

# Attorney Style Guide For Electronic Case Filing

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This guide contains the preferred style practices for all users of the CM/ECF system in the District of Alaska. The intention of the guide is to make everyone's task easier, whether they are entering data or inquiring into the CM/ECF data base. 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 the CM/ECF system, since successful queries require very exact matches on search data including punctuation, abbreviations and upper or lower case.

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## Adding Parties

***When Adding New Parties to the CM/ECF Data Base, the Names Should Conform with Standard Punctuation and Spacing Conventions Listed in the Style Conventions for Names section of this Guide.***

Much 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 as well. Access to this information is vital to the court, the bar and the general public.

### Searching For Parties

***Make sure you search the CM/ECF data base for the party you want to add to a case.***

Before adding any party to a case, search for that party using name, social security number or tax ID number “search clues” where appropriate. 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, the style guide can help avoid “United States” being in the data base also as “UNITED STATES”, “U.S.”, “US”, “USA”, “U.S.A.”, or “U.S. of A.”

### Debtors

***Add debtors to cases using names and addresses exactly as they appear on the petition.***

In most cases, you will NOT find debtors or joint debtors when you search the CM/ECF data base. You will have to add them to the data base and the case as a new party. If they have filed previously, and are in the database, then you must verify the address information and correct it if necessary.

***If a debtor has a title, add the title in the “party text” box.***

Any title that you add as party text will show up on the face of the docket report following the name and separated by a comma.

### 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

***If the SSN for an individual debtor or the Tax ID for a business is unknown, then in the applicable box, enter zeros in the format below. Do NOT enter zeros in the box that does not apply.***

SSN:           000-00-0000  
Tax ID:        00-0000000

## Plaintiffs and Defendants

***Add plaintiffs and defendants to cases using names exactly as they appear on the complaint.***

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

***Do NOT add any addresses for plaintiffs or defendants.***

If you find a plaintiff or defendant in CM/ECF with an address, highlight and delete the address fields before accepting the Party information screen.

***Do NOT add a title for plaintiffs or defendants.***

***Make sure to select the plaintiff or defendant party role.***

## Creditors

***Add creditors to cases using names already in the CM/ECF data base if at all possible.***

When you search for a creditor, you will probably find the party in the CM/ECF data base.

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 data base. 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.***

If you find a creditor in CM/ECF with an address, highlight and delete the address fields before accepting the Party Information screen.

***Do NOT add a title 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 system)

***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

***When typing names that have upper and lower case 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).

***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

***Business names should be entered entirely in the Last Name box.***

Do not use the First Name or Middle Name box when entering business names.

***Do not use the ampersand sign for "and" unless it is part of a company name.***

B & D Company  
Cameron & Associates  
J & J Trucking

***Avoid abbreviating a company's name, unless the abbreviation itself is part of the company's name (e.g. Boxes, etc.).***

☺	Ford Motor Company	☹	Ford Motor Co.
☺	First Federal Association	☹	1 <sup>st</sup> Federal Assoc.

***Enter US and USA without any spaces or periods.***

US Department of Agriculture  
US Trustee  
US Attorney  
US Environmental Protection Agency  
US Nuclear Regulatory Commission

## Style Conventions for Addresses

(These style conventions apply to all addresses entered in the CM/ECF system)

**Abbreviate post office addresses without any spaces or periods between the P and O.**

PO Box 1359  
PO Drawer 34321

**Use digits for numbers in addresses.**

3224 East 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
425 6th Street  
1 Valley Plaza

**When there is a street address as well as a post office box address for a debtor, add only the post office address.**

John J Johnson  
PO Box 1477  
4218 Elmwood Lane **(Eliminate this line)**  
Bentonville, AR 40453-0453

**Also, CM/ECF will drop the 6<sup>th</sup> line of an address so ONLY 5 LINES are to be used.**

**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 capital letters.**

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

Alfonso Diaz  
Rio de Danubecy 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 may use the # sign in place of the word number or suite.***

Barbara Bixby  
322 West Shady Lane, # 334  
Austin, TX 78701

***Use c/o to indicate "In Care Of".***

Manuel Ortega, Jr.  
c/o Manuel Ortega, Sr.  
6612 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
El Paso, TX 79901

***The preferred format for telephone and fax numbers is (210) 261-3851.***

## Required Creditor Matrix Specifications

(These required creditor matrix specifications apply to all addresses on a creditor matrix)

- ◆ The name and address of each creditor shall not be more than **five (5) lines**.
- ◆ Each line may contain no more than 40 characters including blanks.
- ◆ Names and addresses shall be left justified (flush against the left margin, no leading blanks).
- ◆ Names shall be last name, first name middle name  
(Example - Smith, John David)
- ◆ Use upper and lower case.
- ◆ Do Not use periods after PO Boxes, USA, etc.
- ◆ Account numbers or “attention” lines should be placed only on the second line of the name/address, unless this causes the address to exceed 5 lines, in which case they should be omitted.
- ◆ City, state and ZIP Code must be on the last line.
- ◆ Nine digit ZIP codes must be typed with a hyphen separating the two group of digits.
- ◆ All states must be two-letter abbreviations.
- ◆ Each creditor must be separated by at least one blank line.
- ◆ Do not include page numbers, headers, footers, etc.
- ◆ The creditor matrix must be saved in ASCII text format.

