

November 12, 2003

**Notice to Attorneys Regarding Redaction of Social Security Numbers**

On Monday, November 10, 2003, the bankruptcy judges promulgated [General Procedure Order No. 2003-4](#), In the Matter of Procedures for the Privacy of Court Records Including the Receipt and Safeguarding of Debtors' Social Security Numbers. A copy of GPO 2003-4 is available by clicking on the links highlighted in this notice. GPO 2003-4 becomes effective December 1, 2003.

GPO 2003-4 coincides with changes to Fed.R.Bankr.P. 1007 also effective on December 1, 2003. GPO 2003-4 and the changes to Rule 1007 establish new procedures and forms regarding the manner in which debtors' Social Security numbers are submitted to the court. The changes also address how Social Security numbers are displayed in full on the initial notice of the filing of the 341 meeting that is mailed to all creditors, but appear only in redacted form (last four numbers only, i.e., XXX-XX-1234) on all other records of the case that are publicly accessible.

The full Social Security number will be entered into the system by the clerks office or by electronic filers just as it has in the past, but will be automatically displayed in a redacted format via software upgrades to the database operating system. To enable continued entry of the full debtors' Social Security numbers into the system, new forms are required to be submitted to the court by the debtor. One of these forms is an update to the [Declaration Re: Electronic Filing](#) and is required to be submitted within 10 days after the electronic filing of a new petition. The other, [Official Form 21, Statement of Social Security Number](#), is a nationally prescribed form that must accompany the paper petition at the time of a conventional filing. In the event Official Form 21, Statement of Social Security Number, is not submitted with the paper petition at the time the petition is tendered for conventional filing, the clerk can not properly schedule and send notice of the meeting of creditors required by 11 U.S.C. §341. In such event, GPO 2003-4 directs that the clerk "shall not accept the petition for filing."

In addition, the Declaration Re: Electronic Filing and Official Form 21, Statement of Social Security Number, ***will not be filed*** in the case. Instead, they are to be ***submitted*** to the clerk. The clerk will retain them in the official records of the court, but not in the public case files.

Your attention is further directed to paragraph H of GPO 2003-4 which states that it "shall be the responsibility of the filer, and not the Clerk, to redact Social Security Numbers and other personal identifiers such as dates of birth, financial account numbers, and names of minor children in documents they file with the court, including copies of financial documents attached as exhibits to papers tendered for filing with the court." In the event the filer fails to redact all but the last four numbers from these documents, the public records will continue to reflect the entire Social Security number of the debtor.

Bradford L. Bolton, Clerk