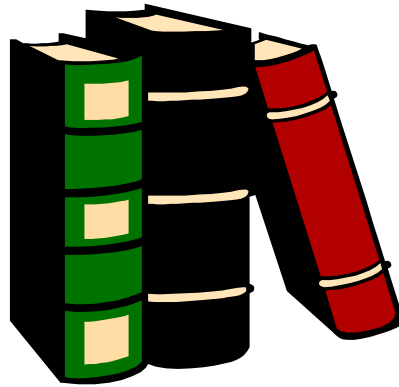


**EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
SEMINOLE COUNTY
CIVIL/FAMILY DIVISION G**



**ADMINISTRATIVE
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
GUIDELINES**

JUDGE MICHAEL J. RUDISILL

(UPDATED January 2017)

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HEARINGS

1. SCHEDULING: All parties are required to give a good faith assessment of the time needed for the hearing. If other parties are waiting for their hearing, and your case goes over the time limit, your hearing will be terminated and rescheduled for a subsequent hearing. 15, 30, or 60 minute hearing times are to be retrieved and scheduled online by using JACS. To use JACS, go to www.flcourts18.org, click on Schedule a Hearing (JACS) under Attorney & Citizen Resources. You will then see a spot that says **click here for instructions on how to schedule hearing through the JACS calendaring system**. Print out this document and follow to schedule. If you need 45 or 60 minutes, these hearings must be scheduled in the afternoon on the 1:30pm or 3:00pm time slots. If you need a hearing for more than 1 hour your motion will have to be placed on the trial docket. To be placed on the trial docket you need to contact the appropriate trial coordinator. (Family – Sandy Gorman 407-665-4222/Civil – Kelley Rowland 407-665-4203) If you have two motions each needing 1 hour each, you cannot set one motion at 1:30 p.m. and the other motion at 3:00 p.m. even if time is available. They must be set on different days or set on the trial docket for 2 hours.

Coordinating: Reasonable attempts need to be made to clear a date with opposing counsel before scheduling on JACS. Do not contact the JA to determine what a reasonable attempt is or how much time is reasonable. That must be determined by the attorney.

Pro se parties only: If the opposing party is pro se and a telephone number is listed on any of their pleadings, you must make two (2) attempts on two (2) different days. A message needs to be left on both days requesting them to call your office by the end of that business day to coordinate the hearing. If at the end of the second business day you do not receive a call back then you may set a hearing unilaterally online at least fourteen (14) days from the current date.

If the opposing party is a pro se and an email address is listed on any of their pleadings, you must email the opposing party to attempt to coordinate a date. If no attempt has been made after one (1) week to contact you back to coordinate you may set a hearing unilaterally online at least fourteen (14) days from the current date. If no phone number is listed in the court file then a hearing cannot be scheduled sooner than one month.

Once your hearing is set on JACS you will receive a confirmation number. Please print that confirmation page and attach it to your copy of the Notice of Hearing for your file. Please do not send a copy of the Notice of Hearing to the Judge, just e-file the original notice.

Motions: If you do not see the subject of your motion that you are trying to set for hearing listed in the drop down box when scheduling a hearing on JACS, please contact the JA for assistance. JACS will only allow you to select one motion in the drop down box. If you have more than one motion that you wish to address on that date then the other motions need to be listed in the box that says “Additional Motions to be Addressed.” Please do not send a copy of the motion to the Judge, just e-file the original.

Courtroom: Do not select a courtroom in the drop down box. Leave the box blank as is. The Judge holds hearings in different courtrooms and this will limit your search. You may contact the JA to see what courtroom the Judge will be in for your scheduled hearing.

Select Role of Scheduling Attorney: If you get a prompt while trying to schedule your hearing that you need to select a role of the scheduling attorney you need to logout of JACS and log back in and attempt to schedule the hearing again. After you select the date for your hearing there will be an option right above where you input your case number for you to select whether your attorney represents the Plaintiff or Defendant.

