

Judicial Practices and Procedures
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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 bbowen_1@coj.net. 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 all 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 according to these practices and procedures.
- **E-Filing Portal Contact Information:** 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 Judicial Assistant is not authorized to provide legal advice.
- **Putting Children First in Divorce Court:** 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 with minor children 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.

B. Scheduling Procedures

- **Court Schedule:** The trial set memoranda, along with available trial dates, are posted on the Judge's webpage at jud4.org/ex-parte-procedures-and-dates.
- **Scheduling Hearings:** Hearings will only be set on motions already filed with the Clerk. All hearings must be coordinated with opposing counsel or party if unrepresented. The party requesting a hearing on any pending motion should contact the Judicial Assistant with all other parties by email at bbowen_1@coj.net. Dates provided for hearings are not held and may be given to other cases. It is expected that all counsel will promptly respond to the moving party's attorney with proposed dates received from the Judicial Assistant to facilitate this process. Hearing dates/times are not secured until confirmation is sent from the Court. Once a hearing time is set, no party may add or notice additional matters for that time without

the express consent of all parties and the Court.

- **Notice of Hearing:** A notice of hearing will be filed and served immediately after reserving hearing time. A notice of hearing involving any remote appearance will list the Judge's Zoom credentials. All notices of hearing will contain the ADA notification required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.540. The Judicial Assistant will prepare the Order Setting Case for Non-Jury Trial and Pretrial Conference. For all hearings (non-trial), the attorneys will prepare the Notice of Hearing.
- **Submission Deadlines:** The Court must receive all materials for the hearing no later than three (3) business days before the hearing.
- **Order of Proceedings:** Matters will be heard in the order they appear on the docket.
- **Continuance Procedure:** Continuances are disfavored and will be granted only upon good cause shown. A request for continuance must be submitted at least five (5) days 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:** Only the party setting a hearing may cancel it. Notification of cancellation must be emailed to the Judicial Assistant with a copy to opposing counsel. The Notice must also be filed. Cancellation of a hearing MUST be confirmed with and by the Judicial Assistant.
- Please note that Judge Tygart will only accept a Trial Set Memo that has the Motions with the corresponding docket line attached – For example "Mother's Motion for Contempt - #D111"
- The Judicial Assistant will e-file the Order Setting a Case for Non-Jury Trial or send it to the Clerk for filing. In some cases, the Judicial Assistant will email the signed order to the parties; if not, the parties may obtain their copies from the CORE/Clerk's docket. In the alternative, Attorneys may provide addressed, stamped envelopes for all parties, including the mediator, for mailing the Order Setting Trial. The Court does not provide envelopes or postage.
- When a case SETTLES prior to the pre-trial or trial date, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY contact the Judge's office to remove the case from the calendar. Please also file a Notice of Voluntary Dismissal with the Clerk's office to close the case.

- **Setting Hearings that Require One (1) Hour or Less:** Hearings of one (1) hour or less may be set by emailing the Judicial Assistant at BBowen_1@coj.net. Opposing counsel should be included in the email. The subject line of the email should contain the case number, case style/parties' names, the name of the motion to be heard, and the docket line of the motion. Your email should specify how much time is requested on the calendar for the hearing. The Motion **MUST** be filed before emailing the JA to set for hearing. The Judicial Assistant will not resolve disputes regarding when a motion will be set. There is no need to send courtesy copies of the motion.
- ****PLEASE NOTE: HEARING DATES PROVIDED ARE NOT HELD AND MAY BE GIVEN TO OTHERS. HEARING DATES ARE NOT SECURED UNTIL CONFIRMATION IS SENT FROM THIS OFFICE.**

C. Remote Appearance

Rule 2.530, Florida Rules of General Practice & Judicial Administration governs the use of communication technology for court proceedings. Considering that rule, the following proceedings will be held in person, subject to the exceptions described below:

- All Contempt Hearings shall be held in person.
- Any Hearing requiring longer than an hour must be held in person.
- By agreement of the parties, or upon the filing of an appropriate motion under the rule, and a finding of good cause by the Court, a non-party witness may be authorized to testify at the hearing via Zoom.
- It is understood that extraordinary or unique circumstances may arise warranting an exception to these procedures. If you believe these circumstances exist, the moving party is directed to file a motion pursuant to 2.530(b), Florida Rules of General Practice & Judicial Administration.
- Whether the case is being heard via Zoom or in person, all parties are expected to dress in courtroom attire and communicate from a location where they are able to fully focus on the proceeding without distraction.
- Judge Tygart uses her own Meeting ID: 444 925 2356 a password is not required.

D. Submission of Orders and Judgments

- **Format:** All proposed orders must be submitted in 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. All consent Orders shall include the word “Consent” or “Agreed” in the caption of the proposed Order.
- **Submission Method:** Proposed orders must be submitted to the Court via e-mail with copies to all parties.
- **Deadline for Submissions:** Proposed orders must be submitted within ten (10) days after any hearing.
- The following link contains a proposed order template: [Family Law Proposed Order Template](#).

E. Courtesy Copies of Case Law and Other Documents

- **When Required:** Courtesy copies of case law must be submitted to the Court for any evidentiary proceeding.
- **Format:** PDF or Word document.
- **Submission Method:** Courtesy copies shall be submitted via electronic submission. If voluminous (more than twenty-five pages), parties must provide the Court with a hard copy that is bound and indexed five (5) days prior to the hearing.
- **Deadline for Submissions:** Courtesy copies must be delivered to the Court at least three (5) days prior to the hearing with copies provided to all other parties at the same time.

