

U.S. Bankruptcy Court
Southern District of Illinois



Style Guide
for Electronic Case Filing
December 2001

Revised 7/9/2012

Section-by-Section Comparison Chart

Change Code:

R = revised

D = deleted

A = addition

<u>Type of Change</u>	<u>Date of Change</u>	<u>New or Revised Section(s)</u>	<u>Reason for Change</u>
R	7/12/05	Introduction	Corrected two grammatical errors
R	7/12/05	Search Strategies	Clarified example of searching for debtors and corrected two grammatical errors
D	7/12/05	Adding Debtors	Removed redundant wording
D	7/12/05	Style Conventions for Addresses	Removed redundant wording and corrected grammatical error
R	7/12/05	Abbreviations - States and Territories	Corrected abbreviation for Marshall Islands, Micronesia, North Mariana Islands and Palau. Minnesota was missing
R	7/12/05	Street Designators	Added square and freeway. Reordered list to be alphabetical
R	3/10/08	Adding Debtors	Reworded sentence about names to make clearer
R	3/10/08	Adding Debtors	Modified SSN/TaxID prompts to match CM/ECF
A	3/10/08	Adding Plaintiffs and Defendants	Added sentence about alias(es)
A	3/10/08	Adding Creditors	Added sentence about alias(es)

A	3/10/08	Creditor/Party Filer Tips	Added sentence about party name(s) that contain an article
A	3/10/08	Street Designators	Added circle
R	7/09/12	Creditor matrix entries	Revised guidelines for adding creditors to matrix

United States Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Illinois

This guide contains the preferred style practices for all users of the CM/ECF application in the Southern District of Illinois. The intention of the guide is to make everyone's task easier, whether they are entering data or querying 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 very exact matches on search data including punctuation and abbreviations.

The rule of thumb when using the CM/ECF application is to keep it simple. Using the least amount of punctuation and descriptive information as possible will further enhance uniformity.

Adding Parties	5
Searching for Parties	5
Search Strategies	5
Adding Debtors	6
Adding Plaintiffs and Defendants	6
Adding Creditors	7
Style Conventions for Names	8
Style Conventions for Addresses.....	10
Abbreviations	12
States & Territories	12
Geographic Directions	12
Street Designators	13
Creditor Matrix Specification	14

Adding Parties

When adding new parties to the CM/ECF database, the names should conform with punctuation and spacing conventions adopted by the Southern District of Illinois Bankruptcy Court and listed in the **Style Conventions for Names** section of this guide.

Most of case opening 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. Access to this information is vital to the court, the bar, and the general public.

Searching for Parties

Make sure you do a thorough search of the CM/ECF database for a party before you add them to a case.

Before adding any party to a case, search for that party using appropriate “search clues”. If the system finds the correct name, select it to help eliminate different versions of the same party name.

Even something as simple as “United States” can cause ambiguity if everyone is entering it differently. For instance, following this style guide can help avoid “United States” being in the database as “UNITED STATES”, “U.S.”, “US,” “USA”, “U.S.A.”, or “U.S. of A.”

Search Strategies

CM/ECF searches require exact text matches.

- When searching for debtors, the more search clues you provide, the more likely you are to find the exact person. For example, if you search for the last name of Grant, CM/ECF may return a list of a quite a few parties with that last name. However, if you search for the last name of Grant with a first name of Eugene, CM/ECF will return a single party.
- When searching for creditors, it may be necessary to conduct multiple searches. First, search for the creditor’s entire 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”).
- When searching for a party, **DO NOT** use an asterisk in the search criteria as follows:
Villa*

Using an asterisk will slow down the entire system.

- Finally, an unsuccessful search for A & A Metals might be successful

if you search without special characters (e.g., A and A Metals).

Adding Debtors

Add debtors name(s) and address(es) using the Style Conventions for Names and Addresses found in this guide.

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. One exception would be if the debtor and or joint debtor had previously filed a case.

If a debtor has a title, add the title in the “party text” box. Keep the following tips in mind when considering using a title.

