

Law Office Management Chapter 12

Chapter 12

Tab Text

Docket Control Systems

OBJECTIVES

After completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- List the elements of a docket control system.
 - Explain what information is placed on a master calendar.
 - Describe primary and secondary information.
 - Explain how to maintain a tickler system.
 - Explain how to tickle various types of due dates.
 - Explain how to tickle statutes of limitations.
 - Explain how to manage reminder dates.
 - Describe the difference between a static and an automated computerized docket system.
 - Explain the major features of automated docket control software.
 - Set up a manual tickler system.
 - Discuss the various forms and reports used in docket control systems.
 - Describe file review.
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Key Terms

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1. **Data validation:** A feature in automated docket control software that will not allow an incorrect entry.
 2. **Default:** Failure to respond within the required time.
 3. **Docket:** An abstract or brief entry or the book or record containing such entries.
 4. **Docket coordinator:** A person in charge of a firm's docketing process.
 5. **Master calendar:** A calendar that contains hearing and deposition dates for each attorney in a firm.
 6. **Personal calendar:** An individual's calendar that contains the same information as a master calendar but also includes appointment dates, follow-up, deadlines, and personal information.
 7. **Proof of service by mail:** A document that informs the recipient of the date the attached document was mailed.
 8. **Retroactive event recalculation:** A feature in automated docketed software programs that automatically recalculates dates in the event of a change in a corresponding date.
 9. **Static calendar program:** A calendar program that requires entries to be made manually.
 10. **Statute of limitations:** The time period after an offense within which a lawsuit must be filed.
 11. **Trigger date:** The date of an event that starts the clock running on a deadline.
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Answers to Chapter Review Questions

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Following are answers to the Chapter Review Questions found in the text.

1. The five characteristics of a good docket control system are:
 - A. Provides immediate and automatic calendaring;
 - B. Provides a double-check of entries;
 - C. Allows sufficient lead time for completion of tasks;
 - D. Provides for follow-up to ensure the actual performance of work; and
 - E. Is easily maintained and operated (p. 391).
 2. The three main areas of a docket control system are calendar system, tickler system, and file review system (p. 391).
 3. Primary information includes court trials and hearings, depositions, and statutes of limitations (p. 392).
 4. Secondary information includes dates and time of client appointments, conferences, bar association meetings, continuing education, and personal reminders (p. 392).
 5. Large firms have a docketing department that handles the firm's calendar. In a small firm, docketing is handled by a secretary or paralegal (p. 394).
 6. A firm maintains manual calendars in case of computer malfunction (p. 397).
 7. When determining due dates, the dates considered are trigger date, due date, and mail date (p. 401).
 8. The four reminder dates used in a tickler system are: reminder, urging, warning, and alert dates (p. 401).
 9. Time intervals between reminder dates are determined by the project (p. 402).
 10. The basic rule of a tickler system is that no item is removed from the system until it is completed
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(p. 397).

11. Astatic computerized calendar program is a system that contains due dates and tickler dates, but they must be calculated and entered by hand (p. 406).

12. An automated docket control program calculates due dates and reminder dates. Key features are:

- Preprogrammed court rules;
- Automatic date scheduling;
- Automatic reminders;
- Data validation;
- Holiday scheduling;
- Retroactive event recalculation;
- Group scheduling; and
- Scheduling reports (pp. 407-408).

13. A file review system is important to good client relations because it gives a firm an opportunity to keep clients informed of their case. It also guards against a file being neglected (p. 416).

Examples for Discussion

Tab Text

1. Reluctant File Review

File review is an important aspect of case management. Management must set policies to ensure that file review is completed. Management may assign Richard's file review to another attorney or senior paralegal. Management may also reduce Richard's trial obligations by assigning another attorney in the firm to assist him.

2. Weekend and Holiday Projects

If the firm has a computerized tickler system, the computer can be programmed to block weekend and holiday dates so it would be impossible to insert information on those dates. In a manual tickler system, weekend and holiday cards could be removed from the system, or marked to alert the secretary not to insert information behind those dates.

3. Automated Systems

Individual student response.

4. Calendar Meetings and File Review Problem

Individual student response.

Possible Answers to Assignments

Tab Text

Following are possible answers to Assignments provided in the text. The responses below are a guide to what an instructor would look for within the student's response. Some assignments are based solely on individual experience and/or opinion, and a general response for such questions is not provided.

1. The Tech Tips sidebars found on pages 407 and 415 can be used for this assignment, and all research may be done on the Internet by contacting the company's Web site.

2. A manual tickler system can be created easily. The students can purchase all the necessary supplies from a stationery store. Tickler slips are provided in the handouts section (Handout 12.1). This assignment will give students practice in using a tickler system.

3. Copy the tickler slips (Handout 12.1) for this assignment. The student's name goes on the first line, and the letter of the assignment (2a, 2b, etc.) is inserted in the file no. area. Instruct the students to watch for weekend and holiday dates.

For the purpose of this exercise, holidays are Thanksgiving Day, November 23; the day after Thanksgiving, November 24; Christmas Day, December 25. For all questions that ask for a mail date, use the 3-day mailing schedule.

a.

November 9	Reminder
November 13	Urging
November 16	Warning
November 20	Mail date
November 22	Due date

b.

November 14	Reminder
November 17	Urging
November 21	Warning

November 22 Mail date
November 27 Due date

c.
December 6 Reminder
December 11 Urging
December 12 Mail to client
December 17 Received from client?
December 18 Warning
December 22 Mail date
December 26 Due date

d.
November 8 Reminder
November 13 Urging
November 20 Warning
December 1 Mail
December 4 Due date

e.
November 20 Reminder
November 27 Warning
December 1 Due date

f.
November 3 Reminder
November 6 Urging
November 10 Warning
November 14 Mail date
November 16 Due date
December 15 or Reply brief due
December 18 from opposition

g.
December 6 Due date

h.
November 15 Reminder
November 20 Urging
November 27 Warning
December 1 Serve subpoenas on
 defendants
December 4 Last day to serve
 subpoenas

4. Response is due November 22. Mail date:

November 17. Four reminder dates:

5. The statute of limitations would be tickled as follows:

Statute runs: December 18 (5 days before the actual date)

November 18 October 18 August 18

6. Brief due November 13 Mail date: November 10.

One or two reminders should be entered for the response.

Tickler Slips

Tab Text

An example.

TICKLER RECORD	
Responsible Attorney/Paralegal _____	
Case _____	File No _____
Event _____	
DUE DATE _____	
Reminder Dates _____	
Notes: _____	Initials _____

TICKLER RECORD	
Responsible Attorney/Paralegal _____	
Case _____	File No _____
Event _____	
DUE DATE _____	
Reminder Dates _____	
Notes: _____	Initials _____

Quiz

Law Office Management Chapter 12

Quiz

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Answers to Chapter Review Questions

Examples for Discussion

Possible Answers to Assignments

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Quiz

Tab Text

[Click here to take the Chapter Quiz.](#)
