



19th Judicial Circuit Court Judge Janet Croom
Guidelines and Procedures

Circuit Civil Jury and Non-Jury Division
UPDATED: September 2023

PLEASE REVIEW ALL PROCEDURES PRIOR
TO CONTACTING THE JUDGE'S OFFICE

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COMMUNICATIONS WITH JUDGE’S OFFICE: Please do not ask the Judicial Assistant or other Court personnel to communicate any message to the Judge. This is prohibited ex-parte communication. The Court’s staff is not permitted to relay ex-parte information to the Judge. This office can best respond to all communications via e-mail to: IRCJudge2@circuit19.org. E-mails must contain the case name, case number, subject matter and relevant date(s). Please ensure that all e-mails are also copied to all opposing counsel and/or *pro se* parties and indicate same in the body of your e-mail to prevent ex-parte communication to the Court.

PAPERLESS OFFICE: This office is completely paperless. All correspondence, motions, hearing materials, etc. should be sent by EMAIL in PDF format to the Judicial Assistant at IRCJudge2@circuit19.org. Hearing materials should be provided to the Court at least five (5) business days before the hearing. Lengthy materials submitted in the form of tabbed PDF electronic binders, highlighting pertinent sections and brevity are appreciated. Lengthy submissions may be sent through an online drop box. Please do not mail binders or hard copies of hearing materials. An electronic copy of the submission must be simultaneously provided to all other parties. Case law and memoranda provided to the Court during the hearing may not be considered.

PROPOSED ORDER PREPARATION & SUBMISSION: **For your convenience, there is no need to submit proposed orders prior to a hearing.** Proposed orders are to be submitted in Microsoft Word format via EMAIL **after** the hearing, the title must describe the subject and ruling of the Court, *i.e.* “Order Granting Plaintiff’s Motion for Partial Summary Judgment on Liability” *See*, Fla.R.Civ.P., Rule 1.100(c)(1), and the service of process shall contain the name and e-mail service address for all parties. If any party does not have an e-mail service address, that parties’ physical service address shall be contained in the proposed order.

If counsel is asked to prepare an order, the order shall be drafted and circulated among all parties within 2 business days of the hearing, and submitted to the Court with transmittal confirmation to all counsel and *pro se* parties within 7 business days of the hearing, advising the Court in writing of any objection to the form of the proposed order. The Court will not execute proposed orders, agreed orders, or stipulations without transmittal confirmation to all counsel of record and *pro se* parties. Please specify whether all parties agree to the form of the proposed order, or if there is an objection. **Do not E-File proposed orders via the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal.**

SIGNED ORDER FILING & SERVICE: Signed Orders are E-Filed and E-Served via the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal by the Court.

COURT REPORTERS: Fl. R. Jud. Admin 2.535(b) requires that the party requesting a court reporter must arrange for and pay the reporting fees for any hearing or trial. This requirement shall not preclude taxation of costs as authorized by law.

SETTLEMENT OF CASES: If your case settles, immediately notify the Judicial Assistant via e-mail, transmittal confirmation to all parties, ATTACHING AN ALREADY E-FILED NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT, DISMISSAL DOCUMENTS AND FINAL DISPOSITION FORM.

A. PRETRIAL PROCEDURES

In compliance with Supreme Court of Florida No. AOSC21-17, 19th Judicial Circuit Administrative Order 2021-15, and Notice of Remote and Courtroom Proceedings: All Circuit Civil hearings and Non-Jury trials are to be

held via Zoom.

<https://zoom.us/j/7450461040?pwd=Rk5GY05VZFBnVnA3d0phM2krVHpQQT09>

Phone: (646) 558-8656

Meeting ID: 745 046 1040

Passcode: 123456

HEARING SCHEDULING: *All motions must be e-filed PRIOR to setting a hearing, however, the mere filing of a motion is insufficient to set a motion for hearing. Except for motions to dismiss (addressed in later section), the motion must be set for hearing to bring the matter to the Court's attention. Provide the Judge's office with the notice of hearing and hearing packet via e-mail only.

