

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

Style Guide

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I. SHORT GUIDE TO BLUEBOOK (21ST EDITION)

This style guide provides a brief summary of commonly used Bluebook rules and the Court’s modifications to those rules. The Bluebook must be used for all citations in legal documents unless this style guide provides for a modification used by the Court.

The Bluepages of the Bluebook provide permissible deviations from the Whitepages for citations in court documents. The corresponding Whitepages should be used to supplement the Bluepages when they are unclear or lacking information. Citations to Florida specific materials should conform to the Florida Style Manual found at www.floridastylemanual.com.

THE COURT WILL NOT CONSIDER PLEADINGS THAT EXCEED FIFTY (50) PAGES UNLESS THE FILER COMPLIES WITH N.D. FLA. LBR 9013-1(E).

A. Citations in Court Documents

1. Cases (Bluebook (“BB”) Rules B10 and 10)

Law v. Siegal, 571 U.S. 415, 420–22 (2014).

Thompkins v. Lil’ Joe Records, 476 F.3d 1294, 1315 (11th Cir. 2007).

Harvard v. Inch, 408 F. Supp. 3d 1255, 1261 (N.D. Fla. 2019).

Melon Acres, Inc. v. Villa (In re Villa), 625 B.R. 111, 121 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2021).

In re Thacker, Case No. 12-50370-KKS, 2020 WL 4000864, at *4 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. May 28, 2020).

Souffrant v. State of Fla. Dep’t of Child. & Fam. Benefit Recovery/Off. of Pub. Benefits Integrity (In re Souffrant), Case No. 18-40550-KKS, Adv. No. 19-04041-KKS, 2021 WL 1713265 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. Apr. 2, 2021).

Biscayne Boulevard Props., Inc. v. Graham, 65 So. 2d 858, 859 (Fla. 1953).

- a. If the opinion was issued in the context of the main bankruptcy case, cite the case name as the last name of the debtor prefaced by “*In re.*” Phrases

such as “in the matter of” or “petition of” are always abbreviated as “*In re*.”

Example: *In re Harrison*, 599 B.R. 173 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2019), *In re Hamrick*, 551 B.R. 860 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2016).

- b. Phrases such as “on the relation of” or “on behalf of” are abbreviated “ex rel.”

Example: *U.S. ex rel. Clausen v. Lab Corp of Am.*, 290 F.3d 1301 (11th Cir. 2002).

- c. If the opinion was issued in the context of an adversary proceeding, list the adversary names on either side of a “v.” and the administrative case name in parentheses.

Example: *Spence v. Hintze (In re Hintze)*, 570 B.R. 369 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2017).

2. *Order of Authorities (BB Rule 1.4)*

Modification: The Court adheres to the 20th Edition’s Rule 1.4, which requires cases to be cited in order of highest court first then in reverse chronological order.

3. *Statutes (BB Rules B12 and 12)*

The year is not required for citations to the official or unofficial versions of the United States Code. Citations to all other statutes, including state statutes, must include the year of the code edition, whether official or unofficial.

28 U.S.C. § 157(b).

11 U.S.C. §§ 544–548.

7 C.F.R. § 45.45 (2021).

Fla. Stat. § 95.11(3) (2021).

4. *Federal and Local Rules (BB Rules B12.1.3 and 12.9.3, Local Rule 1001-1(A))*

This Court’s Local Rules should be cited as follows: “N.D. Fla. LBR 1001-1(A)” or “Bankr. N.D. Fla. Loc. R. 1001-1(A).”

Fed. R. Bankr. P. 6003.

Fed. R. Civ. P. 8.

Fed. R. Evid. 410.

N.D. Fla. Loc. R. 1.1.

5. Books, Treatises, and Other Nonperiodic Materials (BB Rules B15 and R15)

10 *Collier on Bankruptcy* ¶ 6003.02[2] (16th ed. 2020).
Good-Faith Bargaining, Black's Law Dictionary (10th ed. 2014).

6. Court/Litigation Documents (BB Rules 10.8.3, B17, and Table BT.1, with modifications)

Modification: Citations to court or litigation documents must include a reference to the CM/ECF document number. The full title of the document must be cited the first time it is used, either in-text or in a citation, but may be later referred to by a defined, shortened name. The full title of court or litigation documents must be italicized in-text and in citations. Defined, shortened names should be capitalized, but not italicized.

In-Text Example: This case is before the Court on *Trustee's Motion for Authority to Sell Real Property of the Estate Pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 363(b)(1)* ("Motion," ECF No. 21).

Footnote/Citation Example: *Debtor's Objection to Plaintiff's Motion for Relief from Automatic Stay (ECF No. 30)*, ECF No. 35 ("Objection").

