

ALPHABETIZING RULES

The following rules for proper alphabetizing will help create and maintain consistency & efficiency in your files.

ALPHABETIC ORDER

Rule 1. – Alphabetic Order

Names are alphabetized by units (the number of words contained in a name).

For example, Little Playhouse School has 3 units, Gardener's Glen has 2 units and Butternuts has 1 unit.

- a. alphabetize names by comparing the first unit letter by letter. If the first letters are the same, file in terms of the second letter, and so on.

Butterfield
Butternuts
Gardener's Glen
Gardening Plus
Little Playhouse School
Maria
Marian
Marilyn
Marist

- b. alphabetize names considering the second unit only when the first units are the same, and so on

<u>UNIT 1</u>	<u>UNIT 2</u>
Gardener's	Glen
Gardener's	Paradise
Gardener's	Place

<u>UNIT 1</u>	<u>UNIT 2</u>	<u>UNIT 3</u>
Black	Mirror	Designs
Black	Mirror	Images
Black	Mirror	Tattoos

RULE 2. – NOTHING COMES BEFORE SOMETHING

- a. Names that are a single letter come before names that begin with that same letter.

B
 Bailey

- b. Names of a single word come before names of that same word followed by a second or more words, and so on.

Bailey
 Bailey Park
 Bailey Park Barn
 Bailey Park Barn Delicatessen

ALPHABETIZING NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS

RULE 1. – LAST NAME FIRST

Names of individuals are filed as follows: last name, first name or initial, middle name or initial.

Smith	Smith		
K. Smith	Smith	K.	
K. John Smith	Smith	K.	John
Stephen Smithson	Smithson	Stephen	
Stephen G. Smithson	Smithson	Stephen	G.
Steven G. Smithson	Smithson	Steven	G.
B. Smithy	Smithy	B.	
B. A. Smithy	Smithy	B.	A.
Bruce Smithy	Smithy	Bruce	
Bruce E. Smithy	Smithy	Bruce	E.

When it is impossible to distinguish the first name from the surname, file the name as written considering each part of the name as an individual unit. It is often useful to file a cross-reference using the first name as the surname.

RULE 2. – PREFIXES – PARTICLES – St.

Prefixes should **not** be considered as a separate unit. Ignore variations in spacing, punctuation or capitalization. Past practices treated prefixes and particles as separate units. The current standard matches automated systems' filing criteria, that is, units of a name become computer program fields.

Common prefixes and particles are d', D', Da, de, De, Del, Dela, Des, Di, Du, Fitz, la, La, le, Le, M', Mac, Mc, O', St., van, Van, Van de, Van der, von, Von, Von der .

Alphabetize the prefix St. as though it were spelled out – Saint.

A. Maria Delagrosso	Delagrosso	A.	Maria
Anna Maria de LaGrosso	DeLaGrosso	Anna	Maria
Maria Dela Grosso	DelaGrosso	Maria	
Shaun MacIntyre	MacIntyre	Shaun	
Shaun G. Mac Intyre	MacIntyre	Shaun	G.
Shaun McIntyre	McIntyre	Shaun	
Jill St. Charles	SaintCharles	Jill	
Jill R. Saint Charles	SaintCharles	Jill	R.

RULE 3. – HYPHENATED NAMES

Hyphenated names are considered one unit. Ignore the hyphen and alphabetize considering the first part of the hyphenated name. Ignore ampersands (&) joining two or more proper names. File considering the first name.

Billie Jo Long	Long	Billie	Jo
Billie-Jo Long	Long	Billie-Jo	
John Randolph-Smith	Randolph-Smith	John	
John Randolph Smith	Smith	John	Randolph
Smith & Randolph	Smith (&)	Randolph	

RULE 4. – ABBREVIATED NAMES AND NICKNAMES

Names that are abbreviated (such as Wm. for William or Chas. for Charles) should be alphabetized as if spelled out. Initials standing for or representing a first or middle name are not abbreviations. Names such as Al, Kate, Bill, Joe should be used as a given name unless it is known that it is a nickname.

Individuals known only by a nickname, without a surname, it should be alphabetized considering each name in the nickname as a unit.

Chas. A. Bailey	Bailey	Charles	A.
Big Al	Big	Al	
Bud Leary	Leary	Bud	
William (Bud) Leary	Leary	William	
Lending Larry	Lending	Larry	
The Tall Man	Tall	Man	

RULE 5. – TITLES – SENIORITY TERMS – OTHER DESIGNATIONS

- a. Ignore titles such as Dr., Officer and Senator if used with the individual's full name. Consider a title as the first name if it is used with only one part of an individual's name.