Title Tips

1. The name of the debtor without the title will appear in docket text.
2. Titles will not appear on notices.
3. Titles will appear on the face of the docket report in upper and lower case following the debtor name as shown below:

Jose Garza, Administrator of the Estate of Sylvia Garza

Alamo Limestone, a Texas Corporation

Catherine V. Ruiz, Official Administrator of Lottery Winnings

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 is unknown.

SSN/ITIN: 000-00-0000
TaxID/EIN: 00-0000000000

Adding Plaintiffs and Defendants

When you search for plaintiffs and defendants, you will probably find them in the database.

If the complaint lists alias(es) for the plaintiff or defendant, add them separately using the Alias(es) button and not as part of the name.

Adding Creditors

Add creditors to cases using names that are already in the CM/ECF database if at all possible.

When you search for a creditor, you will probably find the 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:

- ☺ Ford Motor Credit
- ☹ Ford Motor Credit Company
- ☹ Ford Motor Credit Co.
- ☹ Ford Motor Credit Corporation
- ☹ Ford Motor Credit Company, Inc.
- ☹ Ford Motor Company
- ☹ Ford Motor Credit Corp.
- ☹ Ford Motors Credit Company
- ☹ Ford Motor Credit Company (“FMCC”)

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

DO NOT add mailing addresses for creditors who have attorney representation.

DO NOT add titles for creditors.

DO NOT add alias(es) for creditors.

Make sure to select the creditor party role.

Style Conventions for Names

(These style conventions apply to all names entered in the CM/ECF application.)

Use upper and lower case for all names and capitalize the first letter in a proper noun.

Wallace D Smith
United Services Fidelity and Guaranty

Use single spacing between all names and/or initials. **The preferred method of entry is to omit the use of any punctuation.**

J J Jones
Smith Inc
C W Bradford Ltd

When typing names that have upper and lower case letters, **DO NOT** insert spaces.

Patricia DeLaGarza
Kathleen O'Brien (include apostrophe)
Patrick MacDougal

When typing hyphenated names, eliminate the hyphen and enter a space.

Mary Smith-Baker would be entered as Smith Baker in the last name field.

If an individual does NOT have a middle name, leave that field blank. **DO NOT** enter "NMI" (no middle initial).

If a party has multiple names such as Robert Kramer Johns Martin, add the extra names in the Middle Name box.

Last name: Martin
Middle name: Kramer Johns
First name: Robert

DO NOT use the First or Middle name box when entering business names. Business names should be entered entirely in the Last Name box.

Spell out the word "and" when used in party names. **DO NOT** use the ampersand sign for "and".

B and D Company
Cameron and Associates
J and J Trucking

When entering a United States Government Agency, spell out United States.

United States Department of Agriculture
United States Attorney
United States Environmental Protection Agency

Creditor/Party Filer Tips

1. Make sure you search for existing creditors before adding new creditors/parties to the database.
2. **DO NOT** use any punctuation when specifying names.

Example: **GMAC**

3. When a corporation has multiple locations, it is not necessary to include the name of the location in the party name.

Example: **Union Planters Bank
US Bank**

4. Try to make the name as short as possible. Shortening the name can prevent duplicates, prevent typographical errors, and enhance uniformity.

Example: **American General Finance
Norwest Financial**

5. **DO NOT** include departments in the name.
6. All parties must be added individually.
7. If the business name begins with an article (A, An or The), enter the name without the article.

Example: The Franklin Mint Company as Franklin Mint Company
The Chocolate Factory as Chocolate Factory

Style Conventions for Addresses

(These style conventions apply to all names entered in the CM/ECF application)

Abbreviate post office addresses without periods or a space between the P and O

PO Box 1359
PO Drawer 34321

Use integer numbers and not the spelling to designate numbered street names.

3224 E 26th St
425 6th St
1 Valley Plaza

If an address contains two directional words, abbreviate the first directional reference.

1093 N Belt West
Belleville, IL 62220

If the voluntary petition contains a mailing address for the debtor that differs from the street address, enter the mailing address listed on the voluntary petition, using the style guide specifications.

