FAMILY LAW DIVISON ▪ SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
GENERAL MAGISTRATE OFFICE ▪ CLEARWATER COURTHOUSE #438
315 COURT STREET, CLEARWATER, FLORIDA 33756
P: (727) 464-4945| E: ClwGM@jud6.org

PRACTICE PREFERENCES

GENERAL MAGISTRATE
HENRY T. PALMER

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
KATHY WOLFE

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A. COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MAGISTRATE OFFICE

Division E-mail:
All communications to the Magistrate office by **attorneys** must be submitted by e-mail to ***ClwGM@jud6.org***, the dedicated division e-mail account. The subject line of any e-mail to the Magistrate office must contain the reference number and case name. (*example*: 24-001234-FD-25 Doe v. Doe.)

Telephone:
All communications by **self-represented litigants** to the Magistrate office must be submitted by telephone to 727-464-4945. You must leave your name, your contact number, your reference number, and a brief reason for your call. **The Magistrate's office does not accept e-mails or text messages from self-represented litigants**, unless specifically directed by the Magistrate.

Ex-parte Communications:
All communications with the Magistrate office must comply with Canon 3 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, which prohibits a Magistrate 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 Magistrate office, unless an ex-parte communication is authorized by law.

Unsolicited Communications:
Parties may only contact the Magistrate 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 e-mail, which is generally through the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, unless excused. Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.516.

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 Magistrate's Administrative Assistant is not authorized to provide legal advice.

The Administrative Assistant strives to substantively respond to all inquiries within the same, or one business day from the time of your call/message. However, if the Administrative Assistant is unable to substantively respond within one business day, please contact the Pro se Department at **727-582-7200**, and leave a message.

When the Administrative Assistant is out of the office, please contact the Pro se Department at **727-582-7200**, and leave a message as an alternate contact number for immediate assistance.

Other Communication Procedures:
Most written communication to or from the Magistrate office can be considered public record. Your email communication may be subject to public disclosure upon request.

B. SCHEDULING PROCEDURES

Conducted Hearings:
Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Scheduling a Hearing:
For attorneys only - hearings must be requested by contacting the Magistrate office by e-mail at ClwGM@jud6.org.

For Pro se litigants only – you must request a hearing by contacting the Pro se Department at 727-582-7200.

Notice of Hearing:
The Magistrate's office will provide a Notice of Hearing for all remote and in-person appearances once a case is ready to be set for hearing.

All Notice of Hearings will contain the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) notification required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.540.

Submission Deadlines:
The Magistrate office must receive all materials for the hearing no later than 5 business days before the hearing.

Order of Proceedings:
Each case will be heard during the date and time provided on the Notice of Hearing.

Hearing Cancellations:
To cancel a scheduled hearing, you must notify the Magistrate's Administrative Assistant immediately by calling **727-464-4945**, to ascertain if a cancellation is

acceptable. If acceptable, the Magistrate's Administrative Assistant will provide the Notice of Cancellation to all parties involved by mail or e-mail.

C. REMOTE APPEARANCE

Remote Appearance Procedure:
The court maintains a hybrid virtual courtroom, allowing parties to appear remotely, as provided by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530. Requests to use communication technology for such an appearance must be made by motion. Any objection to the use of communication technology must be filed no later than 7 business days before the hearing.

Platform Used:
The court uses Zoom Virtual Conference for remote appearances.

Platform Meeting ID and Passcodes:
All Meeting ID and Passcodes will be provided on the Notice of Hearing

Requirements:
Requests for remote appearance must be submitted by motion to the Clerk of Court. A call must be made to the Magistrate office to inform the court that a Motion for remote hearing was filed at least a week prior to the hearing.

Certain hearings are eligible for remote appearance. These include Case Management Conferences.

Any person appearing remotely must be in a private location that is quiet and free from distractions. Under no circumstances will a participant be permitted to appear remotely from a moving vehicle.

Any person appearing remotely m**ust dress and behave professionally** in the same manner as if physically present in the courtroom.

Any person appearing remotely **must ensure the camera is operable** and keep the camera turned on until instructed otherwise by the court.

Any person appearing remotely **must ensure the sound and microphone is operable.**

If a witness appears remotely, **the party calling the witness** must ensure the witness has a functioning camera and microphone and has tested the internet connection before the hearing. The oath will be administered in accordance with Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530.

Technology Needs:
All participants in a remote hearing must have reliable high-speed internet service,

and the ability to download the Zoom Virtual Conference application.

D. EXHIBITS FOR EVIDENTIARY PROCEEDINGS

Submission Method:
Exhibits can be sent to the Magistrate office by U.S. mail or hand-delivered to **315 Court Street, Clearwater FL 33756, 4th floor, Room #438**.

Exhibits should be well organized and labeled.

For large amounts of exhibits, they need to be submitted in three-hole punched binders printed on 8.5 x 11-inch paper, well organized and labeled which can also be delivered to the Magistrate office by U.S. mail or hand-delivered.

Format:
Exhibits should be in paper format.

Litigants should contact the Magistrate's office for instructions regarding video and audio evidence.

Deadline for Submissions:
All exhibits must be received in the Magistrate office **a week prior** to the evidentiary proceeding.

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.

E. PRETRIAL PROCEDURES AND CONFERENCES

Case Management Conference (CMC):
Any party may request a Case Management Conference (**CMC**) by contacting the Pro se Department.

The court strongly encourages the early use of Case Management Conference in more complex cases, multiple-party litigation, or any case that might benefit from court intervention.

F. SETTING CASE FOR TRIAL

Procedure:

All parties will be informed of the upcoming hearing date and time, of pre-trial conferences, of evidentiary documents, witness lists, etc. A separate Notice of Hearing will be sent from the Magistrate office to all parties involved.

All attorneys, self-represented litigants, parties, and witnesses are expected to be available during the entire trial period.

G. FORMS

Access:

Division forms can be found on our website www.jud6.org, under "**Family Forms**": https://www.flcourts.gov/Services/family-courts/domestic-relations-court-resources/family-law-forms

H. OTHER DIVISION PROCEDURES

ADA Accommodations:

If you need ADA accommodations, information it can be found on the Sixth Judicial website at www.jud6.org

Interpreter Requests:

If you need an interpreter for your hearing or trial, it can be found on the Sixth Judicial website at www.jud6.org