Multifactor Authentication – Backup Codes

Multifactor authentication (MFA) is now available for all PACER users. MFA provides an added layer of security that helps protect users from cyberattacks that steal passwords.

This learning aid describes the process of enrolling in MFA by getting backup codes. It also describes the process of deleting unused backup codes.

NOTE: PACER users with filing and all other types of CM/ECF-level access are required to enroll in MFA. All other PACER users are strongly encouraged to enroll.

Enrolling in MFA

Step 1.   Navigate to https://pacer.uscourts.gov/.

Step 2.   In the top right corner, click the **Log in to**... link, and then click **Manage PACER Account**.

Figure 1: PACER website homepage

Step 3.   Enter your PACER username and password, and click **Login**.
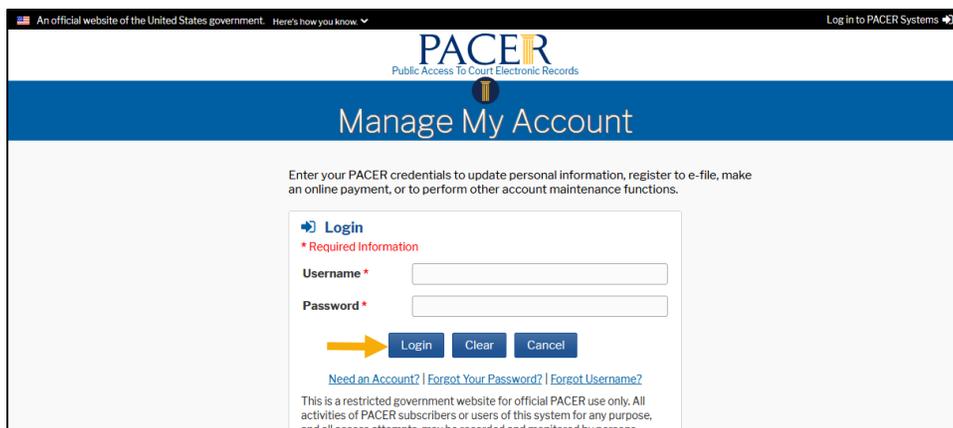
Figure 2: Manage My Account login page

Step 4. On the landing page, click the **Enroll** link in the Multifactor Auth field, or click the **Manage MFA Settings** link under the Settings tab.
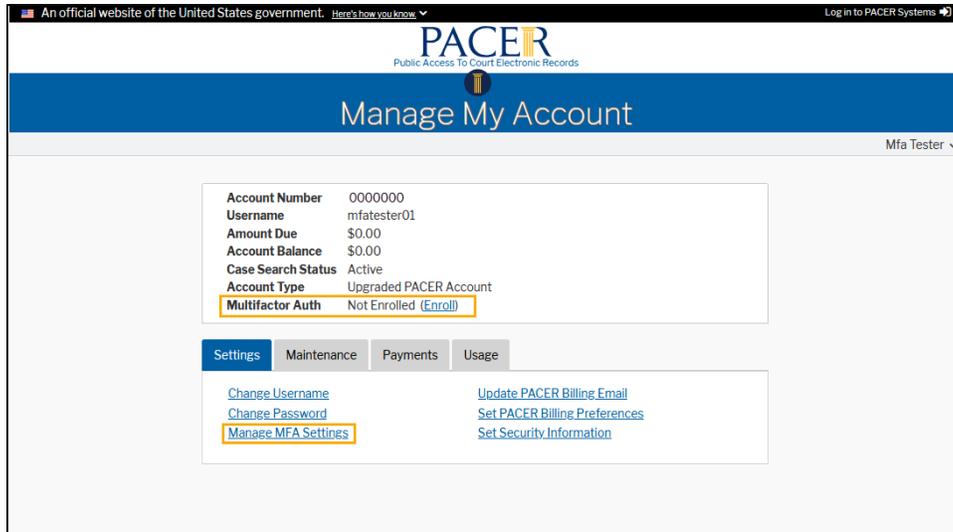
Figure 3: Manage My Account landing page

