

18 Filing Rules For Proper Alphabetizing

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Following Find 18 Important Rules for Proper Alphabetizing that will help to make your files much more consistent and efficient.

Rule 1:

Name of individuals are transposed when filed as follows: last name, first name or initial, then middle name or initial.

As Written	As Filed By Unit	
	1	2
John W. Adams	Adams	John W.
James A. Smith	Smith	James A.
Betty O. Greene	Greene	Betty O.
Julie M. Trurgas	Turgas	Julie M.
Thomas R. Macy	Macy	Thomas R.

Rule 2:

Surnames which include prefixes such as D', Da, De, Del, De la, Della, Den, Des, Di, Du, El, Fitz, L', La, Las, Le, Les, Lo, Los, M', Mac, Mc, O', Saint, St., Ste., Te, Ten, Ter, Van, Van der, Von, etc.. are filed as one word in alphabetical order.

As Written	As Filed By Unit
	1
D' Genoa	Dgenoa
de Silva	Desilva
Van Der Liden	VanderLiden
Mac Gregor	MacGregor
Saint Thomas	SaintThomas
De Leon	DeLeon

Rule 3:

When it is impossible to distinguish the first or last name, or if confusion lies in the arrangement of a name, it is filed as it is written with the last name as the first filing unit while creating a cross-reference from the first name.

As Written	As Filed By Unit	
	1	2
Pas Boss	Boss	Pas
Solidarity Freedom	Freedom	Solidarity
Suri Jiono	Jiono	Suri
Gery De Geer	DeGeer	Gery

Rule 4:

Hyphenated and compound last names are treated as one unit. Ignore the hyphen and file the two words as one unit.

As Written	As Filed By Unit	
	1	2
Dianne Roger-Bach	Roger-Bach	Dianne
Mark St. Paul	Saint Paul	Mark

Rule 5:

Name of individuals are transposed when filed as follows: last name, first name or initial, then middle name or initial.

A: Titles which are intrinsic part of the name are considered as the first unit.

As Written	As Filed By Unit		
	1	2	3
Prince Charles	Prince	Charles	
Sister Mary Theresa	Sister	Mary	Theresa

B: When title of a person is added to a full name, it should be considered as the last unit.

As Written	As Filed By Unit		
	1	2	3
Father Terry Shields	Shields	Terry	Father
Colonel George Zaback	Zaback	George	Colonel
Mayor James Daley	Daley	James	Mayor

C: Other titles and appendages such as Sr., Jr., II, Mrs., Ph. D., are also considered as the last name.

As Written	As Filed By Unit			
	1	2	3	4.
James A. Baker, II	Baker	James	A.	II
Mark G. Spilmon, Jr.	Spilmon	Mark	G.	Jr.
Michael E. Chan, Ph. D.	Chan	Michael	E.	Ph.
Mrs. Laurie D. Judnack	Judnack	Laurie	D.	Mrs.
John J. Johnson, C.P.A.	Johnson	John	J.	CPA
Mary T. Todd, M.D.	Todd	Mary	T.	MD

D: Firm names beginning with a title should be indexed and filed as written.

As Written	As Filed By Unit			
	1	2	3	4.
Dr. Pepper Bottling Co.	Doctor	Pepper	Bottling	Company

Rule 6:

All Abbreviations in names should be alphabetized as though they were spelled out..

As Written

Robert St. Charles
 Wil. Ziscowski
 Ft. Collins Review
 Acme Mfg. Co.

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3
Saint Charles	Robert	
Ziscowski	William	
Fort	Collins	Review
Acme	Manufacturing	Company

Rule 7:

A business name is filed as written unless it is the name of an individual, in that case it should be transposed.

As Written

Ace Hardware Co.
 Murphy Brown Co.

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3
Ace	Hardware	Company
Brown	Murphy	Company

The **exception to this rule** is when a firm named for an individual is so well know that to transpose it would cause confusion. In that case it is filed as written.

As Written

Marshall Field & Co.

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3
Marshall	Field	Company

Rule 8:

When a business name is made up of two or more surnames, it is filed as written - with each name considered as a separate unit.

As Written

Roth Windslow Corps.
 Dean, Richards, and Watkins

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3
Roth	Windslow	Corporation
Dean	Richards	Watkins

Rule 9:

Hyphenated Words and Names

A. A hyphenated name is filed as one unit.

As Written

Use-N-Save Company
 Top-Choice Meats Company

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3
Use-N-Save	Company	
Top-Choice	Meats	Company

B. A hyphenated word is considered as one unit.

As Written

Pre-Med Program
 Anti-Fraud Unit

As Filed By Unit

1	2
Pre-Med	Program
Anti-Fraud	Unit

Rule 10:

When letters are used together to form a name, each letter is considered as a separate unit.

