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## Chapter 1 - Getting Started

### Getting Started

#### [Introduction](#)

This manual provides instructions on how to use the Electronic Filing System to file documents with the U.S. Bankruptcy Northern District of California, or to view and retrieve docket sheets and documents for all cases assigned to this system. It assumes a working knowledge of Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Adobe Acrobat. Please refer to Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox or Adobe Acrobat instruction manuals for specific questions regarding those applications.

#### [Accessing ECF](#)

Users can access ECF by navigating to: <http://canb.uscourts.gov> or <https://ecf.canb.uscourts.gov>

**Step 1** The **Welcome Screen** is displayed.

**Click [hyperlink]** Northern District of California -Document Filing System

#### **Step 2** Logins and Passwords

Some registered users (attorneys, trustees and certain users) will use two sets of logins and passwords; one for [CM/ECF filing](#) and the other for [Public Access to Electronic Records \(PACER\)](#) access for queries and reports. Registered users will see a login screen. (**Note:** The Login and Password fields are case sensitive.) Registered users will initially enter their ECF login and password which has been issued by the court on this screen. This login and password allows electronic filing of documents, not access to reports or queries. The client code field is optional and is used for PACER users to associate this activity to specific customers. If an error is made before submitting the screen, clicking on the [Clear] button will delete the data and allow you to reenter information

**Note:** The registered user's login and password is the electronic equivalent of their signature. All users are personally responsible for activity with their logins.

If you forget your password, please use the [forgotten password link](#) on the login page or send an e-mail to the *helpdesk* at [helpdesk@canb.uscourts.gov](mailto:helpdesk@canb.uscourts.gov) requesting a password change.

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### [Menu Descriptions in CM/ECF](#)

Access to the various modules are provided by the blue Main Menu Bar at the top of the screen. Each selection is a hyperlink to another set of options or hyperlinks allowing participants to file documents, query, view or print a docket sheet, and generate reports.

Bankruptcy	If you are filing a new <a href="#">bankruptcy petition</a> or filing any documents in a bankruptcy proceeding, click Bankruptcy from the main menu.
Adversary	If you are filing a new Adversary action or filing any document in an <a href="#">adversary proceeding</a> , click Adversary to proceed.
Query	Query allows you to view a variety of information about a case such as a list of attorneys or current status, as well as the docket sheet. After identifying the case you want, you will see a menu of these choices.
Reports	From the Reports menu, you can run a variety of reports including a Case Report and Docket Report.
Utilities	This option allows you to view a log of transactions you have made in ECF. In addition, you can make Internet payments and view your Internet payment history.
Search	A pop-up window appears allowing you to enter the text to be searched.
Logout	Allows you to logout the system. Always use the Logout option when you have completed your work

### [Adding Parties](#)

#### Parties

Consistently adding names and addresses with the same formats and abbreviations aid in the search for and retrieval of these records, which prevents duplicate entries. To avoid duplicate entries, it is important to use the following standards when adding names to the CM/ECF database.

#### How to Search for a Party

Before adding a party, it is recommended that one search the database for the filer to eliminate duplicate records in the system. One can search by Social Security Number, Tax Identification Number, Last Name or Business Name.

Enter the [debtor](#)'s last name and first name and click **[Search]**. For business filings enter the entire name in the Last/Business name field.

**Note: DO NOT TYPE IN ALL UPPERCASE CHARACTERS, UNLESS THE NAME OF THE**

## **PARTY SHOULD BE IN UPPER CASE.**

### [Rules for Entry of Party Names](#)

#### Names of Individuals

Capitalize the first letter of the first, middle and last names only. Enter the last name in the last name field, the first name in the first name field, and the middle name in the middle name field. (If only a middle initial is provided, enter it with a capital letter followed by a period.)

Type the generation, if there is one, in the generation field (e.g. Jr., Sr., III).

Titles (e.g. M.D., PhD.) Use the **Party text** field **only**. Do not include titles in the generation or last name field.

#### Company and organization names

Type company or organization names in the last name field. Leave the first name, middle name, and generation fields blank.

Company names with initials should be added with no spaces between the first and second initials. **Example:** A.B. Truck Lines

Company names using initials such as GMAC, PG & E should be spelled out with the exception of the name that is only part of the name not the whole name.

**Example:** General Motors Acceptance Corp.

**Example:** Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

**Example:** RDI Financial Inc.

"The" as the first word in a name. Type it in before the name.

Ampersands (&): Do not use the ampersand symbol in names or addresses. Type the word "and" instead of the ampersand.

**Example:** A and A Seed Co.

Associates, Association, Company, Corporation, and Incorporated: Abbreviate as "Assoc." "Assn.", "Co.", "Corp." and "Inc."

"of" and "the": Use all lower case letters when in the middle of a name.

LLC, LLP, LP, N.A., FSB, Esq: Do not add as part of the name.

Use the **Party Text** field only.

Aka, faka, dba, fdba: Do not add as part of the name, add them in the alias field.