Uniform Motion Calendar (5-10 minute non-evidentiary hearings) and Special Set Hearings (1 hour or less) must be scheduled online by counsel. All UMC hearings must be noticed for 8:30 a.m. Please refer to Judge Croom's on-line calendar to confirm and schedule available dates. Parties will be restricted to the time allotted for the hearing. Attorneys who repeatedly abuse the online scheduling may be denied further privileges of self-scheduling. Any hearings requiring more than 1 hour must be scheduled by contacting the Judicial Assistant via e-mail, with the attached copy of the motion already e-filed with the Clerk.

Hearings on UMC are limited to five to ten (5-10) minutes per case (not per motion). Additional motions should not be "piggy-backed" by cross-notice unless counsel first confirms with opposing parties and the online calendar, that sufficient additional time is available and can be reserved for same. UMC is heard on a "first come, first serve" basis. After proper notice, failure of any party to appear at the hearing shall not prevent a party from proceeding with the matter when the case is called. If the party noticing the matter for hearing chooses to wait for the absent party, the matter may be passed over until the end of the calendar. If UMC time expires, any remaining hearings will need to be rescheduled.

Contested summary judgment and evidentiary motions will not be heard at UMC. The types of motions suitable for hearing on the Uniform Motion Calendar include simple motions, such as motions to strike affirmative defenses, amend pleadings, discovery motions, objections to CME, etc. UMC is available to pursue a summary final judgment for liquidated damages, including attorney's fees and costs after a default based upon a proper motion with supporting documentation, unless a party appears to contest it. In that instance, the parties must reset per the on-line calendar for an evidentiary hearing/trial on such matters.

HEARING CANCELLATION: Cancellation of any hearing must be done 1) through the online Court scheduling calendar, 2) by e-filing a Notice of Cancellation of Hearing in advance of the hearing date, and 3) a courtesy copy of your Notice of Cancellation of Hearing to the Judicial Assistant via email, once you have e-filed same.

EMERGENCY HEARINGS: If an emergency situation arises, counsel may request that a hearing be set on short notice. The body of the motion must contain a detailed explanation of the circumstances constituting the emergency as well as the substance of the motion. The motion must be e-mailed to the Court before a hearing will be set. The Court will review the motion and, if it is determined an emergency exists, the Judicial Assistant will contact counsel to set the hearing.

COOPERATION OF COUNSEL: Hearings must be cleared with opposing counsel and/or *pro se* parties. Good faith cooperation is expected from counsel, their support staff, and *pro se* litigants. Should counsel, their staff, or *pro se* litigants fail to respond within 3 business days, or refuse to cooperate in obtaining or in setting a hearing, the difficulty should be set forth either in the motion or in the notice of hearing. After 3 days, the requesting party

may unilaterally set a hearing. Notice of the hearing must be provided at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing. All motions must comply with the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, including, but not limited to, a certification that the movant, in good faith, has conferred or attempted to confer with the person or party failing to make discovery in an effort to secure the information without Court action. *See*, Fla.R.Civ.P., Rule 1.380(a)(2). All notices of hearing shall contain a certification signed by the scheduling attorney in substantially the following form:

I HEREBY CERTIFY that I have personally contacted opposing counsel in an effort to resolve the issue(s), however, the matter cannot be resolved and a hearing is necessary.

Please note that certifications containing language to the effect that an effort will be made to resolve the issue in the future is NOT sufficient. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in cancellation of the hearing by the Court. If it is determined that the certification is not true, other sanctions may be imposed, including a referral to the Florida Bar.

MOTION TO DISMISS and/or MOTION FOR MORE DEFINITE STATEMENT: All motions to dismiss filed pursuant to Fla.R.Civ.Pro., Rule 1.140(b) and motions for more definite statement filed pursuant to Fla.R.Civ.Pro., Rule 1.140(e), will initially be considered without a hearing. Motions to dismiss must strictly comply with the requirements of the Rule in that the grounds and the applicable substantial matters of law shall be stated specifically and with particularity. Motions for more definite statement must strictly comply with the requirements of the Rule. Any party may furnish to the Court via email: the motion and transmittal confirmation to all counsel of record and *pro se* parties. The motion will be held for ten (10) days to give the opposing side the opportunity to reply. If it is determined that a hearing is necessary, the movant will be advised to schedule a hearing and file the appropriate notice. If a hearing is not required, an appropriate order will be entered. No case dispositive ruling will be made without a hearing.

