

AMENDMENTS TO BANKRUPTCY RULES, FORMS AND FEES

On April 25, 2014, the Supreme Court approved amendments to the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure which will take effect on **December 1, 2014**.

The amendments to the bankruptcy rules address the following: 1) petitions involving the same debtors filed in different courts; 2) time limits for serving a summons and complaint; 3) general pleadings and judgments and costs; 4) bankruptcy appeals; and 5) new trials and relief from a judgment or order.

The amended rules are located at:

<http://www.uscourts.gov/uscourts/RulesAndPolicies/rules/congressional-package-for-congress.pdf>

Also, please see the summary information and recommendations pertaining to the amendments to the rules and forms.

Several official forms will be updated to address the amended rules. A complete list of the revised forms and instructions is posted at:

<http://www.uscourts.gov/FormsAndFees/Forms/BankruptcyForms/BankruptcyFormsPendingChanges.aspx>.

While no software changes are required to the CM/ECF source code, some new docketing (dictionary) events will be created and others have been revised. More information on these new events will be posted in a later notice.

Should you have any questions regarding application of these rule changes, please contact the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma at 918-549-7200.

Summary of 2014 Changes to Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure

- **Rule 1014(b)** addresses the procedure when petitions involving the same or related debtors are filed in different courts. The amendment to Rule 1014(b) provides that proceedings in subsequently filed cases are stayed only upon order of the court in which the first-filed petition is pending, and would expand the list of persons entitled to receive notice of a motion in the first court for a determination of where the related cases should proceed.
- **Rule 7004(e)** alters the period of time during which service of the summons and complaint must be made, reducing the period from 14 days to 7 days after issuance of the summons. Because Rule 7012 provides that the defendant's time to answer the complaint is calculated from the date the summons is issued, a lengthy delay between issuance and service of the

summons may unduly shorten the defendant's time to respond. Therefore, this amendment seeks to ensure prompt service.

- **Rules 7008(b) and 7054** would change the procedure for seeking attorney's fees in bankruptcy proceedings, bringing the Bankruptcy Rules in closer alignment with the Civil Rules.
- **Rule 7008(b)**, which currently addresses attorney's fees, will be deleted.
- **Rule 7054** will include the procedures for seeking an award of attorney's fees, unless the governing substantive law requires the fees to be provided at trial as an element of damages.

Rules Governing Appeals - Rules 8001-8028

The amendments to Part 8 of the Bankruptcy Rules govern appeals to district courts and bankruptcy appellate panels. The purpose of the amendments is to: (1) bring the bankruptcy appellate rules into closer alignment with the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure; (2) incorporate a presumption favoring electronic transmission, filing and service of court documents; and (3) adopt a clearer and simpler style.

Some highlights of the revised rules related to appeals include:

- **Rule 8003** requires the clerk to serve the notice of appeal instead of providing notice of the filing of the notice of appeal. The Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) will suffice as notice except when pro se parties are involved.
- **Rule 8003(d)(1)** requires the clerk to transmit the notice of appeal promptly to the district court or BAP.
- **Rule 8005(a)** eliminates the requirement that a separate document be filed when a party to an appeal opts out of the BAP. (Also see discussion of Official Form 17 below).
- **Rule 8009** addresses transcripts, when a transcript is or is not ordered, and allows an appellant to file a statement of the evidence or proceedings in lieu of transcript, when a transcript is unavailable. The Court will enter a General order to address the circumstances under which a transcript would be considered "unavailable."
- permits the parties to file an agreed statement as to the record on appeal (in lieu of the record on appeal).
- if a sealed document is designated as part of the record on appeal, the party making the designation must file a motion requesting that the appellate court accept the sealed document. The Committee Note states that the bankruptcy court may not transmit the designated sealed document without an order from the appellate court.
- **Rule 8010** requires that if a party moves in the district, BAP, or court of appeals for any of the following: leave to appeal; dismissal; a stay pending appeal; approval of a supersedeas bond, or additional security on a bond or undertaking on appeal; or any other intermediate

order, the bankruptcy clerk must transmit to the clerk of the court where the relief is sought any parts of the record designated by a party to the appeal or a notice that those parts are available electronically. The Court will enter a General Order requiring the movant to notify the bankruptcy court of the filing of such a motion, as well as the disposition of the motion, and to identify what records need to be transmitted.

