

Judicial Practices and Procedures

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These Practice and Procedures apply in all cases—whether the party is represented by counsel or self-represented (i.e. *pro se*). The Court’s practices and procedures are addressed in this document only.

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A. Manners are Mandatory. Everyone shall treat all other persons involved with dignity and respect, including court staff. There is never a reason to be rude, and *ad hominem* attacks on opposing parties or counsel are prohibited.

B. Communications with the Judicial Office

Any e-mail sent to or from the judicial office may be a public record subject to disclosure.

- **Method of Communication:** All communications to the judicial office must be submitted by e-mail to the dedicated division e-mail account listed in the Contact Information above. The subject line of any e-mail to the judicial office must contain the case number, case name, and relevant matter (e.g., 2026-DR-001234; Doe v. Doe; 2-Hour Hearing Requested).
- **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 email directed to the judicial office, unless an ex parte communication is authorized by law.

- **Unsolicited Communications:** Parties may only contact the judicial office in accordance with these practices and procedures. Unsolicited communications from non-parties will not be considered by the court.
- **E-Filing Portal Contact Information:** All attorneys and self-represented litigants must make and receive service by email unless excused.¹

All attorneys and self-represented litigants must provide an e-mail address to receive signed orders electronically, unless excused.² 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.

The judicial assistant strives to substantively respond to all inquiries within one business day. If the judicial assistant is unable to substantively respond within one business day, the judicial assistant will acknowledge your message as received and will indicate when to expect a substantive response.

C. Motion Practice / Memoranda.

- **Good-Faith Conferral:** Parties shall comply with Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.202 before filing a motion or petition and confer in good faith with opposing parties regarding the relief requested. Failure to include a certificate of conferral may result in rejection of the motion, continuance of the hearing, or other appropriate remedies as the circumstances may warrant.
- **Emergency or Expedited Motions:** An emergency exists if there is *actual or imminent danger* of physical harm, substantial abuse or trauma, abandonment or neglect, or where a child is about to be improperly removed from the state. An expedited basis exists if there is a compelling need or risk of substantial harm to person or property.

A movant who thinks that an emergency exists may file a motion labeled as an emergency. The movant or their attorney shall include a Certificate of Necessity stating the basis for the emergency.

¹ Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.516.

² Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.516.

If the court determines that an emergency exists, a hearing will be scheduled unilaterally by the court, typically within 7 to 14 days. All parties shall make themselves available for the emergency hearing, barring exigent circumstances.

All non-emergency or non-expedited motions will be considered in the ordinary course. Abuse of the Emergency / Expedited Process may result in admonishments or in appropriate cases, sanctions.

In all cases, a movant who has filed a motion filed on an emergency or expedited basis must make diligent and reasonable efforts under the circumstances to serve a copy of the motion on all interested parties and provide notice of any hearing. Failure to do so may result in denial of the motion.

- **Format:** Motions, Responses, and Memoranda should comply with the Style Guide, attached. **Replies to Responses are disfavored.** The title of the Motion should indicate the party filing the motion (e.g., “Petitioner,” “Respondent,” or “Guardian ad Litem”).
- **Agreed or Uncontested Motions:** Agreed or uncontested motions shall so state in the title.
- **3-3-3 Rule:** Motions and Responses should be limited to 3 pages, 3 arguments, and 3 case citations per argument.
- **Trial Memoranda or Memoranda of Law:** Memoranda should be succinct and concise. Trial Memoranda should clearly summarize (i) the issue presented, (ii) the party’s position, (iii) the legal basis for the position, and (iv) the material facts supporting the party’s position. Memoranda should not state why the other party is wrong.
- **Confidential Information:** Pursuant to Florida Rules of General Practice & Judicial Administration 2.420(d), the filer is responsible for ensuring that confidential information is redacted or made confidential from papers filed with the Court.
- **Exhibits to Motions/Responses:** Exhibits should be clearly marked and limited to those that are strictly necessary to establish the basis for relief in the motion. As a practical matter, it is

unlikely that the Court will have sufficient time to review voluminous exhibits.

- **Boilerplate Language Disfavored:** Motions should not use boilerplate language. Motions or petitions should clearly state (i) the relief requested; (ii) supporting statutes, rules, and case law; and (iii) facts supporting the requested relief. Motions containing only boilerplate language, or where the relief sought is not well supported, will likely be denied.
- **Style Guide.** Motions, responses, memoranda, or proposed orders use the attached Style Guide, attached.

D. Artificial Intelligence; Use and Disclosure:

AI tools may produce false, biased, incomplete, or erroneous content, and are generally disfavored. Parties may use AI as a supplement to, but not a substitute for, human judgment and expertise.