- 2. Telephonic Hearings:** A motion and order must be submitted. If granted, the Judge will contact the attorney for the hearing. The attorney's first and last name along with direct contact number **must** be listed in the order. The attorney needs to stand by for 1 hour from the time the hearing is set for the Judge's phone call. If the moving attorney is appearing by phone, then the proposed order with the copies and the self-addressed stamped envelopes are required to be sent to the Judge before the hearing or the hearing could be subject to cancellation.

- 3. CONTINUANCES:** If a continuance of a hearing is requested by a party who did not set the hearing and the party who scheduled the hearing will not reschedule, then a motion for continuance may be presented at a noticed short matter hearing (*see page 5 for procedures on setting Short matter hearings*).
The attorney who scheduled the hearing needs to go on JACS (*see page 2, under Scheduling*) click "Display a list of available hearing dates" under the main menu. Clear a new date with the opposing side. When your ready to reschedule go on JACS and click "To Re-Schedule a Hearing" under the Main Menu. Type in your confirmation # and hit "Reschedule". Click the new coordinated date and the hearing will be rescheduled and you will receive a new confirmation number for your records. An Amended Notice of Hearing needs to be prepared and attach a copy of the confirmation page to your copy of the notice of hearing for your file. Please do not send a copy of the Amended Notice of Hearing to the Judge, just e-file the original.

- 4. CANCELLING:** Only the party who scheduled the hearing can cancel the hearing. The attorney who scheduled the hearing needs to go on JACS and click "To cancel a Hearing" under the main menu. Enter your confirmation # and click "Cancel Hearing". You must follow up with the filing of a Notice of Cancellation in the court file. Attach a copy of the confirmation page to your Notice of Cancellation for your file. Please send a copy of the Notice of Cancellation to the Judge. **IF A HEARING IS CONTINUED OR CANCELLED, IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHEDULING ATTORNEY TO ADVISE THE JUDICIAL ASSISTANT THAT THE SCHEDULED HEARING IS CONTINUED OR CANCELLED SO THAT IT IS REMOVED FROM THE COURT'S CALENDAR.**

5. CROSS NOTICING/PIGGY BACKING: If you wish to add a motion to a previously set hearing date, you must contact the party who set the hearing and obtain permission to share their time. Same idea applies if you want to add a motion to a hearing “you” set. You must call the JA to add the additional motions and no more time will be given unless available. Please make sure that Amended Notices and/or Cross Notice of Hearings are filed with the clerk to keep the file updated. Please do not send a copy of your Amended Notice or Cross Notice of Hearing to the Judge.

6. NOTICE OF HEARING: A notice of hearing must specifically state the matter(s) to be heard. A notice of hearing that states "All Pending Motions" is a nullity. Any party scheduling a hearing must provide notice to the other parties even if defaulted by the court. If a Guardian Ad Litem appointed in the case is not given notice of the hearing, the hearing may be subject to cancellation by the court pending proper notice to the Guardian Ad Litem. Please do not send a copy of your Notice of Hearing to the Judge, just e-file the original.

7. MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A HEARING: The following matters do not require a hearing and may be submitted *with a cover letter*, by mail or email stating that opposing counsel has reviewed the proposed order or stipulation and does not object to the court entering the relief requested.

- Appointment of Special Process Server
- Appointment of Special Magistrate to hear UCD
- Stipulated Modifications
- Stipulated Orders
- Motion for Substitution of Counsel (Signed by Attorney and Party)
- Motion to Enter an Agreed Order
- Cancellation and rescheduling a foreclosure sale
- Motion to Vacate Foreclosure Judgment because of reinstatement
- Default judgment of *liquidated* amounts
- Motions to Withdraw (with signed consent from client)
- Uncontested Final Judgment for Dissolution of Marriage (with answer and waiver filed by respondent)

8. EMERGENCY HEARING: If you feel that your motion is an emergency (*An example of an emergency issue is a child “seriously” endangered*) please file your emergency motion with the clerk and contact the JA. You may also send a copy to the JA via e-mail. Once the emergency motion is reviewed by the Court the JA will contact you to set the motion for hearing if deemed an emergency.

