

# **Style Guide for Electronic Case Filing**

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**



**NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Searching For Parties</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Search Strategies</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Adding Parties</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Party Title Tips</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Style Conventions for Names</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Style Conventions for Spanish Names</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Style Conventions for Addresses</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Geographic Directions</b> .....	<b>9</b>

## Introduction

This guide contains the preferred style practices for all users of the CM/ECF application in the Northern District of Florida. The intention of the guide is to make everyone's task easier, whether they are entering data, inquiring into the CM/ECF data base, or uploading a proposed order. 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.

## Searching For Parties

Search the database for existing party names before adding new names. Search criteria is not case sensitive. To perform the search, enter at least two letters of the party's last name into the search window provided and click "Search". A drop down window will display all names which match the entered search criteria. Please scroll through the whole list to determine if the party name is already in the database to avoid creating a duplicate party record. 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 also as "UNITED STATES", "US", "USA", or "US of A."

## Search Strategies

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

- All parties are to be in ALL CAPS only.
- When searching for parties, 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 of JOHNS, CM/ECF may return a list of a hundred parties with that last name or with similar names such as "JOHNSON."
- When searching for parties, it may be necessary to conduct multiple searches.
  - First, search for the entire party's name (e.g., WORLD COMMUNICATIONS).
  - If that is not successful, you can search for part of the party's name (e.g., WORLD COMM or just WORLD).
  - The asterisk symbol ( \* ) can be used as a wild card in order to search

for words contained within a name.

- A search for **\*COMMUNICATIONS** would yield all party names in the database that contain the word “COMMUNICATIONS” but do not actually start with that word, e.g., WORLD COMMUNICATIONS.
- A search for **\*COMMUNICATIONS\*** would yield all party names that contain “COMMUNICATIONS” but do not start or end with that word, e.g., WORD COMMUNICATIONS CENTRAL.

NOTE that the use of an asterisk at the end of the word, e.g., **COMMUNICATIONS\***, is not required as the system automatically performs that function.

- An unsuccessful search for A & A Metals might be successful if you search without spaces (i.e., A&A METALS). On the other hand, an unsuccessful search for A&A METALS might be successful if you search with spaces (i.e., A & A METALS).
- Search by last name “DOE”, if you have parties referenced as “JANE DOE, JOHN DOE, DOE or DOES”.

## Adding Parties

- Add parties to cases using names exactly as they appear on the complaint. When you search for parties, you may find them in the database. If so, then select the name from the list.
- If a party 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. **DO NOT add titles to the “Title” field.**

## Party Title Tips

**REMINDER: Titles should be added to the “Party Text” field.**

1. The name of a party without the title will appear in docket text. This situation is desirable as title information is not required to appear within the docket text and causes the docket report to become longer and more costly to reproduce.
2. Titles will not appear on notices.

3. Titles will appear on the face of the docket report in ALL CAPS following the parties name as shown below:

JOSE GARZA, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ESTATE OF SLYVIA GARZA

FLORIDA LIMESTONE, A FLORIDA CORPORATION

JANE M RUIZ, OFFICIAL ADMINISTRATOR OF LOTTERY WINNINGS

2. Selecting Existing Party Names from the List

- If the party exists, highlight the name.
  - Do not duplicate exact party names in the database.
  - Only one name may be selected at a time in this window.
  - DO NOT insert Social Security numbers or tax identification numbers.
  - Alias name information may be added by selection of selecting the “Alias” button. The system does not limit the number of alias names associated with a party. Alias names should be added using the same formatting conventions as party names.
- Next, select the party role from a drop down list showing available role types.
- The Party Text field is reserved for extended descriptions of the party (i.e. A DELAWARE CORPORATION).
- When done, click “Next”.

3. Adding New Names to the Database

- New names may be added by selecting “Create New Party” from the search display screen. The basic rule to follow for entry of information in CM/ECF is: Spell it out exactly as it appears on the pleading.
  - Make sure to select the applicable party role such as Plaintiff, Defendant, Petitioner, or Respondent.
  - If you find an existing party record in CM/ECF with an address, delete the address fields before accepting the Party Information screen.

- As with any database, before entering information into CM/ECF, it is important to do a thorough search to be sure the same information has not been entered previously. Users should note that the results of a search will be in alphabetical order. However, please scroll through the whole list to determine if the party name is already in the database to avoid creating a duplicate party record.
- Searches are conducted by entering at least two letters of the last name of a person -OR- the name of the business, municipality, organization, or agency. Remember, the information will be retrieved only as it was added to the system based upon how it appeared on the pleading and in accordance with these standards and conventions.

### Style Conventions for Names

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

- All names are to be added using ALL CAPS.

WALLACE D SMITH  
UNITED SERVICES FIDELITY AND GUARANTY

- Use single spacing between all names and initials. **Do not use punctuation.**

J J JONES  
SMITH INC  
C W BRADFORD LTD

- When typing names that have upper and lower case letters or hyphens, do not insert spaces. Remember, ALL CAPS ONLY.

PATRICK MACDOUGAL  
KATHLEEN O'BRIEN  
MARY SMITH-BAKER  
SHEILA BONO-COLLINS  
WAL-MART

- If an individual does not have a middle name, leave that field blank. Do not enter "NMN" (no middle name), or "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 on the petition or pleading.

B & D COMPANY  
CAMERON & ASSOCIATES  
J&J TRUCKING

### Entering Spanish Surnames

The father’s surname, or in the case of a married woman, the husband’s surname, is always used as the control name.

JOSE RODOLFO RAMIREZ-VILLAREAL

First name: JOSE  
Middle name: RODOLFO  
Father’s surname: RAMIREZ  
Mother’s surname: VILLAREAL

Enter:	Last name:	RAMIREZ-VILLAREAL
	First name:	JOSE
	Middle name:	RODOLFO

### Married Spanish Female

LUCERO VILLEGAS DE RAMIREZ

The “DE” indicates that the woman is married. Consequently, the control name is her husband’s surname, “RAMIREZ”. **NOTE:** There are some exceptions when the “DE” is used to link two first names. See the following example:

First name:	LUCERO
Middle name:	
Father’s (her maiden) name:	VILLEGAS
Husband’s surname:	RAMIREZ
Enter:	Last name: RAMIREZ-VILLEGAS DE
	First name: LUCERO

Spanish speaking countries use the “DE”, “LA”, “LOS”, “DEL” to link two first names to make it into one name, e.g., MARIA **DE** JESUS, MARIA **DE** ACENCION, MARIA **DE LA** LUZ, MARIA **DE LOS** ANGELES, MARIA **DEL** ROSARIO, MARIA **DE** ATOCHE.

All the names linked with the **DE, LA, LOS, DEL**, mentioned above form one *first name*.

## Abbreviations

### States and 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	VI	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  
South = S  
East = E  
West = W

Northeast = NE  
Southwest = SW  
Southeast = SE  
Northwest = NW