

**United States District Court Middle District of Georgia
Style Guide for Electronic Case Filing**

Revised (8/8/19 to reflect 9/8/17 change in process)

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INTRODUCTION

This guide contains style practices for all users when entering party names and addresses into CM/ECF. The application of a common set of styles allows information to be captured and displayed in a more uniform and predictable way, thus reducing confusion and error. In addition, style consistency is the key to efficient searches in CM/ECF, since successful queries require exact matches.

PARTY SEARCHES

Before adding any party to a case, search for the party using appropriate search strategies. Proper searches help to eliminate duplicates. A party name as simple as the *United States* can cause ambiguity and result in inaccurate queries if entered using multiple styles. Adherence to this guide can help avoid *United States* being entered in the database as *United States*, *U.S.*, *US*, *USA*, *U.S.A.*, or *U.S. of A.*

Wildcard Searches:

CM/ECF searches are **NOT** key word searches but require exact text matches. For example, the party *World Bazaar* cannot be located by simply entering *Bazaar* in the party query. You must search for a party using the first letters of the **Last/Business name** and/or make use of the asterisk. An asterisk may be used before or within search strings, but **NEVER** at the end of a word and **NEVER** by itself. To search for the party *World Bazaar*, you may use **Bazaar* or *World*. It is not necessary to use *World**.

Search Strategies:

When searching for parties, it may be necessary to conduct multiple searches. Search carefully before adding a new party.

Searching is not case sensitive.

You may search for the entire party name (e.g., *World Bazaar*) but if unsuccessful, you should search for a portion of the party name (e.g., *World Baz* 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 request for *The Timely Times* may not produce a result while a search request for *Timely Times* will be successful. An unsuccessful search for *A & A Metals* might be successful if you search without spaces (e.g., *A&A Metals*).

ADDING PARTIES

Much of case opening in CM/ECF consists of adding the names of plaintiffs and defendants to cases. Access to this information is vital to the court, the bar, and the general public. Always perform a thorough search before adding a new party to the database.

If your search brings up the name and address of the person (entity) you need, use it.

If you find a plaintiff or defendant in CM/ECF and the name is correct but the address is different, place the correct address in the address fields before accepting the Party Information screen. **DO NOT CREATE A NEW PARTY.** You may also find the party you are looking for in the database with an address but your party does not have an address. **DELETE** the address but **DO NOT CREATE A NEW PARTY.**

Only individuals or organizations that are a party to the action should be added as a party to the case. Do not add a party simply because you were required to serve them by law unless they are specifically named on the complaint (e.g., the United States Attorney or the United States Attorney General).

When adding a party name to the database, realize that others may one day be searching for the name you are adding. This is why entering it in a way that makes it easy to find is so important. Incorrectly added parties will be updated periodically but may appear on your pick-list from time to time. Always choose an existing party that is properly formatted over one that was added incorrectly when presented with a list of possible matches.

When adding new parties, you will be prompted to enter information into the fields outlined below:

Party Name - Enter all name information in **ALL CAPS**

Title - Use this field to enter party's title. Example: MR, MRS, DR, OFFICER, WARDEN, LIEUTENANT, SERGEANT, etc.

Do not use punctuation in the title.

Office - Used for law firms, business names, etc.

Prisoner id – State GDC123456 Federal REG1234-020

Address 1 – Enter address information in ALL CAPS.

Unit - Don't enter any information here

Try to keep the entire address on the Address 1 line. If you are unable to do this, finish the address on line Address 2.

Do not add mailing addresses for plaintiffs or defendants, unless they are pro-se.

City - Enter city names in their entirety (don't abbreviate).

State - Use 2 letter state abbreviation

Zip - Five digit zip code + four digit code, if known.

County - DO NOT USE

Country - DO NOT USE (unless country is other than USA).

Phone - Enter using the following format 123-456-7899. Do not use parenthesis around the area code. (Do not enter prison phone numbers)

Fax - (same as above)

Pro Se - Select no or yes.

Role - Select the appropriate role of the party.

Party text - This field is used in addition to the last name field to add miscellaneous information about the party. For example, you may want to add information which is part of the case caption but is more of a description than part of the proper name. It contains an indefinite number of characters.

If the name of the party you are searching for is already in the system you should select the party.

