

FM-F DIVISION PROCEDURES

Judge Ashley Wells Cox

Norma Ponder, Judicial Assistant

Phone: 904-255-1306

Email: nponder1@coj.net

DUVAL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

501 West Adams Street

Hearing Room Number 709

EMAILING THE JA: PLEASE put the case number, parties' last names, and the pleading to be heard in the subject line of your email. For example:

2019 DR 1111, Smith v Smith, Motion for/to ...

EX PARTE: Involves uncontested matters, Motions to Set for Trial, Motions to Withdraw as Attorney of Record (with notice to Client), and coordinating hearings in excess of one hour. Ex parte hearings, with notice to and consent of both parties, will be held between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on specified dates every month as posted on the Ex Parte Schedule, which can be found at the 4th Judicial Circuit Court – Ex Parte Dates & Judge's Procedures (jud4.org). **EX PARTE HEARINGS MUST BE SCHEDULED WITH THE JUDICIAL ASSISTANT FOR FM-F.** Email nponder1@coj.net to schedule an ex parte hearing. Include opposing counsel and/or *pro se* party in all communications with the Court's JA.

Ex Parte hearings will take place via zoom. ALL proposed orders and necessary documentation are to be sent to the Judicial Assistant at the time of scheduling or your date will not be held. Prior to scheduling a hearing on an uncontested dissolution of marriage, one party must provide the following: (1) a checklist for entry of the consent final judgment, (2) proper proof of residency, and (3) the signed Consent Final Judgment. A copy of the checklist can be found at 4th Judicial Circuit Court – Ex Parte Dates & Judge's Procedures (jud4.org)

If it is a Simplified Dissolution of Marriage, both parties must appear.

Unless it is a Simplified Dissolution of Marriage, a waiver of filing financial affidavits may be filed but financial affidavits must still be exchanged.

PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST IN DIVORCE COURSE: Administrative Orders issued in the Fourth Judicial Circuit and Section 61.21, Florida Statutes, require that parents who are parties to a dissolution of marriage action or a

paternity action shall complete a four-hour parenting course offered at: (1) Hope Haven Children's Clinic and Family Center, 4600 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32207 (904) 346-5100, (2) First Coast Behavior Solutions, LLC, 2317 Blanding Blvd., Suite 102, Jacksonville, FL 32210 (904) 200-7979, or (3) Jewish Family and Community Services, 8540 Baycenter Road, Jacksonville, FL 32256 (904) 394-5865. The parties are further required to file the Certificate of Completion in the Court file before the entry of a Final Judgment.

SETTING A CASE FOR TRIAL: Motions to set for trial and motions to set hearings in excess of one hour are set during ex parte. Attorneys must: (1) coordinate a date and time certain with the Court's Judicial Assistant for an ex parte hearing, (2) serve the Notice of Ex Parte Hearing on all parties, and (3) **complete and submit to the Court's Judicial Assistant the Trial Memorandum Form WITH DOCKET NUMBERS** found on the web at 4th Judicial Circuit Court – Ex Parte Dates & Judge's Procedures (jud4.org) in advance of the Ex Parte hearing.

The Court will prepare the Order Setting Case for Trial and Pre-Trial Conference or the Order Setting Case for Hearing. A schedule of Judge Cox's trial weeks can be found on the web at 4th Judicial Circuit Court – Ex Parte Dates & Judge's Procedures (jud4.org). The Court will e-file the Order Setting Trial or Hearing.

SETTING HEARINGS LESS THAN ONE HOUR IN DURATION: Hearings lasting one hour or less may be set by contacting Judge Cox's judicial assistant Norma Ponder at nponder1@coj.net. Please copy the opposing attorney on the email and include the case number, the title of the motion to be heard (which must be filed prior to setting a hearing), and the amount of time needed for the hearing.

When a case SETTLES prior to the hearing, pre-trial or trial date, PLEASE, IMMEDIATELY contact the Judge's office to remove the pre-trial conferences, hearings, or trials from the calendar.

CANCELLATION OF HEARINGS: When cancelling a hearing, please file a Notice of Cancellation with the Clerk and provide a courtesy copy to the Court via an email to Judge Cox's Judicial Assistant at nponder1@coj.net. If the hearing is imminent, please call 904-255-1306.

DOCUMENTS FOR IN PERSON HEARINGS/TRIALS: Exhibits or Evidence that you want the Judge to consider for an in person hearing may be brought to the Judge at the time of the hearing. **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED MUST BE ORGANIZED, TABBED, AND LABELED** and placed in a binder/notebook, if appropriate. All exhibits should be tabbed and pre-marked as referenced in the example below.

Case No. 2020-DR-123456 FMXX
Petitioner/Respondent's Exhibit No. A
Admitted as Exhibit _____
Date admitted 10/1/2020

DOCUMENTS FOR ZOOM HEARINGS/TRIALS: Anything you wish the Judge to consider for a hearing, i.e.: exhibits, evidence, caselaw etc., **must be delivered to the Judge by dropping off documents in the designated cart in the Courthouse lobby and exchanged with opposing counsel/party at least THREE (3) business days** before a scheduled hearing on the matter. **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED MUST BE ORGANIZED, TABBED, AND LABELED** and placed in a binder/notebook, if appropriate. Binders/notebooks/documents should be placed in the designated cart for Judges in the Courthouse lobby. All exhibits should be tabbed and pre-marked as referenced in the example below.