9. SHORT MATTERS/EX PARTE: Short Matters/Ex-parte hearings are five minutes or less. These hearings are not scheduled on a docket so you do not contact the JA to schedule or cancel.

These hearings are not scheduled on JACS. They are held Monday – Thursday at 9:00 a.m. with exceptions. Before you notice your hearing, check the Judge’s daily dockets to verify that they are being held that day and which courtroom. The daily dockets are found by going online to our website, click the Available Dockets (JACS) link under Attorney & Citizen Resources, click “Docket Calendar by division”, and select the Judge’s name in the drop down box. Each day is a link that you can click on to view the docket and as long as it indicates at the top of the docket that Ex-parte/Short Matter hearings are at 9 a.m. then it is an available day to notice your hearing. It does not matter if the day falls on a family or civil week. Unless the opposing side agrees to your motion and will not be appearing, it must be coordinated like any other hearing. Please do not send the Judge copies of Notice of Hearings.

Residential mortgage foreclosures are not to be scheduled during Short Matters. Please contact the JA to set a hearing on your motion. *(please see page 7 on residential mortgage foreclosures)*

10. TEMPORARY RELIEF FOR FAMILY CASES: Motions for Temporary Relief are scheduled before and conducted by the General Magistrate’s office, (407) 665-4050. If the case has never been referred to the GM in the past *(from the time the case was first opened till now regardless if you were the attorney at that time)* and you do not wish to have the GM hear the motion then an objection must be filed in writing. Before the hearing can be scheduled before the Judge, mediation must have occurred regarding the temporary issues. Temporary Relief hearings before the Judge will be limited to 30 minutes.

If the case has been referred to the GM in the past for a previous issue and neither party objected to that hearing within the ten (10) day rule then no party can ever object in the future to a hearing before the GM *(regardless if new attorneys have taken the case.)* If a temporary matter has been referred to the General Magistrate and a party files a timely objection, the objection must include the date, time, mediator (if private) and place of the mediation in order for it to be deemed valid. *Pursuant to Administrative Order 17-08-S*

11. RULE TO SHOW CAUSE: A verified Petition for Rule to Show Cause or a Petition for Order to Show Cause, with accompanying Affidavit, can either be presented at Short Matters/Ex Parte or can be forwarded by letter to the court. If the Petition is granted at Short Matters/Ex Parte, the attorney may obtain a date for the Order to Show Cause on JACS. If the Petition is granted and has been mailed to the court, the judicial assistant will contact your office to let you know you may schedule on JACS.

12. CONTEMPT:

- A. **Civil:** Motions for Contempt in civil cases are scheduled on JACS.
- B. **Family:** Motions for Contempt in family cases are scheduled with the General Magistrate's office, (407) 665-4050. If the case has never been referred to the GM in the past (*from the time the case was first opened till now regardless if you were the attorney at that time*) and you do not wish to have the GM hear the motion then an objection must be filed in writing and then a hearing can be scheduled on JACS.

If the case has been referred to the GM in the past for a previous issue and neither party objected to that hearing within the ten (10) day rule then no party can ever object in the future to a hearing before the GM (*regardless if new attorneys have taken the case.*)

13. **UNCONTESTED DISSOLUTIONS OF MARRIAGE:** Uncontested Dissolutions of Marriage can either be heard on the short matter calendar, (*see the short matter section on page 5 for dates and times*) or can be mailed/emailed in. If the Final Judgment is mailed/emailed in, the cover letter needs to specify that all parties, *pro se* or opposing counsel, have reviewed the Final Judgment and have no objection. Be sure and include a copy of the answer and waiver as well as a copy of your client's driver's license. Also, if there are children involved, the Final Judgment needs to incorporate specifics on child support (*i.e. how much, how it is to be paid, & how often.*)

If both parties are *pro se* then they must fill out Form A located on the 18th circuit website under Program/Services, Self Help (Represent Yourself) and file it with the Clerk of Court.

