

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
TEXAS, DALLAS DIVISION

Stephanie Key v. Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages, LLC, and
Dolgencorp of Texas, Inc. d/b/a Dollar General #12498

Key · No. 3:24-CV-1368-S · Decided December 15, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas grants the parties’ agreed motion to seal an exhibit containing excerpts from Dollar General’s confidential Standard Operating Procedures. The court finds that the exhibit includes proprietary operational information whose disclosure could cause competitive harm, and that the interests favoring nondisclosure outweigh the public’s common-law right of access. The court directs Plaintiff to file Exhibit 3 under seal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Dallas Division
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Dallas Division
DECIDED	December 15, 2025
DOCKET	3:24-CV-1368-S
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court considered the parties' agreed motion for leave to file under seal an exhibit attached to Plaintiff's response to Dollar General's summary-judgment motion.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied Local Civil Rule 79.3(b) and conducted a document-by-document, line-by-line balancing of the public's common-law right of access against interests favoring nondisclosure.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Stephanie Key v. Dolgencorp of Texas, Inc. d/b/a Dollar General #12498, Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages, LLC

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- commercial litigation
- summary judgment

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

commercial litigation

sealing of judicial records

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Exhibit 3 should be filed under seal under Local Civil Rule 79.3(b) and the common-law right of access to judicial records.

HOLDINGS

1. Exhibit 3 should be sealed because the parties identified specific competitive harms from disclosure, the information was proprietary and confidential, and the interests favoring nondisclosure outweighed the public's common-law right of access.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Court “heavily disfavor[s] sealing information placed in the judicial record.”” (at 2)

“In determining whether a document should be sealed, the Court undertakes a “document-by-document, line-by-line balancing of the public’s common law right of access against the interests favoring nondisclosure.”” (at 2)

“ “[T]he working presumption is that judicial records should not be sealed.”” (at 2)

“The Court DIRECTS Plaintiff to file Exhibit 3 under seal.” (at 5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Dollar General's summary-judgment motion involved an excerpt from its Standard Operating Procedures that Plaintiff attached to her response. The parties represented that the exhibit contained confidential staffing models, labor-allocation strategies, merchandising methodologies, receiving-room procedures, and maintenance procedures tied to Dollar General's risk-management strategy. They further asserted that disclosure could allow competitors to adopt Dollar General's procedures without making comparable investments.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Dollar General moved for summary judgment. Plaintiff filed a response attaching a redacted excerpt of Dollar General's Standard Operating Procedures and twice sought leave to file the exhibit under seal. The court denied the earlier sealing requests for failure to comply with Fifth Circuit law. After the parties filed an agreed motion addressing the applicable sealing standard, the court granted the motion and directed Plaintiff to file Exhibit 3 under seal.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Binh Hoa Le v. Exeter Finance Corp., 990 F.3d 410, 419 (5th Cir. 2021)
- June Medical Services, LLC v. Phillips, 22 F.4th 512, 519-21 (5th Cir. 2022)
- Vantage Health Plan, Inc. v. Willis-Knighton Medical Center, 913 F.3d 443, 451 (5th Cir. 2019)
- Blue Yonder Group, Inc. v. Kinaxis Inc., No. 3:20-CV-03636-K, 2024 WL 4796229, at *4 (N.D. Tex. May 30, 2024)
- MIECO LLC v. Pioneer Natural Resources USA, Inc., No. 3:21-CV-1781-B, 2022 WL 18034481, at *2 (N.D. Tex. Oct. 28, 2022)

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