

Judicial Practices and Procedures

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A. Communications with the Judicial Office

- **Method of Communication:** All communications to the judicial office must be submitted by e-mail to either diazcra@fljud13.org or felonydiv1@fljud13.org, or via telephone at (813) 272-8551. The subject line of any email must contain the case number, case name, and relevant matter. When leaving a voicemail message, the message must contain the case number, case name, and relevant matter for the call.
- **Ex parte Communications:** All communications with the judicial office must comply with Canon 3 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, which prohibits a judge from initiating, permitting, or considering ex parte communications and from considering other communications outside the presence of the parties concerning a pending or impending proceeding, unless authorized by law. All parties must be copied on any e-mail

directed to the judicial office, unless an ex parte communication is authorized by law.

- **Unsolicited Communications:** Unsolicited communications from non-parties will not be considered by the court. Parties may only contact the judicial office in accordance with these practices and procedures.
- **E-Filing Portal Contact Information:** All attorneys and self-represented litigants must provide an e-mail address to receive signed orders electronically, unless excused. Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.516. It is the responsibility of attorneys and self-represented litigants to update their contact information using Form 2.603 any time there is a change in the e-mail account registered for electronic service.
- **Response to Inquiries:** The judicial assistant is not authorized to provide legal advice and any inquiries via email or voicemail message will be responded to, if legally permissible, by the end of the next business day.

B. Scheduling Procedures

- **Court Schedule:** The Court schedules all status conference dates for Division J, and all motions for attorneys fees on one Thursday a month via Zoom. Trial dates and evidentiary hearing dates are specially set by the Court
- **Scheduling Hearings:** Please contact the Court's judicial assistant to schedule any hearings for Trial Division 1 and Division J.
- **Notice of Hearing:** A notice of hearing must be filed and served immediately after reserving hearing time. A notice of hearing involving any remote appearance must list the judicial Zoom credentials. All notices of hearing must contain the ADA notification required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.540.
- **Submission Deadlines:** The court must receive all materials for the hearing no later than two business days before the hearing.
- **Order of Proceedings:** Matters will be heard in the order they appear on the docket.
- **Continuance Procedure:** Continuances are disfavored and will be granted only upon good cause shown. A request for continuance must be submitted at least five days prior to the scheduled court date, absent

exigent circumstances. Except for good cause shown, the motion must be signed by the party requesting the continuance, as required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.545(e).

- **Cancelling Hearings:** You must cancel hearings by notifying the judicial assistant immediately. You must also immediately file and serve a notice of cancellation on opposing counsel and any self-represented litigant.

C. Remote Appearance

- **Remote Appearance Procedure:** The court maintains a hybrid virtual courtroom, allowing parties to appear either in person or remotely for status conference dates in Division J and Trial Division 1, as provided by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530. Requests to use communication technology for an appearance for any other type of hearing must be made by motion.
- **Platform Used:** The court uses Zoom for remote appearances.
- **Platform Meeting ID#:** Meeting ID#: 936 0721 8255, no password is required.
- **Requirements:** All requests to appear remotely, other than the monthly status dates in Division J, must be submitted at least 5 business days before the hearing.

D. Submission of Orders and Judgments

- **Format:** All proposed orders must be submitted in PDF and uploaded to the Court's E-Filing Portal via the JAWS system. All proposed orders must be accompanied by a cover letter either (1) certifying that all parties agree to the order or (2) containing a statement identifying any disagreement of the parties as to the proposed order.
- **Deadline for Submissions:** Proposed orders must be submitted within 10 days after any hearing.

E. Courtesy Copies of Case Law and Other Documents

- **When Required:** Courtesy copies of case law must be submitted to the court for any evidentiary proceeding.
- **Format:** Either PDF or Word document.

- **Submission Method:** e-mail or, U.S. mail, or hand-delivery to the judicial assistant.
- **Deadline for Submissions:** Courtesy copies must be delivered to the court no later than two days before any evidentiary proceeding.

F. Emergency and Other Urgent Matters

- **Requirements:** If a party believes there is a factual basis for setting an emergency hearing, a detailed motion setting forth the following must be filed: (1) the issues to be resolved, (2) reasons why an emergency hearing is necessary, and (3) the amount of time needed for each party's presentation.
- **Scheduling:** If the court determines that an emergency exists, a hearing will be scheduled unilaterally by the court. All parties shall make themselves available for the emergency hearing, barring exigent circumstances.

G. Exhibits for Evidentiary Proceedings

- **Format:** Exhibits must be submitted to the clerk of court in paper format. All attorneys and self-represented litigants must bring sufficient copies of each exhibit for the clerk, the court, and each party to review during the hearing or trial. Exhibits must be labeled in the following format: "Petitioner/Plaintiff 1" or "Respondent/Defendant 1". Composite exhibits must be labeled as 1A, 1B etc.

H. Pretrial Procedures and Conferences

- **Case Management Conference:** Any party may request a case management conference (CMC) when a case requires. The court strongly encourages the early use of CMC in more complex cases, multiple-party litigation, or any case that might benefit from court intervention. Unless excused by the court in advance, all CMCs are mandatory for attorneys and self-represented litigants. Parties represented by counsel are not required to appear at a CMC.
- **Status Conference:** Any party may request a status conference when a case requires.
- **Other Procedures Relating to Pretrial Procedures and Conferences:**

ALL PRETRIAL MOTIONS FOR ANY CASE TRANSFERRED TO TRIAL DIVISION 1 FOR TRIAL, MUST BE SCHEDULED AND HEARD BY THE ORIGINAL ASSIGNED TRANSFERRING JUDGE. THE FAILURE OF ANY PARTY TO TIMELY FILE AND SET FOR HEARING ANY PRETRIAL MOTION BEFORE THE ORIGINAL TRANSFERRING JUDGE WILL BE DEEMED A WAIVER OF THE MOTION BY THIS COURT.

I. Setting Case for Trial

- **Procedure:** All trial and evidentiary hearing dates are specially set by the Court.

J. Forms

- **Access:** Division forms are available at <https://www.fljud13.org/JudicialDirectory/MichelleSisco/Forms.aspx>

K. Other Division Procedures

- **ADA Accommodations:**
<https://www.fljud13.org/BusinessOperations/CourtFacilities/ADAaccommodations.aspx>
- **Interpreter Requests:** If an interpreter is needed for a hearing or trial, please contact
<https://www.fljud13.org/CourtPrograms/CourtInterpreterCenter/ContactUs.aspx>
- **Other Division Procedures: ALL ATTORNEYS PRACTICING BEFORE THIS COURT ARE REQUIRED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH, AND TO ABIDE BY, THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL COURTESY.**

<https://www.fljud13.org/LegalCommunity/ForAttorneys/StandardsOfProfessionalCourtesy.aspx>