For example:

Street Address (DO NOT ENTER)

John J Johnson
4218 Elmwood Lane
Bentonville, AR 40453

Mailing Address (ENTER)

John J Johnson
PO Box 1477
Bentonville, AR 40453

It is preferred that you:

- ⊖ **DO NOT** include symbols such as c/o, &, %, #, etc.
- ⊖ **DO NOT** include department numbers or descriptions (e.g. Certified Public Accountant, Examiner).
- ⊖ Avoid the use of building names, suite numbers, floor numbers, firm names, and attention to information.

When needed, use the second and/or third line of the address for building name, suite number, or floor.

Arthur Andersen and Associates
John Hancock Bldg Suite 2600
8723 Michigan Ave
Chicago, IL 60604

The city, state, and zip must be the only information on the last address line.

Use the full nine digit zip code if at all possible.

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

The country name of APO destination must be the only information on the bottom line of the address.

Alfonso Diaz
Rio de Danubec y Rio Florido
CD JUAREZ, CHIHUAHUA
MEXICO 1050

Sgt John Smith
C Company 237 Armor
Unit 21103 Box 512
APO AE 09014

If the address contains an apartment number or suite number, *you simply type the number without the # symbol.*

Barbara Bixby
322 W Shady Ln Apt 334
Austin, TX 78701

The preferred format for telephone number is (210) 261-3851. Note the blank space between the area code and phone number.

**Abbreviations
States & Territories**

AL	Alabama	MT	Montana
AK	Alaska	NE	Nebraska
AZ	Arizona	NV	Nevada
AR	Arkansas	NH	New Hampshire
AS	American Samoa	NJ	New Jersey
CA	California	NM	New Mexico
CO	Colorado	NY	New York
CT	Connecticut	NC	North Carolina
DE	Delaware	ND	North Dakota
DC	District of Columbia	MP	N. Mariana Islands
FL	Florida	OH	Ohio
GA	Georgia	OK	Oklahoma
GU	Guam	OR	Oregon
HI	Hawaii	PW	Palau
ID	Idaho	PA	Pennsylvania
IL	Illinois	PR	Puerto Rico
IN	Indiana	RI	Rhode Island
IA	Iowa	SC	South Carolina
KS	Kansas	SD	South Dakota
KY	Kentucky	TN	Tennessee
LA	Louisiana	TX	Texas
ME	Maine	UT	Utah
MH	Marshall Islands	VT	Vermont
MD	Maryland	VA	Virginia
MA	Massachusetts	VI	Virgin Island
MX	Mexico	WA	Washington
MI	Michigan	WV	West Virginia
MN	Minnesota	WI	Wisconsin
FM	Federated States of Micronesia	WY	Wyoming
MS	Mississippi		
MO	Missouri		

Geographic Directions

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

Street Designators

Below is a list of the preferred street designators:

<u>Use</u>	<u>Instead of</u>
1 st	First
2 nd	Second
3 rd	Third
Apt	Apartment
Ave	Avenue
Bldg	Building
Bld	Boulevard
Center	Center
Circle	Circle
Ct	Court
Dr	Drive
Expwy	Expressway
Frwy	Freeway
Hwy	Highway
IH	Interstate Highway
Ln	Lane
Pkwy	Parkway
Place	Place
Road	Road
Route	Route
RR	Rural Route
Square	Square
St	Street
St	Saint

Creditor Matrix Specification

Matrix files must be in ASCII DOS text or text only files.

Margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least one (1) inch.

Each creditor must be separated by at least one blank line.

DO NOT include page numbers, headers, footers, etc.

All entries should conform to the style specifications in the Style Guide.

Each creditor name may contain no more than 50 characters including spaces. Each Address line maximum 5 lines may contain no more than 40 characters including spaces.

Names and addresses should be left justified (flush against the left margin, no leading blanks.)

Account numbers or "attention" lines should be placed on the second line of the name/address, *although the preferred method is that you omit account numbers and attention lines from the matrix.*

City, state and zip code must be on the last line.

There must be a comma placed immediately after the city name.

All states must be two-letter abbreviations.

Nine digit zip codes must be typed with a hyphen separating the two groups of digits.