As Written	As Filed By Unit			
	1	2	3	4.
AA Driving School	A	A	Driving	School
ABC Engineering	A	B	C	Engineering
WGN Company	W	G	N	Company

Rule 11:

A: The 's when used to designate a possessive is disregarded since it denotes possession, but does not alter the name.

As Written	As Filed By Unit		
	1	2	3
Teal's Garden Store	Teal's	Garden	Store

B: The apostrophe designating the possessive following a plural is disregarded. The "s" is part of the word and is considered.

As Written	As Filed By Unit			
	1	2	3	4.
What's New Today Online	Whats	New	Today	Online

C: The 's when used to designate a possessive is disregarded since it denotes possession, but does not alter the name.

As Written	As Filed By Unit	
	1	2
Mens' Club	Mens	Club

Rule 12:

In general articles, conjunctions, and prepositions are not considered when filing.

A. An article that begins a name is disregarded.

As Written	As Filed By Unit			
	1	2	3	4.
The Last Stop Motel	Last	Stop	Motel	The
A Nice Place	Nice	Place	A	

The **exception to this rule** is when the article is considered when it forms an intrinsic part of the geographic name.

As Written	As Filed By Unit		
	1	2	3
The Garden City, New York	The	Garden City	NewYork

B. Disregard conjunctions, articles and prepositions that are part of the name.

As Written	As Filed By Unit		
	1	2	3
Stop & Go Groceries	Stop (&)	Go	Groceries
Top of the World Bar	Top (of the)	World	Bar

C. Prepositions that begin a name are considered as part of the name.

As Written	As Filed By Unit		
	1	2	3
By Womens Designs	By	Womens	Designs
On the Pier Lighthouse	On (the)	Pier	Lighthouse

Rule 13:

Consideration of numeric names.

A. Numeric names are always filed as though spelled out.

B. Numbers of more than two digits are given their proper numeric value.

As Written	As Filed By Unit				
	1	2	3	4.	5
900 Club	Nine	Hundred	Club		
10th Floor Lounge	Tenth	Floor	Lounge		
A 1 Repair Service	A	One	Repair	Service	
5000 Cornell Apts.	Five	Thousand	Cornell	Apartments	
5623 Bldg.	Five	Thousand	Six Hundred	Twenty-Three	Building

Rule 14:

In geographic names where there is more than one word, each word is to be considered as a separate unit. Names with a prefix are considered as one unit.

As Written	As Filed By Unit			
	1	2	3	4.
North East Bank	North	East	East	Bank
North West Publishers	North	West	West	Publishers
Northeast Transit Co.	Northeast	Northeast	Transit	Company
Northeastern Coach Line	Northeastern	Northeastern	Coach	Line

Note: Cross reference can be used for clarification.

Rule 15:

In geographic names where there is more than one word, each word is to be considered as a separate unit. Names with a prefix are considered as one unit.

As Written

Pan Pacific Arilines
 Del Norte Safe Co.
 Mississippi River Camp Club

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3	4.
Pan	Pacific	Airlines	
Del Norte	Safe	Company	
Mississippi	River	Camp	Club

Rule 16:

Institutions and organizations are filed under the significant word or location.

As Written

Hotel Dublin
 Hotel Dublin Restaurant
 First Savings Bank of Chicago
 University of California

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3
Dublin	Hotel	
Dublin	Hotel	Restaurant
Chicago	First	SavingsBank
California	University	(of)

Rule 17:

Names of governmental units are filed under the name of the location or political division by the significant word or title.

As Written

Chicago City Collector
 Chicago Dept. of Welfare
 California Dept. of Welfare
 United States Dept. of Defense

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3	4.
Chicago	City	Collector	
Chicago	City	Welfare	Department
California	Welfare	Department	
United	States	Defense	Department

Rule 18:

When filing bank names, first file under the city and their location and then use the name of the bank as written.

As Written

Second National Bank of Houston
 Commercial Investors Bank, Reno
 Citizens State Bank of Atlanta

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3	4.
Houston	Second	National	Bank
Reno	Commercial	Investors	Bank
Atlanta	Citizens	State	Bank

Note: If the city of location is in the first word of the bank names, do not repeat it. If the names of the bank and the city are the same, use the name of the state as the final unit to distinguish them.

As Written

Las Vegas Commercial Investors Bank
 Tulare Trust and Savings Bank, Tulare, AZ

As Filed By Unit

1	2	3	4.	5
Las Vegas	Commercial	National	Bank	
Tulare	Trust	Savings	Bank	Arizona