RANDOM ORDER	ALPHABETIZED ORDER		
Dr. Faith Mattson	Clinton	Hillary	R.
Senator Hillary R. Clinton	Mattson	Faith	
Officer O'Brien	Officer	O'Brien	
Saint Michael	Prince	William	
Prince William	Saint	Michael	
Prince William Walker	Walker	William	

- b. The titles Mr., Mrs., Ms., and Miss are not considered for use except to distinguish individuals with identical names. The one exception is Mrs., which is used when a woman uses her husband's name. If a married woman's given name is known it is used and cross-referenced to her husband's.

Miss Taylor Jones	Jones	Taylor	Miss
Mr. Taylor Jones	Jones	Taylor	Mr.
Mrs. Taylor Jones	Jones	Taylor	Mrs.
Ms. Taylor Jones	Jones	Taylor	Ms.

Mrs. Peter Jones	Jones	Peter	Mrs. – when the first name is unknown
Mrs. Peter Jones	Jones	Regina	– when the first name is known

- c. There are two schools of practice regarding seniority terms (Sr., Jr., 2d, II, 3d, III), professional or academic degrees (CPA, Ph. D., M.D.) and other designations following a name. The first ignores all except to distinguish between individuals with identical names. The second considers the seniority terms Sr. and Jr. as units and alphabetizes them in the abbreviated form. Numerical designations are sequenced in numeric order.

Toby Lord	Lord	Toby	
Toby Lord Jr	Lord	Toby	Jr.
Toby Lord Sr	Lord	Toby	Sr.

Toby Lord 3d	Lord	Toby	3 rd
Toby Lord 4 th	Lord	Toby	4 th

Toby Lord DDS	Lord	Toby	(DDS)
Toby Lord DVM	Lord	Toby	(DVM)
Toby Lord DVM	Lord	Toby	(Ph.D)

ORGANIZATIONAL NAMES

RULE 1. – AS WRITTEN and ABBREVIATIONS

Organizations are alphabetized as they are written, each word being a unit for consideration. Hyphenated words are considered as one unit. Titles in an organization's name are considered a unit (Mr. Mrs. Miss, Ms.). Abbreviated titles are treated as if spelled out (Capt. = Captain, Inc.= Incorporated)

Acme Engineering	Acme	Engineering	
Captain Bob's	Captain	Bob's	
Capt. Bob's Bait	Captain	Bob's	Bait
Computer Cabinets & Desks	Computer	Cabinets (&)	Desks
Miss Piggy's Porkhouse	Miss	Piggy's	Porkhouse
Mrs. Tom's Cookies	Mrs.	Tom's	Cookies
Queen Bea's Teahouse	Queen	Bea's	Teahouse
U-Pick Tomatoes Inc.	U-Pick	Tomatoes	Incorporated
Zip-Up Packaging	Zip-Up	Packaging	

RULE 2. – ARTICLES, CONJUNCTIONS and PREPOSITIONS

Ignore an article (a, an, the) a conjunction (and or &) or prepositions (such as for, in, of) except where they are used distinctively.

The Best Cookie Shop	Best	Cookie	Shop
Bob and Mary's Shop	Bob	Mary	Shop
Cal & Ed's Bait	Cal	Ed's	Bait
Cats of the Hill	Cats	Hill	
The Place	The	Place	

RULE 3. – ACRONYMS and SINGLE LETTERS

Organizations whose title or name is an acronym or contain a single letter are alphabetized treating each letter of the acronym or single letter as a separate unit.

ABC COMPANY	A	B	C	Company
ONC Bagels	O	N	C	Bagels
YZ Company	Y	Z	Company	

NUMBERS

Names beginning with a number expressed in digits are placed as a group before the alphabetical filing. They are sequenced in numeric order, Arabic followed by Roman numerals.

5 th Ave Hair	5	Avenue	Hair
725 Associates	725	Associates	
1200 Rentals	1200	Rentals	
IV Ave Hair	IV	Avenue	Hair
XII Street Barber	XII	Street	Barber
XX Century Realty	XX	Century	Realty
Able Equipment	Able	Equipment	
The Cats Meow	Cats	Meow	

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

When alphabetizing government agencies it is a best practice to file them under the lead agency, such as the country, state or providence, county, city, town.

Maryland Div. of Conservation	Maryland	Conservation	Division
Public Works Dept. of Newark	Newark	Public Works	Department
U.S. Dept. of Labor	United States	Labor	Department
Wisconsin Bureau of Purchasing	Wisconsin	Purchasing	Bureau