

Retrieving Dockets on Westlaw

This quick reference guide describes how to retrieve case docket information on Westlaw so that you don't have to leave your office or contact court staff. Dockets typically include the names of the participants and their attorneys; the name of the presiding judge; the case number; the type of claim; the status of the case; a list of documents filed; and a schedule of appearances.

You can also retrieve dockets using Westlaw CourtExpress®, which offers additional docket research features, at courtexpress.westlaw.com.

Docket Coverage

FEDERAL COURTS

Docket databases are available for the U.S. Supreme Court, all U.S. courts of appeals, most U.S. district courts and bankruptcy courts, the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, the U.S. Court of International Trade, the U.S. Tax Court, and the U.S. International Trade Commission.

STATE COURTS

As of January 1, 2009, docket databases are available for selected courts in 31 states and the District of Columbia. See the Westlaw Directory for a complete listing of state court docket databases.

Accessing Docket Databases

To access a docket database when you know its identifier, type the database identifier, e.g., **dock-all**, in the *Search for a database* text box in the left frame of a tabbed page and click **Go**.

If you do not know the database identifier, browse the database listings in the Westlaw Directory. Click **Directory** at the top of any page, then click **Dockets** under *Litigation*. Click a database name to access the database or click a folder name, e.g., **Dockets–U.S. Bankruptcy Courts**, to view additional docket database listings.

For assistance using Westlaw, call **1-800-WESTLAW** (1-800-937-8529).

For free reference materials, visit west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides.

Figure 1. Dockets section of Westlaw Directory

Retrieving Dockets

USING A SEARCH TEMPLATE

When you access a docket database, an easy-to-use search template is displayed. In all docket databases, you can search by participant name or docket or case number. In most docket databases, you can also search by judge's name, attorney's name, filing date, and key terms. In addition, you can search using information from the case type classification systems described below.

In a few databases, e.g., federal court index databases, special rules apply to template searches. In these databases, the note *Special search rules apply* appears on the search template. Click the **Scope** icon (i) on the template for more information about the special search rules. In general, you will find that Scope includes helpful database information, including information about database currentness, beginning date of coverage, and frequency of updates.

USING U.S. DISTRICT COURT NATURE OF SUIT (NOS) CODES

Search templates for U.S. district court docket databases include list boxes from which you can select NOS codes to limit your search. In federal civil litigation, NOS codes are used to classify the subject matter of the lawsuit. A code is selected at the outset of litigation when the filing attorney completes the civil cover sheet (JS-44). NOS codes can also be used to set up Docket Alert entries that track new cases filed in U.S. district courts. Scope for a U.S. district court docket database provides additional information about NOS codes.

USING KEY NATURE OF SUIT (KNOS) CLASSIFICATIONS

Search templates for most docket databases enable you to search with KNOS classifications. KNOS classifications are based on docket case type information provided by the court and provide a uniform basis for identifying dockets by case type across state and federal jurisdictions. To limit your search by KNOS classification, click **Available KNOS Selections** on the search template. At the next page, select the appropriate check boxes. Click **Save** to save your selections and return to the search template, where the KNOS classifications you selected are displayed in the *Key Nature of Suit (KNOS)* text box.

For more information about KNOS classifications, click the **Help** icon (?) next to *Available KNOS Selections* on the search template.

The screenshot shows a search template interface with the following elements and annotations:

- Search** header.
- Selected Databases** section: "Dockets - Texas - Harris County (DOCK-TX-HARRIS)" with a **Scope** icon (i) and a **Remove** link.
- Terms and Connectors** and **Template** tabs.
- Search Westlaw** button.
- Participant Name:** text box with examples: "John /2 Smith", "John Smith", "ABC Construction".
- Docket Number:** text box with a **Scope** icon (i).
- Key Search Terms:** text box with **Connectors/Expanders** link.
- Key Nature Of Suit (KNOS):** text box with **Available KNOS Selections?** link.
- Filing Date:** radio buttons for "No date restriction" (selected), "Specific date" (with text box), and "After" (with text box).

Annotations on the left side:

- Click the **Scope** icon to view information about the database, including content and coverage information.
- Click **Scope** under the *Docket Number* text box to view information about docket number formats for searches.
- Click **Available KNOS Selections** to display the list of KNOS classifications.

Annotations on the right side:

- Click the **Scope** link information on Do Formatting.
- You may enter ter connectors to help search. Click the **Connectors/Expanders** link for more information.

Figure 2. Search template

Updating Dockets

Dockets on Westlaw include the information available at the time the case is filed and information from filings made shortly thereafter. Typically, this information includes participant, judge, and attorney names, case type information, and initial entries. To view the most recent additions, click **Update** at the top of the docket. You can also update several dockets simultaneously. While viewing the result list, select the check boxes for up to five dockets and then click **Update Selected Dockets** at the top of the list. At the Docket Update Request page, click **Submit**. The Docket Tools page is displayed at which you can view the updated dockets or print, e-mail, or download them.

CALENDAR INFORMATION

While viewing a full-text docket, click **Calendar Information** on the Links tab in the left frame to view current entries on the court calendar. You can also add the entries to your Outlook® calendar.