## 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	CM	N. Mariana Isl.
FL	Florida	OH	Ohio
GA	Georgia	OK	Oklahoma
GU	Guam	OR	Oregon
HI	Hawaii	TT	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
TT	Marshall Island	VT	Vermont
MD	Maryland	VA	Virginia
MA	Massachusetts	VT	Virgin Islands
MX	Mexico	WA	Washington
MI	Michigan	WV	West Virginia
TT	Micronesia	WI	Wisconsin
MS	Mississippi	WY	Wyoming
MO	Missouri		

### Geographic Directions

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

## Street Designators

*In general it is best to type out the entire name of the street designator.*

If there is a necessity to abbreviate, use the following:

Avenue	Ave
Boulevard	Bld
Circle	Cir
Court	Ct
Highway	Hwy
Interstate Highway	IH
Lane	Ln
Road	Rd
Street	St

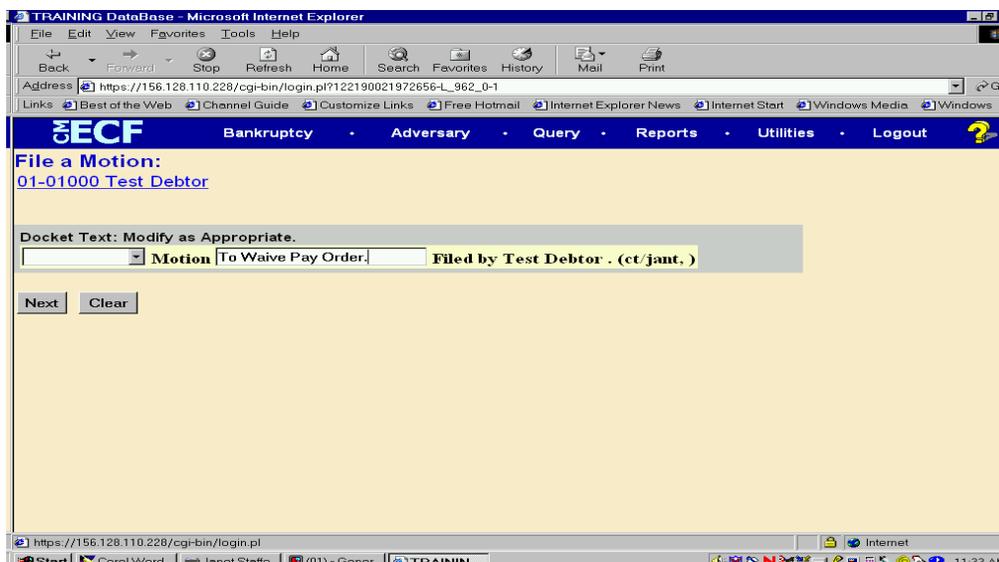
## Style Conventions for Docket Text

The CM/ECF system has been designed to produce a consistent form of docket text. Most of the time you will not need to change docket text in any way when you are creating docket entries. This section provides you with some preferred practices to enhance docket text to add further meaning or clarification to the court record.

### Motion Text

***Docket text should concisely and accurately describe the type of motion being electronically filed.***

Depending on the CM/ECF event you use to docket a motion, CM/ECF will display a text box for you to further describe the pleading you are filing. (See figure 1 and 2.)



**Figure 1** - generic motion event used to docket a motion to waive pay order. **NOTE** - a generic motion should only be used when the motion being filed is not listed on the drop down menu.

