



U.S. Bankruptcy Court Central District of California

Style Guide For Electronic Case Filing



Table of Contents

Overview 2

To Avoid Common Mistakes..... 2

Style Conventions for Names..... 2

Style Conventions for Addresses 5

Adding Parties 7

 Adding Debtors 7

 Adding Creditors 7

 Adding Plaintiffs and Defendants 8

Enhancing Text in CM/ECF 8

Searching For Parties 9

Searching Strategies 9

Creditor Matrix Specification..... 10

Abbreviations..... 10

 Standard 10

 Professional Titles 11

 Geographic Directions 11

 Street Designations 11

 States and Territories 11

 Country 12

Style Guide for Electronic Case Filing CM/ECF

Overview

This guide contains the preferred style practices for all users of the CM/ECF system in the Central District of California. The purpose of this guide is to make everyone's task easier, whether they are entering data or searching the CM/ECF database. The application of a common set of styles, when creating docket entries, results in information being captured and displayed in more uniform and predictable ways, thus reducing confusion and errors. In addition, style consistency is the key to efficient searches in CM/ECF since successful queries require exact matches on search data including punctuations, abbreviations, and upper or lowercase characters.

To Avoid Common Mistakes

- ✓ Always use upper and lowercase characters for all names.
- ✓ No punctuation, abbreviation entered in the address unless it is a part of the address.
- ✓ Avoid entering periods after initials or additional spaces between all names.
- ✓ Do not exceed the maximum number of characters for each name field.
- ✓ Do not use any special symbols or characters such as “/, @, |” at any time.
- ✓ Ensure that each page of the document that bears the signature of a person must be signed by the person as holographic signature. Electronic signatures are acceptable for electronic filers or court-authorized filers only.

Style Conventions for Names

These style conventions apply to all names entered in the CM/ECF database.

Note: *There are a maximum number of characters for each name field:*

- Last name: 200
- First name: 20
- Middle name: 20
- Generation: 5
- Title: 20

1. Always use upper and lowercase characters for all names.
 - Patrick MacDougal
 - Wallace D Smith
 - Grover's Cookie Company

2. Use only the following punctuation/characters:

- Hyphens(-) Mary Smith-Baker
- Apostrophes (') Kathleen O'Brien

3. Use single spacing between all names and initials; **do not** enter period after initials.

- J J Jones
- C W Bradford Ltd
- Edward V Gump

4. When entering names that have upper and lowercase letter or hyphens; **do not** insert spaces.

- Patricia DeLaGarza
- Patrick MacDougal
- Kathleen O'Brien
- Mary Smith-Baker

5. If an individual does not have a middle name, leave that field blank; **do not** enter "NMI" (no middle initial).

6. Enter generations such as Jr, Sr, II, III in the **generation field ONLY**.

Enter ***Douglas Smith, Sr.***, as:

- Last name field: Smith
- First name field: Douglas
- Generation field: Sr

7. If a party has multiple names such as ***Robert Kramer John Martin***, **do not** add the extra names in the middle name field, only add the middle initials(s) without periods.

- Last name field: Martin
- First name field: Robert
- Middle name field: KJ

8. Business names should be entered entirely in the **Last Name** field without a comma. **Do not** use the First or Middle Name fields when entering business names.

9. **Do not** use the ampersand sign (&) for "and" unless it is part of the business name.

- B & D Company
- Cameron & Associates
- J & J Trucking

10. **Do not** use “/, @, |” at any time.

11. Avoid abbreviations unless it is part of a business name on the petition or pleading.

- Ford Motor Company: Ford Motor Co
- First Federal Association: 1st Federal Assoc

12. Enter acronyms without spaces and periods.

- US = United States
- HUD = Housing Urban Department
- FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation

13. Business names beginning with the words “The, A or An” should **not** be entered beginning with “The, A or An.”

Enter ***The Cookie Company*** as:

- Last name field: Cookie Company
- First name field: **Leave blank**
- Middle name field: **Leave blank**

Enter ***A Toy Store, Inc.*** as:

- Last name field: Toy Store Inc
- First name field: **Leave blank**
- Middle name field: **Leave blank**