EX PARTE MOTION TO COMPEL: If a motion to compel discovery sets forth a complete failure to respond or object to discovery, the time for complying with the discovery request has lapsed, and there has been no request for an extension of time, an *ex parte* order may be entered requiring compliance with the original discovery demand within ten (10) days of the signing of the order. After filing such motion, the moving party shall send the motion, proposed order and transmittal confirmation to the Court via e-mail.

MOTION FOR PROTECTIVE ORDER: The filing of a motion for protective order, without presenting it to the Court, is insufficient. The party filing such order must email the motion to the Judicial Assistant, and set same for hearing.

MOTION FOR REHEARING, RECONSIDERATION OR NEW TRIAL: Upon the filing of such motion, the moving party shall send a copy to the Court for review via e-mail. The copy of the motion shall be accompanied by a completed proposed order and transmittal confirmation to all counsel. If the Court determines that a hearing is necessary, the movant will be given dates and times to coordinate with opposing counsel or *pro se* litigants, and the movant must file the appropriate notices.

WITHDRAW OR SUBSTITUTION OF COUNSEL: Compliance with Fla. R. Jud. Admin. Rule 2.505 is required. Written client consent must be filed, or a hearing must be held after proper notice to the client.

MOTION TO CONTINUE: Any motion to continue must comply with Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.460,

including requirement of signature by the party requesting continuance. **Simply filing a motion to continue will not suffice to continue the case. Your case will not be continued because both parties agree. If an order is issued continuing your case, only the trial date or E-Docket call date is moved and all other deadlines are not moved or affected.**

CASE MANAGEMENT, NOTICE FOR TRIAL, TRIAL ORDERS: All cases must submit an Agreed Case Management Plan and Order Setting Trial, available in fillable format on this Court's webpage, within 20 days after the filing of the last responsive pleading. Deadlines are established and enforced pursuant to such Order. Submitting the agreed plan allows attorneys to choose their own deadlines and trial dates. After all attorneys sign the ACMPO, it must be emailed to the Court, which will sign and E-File the Order. Please do not E-File ACMPO without a signature from the Court. Failure to submit the ACMPO shall result in the Court issuing its ORDER REQUIRING FILING OF MANDATORY CASE MANAGEMENT PLAN; failure to comply with said order will result in the case being administratively closed by the Clerk of Court without further notice and without further court order.

Notices for Trial are not required, as trial dates are set by the attorneys in the required Agreed Case Management Plan and Order Setting Trial.

B. TRIAL DOCKETS

There is no requirement to physically attend Docket Call. Cases are stacked according to the year that the case was filed, with the older cases being placed at the top of that week's trial schedule. Docket Call is the first day of every month, and is the date that your Agreed Jury Instructions and Joint Pretrial Statement are due via email to the Court.

The Monthly Trial Schedules are posted on this Court's webpage located online at www.circuit19.org, and are continually updated months in advance. ***It will be the responsibility of counsel and pro se litigants to keep track of their position on the trial docket and to monitor whether the cases set ahead of your case are settled or continued.**

The top 3 (three) cases moving forward as of 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding your trial are required to appear the morning of trial. Unless the case is settled or continued prior to the date set for trial, counsel must appear for trial. **All other cases are rolled to the next Docket Call.**

***If your case is rolled or continued, existing deadlines stay in place and you will not be issued a new Trial Order.** **Do not call the Judge's office to determine the status of your case or priority of your case for the trial week. It is unacceptable to announce to the Court that counsel is not ready to proceed to trial because counsel thought another case would proceed instead.** If your case is called up for trial and you do not appear or are not ready for trial, the case will be dismissed if you are the plaintiff, or a default entered if you are the defense.

All other trial specific information is found on your Agreed Case Management Plan and Order Setting Trial or your Trial Order.