False citations and fake legal authority are a particularly troublesome problem for the Court. “AI programs are known to ‘hallucinate’ nonexistent cases.”³ Attempting to persuade a court or responding to motions by utilizing fake legal authority “is an abuse of the adversary system.”⁴ Courts have routinely sanctioned both attorneys and unrepresented litigants for filing or submitting papers that included fictitious case law.⁵

- **Ultimate accountability rests with the filer.** Pursuant to Florida Rule of General Practice & Judicial Administration 2.515, a filer certifies that the filer has read the filing, there is a good-faith basis for its legal and factual content, and the filing is not filed for an improper purpose. Additionally, Florida Statute § 57.105 imposes responsibility on the filer to assert legal and factual positions supported by existing law or a good faith argument for change.

³ *Goya v. Hayashida*, 418 So.3d 652, 655 (Fla. 4th DCA Aug. 13, 2025) (quoting *Sanders v. United States*, 176 Fed. Ct. 163, 169 (2025)).

⁴ *Park v. Kim*, 91 F.4th 610, 615 (2d Cir. 2024) (sanctioning attorney who submitted “a brief relying on non-existent authority” and “present[ed] a false statement of law to this Court”).

⁵ See e.g., *Gutierrez v. Gutierrez*, 399 So.3d 1185, 1187 (Fla. 3d DCA 2024) (sanctioning pro se litigant for filing briefs containing fictitious and nonexistent law); *Russell v. Mells*, Case No.: 2D2024-1560, --- So.3d ---, 2025 WL 3533637 *4 (Fla. 2d DCA Dec. 10, 2025) (referring attorney to the Florida Bar for disciplinary proceedings for filing a brief containing a single hallucinated case).

- **Mandatory Disclosure of AI Use.** Any attorney or self-represented litigant who uses an AI tool for:
 - Legal research that is reflected in the text of a filing;
 - Drafting any portion of a filing or submission; or
 - Summarizing legal sources or facts

must (i) disclose the use of Artificial Intelligence at the end of the submission; (ii) the AI tool used (e.g. ChatGPT, Westlaw AI), (iii) the manner in which Artificial Intelligence was used (e.g., “research of case law”; “initial draft of legal argument”); and (iv) state whether any text generated by the AI tool appears in the body of the Motion.

- **Certification of Use of AI:** Upon filing of any paper with the Clerk of the Court or JAWS, including without limitation motions, responses, memoranda, or proposed orders, a filer is deemed to have certified in accordance with Florida Statute § 57.105 and Rule 2.515 the following: (i) the mandatory disclosure is true and accurate; (ii) the filer reviewed each of the cases cited before submission; and (iii) the cited cases exist and accurately described in the filing (i.e. the case must state what the filer represents the case states).
- **Violations:** Failure to comply with this requirement may result in appropriate sanctions, including with limitation striking the filing or referral to the Florida Bar.

E. Scheduling Procedures

- **Scheduling Hearings:**

Hearings must be requested by e-mail to the division email.

The moving parties shall confer in good faith with opposing parties prior to scheduling hearings. If parties are unable to identify a hearing date and time, the scheduling party should e-mail the judicial assistant, copying opposing counsel and any self-represented litigant, to coordinate scheduling the hearing.

DO NOT FILE A NOTICE OF HEARING UNTIL THE JUDICIAL ASSISTANT CONFIRMS THE HEARING DATE AND TIME.

- **Notice of Hearing:**
A notice of hearing must be filed and served immediately after reserving hearing time.

Matters set for Hearing: The notice must clearly identify the motion or petition set for hearing. **Motions unilaterally added to the notice without prior approval from Chambers may not be heard.**

Notice of Zoom Hearing: A notice of hearing involving any remote appearance must list the judge's zoom credentials and include the link provided by the judicial assistant.

ADA Notice: All notices of hearing must contain the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) notification required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.540:

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact either the Pasco County Customer Service, 8731 Citizens Drive, New Port Richey, FL 34654, (727) 847-2411 (V) or the Pasco County Risk Management Office, 7536 State Street, New Port Richey, FL 34654 (727) 847-8028 (V) at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days. If you are hearing or vision impaired, call 711.

- **Submission of Materials Deadlines:** Parties should follow the procedures for Exhibits for Evidentiary Proceedings.
- **Continuance or Cancellation of Hearings:** The moving party shall contact Chambers immediately if a motion/petition is settled, withdrawn, or otherwise resolved.

