

THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
FAMILY LAW DIVISION

CONTEMPT

(Packet #10)

If you choose to represent yourself (*pro se*) in your case, you should be aware that you will be required to follow the same rules that are required in cases filed by persons represented by attorneys. The judge or general magistrate assigned to your case is not required to grant what you request in a form. If you do not like the outcome of your case, you may not be able to change it. If you have any questions or concerns about your case, you should consult with an attorney.

If you do not know an attorney, you may call the Lawyer Referral Service at 221-7780. If you do not have the money to hire an attorney, you may apply to Bay Area Legal Services by calling 232-1343. You may also obtain legal information at the Legal Information Center at the George Edgecomb Courthouse (call 864-2280 for hours and information).

All instructions and forms distributed by the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit are provided merely as a public service to persons seeking to represent themselves in court without the assistance of an attorney. These documents are meant to serve as a guide only, and to assist *pro se* (self-represented) litigants with their cases. The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit does not guarantee that either the instructions or the forms will achieve the result desired by the parties or ensure that any individual judge will follow the procedures exactly or accept each and every form as drafted. Any person using these instructions and/or forms does so at his or her own risk, and the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit shall not be responsible for any losses incurred by any person in reliance on the instructions and/or forms.

In no event will the Florida Supreme Court, The Florida Bar, or anyone contributing to the production of these forms, commentary, instructions, and appendices be liable for any direct, indirect, or consequential damages from their use.

<u>FORMS CONTAINED IN THIS PACKET</u>	<u>FORM #</u>	<u>WHEN TO USE</u>
<u>General Information for Self-Represented Litigants</u>	Appendix C	For your information only
<u>12 Rules of Courtroom Civility</u>	12 Rules	Required to start
<u>Nonlawyer Disclosure</u>	12.900(a)	Required if someone who is not a lawyer helps you with the forms
<u>Motion for Civil Contempt/Enforcement</u>	12.960	Required to start
<u>Motion for Referral to General Magistrate</u>	12.920(a)	NOT required for child support issues
<u>General Magistrate / Hearing Officer Division Referral Assignment Table</u>	Table	To determine the General Magistrate / Hearing Officer assigned to your case
<u>Notice of Hearing Before General Magistrate</u>	12.920(c)	Use if your hearing is scheduled before a General Magistrate
<u>Notice of Hearing (with Judge or Hearing Officer for SUPPORT issues)</u>	12.961	Use if your hearing is scheduled before a Judge or a Support Hearing Officer and the Motion for Contempt DOES involve support issues
<u>Notice of Hearing (with Judge for NON-support issues)</u>	12.923	Use if your hearing is scheduled before a Judge and the Motion for Contempt does NOT involve support issues
<u>Fee Schedule for Family Law Cases</u>	Fee	A schedule of fees for Family Law related cases
<u>Notice of Confidential Information Within Court Filing</u>	2.40(d)(2)	Use to notify the clerk of documents containing confidential information

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

STEP ONE - Complete the forms to start the case and have them notarized

1. **FORMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED IN BLACK INK AND MOST MUST BE NOTARIZED.** The clerk's office will notarize documents and charge a fee (see attached schedule). Please bring a valid ID.
2. **Names must be written the same way on all documents (no full names on one document and initials on another).**
3. **Your CASE NUMBER AND DIVISION must be written on all documents.**

4. **Complete the following forms and notarize the ones with a notary signature line:**

- A. 12 Rules of Courtroom Civility - (does not need to be notarized)
- B. Motion for Civil Contempt/Enforcement, Form 12.960

If your Motion does not involve child support, complete the following additional form:

- C. Motion for Referral to the General Magistrate, Form 12.920(a)

STEP TWO – Make copies

After you have completed the forms and have signed and notarized them, make 2 complete copies of everything you have completed (one copy is for your records). If you are filing a Motion for Referral to the General Magistrate, make 1 extra copy of that and 1 extra copy of the Motion for Contempt. Copies can be obtained for a fee in the Court Business Center, on the 6th floor of the George Edgecomb Courthouse. You may also purchase copies for \$0.15 per page, before filing your case, from the Family Law Intake staff in room 101.

STEP THREE - Filing your motion

Take the *original* set of completed and signed forms to the clerk on the 1st floor of the main courthouse and pay the filing fee, if applicable.

STEP FOUR – Notifying the other party

Mail, fax, or hand-deliver 1 set of copies of your documents to the other party.

STEP FIVE – Process a Motion for Referral to the General Magistrate?

1. If you are filing a “Motion for Referral to the General Magistrate” (if your Motion does not involve child support), mail the following to the Judge assigned to your case:
 - a. 1 copy of the Motion for Contempt,
 - b. 1 copy of the Motion for Referral to the General Magistrate,
 - c. 2 stamped envelopes, one addressed to each party (envelopes can be purchased in the Court Business Center on the 6th floor of the Edgecomb courthouse)
2. If your case is assigned to a judge in Tampa, mail your documents and envelopes to:
Judge of Division _____, George Edgecomb Courthouse, 800 E. Twiggs Street, 4th Floor, Tampa, Florida 33602.
3. If your case is assigned to a judge in Plant City (Division R, S or T), mail your documents and envelopes to:
Judge of Division _____, Plant City Courthouse, 301 N. Michigan Avenue, Plant City, Florida 33563.
4. The Division of your case can be found next to your case number.
5. If the Motion for Referral to the General Magistrate is not accompanied by 2 stamped addressed envelopes, your Referral will not be processed and your case will be delayed.

STEP SIX – Mediation

You are required to attempt mediation on the issues in your motion before your motion can be scheduled for a hearing. Call the Mediation and Diversion office at 813-272-5642 and ask them to schedule a mediation date. If the other party does not contact the mediation department or the issue(s) cannot be resolved in mediation, a hearing on your motion can be scheduled.

