

Excerpt of PACER Manual for Bankruptcy Dial-Up Systems

5. DIAL-IN PACER

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5. PACER Dial-In

5.A General Information

This section contains information about accessing the PACER dial-in Bulletin Board System. The previous section (4) contains information about accessing PACER on the Internet.

5.A.1 What Is Needed

The following items are needed to access the PACER dial-in Bulletin Board System. If there is a problem with in-office equipment, contact the equipment vendor. Neither the PACER Service Center nor the court has the resources to provide extensive technical assistance for trouble with a PC communicating or other problems. Please contact the vendor or local systems technician if basic difficulties are occurring using a terminal or computer equipment.

- Computer -- A computer allows the user to save downloaded data (case information) onto a disk for later review, printing, or even editing (such as with a word processor). This will also provide the means to run some type of communication software.
- Printer -- A printer is indispensable for obtaining a "hard copy" of the information received. It is much easier to read a printed version, and it can serve as a file document for later reference.
- Modem -- Currently 9600 or faster baud modems are acceptable. Use the fastest speed possible. It makes the system easier to use, particularly for downloading large docket reports.

5.A.2 Technical Specifications

Most PACER Bulletin Board Systems are in ASCII format and are set for 8 data bits, 1 stop bit and no parity with vt100 terminal emulation. However, there are some courts that have special software requirements. It is important to review the modem listing at <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov> . If a court has any specific software requirements, it will be noted.

5.A.3 Availability

Access to electronic information is available virtually around the clock.

5.A.4 Cost

The U. S. Congress has given the Judicial Conference of the United States, the judicial governing body for the U.S. Federal Courts, authority to impose user fees for electronic access to case information. All registered agencies or individuals will be assessed the charge of \$.60 per minute of access time for dialin Bulletin Board Systems. PACER billing begins upon a successful login, and fees will accrue until the session is terminated by the user or there is an abnormal exit. An abnormal exit is defined as turning off the modem in mid-transmission, losing the carrier, etc.

5.A.5 Billing

The PACER Service Center sends quarterly statements. For any balance that is less than \$10, payment will be deferred until the account balance reaches \$10 or more. Payment can be made by check, money order, or credit card. Call the PACER Service Center at 800-676-6856 to pay a balance using VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express. If payment is made by check, please include the login on the check to ensure that payment is posted to the correct account. Mail payment to: PACER Service Center, P.O. Box 277773, Atlanta, GA 30384-7773. If a client code is entered for a transaction, that client code will be presented on the statement. Client code features are thirty-two character text fields provided for tracking charges. A client code will not appear on the bill unless it is entered at the time of transaction. Because the client code feature is optional, it must be enforced within one's office.

If you believe there is an error on your statement, please write to the PACER Service Center, P.O. Box 780549, San Antonio, Texas 78278-0549. All requests for credit must be submitted in writing. In your correspondence, provide us with your name, account number, and the dollar amount of the suspected error(s) together with a copy of the portion of the statement in question highlighting the disputed amounts. Please provide a reason for each credit being requested.

5.A.6 Information Currency

The district and appellate courts' PACER sites are updated from the main court computer once daily. This will provide access to information from the previous days close of business. The bankruptcy PACER sites are live. This will provide up to the minute information. If there are questions about the information the court is providing (How far back does the data go? Why are there docket entries missing? Or other questions about docket entries), contact the court directly.

5.A.7 Capturing

The easiest method for saving information from the PACER system is to set the communication software to capture the "text" in a continuous save to disk. Also, most software programs will provide a capture to "printer" feature as well. When performing either a capture to "text file" or "printer," it is important to invoke the capture feature before the text is listed continuously or non-stop and turned off once the text has stopped scrolling. Note: The capture feature is provided by the communication software; therefore, the software manual will provide any information for invoking the capture feature. When the session is finished, it is possible to edit the saved file (if necessary) and print it out for review and reference. For downloading slip opinions, see the ABBS section of this manual.

5.A.8 Printing

All hardware-specific codes have been removed from the output sent to the screen. This has the advantage that no matter what sort of printer or terminal/computer used, there should be few problems printing the report. Note that form-feed codes (CTRL-L) are used to separate the pages. Often this will automatically advance the printer to the next page, which is just what is

desired. If not, edit and paginate as necessary using any editor or word processor. The output is formatted for 80 columns so a printer will be needed that can handle output at least that wide. Pagination is designed to be suitable for standard 11-inch paper, so this will probably work with a printer being used "as is".