State of Agencies: Type the two letter state abbreviations followed by the department name on the same line. Remember to indicate the state's name even if it is not part of the agency title.

**Example:** CA Franchise Tax Board

County agencies: Type the county name followed by department name.

**Example:** San Francisco County Tax Collector, Santa Cruz County Assessor

If county or city is the name of the party, type the "County of" or "City of" then followed by the name.

**Example:** County of Marin, City of San Jose

Government agencies are to be added in the following manner:

**Example:** U.S. Dept. of [agency]

**Example:** U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs

There are a few exceptions to this rule such as:

**Example:** USDA Rural Development [fdba Farmers Home Administration; fdba Rural Economic and Community Development Services]

**Example:** Internal Revenue Service

Since a Trust or Estate is a legal entity, they should be added as they are filed, with the **exception** of "**The**" in the beginning.

**Example:** "The Estate of John Doe" would be entered in the last name field as: "Estate of John Doe" would be entered in the last name field as: "Trust of Jane Doe"

Calif. Auto Dealers, Inc. is spelled out



(e.g. N,S,E,W,NE, NW, SE, SW, 1834N Main St.)

Suite, Apartment, Office or Room: Type the number symbol # to make these references in the address, even if the suite, apartment, office, or room "number" is a letter. Do not type a comma before, or leave more than one space before the "#" symbol.

**CORRECT**

123 Main St. #3456

22 Country Ln. #3

456 Winding St. #A

2254 12th St. #D

**INCORRECT**

123 Main St. Room 3456

22 Country Ln. Apt 3

456 Winding St. Suite A

2254 12th St., # D

Floor Number: Use an integer for the number (1st, 2nd,) and use the abbreviation (Fl.) For the word "Floor." Type the floor number on the same line as the street address. Do not include a comma after the street name. (E.g. 123 Main St. 5th Fl.)

Zip Code: Type all nine digits of a nine-digit zip code. Use a hyphen to separate the first five digits from the last four digits. If the zip code only contains five digits type the zip code as is.

"Care of "designation: Indicate a "care of " designation by "c/o". DO NOT USE A PERCENT SIGN (%) SYMBOL.

Street names that are letters: When the name of a street is a letter (e.g. O St., the name should be typed as a capital letter. Do not place a period after the letter or place the letter in quotation marks.

Example:

**CORRECT**

1123 O St.

456 G St.

**INCORRECT**

1123 "O" St.

456 G. St.

Street name abbreviations: Use the abbreviations listed below with a capital letter for the first letter and a period at the end of the abbreviation. Do not type out whole words unless indicated below.

Avenue - Ave.	Parkway-Pkwy.
Boulevard - Blvd.	Place - Pl.
Center - Center	Plaza-Plaza
Circle - Circle	Road-Rd.
Court - Ct	Rural Route - RR
Drive - Dr.	Square - Sq.
Expressway - Expwy.	Street - St.
Highway - Hwy	Way - Way
Lane - Ln.	

Post Office Box: Type post office box designations as P.O. Box. Place a period after both the "P" and "O". Type one space before the word "Box". Do not type a space between the period after "P" and "O". Do not use the number symbol (#) before the number.

#### **CORRECT**

P.O. Box 12

P.O. Box 45

P.O. Box 367

#### **INCORRECT**

Post Office Box #12

PO Box 45

P. O. Box 367

#### [Important Information](#)

### Documents Filed in Error

A document incorrectly filed in a case may be the result of posting the wrong PDF file to a docket entry, or selecting the wrong document type from the menu, or simply entering the wrong case number and not catching the error before the transaction is completed. **Do not attempt to refile the document.**

"Contact the [Divisonal Office](#) and request a correction"

as soon as possible after an error is discovered. Be sure to have the case number and document number for which the correction is being requested. If appropriate, the Court will make an entry indicating that the document was filed in error. You will be advised if you need to refile the document. The system will not permit you to make changes to the document(s) or docket entry filed in error once the transaction has been accepted.

## Viewing Transaction Log

This feature, selected from the Utilities Menu, allows you to review all transactions processed with your login and password. Data are displayed in chronological order by date and time.

Selection is by date or date range only, defaulting to today.

## Viewing Mailing Information

Within the **Utilities** menu option in CM/ECF there is a miscellaneous option to view **Mailings...>Mailing Info for a case**. Attorneys can look at this information to see who is receiving service electronically and who is receiving paper service.

### [Document Preparation](#)

## Portable Document Format (PDF)

Only PDF (Portable Document Format) documents may be filed with the Court using the Court's Electronic Filing System. Be sure to view the PDF formatted document before sending it to ensure that it appears in its entirety and in the proper format.

Documents should contain all the appropriate caption information, including; attorney name/address header, case name, case numbers, etc. Ensure documents are in page number order when scanning and/or converting files to a PDF.

The maximum size of a pdf uploaded in the ECF system is **3MB**. (Approximately 20-25 pages of text documents). Scanned documents should be set to **300dpi**.