MFA Methods

Upon clicking **Enroll** or **Manage MFA Settings**, you may add an authentication application (app) and/or get backup codes. If you are required to enroll in MFA, you must set up at least one of the two options.
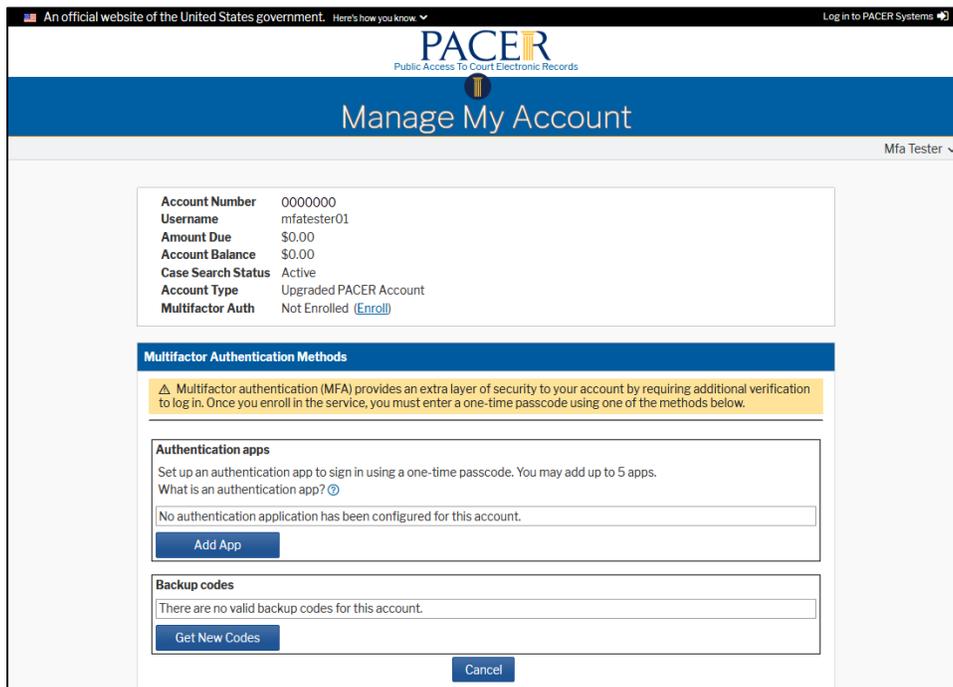
Figure 4: Multifactor Authentication Methods page

Getting Backup Codes

Step 5. Click **Get New Codes**.

A security code is sent to the email address associated with the PACER account to verify that the account holder authorizes getting the backup codes.
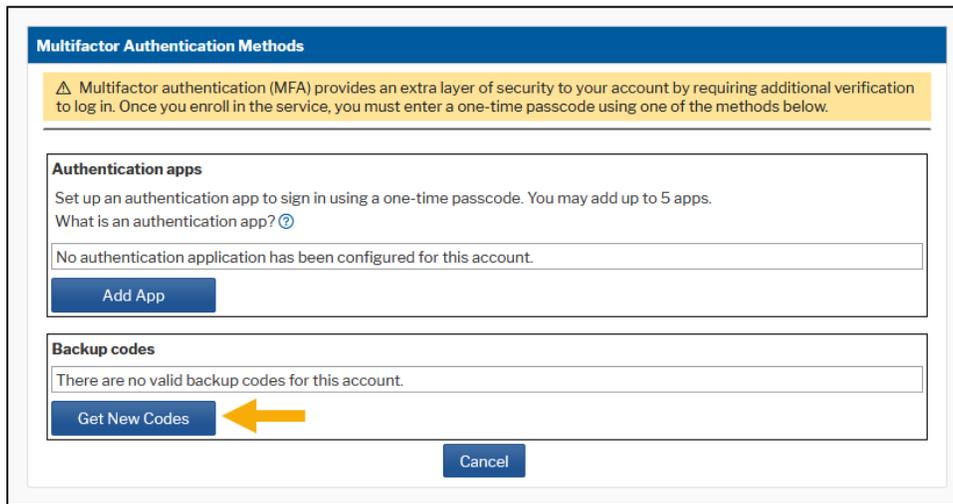
Figure 5: Multifactor Authentication Methods page – Backup codes section

NOTE: While you can use backup codes for MFA, they are not ideal because they can be lost, and only 10 single-use codes are generated at a time. Authentication apps are recommended instead, as they are considered safer.

