mailbox.**********

This email is an automated notification, which is unable to receive replies. For assistance, please contact GAO's Procurement Law Control Group at (202) 512-4788 or protests@gao.gov.

GAO is notifying you that the following request for an entitlement recommendation has been filed with our Office:

Protester: [Redacted]
Solicitation Number: unknown
Time of Filing: May 26, 2017 14:21:03 EDT
B Number: B-112233.2
EPDS Tracking Number: A-P7109.3

Additional instructions from our Office will be forthcoming and available on the docket for the case.

Please Login to your Dashboard to see more details.
```

9. Once GAO assigns an attorney to the request for entitlement, a case acknowledgement package will be prepared by GAO that includes, among other information, the B-Number assigned to the case. The acknowledgement package will be available on the docket, and users who have not turned off email notifications for the case will receive an email notification that the acknowledgement package has been created by GAO.
8.3 File a Request for Reimbursement of Costs

When GAO issues a decision on a case, parties who have not disabled notifications will be notified by email of the decision. Additionally, a case status of Closed is displayed in the Case Status column of the dashboard and the upper right corner of the case docket sheet.

Follow these instructions to file a claim for costs.

1. Click **Claim for Costs** on the Case Docket menu.
2. Complete the items on the **Request for Cost Claims Documents** screen. Additional instructions for completing individual fields follow.

![Request for Cost Claims Documents](image)

2. Complete the items on the **Request for Cost Claims Documents** screen. Additional instructions for completing individual fields follow.

![Request for Cost Claims Documents](image)

3. Click **Add File** under **Upload Request for Cost Claims Document**.

![Upload Request for Cost Claims Document](image)

3. Click **Add File** under **Upload Request for Cost Claims Document**.

![Upload Request for Cost Claims Document](image)

A pop-up window will appear. Locate the appropriate file on your computer, select it (only **PDF** and **Excel files** can be attached), and click **Open**.
4. Once a document is added, you can add additional documents by clicking Yes for the question, Do you want to Upload Associated Documents?

5. If appropriate, click Yes for the question, Do any of these documents contain information that is proprietary, confidential, or otherwise not releasable to the public?

6. Add comments to the Comments field if needed. Click Submit.
7. The new claim for costs will appear in the **Active Cases/Dashboard**, with an assigned **B-Number**.

8. In addition, the system will automatically generate an email notifying the procuring agency that a new claim for costs has been filed. The filer will be copied on the email to the agency.

9. Once GAO assigns an attorney to the claim for costs, a case acknowledgement package will be prepared by GAO that includes, among other information, the B-Number assigned to the case. The acknowledgement package will be available on the docket, and users who have not turned off email notifications for the case will receive an email notification that the acknowledgement package has been created by GAO.
9.0 Manage User Profile

Follow these instructions to update your profile. You can edit most information, with the exception of your email address.

1. Click your name in the upper right corner of the window.

2. Click Manage User Profile.

3. Scroll to the bottom of your profile, and click Edit.

4. Update your information.
5. Scroll to the bottom of your profile, and click **Update**.

6. Click **OK** on the **Success** pop-up window.
10.0 Manage Password

10.1 Change Password

Follow these instructions to change your password.

1. Click your name in the upper right corner of the window.

2. Click Manage User Profile.

3. Click Change Password on the left side navigation.
4. Enter your current password, then your new password. Confirm your password in the next field, and click Update Info.

5. Click OK on the Success pop-up window.

10.2 Reset Password

If you forget your password, you can reset your password using the following instructions:
1. On the EPDS login page, select the **I forgot my password** link.

   ![Login Page](image)

2. In the pop up, enter the email address associated with your EPDS account, and click **OK**.

   ![Pop-up](image)

3. Click **OK** on the Success pop-up window.
4. You will receive an email with a temporary password and instructions for resetting your password. Copy the temporary password, and click the link in the email to update your password.

5. Follow the login steps as in section 2.3 Log In using your temporary password, which you copied in step 4 above.

6. Click OK on the Account Reset pop-up window.
7. Enter your new password. Confirm your new password in the next field, and click **Update Info**.

8. Click **OK** on the **Welcome to EDPS** success pop-up window.
11.0 System Unavailability

GAO will endeavor to maintain the availability of EPDS during normal business hours, which are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Eastern Time, excluding Federal holidays or when GAO’s Headquarters are otherwise closed. In the event that a filer is unable to file a document in EPDS due to a technical failure of EPDS during normal business hours, please refer to the EPDS instructions available here. If a filer is unable to file a document in EPDS during a period other than normal business hours, the filer should attempt to file its document during the next period of normal business hours.
List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPDS</td>
<td>Electronic Protest Docketing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAO</td>
<td>U.S. Government Accountability Office</td>
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