

CALIFORNIA
STYLE
MANUAL

Fourth Edition

A HANDBOOK OF LEGAL STYLE
FOR CALIFORNIA COURTS
AND LAWYERS

By

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Reporter of Decisions
for the Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal

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Appellate Division of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County
the Small Claims Division of the Alameda County Superior Court
Juvenile Court of Los Angeles County
the Tehama County Juvenile Court
the probate department of the superior court
the juvenile court
Municipal Court for the Los Angeles Judicial District of Los Angeles County
Municipal Court for the Los Angeles Judicial District
the municipal court
Small Claims Court for the Alameda Judicial District of Alameda County
the small claims court
Small Claims Division of the Municipal Court for the Glendale Judicial
District of Los Angeles County
the Amador County Small Claims Court

§ 4:2 Federal courts

[A] General guidelines

Capitalize names of federal courts when full or accepted formal titles are used, not when a partial name is given or the reference is to a court or courts generally. Note the exception for the abbreviated reference to the Supreme Court of the United States: Supreme Court is capitalized even when standing alone.

[B] Appellate courts

United States Supreme Court
Supreme Court of the United States
Supreme Court (*capitalize even when standing alone*)
the court
the high court
United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
the Ninth Circuit
the circuit court
the circuit court of appeals
the court of appeals

[C] Trial courts

United States District Court
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas
the district court
the federal district court
United States Court of Federal Claims
the claims court
Tax Court of the United States
the tax court

A. CAPITALIZATION**§ 4:1 State courts****[A] General guidelines**

Capitalize references to state courts when full or accepted formal names are used. Use lowercase when a partial name is given or the reference is to a court or courts generally. Always capitalize partial names when describing the Supreme Court of California (e.g., the Supreme Court) or one of the California Courts of Appeal (e.g., the Court of Appeal, Fourth District, Division Two).

In referring to a trial court, capitalize “department,” “law and motion department,” etc., only when used as a part of a formal title, as in the caption of a pleading. Otherwise use lowercase, e.g., “The matter was transferred to the law and motion department.”

[B] Appellate courts

Supreme Court of California
 California Supreme Court
 Supreme Court (*capitalize even when standing alone*)
 the Florida Supreme Court
 the Washington and Oregon courts
 the New Mexico Court of Appeals
 the state’s high court
 Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division One
 Division One of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District
 Court of Appeal (*capitalize even when standing alone*)
 Fourth Appellate District (*capitalize even when standing alone*)
 Fourth District Court of Appeal
 Division Two (*capitalize even when standing alone*)
 the court
 the appellate court

[C] Trial courts

Superior Court of San Bernardino County
 the superior court
 the court
 Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Tuolumne
 San Francisco Superior Court
 Lassen Superior Court
 El Dorado County Superior Court
 unified (or consolidated) superior and municipal courts
 the appellate division (or former appellate department)
 the superior court appellate division (or former superior court appellate department)