Step 6. Enter the security code from the email, and click **Submit**.
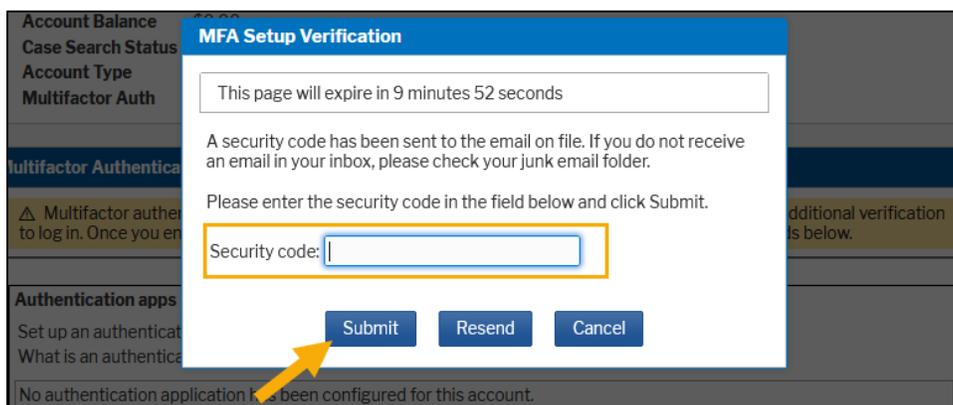
Figure 6: MFA Setup Verification dialog box

TIP
If the security code email does not appear, check the junk email folder.

Step 7. Read the details regarding backup codes, and click **Confirm** to proceed.

Figure 7: Multifactor Authentication Backup Codes confirmation dialog box

Step 8. Save the backup codes generated by downloading, printing, or copying them using the buttons provided. Then select the **I've put my backup codes in a safe place.** checkbox, and click **Save**.
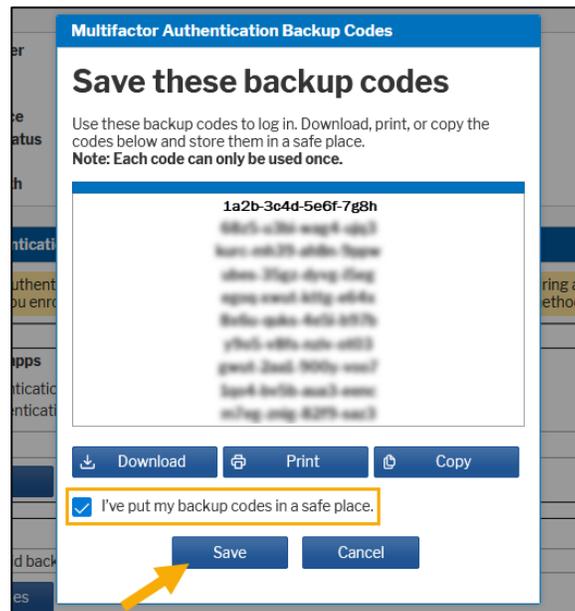
Figure 8: Multifactor Authentication Backup Codes – Save these backup codes dialog box

NOTES:

Once you have saved your backup codes, you will not be able to view them again. If you lose your backup codes, you will need to generate a new set. Generating a new set of backup codes will invalidate the existing set.

Each backup code can only be used once. It is recommended that you use your last backup code to get a new set of backup codes. Otherwise, you will need to follow the Logging in Without Access to Your MFA Method(s) process described in the Multifactor Authentication (MFA) – Logging In learning aid to get a new set.

