

Judicial Practices and Procedures
(last modified August 2025)

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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 smatthews@jud6.org. The subject line must contain the case number, case name, and relevant matter (e.g., 2024 DR 001234 SC – 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 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.
- **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.

B. Scheduling Procedures

- Court Schedule: Jury trials are generally scheduled on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Arraignments are generally scheduled on Monday mornings. Pre-trial conferences are generally scheduled on Monday afternoons, Tuesday mornings, Wednesday mornings, and Thursday mornings. In custody cases that are not violations of probation are generally scheduled on Monday mornings. Violations of probation are generally scheduled on Tuesday mornings. Substantive motions and non-jury trials are generally scheduled on Fridays.
- Scheduling Hearings: Hearings must be requested by e-mail to smatthews@jud6.org.
- 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 three business days before the hearing.
- Order of Proceedings: Parties represented by attorneys will generally be heard first.
- Continuance Procedure: A request for continuance must be submitted prior to the scheduled court date. 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: Requests to use communication technology for an appearance must be made by motion in compliance with Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530. These motions must include a certification that the requesting party has reliable internet access and a quiet location free of distractions and noise for the remote appearance. All requests for remote appearance must be submitted at least 5 days prior to the scheduled proceeding.
- Platform Used: The court uses Zoom for remote appearances.
- Platform Meeting ID#: Contact the judicial assistant to obtain the platform meeting ID#.

- Requirements: Any person appearing remotely must behave and dress in a manner appropriate for court.

D. Submission of Orders and Judgments

- Format: All proposed orders must be submitted in PDF and/or Word format. 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.
- Submission Method: e-mail to smatthews@jud6.org
- 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 or other specified document must be submitted to the court for any evidentiary proceeding.
- Format: PDF or Word document
- Submission Method: e-mail to smatthews@jud6.org
- 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

- Submission Method: Hand-deliver all exhibits to the clerk of the court..
- Format: Exhibits must be submitted to the clerk of court in paper format. Any videos must be submitted to the clerk on a CD or DVD. USB drives will not be accepted. 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: 'State 1' or 'Defense 1.'

- **Deadline for Submissions:** All exhibits must be available at the time of the hearing or trial.

H. Pretrial Procedures and Conferences

- **Pre-trial Conference:** Pre-trial conferences will be scheduled periodically. Defendants are required to appear in person unless their presence has been waived in accordance with Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure.
- Additional hearings may be requested by either party.

I. Setting Case for Trial

- **Procedure:** The court will generally schedule a case for trial at the request of either party. The court may schedule a case for trial without a request from either party.
- **Notice Period:** The court generally sets date-certain trials. Jury selection will typically be in the morning with opening statements following jury selection. Attorneys, self-represented litigants, parties, and witnesses are expected to be available during the entire trial.

J. Forms

- No division specific forms are currently in use.

K. Other Division Procedures

- **ADA Accommodations:** If you need an ADA accommodation, please contact the Human Rights Office, 400 S. Ft. Harrison Ave., Suite 300, Clearwater, FL 33756, 727-464-4062 (V/TDD) at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance.
- **Interpreter Requests:** If an interpreter is needed for a hearing or trial, please call 727-453-7177.