## Viewing a PDF File

Start the **PDF** program .

Go to the **File** menu and choose **Open**.

Click on the location and file name of the document to be viewed.

If the designated location is correct, and the file is in a PDF format, PDF loads the file and displays it on the screen.

If the displayed document is larger than the screen or consists of multiple pages, use the scroll bars to move through the document.

Click on the **View** menu for other options for viewing the displayed document. Choose the option that is most appropriate for the document.

### [Convert Documents to PDF](#)

Except for the [creditor](#)  matrix text file, all documents filed electronically with the court must be in PDF.

The conversion process is relatively simple and can be accomplished in one of two ways depending on the word processing program you are using.

Once your document is complete and with the document to be converted open on your screen.

Select **File** from the application menu bar, then select **Print** (or click the printer icon from your toolbar.)

Use the drop down box to change the current printer to PDF.

Click **Print**.

The document will not actually print; instead a Save As box will appear on your screen.

Select the directory and folder, name your file and click save.

The PDF conversion is now complete. Your *electronic original* is stored in the folder you have designated.

### [Converting a Creditor Matrix to a .txt File](#)

#### **To Save the [Creditor](#) Matrix File with a .txt Extension**

**STEP 1** After creating the creditor list in WordPerfect or Microsoft Word, open the file. Click **File** in the WordPerfect or Microsoft Word toolbar to display the drop down list.

**STEP 2** Click **Save As** in the drop down list.

**Select the Directory where the file should be saved. ( Microsoft Word users, Skip to Step 4. WordPerfect users continue.)**

**STEP 3** Click the drop down menu arrow in the **File Type** box.

Select the file type **ASCII DOS Text**.

**STEP 4** **Microsoft Word users:**

Click the drop down box arrow in the **Save As Type** box.

Select the file type of **Text Files(\*.txt)** or **Text Only(\*.txt)**.

**STEP 5** Enter the file name in the **File Name:** box. (The system provides the same file name with a .txt extension.)

**STEP 6** Click the **[Save]** button.

### [Creditor Matrix Requirements](#)

A [creditor](#) matrix contains each creditor's name and mailing address. This information is used for noticing and also for claims information when applicable. The creditor matrix must be in an ASCII file format with an appropriate text extension such as **.txt** before it can be successfully uploaded into the CM/ECF system

The name and address of each creditor cannot be more than 5 lines. If a record is more than 5 lines, the 6th line will be combined with line 5 and the 7th or 8th lines will be truncated.

Each line may contain no more than 40 characters including blanks.

Names and addresses should be left justified.

Spaces in the first position of a line will cause an exception report for that creditor record.

Special characters such as ~, 1/2 or ^ will cause problems. The # C/O and & characters have not been reported to cause errors.

Account numbers or "attention" lines should be placed on the second line of the name/address.

City, State and Zip code must be on the last line.

Nine digit Zip codes must be typed with a hyphen separating the two groups 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.

Do not center text, left justify only.

### [System Requirements](#)

#### Hardware and Software Requirements

#### **Minimum System Requirements**

A personal computer running a standard platform such as Windows XP, 7, 8 or Apple

Computer.

Internet Service and a compatible browser *i.e* Firefox and Internet Explorer.

Software to convert documents from a word processor format to portable document format (PDF).

A PDF- compatible word processing system such as Windows based versions of WordPerfect and Word.

A scanner to convert documents to a pdf that are not in your word processing or petition preparation systems.

A valid e-mail account.

## [Documentation Filing](#)

### Attachments

There is often a need to submit supporting documents with a pleading. When docketing an event you may attach supporting documents to the main document by clicking the **Yes** on the Attachments to Document radio button. **(Located under the *Browse* Button)**

**Note:** An **attached** document will be referenced in the docket text separately and the attached image will be accessible by clicking on the hyperlink within the docket text.

**Step 1** Click **Browse**, then navigate to the drive and directory where the appropriate PDF file for the attachment is located and select it.

**Step 2** Select a document type from the pick list, and/or enter a **description** in the description box. **You cannot leave both of these boxes blank.**

**Step 3** Click **Add to List**. *The path and file name are added to the List box.*

To attach additional supporting documents, repeat this process.

Click **Next**.

**Remember: Attachments cannot be larger than 3MB's (Approximately 20-25 pages)**

[If you need help](#)

## Help Desk

Contact the Court's divisional offices at the following numbers for assistance between the hours of **9:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M.**, Monday through Friday.

Oakland Division (510) 879-3554

San Francisco Division (415) 268-2368

San Jose Division (408) 278-7500

Santa Rosa Division (707) 547-5975

ECF Technical Support (415) 268-2349

Identify the nature of the issue and your call will be transferred to the appropriate person.

In addition, the Court's General ITD Help Desk can be reached at: **(415) 268-2350** *or* e-mail [helpdesk@canb.uscourts.gov](mailto:helpdesk@canb.uscourts.gov)

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