Step 9. You have successfully added backup codes. If you do not need to add an authentication app, click **Cancel**.
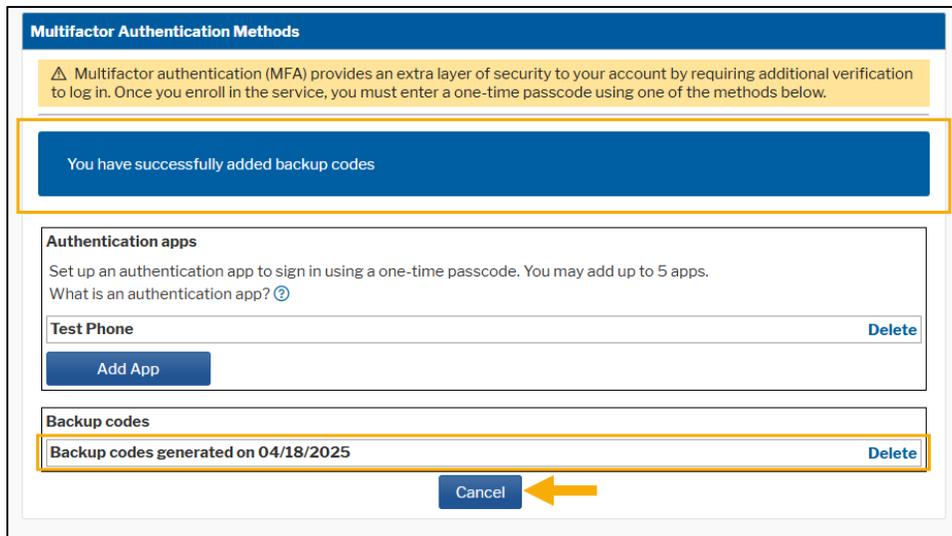
Figure 9: Multifactor Authentication Methods page with success message for adding backup codes

Deleting Backup Codes

Step 1.   Click the **Delete** link in the Backup codes section.
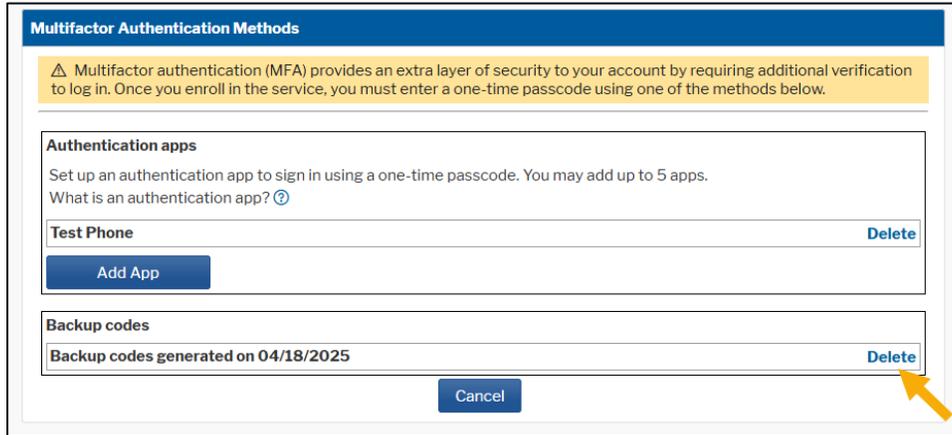
Figure 10: Multifactor Authentication Methods page

