

**THE FOLLOWING IS THE SCRIPT FOR THE INSTRUCTIONAL PHONE LINE 727-582-7891. THIS DOCUMENT WAS DESIGNED TO BE READ ONTO THE PHONE LINE. IT IS PLACED ON THIS SITE FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE IN CASE YOU PREFER TO READ IT. HOWEVER, AS YOU READ, YOU WILL ENCOUNTER WORDS LIKE “LISTEN” AND “CALLER” AND OTHER PHRASES THAT MAKE SENSE ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF A PHONE LINE. IT WILL MAKE MORE SENSE IF YOU IMAGINE YOURSELF LISTENING, INSTEAD OF READING.**

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**Numbers (1) and (2) below are only a summary. Please read, or listen to, the entire script**

(1) **General Magistrate Hearings:** Parties prepare their own Notices and Orders of Referral and mail the originals, with a stamped addressed envelope for each party, to the General Magistrate’s office as further explained at 727-582-7891 (or read instructions below at Option 1). The GM’s office then has the Order of Referral signed, and mails copies of the Notice and Order of Referral to each party.

(2) **Child Support Hearings** before the General Magistrate (No Dept. of Revenue involvement): Parties prepare their own Notice of Hearing (No Order of Referral needed), make copies, and mail as further explained at 727-582-7891 (or read instructions below at Option 2).

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## **ST. PETERSBURG GENERAL MAGISTRATE HEARINGS LINE INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

You have reached the General Magistrate Hearings Line in St. Petersburg, Florida. You are only ready for this information if you have received a date and time for your hearing from the Information and Resource Center of the Court. Informally we call that office the pro se office. If you don’t have a date and time for your hearing, please hang up and call the pro se office at **727-582-7200**. This will be a helpful phone number for you. You will want to write it down. Again it is 727-582-7200. It is very important that you listen to this introduction at least once. **Only** if you have already carefully listened to this important introduction and you know which option to choose, you may bypass this information and go straight to your option by pressing your option number now.

In St. Petersburg the same person acts as a General Magistrate **and** a Child Support Hearing Officer for cases that are **not** Florida Department of Revenue cases. This line is not for the child support cases in which the Dept of Revenue is involved. The pro se office will tell you whether you have a General Magistrate case **or, instead,** a Child Support Hearing Officer Case that **is** appropriate for this phone line. If you don’t yet know which kind of case you have, please ask

the pro se office and then call this line again. To continue, you will need to know what kind of case you have. Briefly, for Spanish speaking callers: Para recibir asistencia, por favor llame al 727-582-7200, para los nombres y telefonos de interpretes de ingles y espanol.

This is a lengthy message. If you prefer, you may read the script online at [www.jud6.org](http://www.jud6.org). The site may still be under construction and not yet up and running. If it **is** up, you will choose “Representing Yourself in Family Court”, then, under “General Information”, choose “Family Law Division” and then choose “Script for St. Petersburg Hearings Line”. Or you may come to the Office of the General Magistrate and pick up a copy of this script in writing. It will be in a forms’ rack just outside the General Magistrate’s Office door at Room A220, 501 First Ave., N., St. Petersburg, FL.

You will not be able to leave a message or speak to a person on this line. But don’t hang up because the following instructions are designed to help you. You might not know it, but, when you represent yourself in court, you **are** your own attorney. **Following these instructions carefully can help you avoid the disappointment and frustration you might experience if your hearing is cancelled because you left something out.** These instructions apply only to Sections 9,12,17 and 24 of the Family Division of the Court. You will find your section number after the letters FD in your case number.

If you do not already have your Notice of Hearing and Order of Referral forms, you can find them online at [www.flcourts.org](http://www.flcourts.org) – Self-Help – Family Law Forms. Please choose the package under Rule 12.920, **unless** your case involves child support issues **only**, in which case you will want to choose the package under Rule 12.921 instead. If you do not have a computer and printer, you may come to the Office of the General Magistrate at 501 First Ave., N., Room A220, St. Petersburg, Florida, and take a ***General Magistrate Notice Package*** and a ***Child Support Hearing Officer Notice Package*** from the metal rack outside the office door. You will need these forms before proceeding with the rest of this message.

**You will be required to write your own contact information on these forms, both address and telephone number. Please understand that the other party is going to see this information. If issues of domestic violence cause you to fear revealing contact information, you may ask the pro se office for ways to avoid revealing the information. You will want to do this because you must give some address in this paperwork, at which you can receive mail. And it is important that you not endanger yourself.**

You will need writing materials in front of you as you listen to these instructions. There is too much to remember without writing it down. If you don’t have writing materials with you, please hang up and call back when you do. You might want to take the instructions that follow step by step, completing one step and then calling back to listen to the directions for the next step. You must, however, comply with **all** of the instructions as quickly as possible if your hearing is to take place as scheduled.