14. Enter titles and prefixes and suffixes such as Dr., Rev. and Trustee in the **generation field**.

Enter ***Douglas Smith, Sr*** as:

- Last name field: Smith
- First name field: Douglas
- Generation field: Sr

Enter **Dr. David Smith** as:

- Last name field: Smith
- First name field: David
- Generation field: Dr

15. Enter suffixes such as MD or DDS in the generation field.

Enter **Roger Thomas, DDS** as:

- Last name field: Thomas
- First name field: Roger
- Middle name field: **Leave blank**
- Generation field: DDS

Enter **Daniel A. Hasioka, MD** as:

- Last name field: Hasioka
- First name field: Daniel
- Middle name field: A
- Generation field: MD

16. Anything relating to Veterans Affairs should be entered as:

- US Department of Veterans Affairs

17. Child Support Enforcement Units should be entered with the county first, for example:

- Los Angeles County Child Support Enforcement
- Santa Ana County Child Support Enforcement

Style Conventions for Addresses

These style conventions apply to all debtor(s) or party addresses entered in the CM/ECF database.

- There are three (3) address lines available for the entry of address information. Always start entering address information on "Address 1." **Do not** leave blank lines before or between address items.

- Use integers instead of spelling out any numbers. (i.e., use “1, 2, 3,” 1st, 2nd, 3rd instead of “one, two, three,” or “first, second, third.” Never use a lowercase “L” (i.e., l) in the place of the symbol for “one” or “first” (i.e., 1st).
- Abbreviate Post Office Box and Postal Mail Box addresses without a space between the P and O and B [POB], or P and M and B [PMB].

These style conventions apply to all creditor addresses entered in the CM/ECF database. You can enter up to ten creditors in a text box.

- Type business name “c/o” [in care of] designation on line two if such information is available. Start entering information in the following order (each of the following items should be on a separate line):

Building name (if any)	US Courthouse Building
Street Address (if any)	123 Main St
Post Office Box (if any)	POB 123
Postal Mail Box (if any)	PMB 34321

- When entering creditors only, use the second and /or third line of the address text box for the building name, suite number, floor, firm name, or attention.

Cookie Factory Inc
Attn Grover Smith
First National Cookie Blvd
123 Cookie Street
Chicago IL 60604

- **Do not** include account numbers(s) listed in the creditor address. The Judicial Conference policy on privacy prohibits the inclusion of account numbers in the case file.
- Use the full nine-digit zip code, if available.
- When entering a phone number and /or fax number, **do not** add slashes. You can use either parenthesis or hyphens.

(213) 555-5555; or
213-555-5555

- Foreign addresses must have the full name of the post office and country of destination printed in capital letters.

Alfonso Diaz	Sgt John
Rio de Danubec y Rio Florida	Company 237 Armor
CD JUAREZ CHIHUAHUA	Unit #21103 Box 512
MEXICO #1050	APO AE 09014

Adding Parties

Opening cases in CM/ECF consists of adding the names of debtors, joint debtors, plaintiffs, and defendants to cases. As cases progress, creditors and other parties are added as well. Consistently adding names and addresses with the same formats and abbreviations aids in the search for and retrieval of these records, which prevents duplicate entries. Access to this information is vital to the court, the bar and the general public. *When adding new parties to the CM/ECF database, the names should conform to standard punctuation and spacing conventions listed in the Style Conventions for Names section of this Guide.*

Adding Debtors

- When you have a street address and a mailing address for a debtor, enter the venue (physical) address only. Add debtors to cases using names and addresses exactly as they appear on the petition or complaint following the same formats and abbreviations. In most cases, you will **not** find debtors or joint debtors when you search the CM/ECF database. You will have to add them to the database and the case as a new party.
- If the search for a debtor's name is successful, select the debtor only if the name is an exact match. Then UPDATE the debtor's address to match the current filing.
- If a debtor has a title or a prefix, add the title or prefix in the "generation" field.
- Make an entry in the SSN box or the Tax ID box even if the social security number for an individual debtor or tax identification number for a business debtor is unknown.