Step 2.   Enter a backup code or passcode, and click **Submit**.
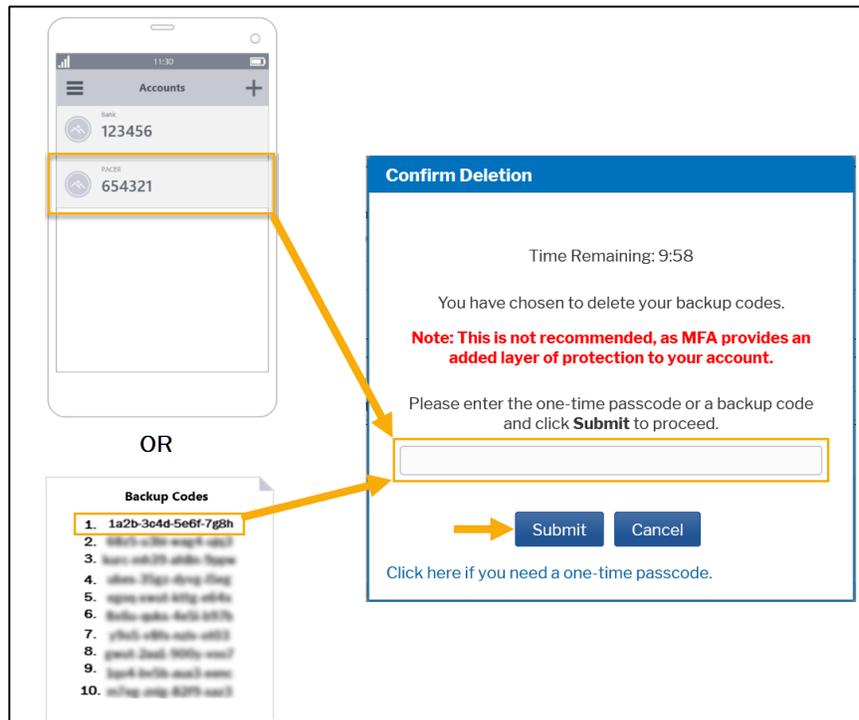
Figure 11: Confirm Deletion dialog box and illustrations of a generic authentication app display and list of backup codes

NOTE: If you do not have access to your authentication app or backup codes, click the "Click here if you need a one-time passcode." link at the bottom of the Confirm Deletion dialog box. Refer to the Logging in Without Access to Your MFA Method(s) section in the Multifactor Authentication (MFA) – Logging In learning aid.

Step 3. You have successfully deleted the backup codes. If you need to get new backup codes, go to Step 5 of the Getting Backup Codes section above. If you are finished, click **Cancel**.
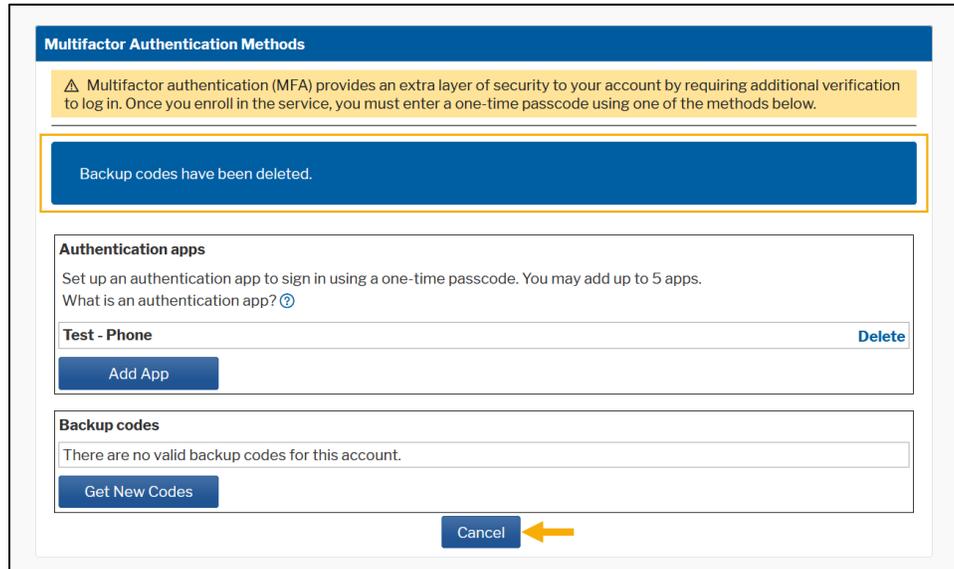
Figure 12: Multifactor Authentication Methods page with success message for deleting backup codes