Motions for continuance are disfavored and will be granted only upon cause shown. Successive continuances are highly disfavored. Lack of due diligence is not grounds for granting a continuance. Except for good cause shown, the motion must be signed by the party requesting the continuance.⁶

Motions for continuance must state with specificity: (i) the basis of the need for the continuance, including when the basis became known to the movant; (ii) whether the motion is opposed; (iii) the action and specific dates for the action that will enable the movant to be ready, including, but not limited to, confirming the specific date any required participants are available; and (iv) the proposed date by which the

⁶ Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.545(e).

case will be ready to proceed and whether that date is agreed by all parties. 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).

Unilateral notices of continuance of a hearing are void *ab initio* and will be ignored. The original hearing notice will control.

- **Agreed / Unopposed Motion for Continuances:** Agreed or unopposed continuances should follow the procedures for the submission of agreed orders.

F. Appearance at Hearings

- **Case Management Conferences:** Case management conferences or non-evidentiary hearings 30 minutes or less will be conducted via Zoom unless otherwise ordered upon request by the parties. The judicial assistant will issue the zoom link.
- **Attire:** ALL persons appearing for hearing should dress professionally and in appropriate clothing. Failure to be appropriately attired may result removal of the offending person from the proceeding.
- **Evidentiary Hearings or Hearings Greater than 30 Minutes:** Evidentiary hearings or hearings greater than 30 minutes in duration will be held in-person unless otherwise ordered upon good cause shown. Requests to appear by Zoom must be made by motion filed with the Clerk **7 Calendar days** prior to hearing.⁷ Long distance travel is not generally considered good cause.
- **Remote Appearance of Witnesses:** Witnesses shall appear in person unless otherwise ordered. Remote appearances of witnesses in evidentiary proceedings are disfavored and will not be allowed absent good cause shown.

If remote appearance is permitted, testimony of witnesses residing outside of the State of Florida must consent to the Administration of the Oath pursuant to Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.530(b)(2)(B). **Testimony of witnesses not within the geographical borders of the United States of America will not be allowed.**

⁷ Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530.

Parties appearing via Zoom shall conduct themselves as if they were physically present in the Courtroom. Parties should be aware of their background before logging into Zoom. PARTIES SHALL NOT DRIVE WHILE APPEARING REMOTELY AND ARE SUBJECT TO IMMEDIATE REMOVAL.

G. Exhibits for Evidentiary Proceedings

- **Submission Method:** Unless otherwise stated in the Pretrial Order, the following submission method is required: no later than **7 calendar days** before trial, each party shall (i) mark exhibits for identification, (ii) serve the exhibits on every other party, and (iii) provide chambers with the original exhibits.
- **Additional exhibits:** Exhibits not included in the original service may be submitted only (i) with consent of the opposing party or (ii) by Court order.
- **Amended Exhibits:** A party may submit an exhibit amending a prior submitted exhibit any time before trial with notice to any other party.
- **Format:** Exhibits must be labeled: “Received in Evidence _____”, “Petitioner’s” or “Respondent’s” exhibit number, and case number.
- **Exhibit List:** Each party should bring to trial an exhibit list in the following format:

Ex.	Description	Admit	Deny
1.			
2.			

- **Motions *In Limine* :** No later than **3 business days** before trial, motions *in limine* must be filed with the Clerk; responses are due **24 hours** before trial.

H. Submission of Orders and Judgments

- **Deadline for Submissions:** Proposed orders should be submitted within 3 business days after any hearing.
- **Orders to be Provided to Opposing Counsel for Review:** Attorneys shall provide a copy of any proposed order to opposing counsel prior to submitting the order to the Court.

- **Submission Method:** All proposed orders must be submitted to JAWS in PDF. 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.
- **Format:** All proposed orders should comply with the Style Guide, attached.
- **Exhibits:** The proposed order should attach any required exhibit; the order should not reference papers in the record. Exhibits must be clearly marked as exhibits.
- **Child Support Guidelines:** Child support is the right of the child(ren) and cannot be waived. Child support guidelines must be attached to the proposed order.
- **Competing Orders:** If parties do not agree on the form of a proposed order, the parties may submit competing orders. Parties must submit copies of the proposed order and the competing order to the section email in both PDF and Microsoft Word formats.
- **Agreed Orders:** Agreed or consent orders may be submitted if: (i) the parties previously filed an agreed or stipulated joint motion signed by all necessary parties or (ii) a separate signed consent is attached to the proposed order. **An agreed order that resolves a matter set for hearing must state that the scheduled hearing is cancelled.**
- **Amended Orders:** Amended orders shall include a footnote on the first page of the Order stating the reason for the amendment. Substantive amendments of a previously entered order require either (i) a motion for entry of an amended order together with the proposed amended order or (ii) a proposed agreed order.
- **Service of Orders:** Represented parties are responsible for ensuring that executed orders are served on unrepresented parties.