Note: If a debtor has been issued an ITIN, place this information in the SSN box and not the Tax ID box.

Use the following format for unknown numbers.

SSN: 000-00-0000

Tax ID: 00-0000000

Adding Creditors

- Add creditors to cases using name already in the CM/ECF database if at all possible. When you search for a creditor, you will probably find a party in the CM/ECF database.

Creditors (such as Ford Motor Credit) are added to many different cases. Ideally, there should be only one Ford Motor Credit party in the CM/ECF database. This greatly simplifies searching when adding parties and querying cases.

For instance, it is better to add Ford Motor Credit to all cases even if that is not the exact name used on a document being docketed. The idea is to avoid adding name variations for a single creditor.

For example: Enter **Ford Motor Credit** instead of the following variables:

Ford Motor Credit Company Ford Motor Credit Company (“FMCC”), Ford Motor Credit Co., Ford Motor Credit Corp.

Ford Motor Credit Corporation Ford Motors Credit Company,
Ford Motor Credit Company, Inc.

The proliferation of different names for the same creditor makes searching frustrating and time consuming.

- Do **not** add a title for creditors.
- Make sure to select the creditor party role.

Adding Plaintiffs and Defendants

- Add plaintiffs and defendants to adversary proceedings using names exactly as they appear on the complaint only after searching the database for the parties. It is likely that you will find them in the database and can select rather than add the parties. Make sure to add the address when adding plaintiffs and defendants (if available).
- Do **not** add a title for plaintiffs or defendant.

Enhancing Text in CM/ECF

CM/ECF filers must **not** use ALL UPPER CASE LETTERS when enhancing text to complete a docket entry. When enhancing a docket entry, use the standard upper and lower case format only.

- For example , when enhancing text for a declaration docket event, use standard upper and lower case letters:

Declaration re: John Doe in support of debtor’s motion

- The additional text you add **should not look like the following:**

Declaration re: JOHN DOE IN SUPPORT OF DEBTOR’S MOTION

Searching for Parties

Before adding any party to a case, it is strongly recommended that the user searches the database for that party using appropriate search clues. A search can be made by Social Security Number, Tax Identification Number, Last Name and First Name, Last Name only, or Business Name. If the system finds the correct name, select it to help eliminate creating different versions of the same party name. Even something as simple as “United States” can cause ambiguity if filers are entering it differently. By following this style guide, filers will avoid words like “United States” [US] appearing in the database also as “UNITED STATES”, “U.S.”, “USA”, “U.S.A.”, or “U.S. of A.”

Searching Strategies

CM/ECF searches are not key word searches but require exact text matches.

- Always use the appropriate spelling when searching for all parties [debtors, creditors, parties, attorneys, etc.].
- When searching for debtors, the more search clues you provide, the more likely you are to find the exact person you are searching for. For example, if you search for the last name, Grant, CM/ECF may return a list of a hundred parties with that last name. However, if you search for last name, Grant, with a Social Security number (Example: 333-22-1111) CM/ECF will return a single party.
- When searching for creditors, it may be necessary to conduct multiple searches. First, search for the entire creditor name (e.g., World Communications). If that is not successful, you can search for part of the creditor’s name (e.g., World Comm or just World). If there are articles in the title such as “A” or “The” you may or may not need to include the article in the search. For example, a search for “The Timely Times” may not produce a result. A search request for “Timely Times” will be successful. Likewise a search for “Timely Times” may not produce a result, but a search for “The Timely Times” will be successful.
- When searching for a Party, **do not use an asterisk or star** in the search criteria. For example:

Villa*

- Use of the asterisk slows down the entire system. When searching for Villarreal, the name will be found without using the asterisk as follows:

Villa

- An unsuccessful search for A. & A. Metals might be successful if you search without punctuation (i.e. A & A Metals). On the other hand, an unsuccessful search for A & A Metals might be successful if you search with punctuation as follows:

A. & A. Metals

Creditor Matrix Specification

When submitting a Creditor list, it must be submitted in a court-approved electronic format (see Court Manual, section 2.3). The file must be in the appropriate text extension (.txt). The Master Mailing List of Creditors should meet the following specifications:

- The name and address of each creditor must be five lines or fewer.
- The first line, or names, may contain no more than 50 characters, and the address lines may contain no more than 40 characters in length including spaces.
- Name and addresses should be left justified (no leading spaces).
- If attention lines are used, they should appear on the second line of the address.
- City, State and ZIP Code must be on the last line.
- All States must be two-letter abbreviations in capital letters only.
- If a nine-digit ZIP Code is used, a hyphen must separate the first five digits from the last four digits.
- Each creditor must be separated by two blank lines.
- Do not use punctuation, except for one comma between city and state (for example Los Angeles, CA 90012).

Filing of a hard copy of the Master Mailing List of Creditors is not required for petitions filed via the court's electronic filing system (for more information, see Court Manual, section 2.3).

Abbreviations

When abbreviating, use abbreviations from these approved abbreviations lists.

Standard					
Account	Acct	Finance	Fin	Medical	Med
Association	Assoc	In Care of	c/o	National	Natl
Attention	Attn	Incorporate	Inc	Number	#
Corporation	Corp	International	Intl	Senior	Sr
Company	Co	Junior	Jr	System	Sys
Department	Dept	Limited	Ltd	United States	US
Federal	Fed	Limited Liability	LLC		

Professional Titles			
Attorney	Atty	Doctor Juristic Science	JS
Chief Executive Officer	CEO	Doctor of Medicine	MD
Doctor of Chiropractic	DC	Monseigneur/Monsignor	Msgr
Doctor of Dental Science/Surgery	DDS	Notary Public	NP
Doctor of Optometry	OD	Pharmacist	Phar
Doctor	DR	Reverend	Rev
Doctor of Veterinary Surgery	DVS	Registered Nurse	RN
Esquire	Esq	Secretary	Secy
Honorable	HON	Trustee	TTE
Doctor of Laws	JD		

Geographic Directions			
North	N	Northeast	NE
South	S	Southwest	SW
East	E	Southeast	SE
West	W	Northwest	NW

Street Designations					
Apartment	Apt	Floor	FL	Private Mail Box	PMB
Army Post	APO	Fleet Post	FPO	Road	Rd
Avenue	Ave	Highway	Hwy	Room	Rm
Basement	Bsmt	Interstate	IH	Route	Rte
Boulevard	Bldv	Lane	Ln	Space	Sp
Center	Ctr	Number	#	Square	Sq
Circle	Cir	Park	Pk	Street	St
Canyon	Cyn	Parkway	Pkwy	Suite	Ste
Court	Ct	Place	Pl	Terrace	Terr
Drive	Dr	Point	Pt	Turnpike	Tpke
Expressway	Expy	Post Office Box	POB	Way	Wy

States and Territories			
Alabama	AL	Montana	MT
Alaska	AK	Nebraska	NE
Arizona	AZ	Nevada	NV
Arkansas	AR	New Hampshire	NH
American Samoa	AS	New Jersey	NJ
California	CA	New Mexico	NM
Colorado	CO	New York	NY
Connecticut	CT	North Carolina	NC

Delaware	DE	North Dakota	ND
District of Columbia	DC	Northern Mariana Islands	CM
Florida	FL	Ohio	OH
Georgia	GA	Oklahoma	OK
Guam	GU	Oregon	OR
Hawaii	HI	Palau	TT
Idaho	ID	Pennsylvania	PA
Illinois	IL	Puerto Rico	PR
Indiana	IN	Rhode Island	RI
Iowa	IA	South Carolina	SC
Kansas	KS	South Dakota	SD
Kentucky	KY	Tennessee	TN
Louisiana	LA	Texas	TX
Maine	ME	Utah	UT
Marshall Islands	TT	Vermont	VT
Maryland	MD	Virginia	VA
Massachusetts	MA	Virgin Islands	VI
Michigan	MI	Washington	WA
Federated States of Micronesia	TT	West Virginia	WV
Mississippi	MS	Wisconsin	WI
Missouri	MO	Wyoming	WY

Country			
Mexico			MX