

**US Bankruptcy Court  
District of Delaware**

**Style Guide  
For Electronic Case Filing**



*CM/ECF*



January 2019

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# Style Guide For Electronic Case Filing

## Overview

This guide contains the preferred style practices for all users of the CM/ECF system in the District of Delaware. 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 punctuation, abbreviations, and upper or lowercase characters.

## Style Conventions for Names

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

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

Last Name: 200  
First Name: 20  
Middle Name: 20  
Generation: 5  
Title: 20

- Always use upper and lowercase characters for all names:

Patrick MacDougal  
Wallace D Smith  
Grover's Cookie Company

- Use only the following punctuation/characters:

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

- Use single spacing between all names and initials.

J J Jones  
C W Bradford Ltd  
Edward V Gump

- When entering names that have upper and lowercase letters or hyphens, do **not** insert spaces.

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

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

- 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

- If a party has multiple names such as *Robert Kramer John Martin*, do not abbreviate the extra names in the middle name field.

Last name field:       Martin  
 First name field:     Robert  
 Middle name field:    Kramer John

- Business names should be entered entirely in the **Last Name** field. Do **not** use the First or Middle Name fields when entering business names.
- Do **not** use the ampersand sign (&) for “and” unless it is part of a business name.

B & D Company  
 Cameron & Associates  
 J & J Trucking

- Do **not** use “/” at any time.
- 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

- Enter suffixes such as Jr., in the **generation field**.

Enter *Douglas Smith, Jr.* as:

Last name field:       Smith  
 First name field:     Douglas  
 Generation field:     Jr.

- Anything relating to Veterans Affairs should be entered as:

US Department of Veterans Affairs

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

New Castle County Child Support Enforcement

Sussex 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," 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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).

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)	P.O. Box 123

- 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 number(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  
Rio de Danubec y Rio Florido  
CD JUAREZ CHIHUAHUA  
MEXICO #1050

Sgt John  
Company 237 Armor  
Unit #21103 Box 512  
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 with standard punctuation and spacing conventions listed in the Style Conventions for Names section of this Guide.*

### **Adding Debtors**

- 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.
- 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 names 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: 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).
- Enter additional text (i.e. "*a Delaware Corporation*" in the Party Text field; not in the party name field.
- When selecting a Chapter 7 trustee as a plaintiff, choose the Trustee already in CM/ECF, and if necessary add additional text "*Chapter 7 Trustee for the estate of...*" in the party text field.
- Enter aliases in the separate alias field, not in the party name field.

## **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

## **Creditor Matrix Specification**

When submitting a Creditor list, it must be submitted in a court-approved electronic format, or by direct submission to the court over the Internet through the ECF System. The file shall 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 six lines or fewer.
- Each line may contain no more than 40 characters in length including spaces.
- Names 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 Wilmington, DE 19803).

Filing of a hard copy of the Master Mailing List of Creditors, in addition to the copy that is electronically filed with the petition, is not required.

## Abbreviations

When abbreviating, use abbreviations from these approved abbreviations lists.

<b>Standard</b>					
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		

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

<b>Street Designations</b>					
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	Blvd	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

<b>States and Territories</b>			
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
<b>Country</b>			
Mexico	MX		