Forms 17 A, 17B, and 17C

- **Official Form 17** will be replaced by three separate forms: 17A, 17B, and 17C. Official Form 17A is the Notice of Appeal and Statement of Election, Part 4 of which applies to BAP courts only and allows the appellant the option of electing to have the appeal heard by district court. Form 17B is the (optional) Appellee Statement of Election to have the appeal heard in district court instead of the BAP. Form 17C pertains to the length of briefs. Rules Governing New Trials, Amendment of Judgments and Relief from Judgment or Order
- **Rule 9023** (governing new trials and amendment of judgments) and Rule 9024 (governing relief from a judgment or order) will add reference to the procedure in amended Rule 8008 addressing indicative rulings.
- **Rule 8008** provides a procedure for the issuance of an indicative ruling when a bankruptcy court determines that, because of a pending appeal, the court lacks jurisdiction to grant a request for relief that the court concludes is meritorious or raises a substantial issue.

The following rule changes will not take effect this year:

- Proposed Amendments in Response to *Stern v. Marshall*, 131 S. Ct. 2594 (2011) (7008, 7012, 7016, 9027, and 9033)
- The proposed Stern-related amendments to 7008, 7012, 7016, 9027, and 9033 were withdrawn due to the case of *Executive Benefits Insurance Agency v. Arkison* (In re *Bellingham Ins. Agency, Inc.*), 702 F.3d 553 (9th Cir. 2012), cert. granted, 133 S.Ct. 2880, 186 L.Ed.2d 908 (2013). The Supreme Court issued its opinion in the *Bellingham* case on June 9, 2014, which will be considered by the Rules Committee at an upcoming meeting.

NEW FEE FOR MOTION TO REDACT A RECORD AND PROCEDURE

Effective December 1, 2014, Item 21 of the Bankruptcy Court Miscellaneous Fee Schedule includes a fee for filing a motion to redact a record. The fee is \$25 per affected case and is applicable to both open and closed cases.

Item 21 specifies that the court may waive the redaction fee in appropriate circumstances. For example, if a debtor files a motion to redact personal identifiers from records that were filed by a creditor in the case, the court may determine it is appropriate to waive the fee for the debtor.

When a party files a request to redact a bankruptcy record, the requesting party should promptly serve the request on the debtor, any individual whose personal identifiers have been exposed, the case trustee (if any), and the U.S. trustee. Requiring service of the request is consistent with Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9013 and the general prohibition against ex parte communication under Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9003.

The debtor and any other affected individual should be served so that if identity theft concerns have arisen, they can be made aware of those concerns. Likewise, service on the U.S. trustee and the case trustee is important to ensure that the proposed redaction process is reviewed or monitored and that any objections are addressed.

The court will not reopen a case solely to address a request to redact personal identifiers from the case record. The act of redacting the record is ministerial in nature and does not impact the administration of the estate.

If the request involves a large volume of affected cases, it is appropriate to open a miscellaneous proceeding to address the requesting party's motion and any related responses. A miscellaneous proceeding fee will apply.

What constitutes a large-scale request can vary depending on the number of cases involved in the request and is in the discretion of the bankruptcy judge. The omnibus motion should identify the affected cases and information to be redacted. Upon order of the court, the bankruptcy clerk will reference the miscellaneous proceeding on the docket in each affected case.

FEE INCREASE FOR FILING A DIRECT APPEAL

The fee for filing a Direct Bankruptcy Appeal has increased from \$157 to \$207. This fee is charged when a Direct appeal is accepted by the Court of Appeals.

FEE FOR MOTION TO SELL PROPERTY FREE AND CLEAR OF LIENS

The fee for a Motion to Sell Property Free and Clear of Liens under 11 U.S.C. Section 363(f) cannot be deferred.