STEP SEVEN – Preparing your case / gathering evidence (if your motion is not resolved in mediation)

If you schedule your motion for a hearing, you will need to be prepared to present evidence to the court which supports your position(s). Gathering evidence is called “discovery.” Discovery is governed by Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure 12.280 – 12.410 and Florida Rules of Civil Procedure 1.280 – 1.410.

Not all evidence can be considered by the court. Evidence must conform to the Rules of Evidence in Chapter 90 of the Florida Statutes to be admissible in court. The duty of establishing the facts that you want to present to the court, or the burden of proof, is on YOU. You should provide the court with admissible evidence to support the claims in your motion and your statements in court.

STEP EIGHT – Scheduling the hearing

1. Once you have received 1) a close-out letter from mediation (showing that you attempted mediation) and, 2) your signed Order of Referral to the General Magistrate or the Order Assigning Action to Child Support Enforcement Hearing Officer, call the administrative assistant for the general magistrate/hearing officer assigned to your case and request a hearing date. The general magistrate/hearing officer assigned is determined by **the last two digits of your case number (see attached table)**.
If assigned to GM-1, call General Magistrate/Hearing Officer **Cuellar-Stilo** (Phone: 272-5351)
If assigned to GM-2, call General Magistrate/Hearing Officer **Johnson** (Phone: 276-2335)
If assigned to GM-3, call General Magistrate/Hearing Officer **Montagno** (Phone: 276-2337)
If assigned to GM-4, call General Magistrate/Hearing Officer **Sarmiento** (Phone: 272-6435)
If assigned to GM-5, call General Magistrate/Hearing Officer **Reeves** (Phone: 272-8565)
2. Once a hearing date has been scheduled, complete a Notice of Hearing form with the place, date, and time of the hearing. Use Form 12.920(c) if your hearing is scheduled with a General Magistrate and is NOT regarding child support. Use Form 12.961 if your hearing is scheduled before a Judge or a Child Support Enforcement Hearing Officer and the Motion for Contempt DOES involve support issues. Use Form 12.923 if your hearing is scheduled before a Judge and the Motion for Contempt does NOT involve support issues.
3. Sign the Notice of Hearing and complete the Certificate of Service part of the notice which states the date you are filing the notice and how you are providing a copy to the other party.
4. Make 2 copies of the Notice of Hearing.
5. File the original Notice of Hearing with the clerk, send a copy of the notice to the other party, and keep a copy for your records.

STEP NINE – The hearing

Normally the hearing is when the request in your motion will be decided.

HOW TO DRESS - Dress appropriately. No shorts, tank tops, or sandals. Do not chew gum.

WHAT TO BRING - All evidence you want the court to consider in deciding your motion.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The hearing will take place in a hearing room or a courtroom. You will not be in front of a jury, just the general magistrate or judge. Do not interrupt the magistrate or judge when he or she speaks. When speaking to the magistrate or judge, address him or her as “Your Honor” or “Judge.”

Each court has at least one bailiff who is a deputy sheriff and is there to maintain order. When you arrive for your hearing, let the bailiff know that you are present and ready. He or she will announce your case when it is time for your hearing, and will tell you where to sit and where to place your belongings as you enter the hearing room. A bailiff will usually remain inside the room during your hearing. If witnesses are called, the bailiff will step out to bring the witness into the hearing room.

At your hearing, be prepared to discuss any issues covered in the petition (and the counterpetition, if one was filed) and be able to provide proof of any disputed facts by presenting evidence. Evidence is proof presented at a hearing in the form of witnesses (people), exhibits (documents), and objects (things). Not all evidence can be considered by the general magistrate or judge, however. Evidence must conform to the Rules of Evidence in Chapter 90 of the Florida Statutes to be admissible in court. Remember, the duty of establishing the facts that you want to present to the court is on YOU. You should provide the judge with admissible evidence to support the claims in your petition and your statements in court. Telling your story may not be enough to win your case.

Once both sides have presented their evidence, the general magistrate or judge will make a decision and an order will be prepared. The order will contain all the details of the court’s decision. You will receive a copy of the order in the mail. The original order will go to the clerk’s office to be filed in your court file.

Family Forms and Packets - available for purchase at the Court Business Center

Form Packets with Instructions:

- 1) Complete packets with all forms and self-help instructions are priced individually and available at the Court Business Center (CBC), in Room 630 (6th Floor) of the George Edgecomb Courthouse, 800 E. Twiggs Street, Tampa, Florida.
- 2) Free online at:
 - a) www.fljud13.org/Portals/0/Forms/pdfs/family/packetList.pdf
 - b) www.hillsclerk.com/en/About-Us/Forms → then click on “Family Law”

Individual Forms (may not include necessary instructions):

- 1) For \$.10 per page at the Court Business Center (CBC), in Room 630 (6th Floor) of the George Edgecomb Courthouse, 800 E. Twiggs Street, Tampa, Florida.
- 2) Free online at: www.flcourts.org → then click on “Family Law Forms”

YOU MAY FILE FORMS AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

Tampa - George Edgecomb Courthouse – Main Location

Clerk of the Circuit Court, 800 E. Twiggs Street, Room 101, Tampa, FL 33602

Brandon – Brandon Regional Service Center

Clerk of the Circuit Court, 311 Pauls Drive, Suite 110, Brandon, FL 33511

Plant City – Plant City Courthouse

Clerk of the Circuit Court, 301 N. Michigan, Room 1071, Plant City, FL 33563

Ruskin/Sun City – SouthShore Regional Service Center

Clerk of the Circuit Court, 410 30th Street SE, Ruskin, FL 33570