**A few more things you should know about:** You will hear me talk about the “other party” in this message. The “other party” is the other person in your case, for example, your spouse, former spouse or the other parent of your child. You are also a “party” to your case.

If you were previously represented by an attorney in this case and the attorney has not formally withdrawn from the case, please hang up and call the attorney and request that the attorney withdraw from your case. If there is not an order in your case releasing your attorney before the date and time of your hearing, your hearing will have to be cancelled. If the other party to your case has an attorney and you have not yet cleared the hearing time with **that** attorney's office, please hang up and call the attorney's office to be sure he/she can come to the hearing on that date and time. If not, call the pro se office back to **reschedule** your hearing. If at any time before the Final Hearing, you or the **other** party are, or become, incarcerated in jail or prison, you must **immediately** inform the pro se office so a special order may be entered. This is required.

You will receive procedural directions only on this line. The court cannot give you legal advice and the following is not intended as legal advice. If you need legal advice, you must consult an attorney. The pro se office can give you information about free or low-cost options for speaking with an attorney.

Now you are ready to fill out your forms: If you have a case before the General Magistrate, please press 1. If you have a case before the Child Support Hearing Officer and the Dept. of Revenue **IS** involved in your case, please hang up and call the pro se office for further instructions. For all other Child Support Hearing Officer cases, please press 2. Write down which option you chose because you will need it if you call again and you want to bypass the introduction.

## **ST. PETERSBURG GENERAL MAGISTRATE HEARINGS LINE**

### **OPTION ONE**

You will want to have your forms in front of you as you listen to this message: You need two. One is entitled **Order of Referral** and one is entitled **Notice of Hearing**. If you see a **Motion** for Referral to GM in your package, please ignore it. It isn't needed. If you don't yet have your forms, wait until you have them to proceed. The directions will not make much sense to you without them. There are three steps in these directions.

**STEP ONE:** Fill in page one of the **Order of Referral** with the *Sixth* Judicial Circuit (that's Sixth), **Pinellas** County (that's Pinellas), your case number, case names, and the issues you are setting for hearing. Some issue examples, to name just a few possibilities, would be: final hearing in divorce case, temporary time-sharing, contempt for failure to comply with Parenting Plan. Please note that you should not put any issue in the Order of Referral that isn't covered by the motion or petition you are setting for hearing. Write the name of the General Magistrate in the appropriate blank. Her name is Kay – middle initial D. (as in David) Sloan. Regarding the "different rules", fill in the blank marked "other" with the following phone number 727-582-7200. On page two, check (a), "electronic recording". Leave the lines blank for the date and the signature of the Circuit Judge. **This is the end of Step One.**

**STEP TWO:** Next you will fill out your Notice of Hearing form. Fill in the top of page 1 with your case specific information just as you did with the Order of Referral. Then fill in the name of the other party to your case. Fill in the correct date and time of the hearing, just as it was given to you by the pro se office. Fill in the Room #. It is A220. There is not room on the Notice form to write in the address where the hearing will take place. So, on the short line provided for filling in the courthouse name, please put an asterisk (the symbol that is shaped like a star). Then, on the bottom of the page put another asterisk and write the following: 501 First Ave., N., St. Petersburg, FL 33701. To fill in the blank lines at the bottom of page one, you will need to go to [www.jud6.org](http://www.jud6.org), choose “General Public” and copy the name, address and phone number from ADA Assistance/Pinellas County. If you picked up your forms at the office of the GM, these lines will already be filled in for you. On page two, check (a) “electronic recording”. **Leave the date of delivery blank.** The GM’s office will be mailing the completed form **for you** and we will fill in that line. Fill out all of the information about the other party, date the document with the date you are signing it, sign the document and fill in your address and phone number. **This is the end of Step Two.**

**STEP THREE:** Next obtain a very large envelope (such as a manila envelope) and at least two legal size envelopes (these are the ones about 4” x 9.5 “). Address one legal sized envelope to yourself and one to the other party **OR** the other party’s attorney if the other party is represented in this case. Please leave the return address area of the envelopes blank. It is very important that you have an accurate address for the other party or attorney. And the address must include the accurate zip code. **When you get to the hearing, if the GM isn’t satisfied the other party has been properly noticed at a correct address, your hearing might be cancelled.** Stamp the envelopes. Each legal sized envelope will need one first class stamp. Do not seal the envelopes. Please note that occasionally there will be other people who must be noticed of the hearing. Some examples are: A Guardian ad Litem, if one was *previously* appointed by the court and not discharged, or the person who has your child in his/her primary care when that person is not one of the child’s parents. If there are any additional persons who must be noticed, please prepare and stamp legal size envelopes for them as well.