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

- **Exhibits:** If you have less than twenty-five (25) pages of total exhibits, they may be submitted via email to the Judicial Assistant. Please include a cover letter/index with numbered or lettered exhibits at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing. If you have more than twenty-five (25) pages of total exhibits, please provide a trial binder by mail or place them in the drop box in the courthouse lobby at least two (2) business days prior to the hearing. Please notify the Judicial Assistant that exhibits have been left in the drop box.
- All exhibits must 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

H. Pretrial Procedures and Conferences

- **Case Management Conference:** The Court will issue Case Management Orders at the outset of all cases that identifies the case type (streamlines, general or complex), and a presumptive trial date. Should the parties believe the needs of the case are different than those identified in the initial Case Management Order, a Case Management Conference will be scheduled. The parties may also jointly submit a Trial Set Memorandum prior to the Case Management Conference and provide it by e-mail to the Judicial Assistant at bbowen_1@coj.net along with (i) the proposed mediator and (ii) the proposed trial week(s).
- **Status Conference:** Any party may request a status conference when a case requires.
- **Requirements:** Any request for a status conference must articulate the reasons for the necessity of the conference.
- **Scheduling:** If the Court agrees that a status conference is required, the moving party may schedule the status conference by emailing the Judicial Assistant.

I. Setting Case for Trial

- **Procedure:** Setting cases for trial will be done through e-mail. The Trial Set Memoranda, along with available trial dates, are posted on the Judge's webpage at 4th Judicial Circuit Court – Ex Parte Dates & Judge's Procedures (jud4.org). The parties shall complete all information in the form, including the desired mediator and trial date, and submit it as an e-mail attachment to the judge's Judicial Assistant along with the Motion to Set Trial. Any disagreements on mediators or trial dates shall be included in the email along with each party's recommendation.
 - Trial week schedules are available on the Court's website. In submitting proposed trial weeks, the parties are representing to the Court that counsel expects to be available that week for trial and, further that the trial week selected is in substantial compliance with the case time standards. Should the parties not submit Trial Set Memoranda, the trial schedule set forth in the initial Case Management Order will be adopted by the Court and the Court will select a mediator for the parties. In either event, the Court will then e-file the Trial Order.
 - If the case settles, the parties shall immediately notify the Court, in writing, so that it may be removed from the trial calendar.

J. Forms

- **Access:** Division forms are available at <http://www.jud4.org/Ex-Parte-Procedures-and-Dates.aspx>.
- **Usage:** Division forms must be used for all relevant filings.

K. Other Division Procedures

- **ADA Accommodations:** If you are an individual with a disability who needs an accommodation to participate in a court proceeding or other court service, program, or activity, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Requests for accommodations may be presented by form, in another written format, or orally. Please visit [Jud4.org - Florida State Courts System ADA Title II Accommodation Request Form - Duval and Clay](#) to access the form, that must be submitted to the ADA Coordinator at (904) 255-1695 (or 711 Florida Relay Service); or at 501 West Adams Street, Room 6204, Jacksonville, FL 32202; or CRTINTRP@coj.net. Please submit your request as far in advance as possible, but preferably at least seven (7) days before your scheduled appearance or other Court activity.

- **Interpreter Requests:** The Fourth Judicial Circuit Court Interpreter Program is dedicated to providing qualified interpreters to non-English speaking litigants in the courtroom. Interpreters are hired by Court Administration on an event-by-event basis and can be provided for most court events. Please contact the Court Interpreter Program Coordinator at least seven (7) days before the service is needed, or immediately upon receiving notification if the time before the needed service is less than seven (7) days. If you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711 to reach the Telecommunications Relay Service. Requests for interpreter services (foreign language and sign language) should be directed to the Court Interpreter Program Manager, crtintpr@coj.net or by telephone at (904)255-1010. Please visit Jud4.org - [Request for Interpreters](#) for more information.
- **Temporary Needs Hearings:** All temporary needs issues are to be set before the General Magistrate. You may call the dedicated number (904) 255-1180 between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, to schedule temporary needs and/or post-judgment hearings before Magistrates.
- **Default Final Hearings:** Default final hearings should be coordinated with the Judicial Assistant on the Court's regular calendar by email. Default final hearings will not be heard during the Ex Parte calendar.
- **Self-Represented Parties (Pro Se):** If you are a self-represented or pro se party (not represented by an attorney), you must contact Family Court Services, Case Management Main Number at (904) 255-1060 for questions and guidance regarding your case.
- **Objections to Magistrates/Hearing Officers:** It is required that any objection to the referral of the matter to the Magistrate must be timely filed with the Clerk of Court, and a courtesy copy provided to the Judicial Assistant via email.
- **Ex Parte Communications:** The Court staff will not have ex parte communications with anyone and the court staff is not permitted to relay ex parte information to the Judge.
- **Leaving Message on Voice Mail:** Please include the case number, your name, phone number, and a brief message concerning your call. The Judicial Assistant will return calls or email you regarding the matter as soon as possible.
- **Unavailability:** Substitute Judicial Assistants are not available to cover this division during illness or vacation. When the Judicial

Assistant for Division FM-D is not present, please email the Judicial Assistant and you will be contacted as soon as possible following the Judicial Assistant's return to the office.

- **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 an interpreter at the time the hearing is scheduled.
- **Recommendations:** If you have a recommendation as to amending or revising these procedures, you may email the Court's Judicial Assistant at BBowen_1@coj.net. Thank you for your courtesies and cooperation.