Modification: Court or litigation documents from cases other than the case at issue or in another court should be cited as follows: document name, pincite, case citation, and the CM/ECF docket number.

Example: *Debtor's Response to Motion to Dismiss (ECF No. 15)*, *In re Smith*, Case No. 21-00001-KKS (Bankr. N.D. Fla. Jan. 1, 2021), ECF No. 20, p. 3.

Modification: After the court document is cited in full the first time, it may be short cited in the following forms, including "*id.*":

1. Motion, ECF No. 21, p. 3 or ECF No. 21, p. 3.
2. Objection, ECF No. 35, ¶ 5 or ECF No. 35, ¶ 5.

Modification: All page references should be preceded by "p." (or "pp." for multiple pages). All paragraph references should be preceded by "¶" (or "¶¶" for multiple paragraphs). All short form citations should also use "p." or to "¶" prevent confusion.

- Example:**
1. ECF No. 18, pp. 4–6.
 2. *Id.* at p. 5.

7. Short Form Citation and “Id.” (BB Rules B4 and 4)

- a. The first time any authority is cited, it must be cited in full. After the first citation, if the reference is clear, a short form should be used. The following are all proper short forms of *In re Harrison*, 599 B.R. 173 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2019):

In re Harrison, 599 B.R. at 188.
599 B.R. at 188.
Id. at 188.

- b. Short forms for adversary proceedings in bankruptcy cases should cite the name of one of the parties on either cite of the “v.” The following are all proper short forms of *Spence v. Hintze (In re Hintze)*, 570 B.R. 369 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2017):

Hintze, 570 B.R. at 369.
570 B.R. at 369.
Id. at 369.

- c. The short form “*id.*” is used to refer to the immediately preceding authority and *may* be used as a short form for all types of authorities. “*Id.*” may *only* be used when the preceding citation contains only *one* source. For the purposes of this rule, ignore sources identified in explanatory parentheticals, explanatory phrases, or prior/subsequent history.

Example:

1. *Law v. Siegal*, 571 U.S. 415, 421 (2014) (citing *Degen v. United States*, 517 U.S. 820, 823 (1996)).
2. *Id.* at 422.

- d. *Supra* may be used to cite to a previously cited group of authorities, such as a lengthy string cite of cases.

Example:

1. *Law v. Siegal*, 571 U.S. 415, 420–22 (2014); *Thompkins v. Lil’ Joe Records*, 476 F.3d 1294, 1315 (11th Cir. 2007); *Silva v. Swift*, No. 4:19-cv-286-RH/MJF, 2020 WL 5523400, at *7 (N.D. Fla. June 1, 2020); *Harvard v. Inch*, 408 F. Supp. 3d 1255, 1261 (N.D. Fla. 2019); *Melon Acres, Inc. v. Villa (In re Villa)*, 625 B.R. 111, 121 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2021); *In re Campbellton-Graceville Hosp. Corp.*, 616 B.R. 177, 183–85 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2019).
2. *In re Harrison*, 599 B.R. 173, 188 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2019).
3. Cases cited *supra* note 1.

8. Capitalization (BB Rules B17.3 and 8)

- a. The word “court” should be capitalized when naming any court in full or when referring to the U.S. Supreme Court. For instance, the “Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals” would be capitalized, but not “the courts of appeals.”
- b. The word “court” is also capitalized in a court document when it is referring to the court issuing or receiving that document. For instance, “the Court has considered the evidence in this case,” but, “bankruptcy courts disagree on this issue.”
- c. Likewise, capitalize “plaintiff,” “defendant,” “debtor,” “trustee” or “creditor” when referring to the party in the case that is the subject of the order. For example, “The U.S. Trustee has objected to the Debtor’s claim of exemptions,” but, “The trustee in *Shoopman* objected, although the debtors had chosen to surrender their homes.” The “U.S. Trustee” is always capitalized.
- d. The title of court documents should be capitalized only if 1) the document was filed in the same case or proceeding in which you are filing your document and 2) the actual title or a shortened form is used. Do not capitalize generic document names. For instance, “In Debtor’s *Objection to Claim Number 5*,” is the name of the document as filed, but, “this Court’s orders are ignored to your peril,” is a generic name referring to orders generally.