EXAMPLE 1: New complaint has OFFICER JOHN SMITH as the defendant. Search for JOHN SMITH. JOHN SMITH is already in the system. Select the JOHN SMITH that is already in the system. Add OFFICER in the “Title” field. If the JOHN SMITH that you found in the system has an address or has a different address from your JOHN SMITH, either delete or change the address information but **DO NOT CREATE A NEW PARTY**.

EXAMPLE 2: New complaint against WARDEN JEFF JONES. Search for JEFF JONES. JEFF JONES is already in the database with OFFICER in the “Title” field. Select the JEFF JONES that’s already in the system with OFFICER in the title field. Delete OFFICER and replace it with WARDEN. This does not create a new party.

If the plaintiff or petitioner files a complaint against someone and they only list the last name of the defendant but the defendant has the title of WARDEN, you will enter WARDEN in the “Title” field at case opening.

EXAMPLE 1: New complaint against OFFICER JONES. Search only the last name JONES*. There is no party with only the last name of JONES so you add a new party with only JONES in the last name. OFFICER will be entered in the “Title” field.

EXAMPLE 2: There is a party in the system with the last name only of JONES. Select this party and enter OFFICER in the “Title” field. If there is a title in the “Title” field other than OFFICER, delete that title and replace with OFFICER.

***DO NOT USE AN ASTERISK (*) IN THE FIRST NAME FIELD** for an unknown first name. An asterisk (*) will not act as a wild card in this instance and will provide you with

invalid results. To obtain a list of parties where only the last name is known, leave the first name field blank."

STYLE CONVENTION FOR ADDRESSES

ABBREVIATIONS:

All uppercase letters are preferred for the delivery address to help ease automated address processing.

EXAMPLE: JOHN J JOHNSTON
PO BOX 477
BENTONVILLE AR 40453

Use abbreviations where possible. For directionals use the one or two character abbreviation:

EXAMPLE: NE SW E W

**The official US Postal Service Standard Abbreviations can be found at www.usps.com/ncsc/lookups/usps_abbreviations.html

PUNCTUATION:

1. Omit all punctuation in the delivery address except for the hyphen in the ZIP+4 codes. Use the full nine digit zip where possible.
2. The pound sign (#) should not be used as a designator for secondary address units, such as apartment or suite.

EXAMPLE: JOHN J JOHNSON

4128 ELMWOOD LN APT 23
BENTONVILLE AR 40453

PO BOX AND RURAL ROUTE:

PO BOX is preferred, no punctuation.

Print rural route addresses as RR N BOX NN. Do not use the words Rural, Number No., or the pound sign (#).

ADDRESS LINES:

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

EXAMPLE: ARTHUR ANDERSON AND ASSOCIATES
ATTN TERRI BROOKS
JOHN HANCOCK BLDG 2600
8723 MICHIGAN AVE
CHICAGO, IL 60604

Overseas military addresses must contain the APO or FPO designations along with a two-character state abbreviation of AE, AP or AA and the Zip Code. This must be the only information on the last line of the address.

EXAMPLE: SERGEANT JOHN SMITH
C COMPANY 237 ARMOR
UNIT 21103 BOX 512
APO AE 09014

STYLE CONVENTION FOR PARTY NAMES

ABBREVIATIONS:

DO NOT use digits in names unless part of the official name.

EXAMPLE 1ST BANK OF THE SOUTH

Avoid abbreviations in party names:

EXAMPLE: FORD MOTOR COMPANY (not FORD MOTOR CO.)
FIRST FEDERAL ASSOCIATION (not 1st FEDERAL ASSOC.)

**NOTE: INC, LLC, etc. are acceptable abbreviations

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

EXAMPLE: B AND D COMPANY
CAMERON AND ASSOCIATES
BRANCH BANKING AND TRUST

When entering a United States Government Agency, always spell “UNITED STATES” out completely.

EXAMPLE: UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

PUNCTUATION:

1. Remove special characters, multiple blanks, and punctuation.
2. Use only the following punctuation/characters:

Hyphens (-) MARY SMITH-BAKER

Apostrophes (') KATHLEEN O'BRIEN

3. DO NOT use any punctuation when specifying names, including spaces and periods.

EXAMPLE: GMAC, not G.M.A.C. or G-M-A-C
WALMART not WAL-MART

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

EXAMPLE: PATRICIA DELAGARZA **NOT** DE LA GARZA

5. When entering last names that begin with MC, DE, etc., use proper spacing.

EXAMPLE: MCCAMIC, **NOT** MC CAMIC

6. If capitalized letters appear in succession, do not enter a space between them.

EXAMPLE: LMC DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION INC **NOT** L M
C DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION INC

7. If the last name is hyphenated, enter both names in the Last Name box.

EXAMPLE: ANGEL LIZARRAGA-DOMINGUEZ

Last Name: LIZARRAGA-DOMINGUEZ

First Name: ANGEL

If there are two last names but no hyphen, use the Last Name and Middle Name boxes.