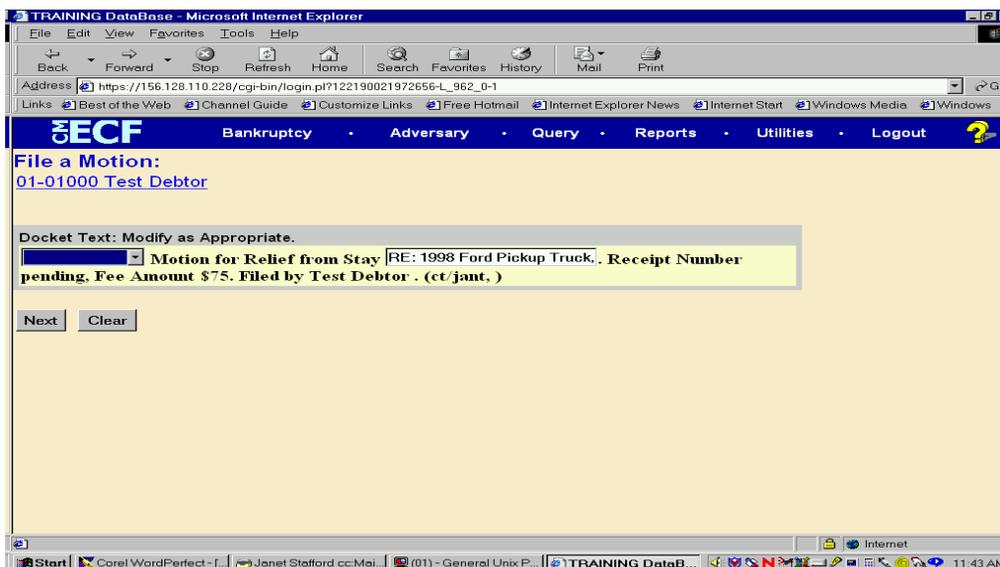


Figure 2 - motion for relief from stay event.

There is room in the displayed text boxes to add any text you feel is necessary to adequately describe your motion.

For example, in figure 2, you might add “RE 1998 Ford Pickup Truck, VIN #1144VD33XXX”

When entering a property description, a BRIEF description is all that is necessary (i.e. Lot 2, Block 5 Northwood Subdivision), not the full legal description. You can review whatever docket text you add before you submit the final docket entry, and can go back to add or correct text if you need to.

## Descriptions of Linked Documents.

***If a document being electronically filed is related to one that has been previously filed, it must be “linked to” the previously filed document, and a description of the related document must be placed in the docket text.***

When you docket an entry which references (“links to”) another docket entry, a text box will be displayed which allows you to add a description of the document that has been referenced. (See Figure 3.)

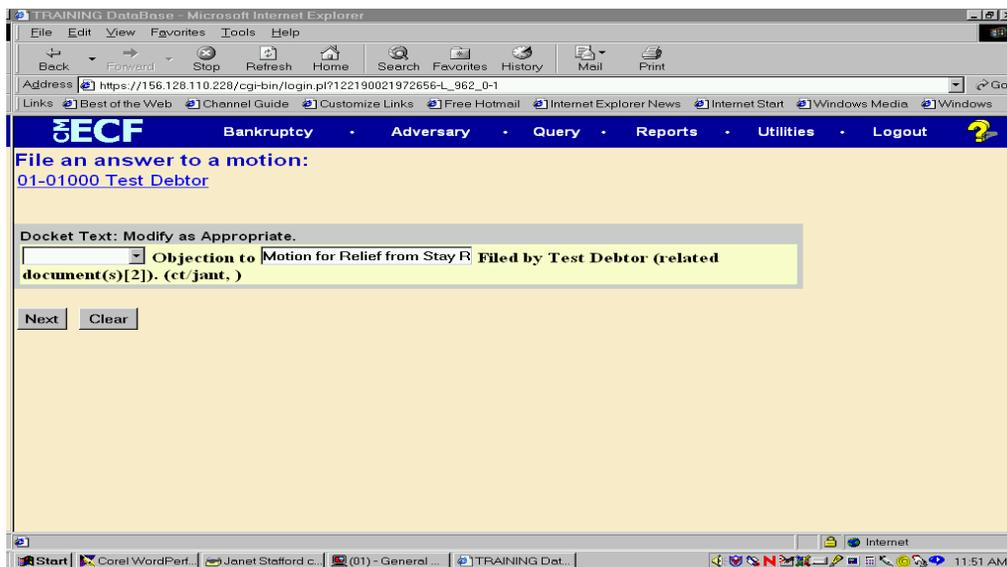


Figure 3 - Objection event linked to a motion for relief from stay.