The screenshot shows a Westlaw docket page. On the left, there is a sidebar with a 'Result List' (33 Docs) and 'Links for 1:08CV00349'. The sidebar includes links for 'Full Screen List', 'Edit Search | Locate in Result', 'Full-Text Document', 'KeyRules' (with sub-links for KEYRULES-DE-DCT and KEYRULES-ALL), 'Calendar Information' (highlighted with an orange box), and 'Westlaw Legal Calendaring'. The main content area displays the case title 'IN RE: DURA AUTOMOTIVE SYSTEMS INC., ET AL.', court information 'U.S. DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF DELAWARE (WILMINGTON)', and case number '1:08CV00349'. Below this, there is a 'Track this Docket' button (highlighted with an orange box) and a notice: 'TO ORDER COPIES OF ANY DOCUMENTS LISTED BELOW, CALL WESTLAW COURTEXPRESS 1-877-DOC-RETR (1-877-362-7387) (Additional Charges Apply)'. Further down, a notice states 'This docket is current through 09/24/2008. For an updated version of this docket, click UPDATE.' (with 'UPDATE' highlighted by an orange box). At the bottom, the court and case title are repeated. On the right side of the screenshot, two orange lines with text boxes provide instructions: one points to the 'Track this Docket' button with the text 'Click Track this Docket to create a Docket Track entry.', and the other points to the 'UPDATE' button with the text 'Click Update to update the docket with current information.'

Figure 3. Docket

Monitoring Changes in Dockets

The Docket Track and Docket Alert services on Westlaw monitor court dockets and notify you automatically when there is a new development. To access Docket Track and Docket Alert, click **Alert Center** at the top of any page. Docket Track monitors a particular court docket and notifies you when there is a new development, e.g., a filing, entered on the docket.

CREATING A DOCKET TRACK ENTRY FOR YOUR CURRENT DOCKET RESULT

Click **Track this Docket** at the top of a displayed docket to display the Docket Track: New Developments in a Specific Case page with the court and docket number entered for you. Follow these steps to complete the entry:

1. Under *Entry Details*, type a name for the entry in the *Name of Alert* text box.
2. The client identifier for the current research session is automatically displayed in the *Client ID* text box. Type a new client identifier if you want to assign this entry to another client.
3. Type terms or phrases in the *Limit by Term or Phrase* text boxes to limit results to documents that contain these terms or phrases.
4. Change one or more delivery settings, if desired.
5. Click **Save**. A list of cases with docket numbers matching your entry is displayed.
6. Click a case number to save the entry in the Docket Alerts and Tracks Directory.

| Docket Track: New Developments in a Specific Case | | Create Entry Directory |
|--|------|---|
| Entry Details | | Delivery Settings |
| Complete each item below: | | Frequency: <input type="text" value="Daily"/> |
| Name of Alert: <input type="text"/> | | Select Delivery Times: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6:00 AM Central Time |
| Client ID: <input type="text" value="AH"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> 12:00 PM Central Time |
| Court: <input type="text" value="DOCK-DE-DCT"/> Edit Court | | <input type="checkbox"/> 3:00 PM Central Time |
| Docket Number: <input type="text" value="1:08CV00349"/> Docket Number Formats | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5:00 PM Central Time |
| Limit by Term or Phrase: | | Destination: <input type="text" value="E-mail"/> Properties |
| Limit your results to dockets that include specific terms or phrases. Type one term or phrase in each text box, e.g., summary judgment. (Tips) | | Result Format: <input type="text" value="Full Docket"/> |
| <input type="text"/> | -or- | Results: <input type="checkbox"/> Inform me of no results |
| <input type="text"/> | -or- | Date Created: <input type="text" value="mm/dd/yyyy"/> |
| <input type="text"/> | | Next Run Date: <input type="text" value="1/29/2009"/> <input type="button" value="Calendar"/> |
| | | Last Run Date: <input type="text" value="mm/dd/yyyy"/> |
| | | Expiration Date: <input type="text" value="1/28/2010"/> <input type="button" value="Calendar"/> |

Figure 4. Docket Track entry

CREATING A NEW DOCKET TRACK ENTRY

To create a new Docket Track entry, click **Alert Center** at the top of any page to access the Alert Center Directory. Click **Create** in the *Docket Alert* section to display the Docket Alerts and Tracks: Create Entry page. Select **Receive an alert when there are new developments in a specific case** and click **Go** to display the Docket Track: Select a Court page. Select the court in which the case was filed. The Docket Track: New Developments in a Specific Case page is displayed. Type the docket number in the *Docket Number* text box and complete the entry as described in steps 1–6 on the previous page.

USING DOCKET ALERT TO MONITOR DOCKETS FOR NEWLY FILED CASES

Docket Alert monitors court dockets for newly filed cases and notifies you when a case matching your search criteria is filed. You can be notified of all new case filings in a selected court or only those filings that name a specified participant, attorney, or judge. For federal district courts and state courts, you can also track newly filed cases by case type, so you can follow developments in practice areas of interest to you. For bankruptcy courts, you can track newly filed cases by Bankruptcy Code chapter.

To create a new Docket Alert entry, click **Alert Center** at the top of any page. Click **Create** in the *Docket Alert* section. At the Docket Alerts and Tracks: Create Entry page, select **Receive an alert when new cases are filed** and click **Go** to display the Docket Alert: Select a Court page. Select up to ten courts, then click **Save**. The Docket Alert: New Cases Filed Based on Selected Criteria page is displayed. Complete the entry and click **Save**.

Retrieving Court Documents

When you retrieve a docket, you can order the court documents listed on the docket by completing an online form. Some documents may also be available for immediate downloading in PDF. Click **View/Download PDFs** at the end of an entry in the list of docket proceedings to display the PDF Bulk Download Review page, which lists all court documents in that docket that are available in PDF. Click **View** to view a court document in PDF immediately, or select one or more check boxes and click **Download** to e-mail or download the court documents in PDF. The Docket Tools page is displayed, which lists your PDF requests in the *PDF Requests* section.

To order a court document, click **Send Runner to the Court** at the end of an entry in the list of docket proceedings. Review the information at the Document Order Review page and click **Next**. Complete the document order form that is displayed and click **Submit Order**.

You can also order court documents without retrieving the docket. Click **Site Map** at the top of any page and then click **Order Documents Online** under *Tools*.