9. Proper Usage of Legal Terms

- a. Motions are either “granted” or “denied.” Applications are either “approved” or “disapproved.” Objections are either “sustained” or “overruled.” Claims are either “allowed” or “disallowed.”
- b. The main bankruptcy case is a “case.” A motion or other document seeking relief in the main case commences a contested matter. An adversary proceeding is a “proceeding.” The Court conducts “final evidentiary hearings” in “contested matters” and “trials” in adversary proceedings. Final evidentiary hearings may also be referred to as “trials.”
- c. When specifying a deadline, using “through” and not “to” a specific date will avoid the possibly unintended consequence of shortening the period by one day.
- d. For clarity, the use of defined terms is recommended.

II. FORMAT OF ORDERS

Proposed order guidelines are located on the Court's website: <https://www.flnb.uscourts.gov/proposed-order-guidelines>. Proposed orders should be double spaced, include page numbers, and use the same font type and size (14-pt) throughout the body of the order.

A. Caption

1. The caption of orders entered in the main bankruptcy case should match the following format:

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
_____ DIVISION

IN RE:

CASE NO.: 13-12345-KKS
CHAPTER 13

JOHN DOE

Debtor.

_____ /

2. The caption of orders entered in adversary proceedings should match the following format:

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
_____ DIVISION

IN RE: CASE NO.: 11-54321-KKS
CHAPTER 11

UNFORTUNATE COMPANY, LLC.,

Debtor.

_____ /

UNFORTUNATE COMPANY, LLC., ADV. NO.: 11-08765-KKS

Plaintiff,

v.

LIABILITY, LTD.,

Defendant.

_____ /

B. The Case/Adversary Proceeding Number

1. The case number should conform to the following: Case No.: 13-12345-KKS. An adversary proceeding number should conform to the following: Adv. No.: 11-04321-KKS.
2. The three uppercase letters signify the judge to whom the case is assigned: KKS = Karen K. Specie; HAC = Henry A. Callaway; JCO = Jerry C. Oldshue

C. Title of Order

1. The title follows the caption, is centered, in all caps, bold, and underlined.
2. The title of the order should be a full, descriptive title containing the exact name and CM/ECF number of the paper ruled upon, and the proper disposition.
3. Only one filing document shall be addressed per order unless the Court directs otherwise.

D. Body

1. The body of the order should be double-spaced, justified, and laid out in unnumbered paragraphs, each beginning with a single indent. All pages, except the first page, must be paginated.
2. The first sentence of the order should begin with “THIS CASE” or “THIS MATTER” in all caps. The sentence should recite the papers and events that resulted in the entry of the order. Orders entered “after a hearing” should include the hearing date. Papers should be identified by title, party, and CM/ECF number.
3. The opening paragraph of the proposed order should contain the CM/ECF number of the motion or document to which the order is related.
4. Any proposed order involving real property should, and for a Mortgage Modification Mediation motion must, contain the address of the real property as provided in the related motion, application, or objection and include as an attachment the full and complete legal description.

E. Ordered Paragraphs

1. Before the Court’s decree should be the phrase “it is ORDERED” and “ORDERED” should be in all caps.
2. The decree is presented in either multiple numbered paragraphs or in a single unnumbered paragraph.
3. The following date and judge signature block format shall come at the completion of the ordered paragraphs:

[Indent] DONE AND ORDERED on _____.



[Tab Right] _____
[Tab Right] KAREN K. SPECIE
[Tab Right] Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge

4. Every page must contain text of the order. No page can begin with “ORDERED,” the date, or the judge’s signature block.

F. Preparation and Service

1. The name of the attorney who prepared the proposed order is to be indicated at the end of the document and in 11-point in the following format: Order prepared by [Attorney's Name].
2. Proposed orders shall include the following statement located after the judge's signature block:

[Name of submitting attorney] is directed to serve a copy of this Order on interested parties who are non-CM/ECF users and file a proof of service within three (3) business days of entry of the Order.

3. Proposed orders must be submitted in Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf). PDF files will not be accepted. Use the electronic submission link through CM/ECF only to submit proposed orders. Exhibits can be attached as a PDF.

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
_____ DIVISION

IN RE:

CASE NO.: 13-12345-KKS
CHAPTER 13

JOHN DOE,

Debtor.

_____ /

TITLE CENTERED IN ALL CAPS, BOLDED, AND UNDERLINED

THIS CASE came on for consideration without a hearing on the Court's own *Motion for Uniformity* (ECF No. 1). Paragraphs in the body of this Order begin with a single tab indent and are unnumbered, double-spaced and justified. This Order is written in 14-point font.

For this reason, it is

ORDERED: The decree of the Court may be presented in a single unnumbered paragraph.

DONE and ORDERED on _____.

KAREN K. SPECIE
Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge

Order prepared by Joe Attorney.

Joe Attorney is directed to serve a copy of this Order on interested parties who are non-CM/ECF users and file a proof of service within three (3) days of entry of the order.