5.A.9 Connecting

The first step to dialing a court is to become familiar with the communication software package being used. Most communication software packages have two dialing options. A user may manually dial a court by using the communication software's manual dial option. This will require the user to enter the court's modem number and settings each time the court is dialed. The PACER Service Center recommends establishing a dialing directory with each court's modem number and settings. This will enable a user to more efficiently utilize the PACER system. For assistance in manually dialing a court or setting up a dialing directory, refer to the communications software manual for instructions.

5.A.10 Time Limits

There is an "idle time" limit (how long the user can just let it sit there before it complains) as well as a "session time" limit (how long the session can last). Session lengths vary as determined by the court. Permission to re-dial the service is allowed if more time is necessary. In addition, the system will not allow a user to "do nothing" for over a predetermined time by the individual court. A warning will be displayed when a limit is approaching.

5.A.11 Other Limits

Other limits on what is available from this system may be possible as designed by the court. Also, there are limits built in as to the maximum number of people and cases allowed to be matched at one time. This should not be a problem if a fairly complete name is entered and searching by extremely common litigant names is avoided.

5.A.12 Exiting

It is crucial to exit properly from the PACER system to avoid accruing extraneous charges. To exit properly use the "exit" or "logoff" option from the court's main menu. A "Hot Key Exit" may also be used for all courts except those identified as NIBS courts. The "Hot Key Exit" is a <Ctrl X> combination that should work at all points within PACER.

5.A.13 Getting Answers to Questions

If there are questions about the information the court is providing (how far back does the data go, how long does it take a motion filed to appear on this system, or a question about a docket entry) contact the court directly. To access a court currently not registered with, contact the PACER Service Center or visit "Account Information" at <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov> to add the court.

Neither the PACER Service Center nor the court has the resources to provide extensive technical assistance for trouble with a PC communicating or other problems. Please contact the vendor or local systems technician if basic difficulties are occurring using a terminal or computer equipment.

5.D U.S. Bankruptcy Courts (Dial-Up)

5.D.1 Understanding BANCAP Case Numbers

When first accessing a court, a new user may not be familiar with the two-part bankruptcy case numbers used. All cases opened in a given year have the last two digits of the year as the first part of the case number followed by an ascending sequence number. Some courts have more specific protocols for assigning case numbers. Contact the court for information on court-specific numbering schemes.

5.D.2 Understanding BANCAP Reports

5.D.2.1 BANCAP Reports

After connecting to PACER and entering the proper identification (id) and password, a menu will appear listing the type of reports available in this court. The following is a **sample*** menu:

1. Active Cases (basic case info., dockets, & registry of claims)
2. Listing of New Cases
3. Registry of Claims Only, by Claimant Name or Case Number
4. Closed Cases (Archives - basic case information only)
5. (Additional Listings & Services)
6. Exit (logout)

***Information may vary depending on individual courts**

The following is a brief summary of the various options, which are available on the Main Public Access Menu:

1. Active Cases (Basic Case Info., Dockets & Registry of Claims)

Provides options for pending and recently-closed cases, which comprise the BANCAP "LIVE" Data Base, to select by case number or participant name to gather case summary information and/or the last 3 months of case events (i.e., docket proceedings) and/or proofs of claims data.

2. Listing of New Cases

Provides a listing, sorted by case number or by debtor's name, of recently-filed cases, which were opened on the BANCAP "LIVE" or "MEGA" Data Bases on the previous business day. **NOTE: In the [V]iew option, press SPACE BAR to scroll forward.**

3. Registry of Claims

Provides options for pending and recently-closed cases, which comprise the BANCAP "LIVE" Data Base, to select by case number or participant name to gather proofs-of-claims information.

4. Closed Cases (Archives - Basic Case Info. Only)

Provides options for cases, closed at least 2 months, which comprise the BANCAP "ARCHIVE" Data Base, to select by case number or participant name to gather case summary information and Federal Records Center information.

5. Miscellaneous Menu

A. Change Password

Provides Pacer users the ability to change their password within the specific court being accessed.

B. Session Information

Provides a breakdown of the Pacer access sessions for a given period of time.

5.D.2.2 Sample Active Case Option

The active case option asks three questions (see example below); if docket entries or the registry of claims is to be accessed, respond "y" to the first question about basic case information. These reports were designed to provide concise standard summaries of the official case record; however, not all the case docket entries necessarily appear. The court controls how many months of docket entries are available on PACER. The following is a sample session:

Enter name or number (RETURN to quit) -> 9030234

Case 90-30234 was last updated on 6/22/90

Would you like case information for 90-30234 (y/n)? y

Would you like to see the docket proceedings (y/n)? y

As of [date], there has been a total of [number] claims entered into the computer for this case.

Would you like to see the registry of claims (y/n) y