EXAMPLE: ARTURO GARCIA LIZARRAGA

Last Name: LIZARRAGA

Middle Name: GARCIA

First Name: ARTURO

ALIASES AND MULTIPLE NAMES:

If an alias is included and the only change is the middle initial or name, do not include as an alias, include it in the name only.

EXAMPLE: a/k/a JOHN P HENRY
a/k/a JOHN PAUL HENRY
should be entered as JOHN PAUL HENRY

If another name (such as a nickname) is listed as well as the proper name, the other name should be entered as an alias.

EXAMPLE: MANUAL "MANNY" VALLE

First Name: MANUEL
Last Name: VALLE
Alias First Name: MANNY
Alias Last Name: VALLE

If a party has multiple names such as BARBARA JEAN MARY KHOUTOUN, add the extra names in the Middle name box.

EXAMPLE: BARBARA JEAN MARY KHOUTOUN

Last Name: KHATOUN
Middle Name: JEAN MARY
First Name: BARBARA

ESTATE:

When entering an estate as a party, enter the executor/personal representative or conservator as the main party.

NEVER add the deceased person as the main party.

Then enter the deceased person as the alias to this party using the role type “est” (estate of). Executor and personal representative are terms that are used interchangeably. Conservator is a person who has guardianship of a minor’s estate.

EXAMPLE: HELEN SMILEY EXECUTOR OF THE ESTATE OF
GEORGE SMILEY

Last Name: SMILEY

First Name: HELEN

Party Text: Executor of the Estate of George Smiley

Party Type: pla

Alias Last Name: SMILEY

Alias First Name: GEORGE

Alias Role: est

JOHN AND JANE DOE(S):

The following parties are in the system:

JOHN DOE
JANE DOE
JOHN DOES
JANE DOES
JOHN AND OR JANE DOE
JOHN AND OR JANE DOES

DO NOT add another JOHN or JANE DOE(S) to the system. If you receive a complaint and the plaintiff or petitioner has JOHN DOES and they list them as JOHN DOES 1 and 2 you would put 1 and 2 in the party text. If you receive a new complaint and the plaintiff has OFFICER JOHN DOE listed as a party you will select JOHN DOE from the party list. You will need to put OFFICER in the “Title” field. **DO NOT** add a new party to the database by the name of Officer John Doe.

EXAMPLE 1: JOHN DOES

Last Name: DOES
First Name: JOHN
Party Text: 1 and 2

EXAMPLE 2: OFFICER JOHN DOE

Last Name: DOE
First Name: JOHN
Title: OFFICER

TITLES, PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES:

Titles Prefixes and Suffixes such as DR, REV, DDS, OFFICER, NURSE, WARDEN, DEPUTY WARDEN, etc. should be entered in the **“Title” field ONLY.**

BUSINESS NAMES:

Business names should be entered entirely in the Last name field. Do not use the First name or Middle name field when entering business names.

Enter small words that precede business names, such as: THE, A, AN, etc. in the “party text” field

EXAMPLE: THE FRANKLIN HOTEL

Last Name: FRANKLIN HOTEL
Party text field: The

When a business name is listed in a format that is slightly different than the standard name in the database, select the standard form of the party name and enter the variation of the name in the Party Text Field.

EXAMPLE: BB&T ASSURANCE COMPANY has filed a pleading and upon searching you only find the party in the standard form of BB&T. Select BB&T and add Assurance Company in the Party Text field.

NON FEDERAL AGENCIES:

For non-Federal government entities, always start with the name of the state, county, city or town followed by the specific name of the entity.

EXAMPLE 1: STATE OF GEORGIA

Last Name: GEORGIA, STATE OF

EXAMPLE 2: DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION OF NORTH CAROLINA

Last Name: NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY:

This party name is already located in the ECF Database under “Commissioner of Social Security”

Pursuant to FRCP 17b, this court has decided to omit the current appointee’s name on the docket. Please to not add the individual’s name when adding this party during case opening.