Now put into the large envelope the following: your legal size, addressed, stamped envelopes, the prepared Order of Referral and the prepared Notice of Hearing. Stamp the large envelope with sufficient postage and mail the items to: Office of the General Magistrate, 501 First Ave., N., Room A220, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. The General Magistrates Office will then take care of getting your Order of Referral signed and copies of everything mailed to you and the other party. **You must do this w/o delay or your hearing cannot take place as scheduled.**

**Congratulations! This is the end of your instructions. We look forward to seeing you soon.**

## **ST. PETERSBURG GENERAL MAGISTRATE HEARINGS LINE OPTION TWO**

It will be helpful to have your form in front of you as you listen to this message: You will need only one. It is entitled Notice of Hearing (Child Support Enforcement Hearing Officer). If you don't yet have your form, you will want to wait until you have it to proceed. The directions will not make much sense to you without the form. Please remember that these directions apply **exclusively** to cases involving issues of child support **only**. Also please know you have the wrong instructions if the Department of Revenue is involved in your case and has not withdrawn. There are three steps in these directions.

**STEP ONE:** Fill in page one of the Notice of Hearing with the *Sixth* Judicial Circuit, that's sixth, *Pinellas* County, that's Pinellas, your case number, case names. Fill in the name of the other party to your case. Write the name of the Hearing Officer in the appropriate blank. Her name is Kay – middle initial D (as in David) – Sloan. Write in the accurate date and time of the hearing, just as you were given it by the pro se office. Fill in the Room #. It is A220. Your hearing will not take place in a courthouse. Cross out "courthouse" and write in the following address: 501 First Ave., N., St. Petersburg, FL 337030"Vj gp'y tkg'lp'vj g'kuwgu">{qw'ctg'ugw'kpi for hearing. Some, but not all, examples would be: final hearing establishing child support, motion for contempt or final hearing on"supplemental petition for modification of child support. Please note that you should not put any issue in the Notice of Hearing that isn't covered by the motion or petition you are setting for hearing. Now fill in the amount of time for which the hearing is reserved. To fill in the blank lines at the bottom of page one, you will need to go to [www.jud6.org](http://www.jud6.org), choose "General Public" and copy the name, address and phone number from ADA Assistance/Pinellas County. If you picked up your forms at the office of the GM, these lines will already be filled in for you.

On page two, check the box at the top of the page that represents the method or methods you are going to use to deliver the Notice of Hearing to the other party. Fill in the line at the top of the page with the date you are going to mail the notice or put the notice directly into the other party's hand. Please note that you cannot have someone else hand deliver the notice to the other party unless the deliverer is a sheriff or private process server serving the other party. Now fill in all of the information about the other party. Date and sign the notice and fill in all of your information under your signature. **This is the end of Step One**

**STEP TWO:** Make copies of the Notice of Hearing: one for yourself, one for the Hearing Officer and one for the other party **or** their attorney if the other party is represented in this case. Occasionally there will be extra people who must be noticed of the hearing. Some examples are: A Guardian ad Litem if one was *previously* appointed by the court and not discharged **or** the person who has the primary care of your child when that person is not one of your child's parents. Make an extra copy of the Notice if there is any such person involved in your case. Next address legal size envelopes (these are the ones about 4" x 9.5 "), and stamp each one with a first class stamp. Address one to the other party to your case **or** their attorney if they have one

for this case, one to the Hearing Officer, and one to Clerk of the Court and one to any additional persons who must be noticed. The address for the Hearing Officer is: Office of the General Magistrate (remember that one person works as both Hearing Officer and General Magistrate) Room A220, 501 First Ave., N., St. Petersburg, FL 33701. The address for Clerk of the Court is Room 170, 315 Court St., Clearwater, FL 33756. In the return address section of all envelopes, write "Office of the General Magistrate" and the address of the General Magistrate's Office that was just provided to you. Do not write your own return address in that space. Please note that it is **very** important that you have an accurate address for the other party and the address must include the accurate zip code. When you get to the hearing, if the Hearing Officer isn't satisfied the other party has been properly noticed at the correct address, your hearing might be cancelled. **This is the end of Step Two.**

**STEP THREE:** Now put the **original** of your notice in the envelope addressed to the Clerk of the Court, with a note requesting that the Notice be filed in your case. Put **copies** of the Notice in the other envelopes. Stamp each envelope with a first class stamp. Now mail all the envelopes. You must mail out your Notices promptly or your hearing will not take place as scheduled. **You should be left with an extra copy of the Notice of Hearing. This is your copy. Please put it in a safe place and bring it with you to your hearing so that court staff can help you find the right room for your hearing.**

Please note that you are also required to bring two legal size envelopes and at least four first class stamps to your hearing. At the hearing, the Hearing Officer will tell you how much postage to put on the envelopes. **Congratulations! This is the end of your instructions. We look forward to seeing you soon.**