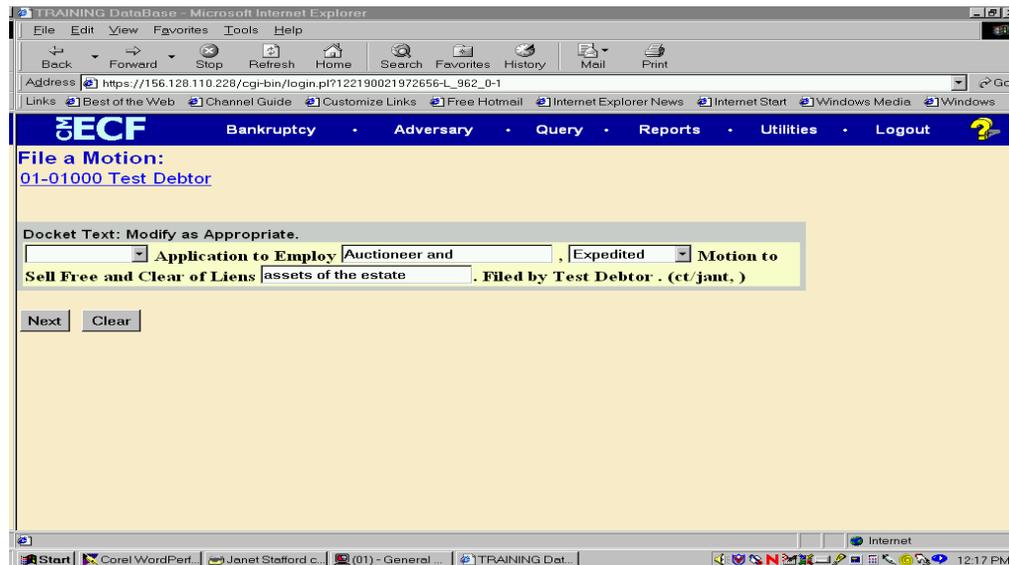
The description you enter in the text box should be as complete as possible. This will help make the intent of the docket entry clear.

For example, in figure 3, you might add “*Motion for Relief from Stay RE: 1998 Ford Pickup Truck, VIN #1144VD33XXX*”.

## Multiple-Part Motion Text

***Docket text for multi-part motions, which request more than one form of relief, should describe each type of requested relief concisely and accurately.***

Depending on the CM/ECF events you use to docket a multi-part contested matter, CM/ECF will display one or more text boxes for you to further describe the pleading you are filing. (See figure 4.)



**Figure 4** - application to employ event and motion to sell free and clear of liens event used to docket a two-part motion.

In this example, an application to employ event and a motion to sell free and clear of liens event have been used to docket a two-part motion.

The preferred practice is to add text for each type of relief being sought to adequately describe each part of the motion.

For example, in figure 4, you might add “auctioneer and” for the application to employ. Then add “*assets of the estate*” for the motion to sell free and clear of liens to describe what is being sold.

- **NOTE:** The CM/ECF system will automatically alphabetize the types of relief requested in a multi-part motion regardless of what order the events were chosen. When it is possible prepare the multi-part motion by alpha. If it is not possible then pick the first motion and type in the language for the second motion in docket text.

Figure 5 displays the resulting docket text.

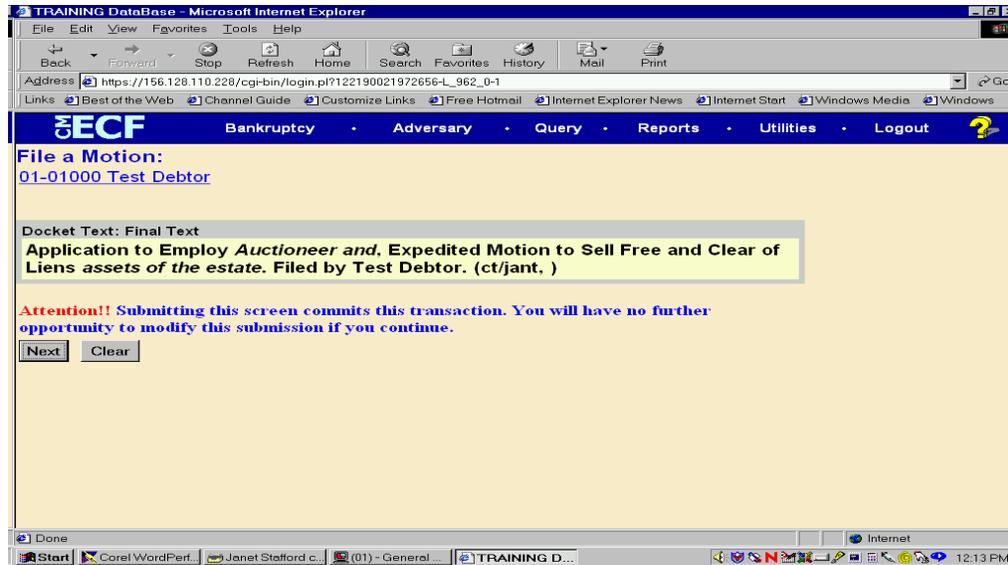


Figure 5