EXAMPLE: COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY

ACCOUNT(S), CHECK(S), CERTIFICATE(S), REAL ESTATE, CURRENCY, COMPUTER(S), GUN(S), VEHICLE(S), PARCEL, FACEBOOK, EMAIL ACCOUNT(S):

The above parties have been created in order to cut down on the number of parties that are added to the system. Please see the following examples:

EXAMPLE 1: SAVINGS ACCT. #xx-xxxx152-5 LOCATED AT
ACCOUNT(S) NATIONAL CITY BANK, IN THE NAME OF
CHADWICK T. DUNHAM

Last Name: ACCOUNT(S)
Party Text: Savings Account xx-xxxx152-5 located at
National City Bank in the name of Chadwick T. Dunham

EXAMPLE 2: \$526,000.00 IN A CERTIFIED CHECK
CHECK(S)

Last Name: CHECK(S)
Party Text: Certified Check in the amount of
\$526,000.00

EXAMPLE 3: ONE SAVINGS CERTIFICATE, No. xxx2346
CERTIFICATE(S)

Last Name: CERTIFICATE(S)
Party Text: Savings, No. xxx2346, one

EXAMPLE 4: 204 ULMER AVE VALDOSTA GA 31601
REAL ESTATE

Last Name: REAL ESTATE
Party Text: Property located at 204 Ulmer Ave.,
Valdosta, GA 31601

8,588.12 ACRES OF LAND IN STOKES COUNTY NC

Last Name: REAL ESTATE
Party Text: 8,588.12 Acres, Stokes County, NC

EXAMPLE 5: \$14,669.00 IN US CURRENCY
CURRENCY

Last Name: CURRENCY
Party Text: \$14,669.00 in US

EXAMPLE 6: 1 DELL MODEL DCMA AND SERIAL #12345, 1 HP
COMPUTER(S) LAPTOP MODEL HP PAVILLION DV 5000

Last Name: COMPUTER(S)
Party Text: 1 Dell Model DCMA & Serial #12345, 1 HP
Laptop Model HP Pavillion DV 5000

EXAMPLE 7: REMINGTON 12-GAUGE SHOTGUN
GUN(S)

Last Name: GUN(S)
Party Text: Remington 12-Gauge Shotgun

EXAMPLE 8: A BLUE 1994 BUICK REGAL BEARING MICHIGAN
VEHICLE(S) REGISTRATION PLATE 7DHB86

Last Name: VEHICLE(S)
Party Text: Blue 1994 Buick Regal bearing Michigan
Registration Plate 7DHB86

EXAMPLE 9: U.S. POSTAL SERVICE PRIORITY MAIL PARCEL
PARCEL BEARING DELIVERY CONFIRMATION TRACKING
NUMBERS 123456789

Last Name: PARCEL
Party Text: addressed to John Doe, 1234 Sunshine Ave.,
Macon, GA 31204 - this information can be
found in the body of the Application and
Affidavit for Search Warrant

EXAMPLE 10: FACEBOOK.COM, 1601 CALIFORNIA VE, PALO
FACEBOOK ALTO, CA 94394

Last Name: FACEBOOK

Party Text: Facebook.com, 1601 California Ave., Palo
Alto, CA 94394

EXAMPLE 11: JOHNDOE@DOE.NET
EMAIL ACCOUNT(S)

Last Name: EMAIL ACCOUNT(S)

Party Text: johndoe@doe.net email address controlled
by Doe Communications

UNIONS:

Always spell out union names. Do not use acronyms or abbreviations. The local number should follow the name.

EX REL:

Example: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA EX REL DAVID JONES

Last Name: JONES

First Name: DAVID

Party Text: United States of America, ex rel

MINOR CHILD:

Last Name: MINOR CHILD

Party Text: First initial and last name

UNKNOWNNS

Example: MS BECKY

Last Name: DOE

First Name: JANE (John if party is male)

Party Text: Ms. Becky

Example: Unknown Stark County Sheriff's Deputy

Last Name: DOE

First Name: JOHN AND OR JANE

Party Text: Stark County Sheriff's Deputy

If an individual does not have a first name, DO NOT enter FNU. Only enter a last name for the party.

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

MILLER ACT CASES

EXAMPLE: UNITED STATES FOR THE USE AND BENEFIT OF ACME
DISPOSAL COMPANY

Last Name: ACME DISPOSAL COMPANY

Party Text: United States of America, for the use and benefit of