Case No. 2020-DR-123456 FMXX
Petitioner/Respondent's Exhibit No. A
Admitted as Exhibit _____
Date admitted 10/1/2020

The Court will only accept emailed submission of exhibits if the documents (total) are 25 pages or less.

CASELAW AND STATUTES: Any law the parties wish the Court to consider shall be delivered **3 business days PRIOR TO** the hearing. If the law is more than 25 pages, then it shall be hand delivered in a binder/notebook, if appropriate. Binders/notebooks/documents should be placed in the designated cart for Judges in the Courthouse lobby.

EMERGENCY MOTIONS: When filing an emergency motion please be mindful that the matter must be: (1) a genuine emergency and (2) the motion must be filed with the Clerk of Court. If seeking an ex parte hearing without notice of hearing, you must state an adequate reason why the other party should not be given notice. Pursuant to Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.941(d), all Emergency Motions for Child Pick-Up Order must be verified/sworn by the movant. Emergency motions should be e-mailed to Judge Cox's Judicial Assistant at nponder1@coj.net or delivered to the Judge's chambers for review. After the Judge has reviewed the motion, the Judicial Assistant will contact the moving party regarding the Judge's decision. Should Judge Cox be out of the office, please follow local rules of procedure by contacting the next division in alphabetical order.

MOTIONS FOR CONTEMPT: All motions seeking to hold an opposing party in contempt of Court shall be held in-person. Notices of Hearings for contempt should include the required language:

FAILURE TO APPEAR AT THE HEARING MAY RESULT IN THE COURT
ISSUING A WRIT OF BODILY ATTACHMENT FOR YOUR ARREST. IF
YOU ARE ARRESTED, YOU MAY BE HELD IN JAIL UPTO 48 HOURS
BEFORE A HEARING IS HELD.

MOTION TO COMPEL:

1. Before filing a Motion to Compel pursuant to Rule 1.380, Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, or a Motion for a Protective Order, as provided in Rule 1.280(c), Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, the attorney for the moving party shall confer with the opposing party or attorney in a good-faith effort to resolve the issues raised, and shall file with the Court at the time of filing of the motion, a statement certifying that the moving attorney or party has so conferred with opposing party or attorney and that they have been unable to resolve the dispute.

2. When a motion to Compel has been placed on a Judge's calendar, that motion may not be cancelled without the Judge's consent.

3. As provided in Section (4) of Rule 1.380, if the motion is granted, the Court shall award or reserve jurisdiction to award expenses which may include attorney's fees.

SUBMITTING PROPOSED ORDERS:

1. The attorney preparing a proposed Order subsequent to a hearing shall provide an advance copy to opposing counsel.
2. The proposed Order should then be submitted to the Court via email to the judicial assistant.
3. **When entitling proposed Orders always designate the particular motion heard, such as “Order Denying Wife’s Motion to Dismiss” or “Order Granting Husband’s Motion for Contempt,” etc. The date the hearing occurred should be included in the first paragraph of the proposed order. Consent Orders shall contain the word “Consent” at the beginning of the caption.**
4. **The DONE AND ORDERED clause, along with the Court’s signature line, should be on the same page.** If the last page contains only the date line and/or Judge’s signature line, it must have the title of the Order and the case number on it also.
5. *Full names and complete addresses (or email address) of counsel/parties to whom copies are to be provided should be included on the last page.*
6. Should the Court request complex Orders to be submitted via email, they need to be formatted in Word.
7. The signature line of the Order shall be located on the right border of the page.

MOTION TO WITHDRAW AS COUNSEL: These motions are heard during ex parte. Please follow Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.505(f). Notice of hearing must be mailed/emailed to client. Do not forget to include the client’s address, email address, and phone number.

TEMPORARY NEEDS HEARING INFORMATION: All temporary issues are to be set before the General Magistrate. You may call the dedicated number 904-255-1180 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to schedule temporary needs and/or post judgment hearings before Magistrates.

DEFAULT FINAL HEARINGS: Default Final Hearings must be coordinated with the Court's Judicial Assistant. Default Final Hearings will not be heard during ex parte. The party seeking the default judgment must have filed a proof of service or diligent search prior to the hearing.

SERVICE BY PUBLICATION: Except in cases of adoption, pursuant to Section 63.088(5), Florida Statutes, in cases where the Respondent has been served by publication, a diligent search affidavit must be filed that includes, at a minimum, searches for the following:

United States Postal Service
Internet Search
Department of Motor Vehicles
Department of Corrections
Letters to Armed Forces of the United States

ADOPTIONS: The Court does not hear adoption matters during ex-parte. Adoption hearings must be coordinated with the Court's Judicial Assistant. It is not necessary that children attend final hearings, but they are welcome to attend, as are other family members.

MOTIONS FOR REHEARING: Motions for rehearing and/or reconsideration must be filed with the Clerk and a copy e-served to the Judge's office at nponder1@coj.net. Please do not call the Judge's office to schedule a hearing on the motion. The Judge will review the motion and either issue an order or the Judge's Assistant will schedule a hearing.

INTERPRETERS: The Court will provide interpreters for matters wherein the requesting party is indigent. Attorneys that represent parties who will need the Court to provide an interpreter should notify the Court's Judicial Assistant of the need for same at the time the hearing is scheduled.

RECOMMENDATIONS: If you have a recommendation as to amending or revising our policy or practice, you may email the Court's Judicial Assistant at nponder1@coj.net. Thank you for your courtesies and cooperation.