14. ADOPTIONS and TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

PENDING: These motions are set at short matters (*see the short matter section on page 5 for locating dates and times*). If both parties are *pro se* then they must fill out Form A located on the 18th circuit website under Program/Services, Self Help (Represent Yourself) and file it with the Clerk of Court.

15. **MOTION TO WITHDRAW AS COUNSEL:** If the attorney is able to obtain a signed consent from their client, then the proposed Order may be mailed in for signature along with a copy of the motion and signed consent. If a signed consent is unable to be obtained then the motion is to be set at short matters with at least 5 days notice to the parties. The proposed Order allowing withdrawal of counsel must reflect the following:

- a) The client's name, address and telephone number
- b) Statement that all pleadings are to be furnished to the client
- c) Statement that the client is responsible for notifying the Clerk, in writing, within (5) days of any changes of address.

16. RESIDENTIAL FORECLOSURE CASES: Do not set residential mortgage foreclosure motions on JACS or for Short Matters. All residential mortgage foreclosure motions are heard on specific dates and times. Contact the judicial assistant, Dayna Griffin at 407-665-4218 for a list of those dates and times. After coordinating your hearing, contact Dayna Griffin again to schedule. Refer to JACS for hearing dates on Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment. Due to the volume of cases and number of parties, telephonic appearances are not permitted regardless of the length of the hearing.

17. MOTION FOR REHEARING/RECONSIDERATION: Once a Motion for Rehearing/Reconsideration is filed with the Clerk's office, you must also send a copy to the Judge for review. The Judge will either make a ruling on the motion, without a hearing, and copies will be sent out or the JA will contact your office to let you know to set a hearing on JACS. Do not set a hearing unless you receive approval first. The hearing is not the rehearing of the issue but an opportunity for the party to argue their motion before the court.

18. PETITION TO RELOCATE: Parties must comply with section 61.13001 of the Florida Statutes. If a timely objection has been filed and a party is seeking expedited hearing time on their motion for temporary relocation, they must contact the JA. Failure to contact the JA to obtain expedited hearing time will constitute a waiver of the time frames contained in the statute.

19. MOTION FOR CHILD PICK-UP ORDER: Without notice, a copy of the motion with justification for lack of notice must be provided to the Judge either by hand delivery or by mail/email with the approved proposed Order. The Order must have the heading, case number, division, and the parties' names filled out. If the Judge enters the order ex parte a certified copy can be obtained through the Clerk's office for service and a hearing will be indicated on the Order as to the date and time for the parties to appear in court to present evidence.

The Judge may deny the ex parte request but set a hearing and will either notify you with a verbal denial or by an Order denying.

20. PROPOSED ORDERS: Proposed orders may now be submitted through the e-portal. The e-portal does not accept cover letters. Therefore, whether the opposing

party/counsel agrees or does not object to the entry of the order must be contained in the language of the order. All proposed orders will need to be submitted in **WORD FORMAT**, if order is not submitted in word format the order may not be entered and will be **REJECTED WITHOUT NOTICE**.

All other proposed orders must be accompanied by a cover letter stating either that opposing counsel has no objection to the form of the order or set for a hearing. Do not ask opposing counsel to contact the Judge's office with objections to a proposed order. If opposing counsel has been forwarded a copy of the proposed order, but has not responded within a reasonable time frame, you may forward the proposed order to the court with a cover letter so stating if the motion was already heard before the court. If the motion has not been heard before the court and you have not received a response from opposing counsel as to their position then a hearing must be set.

If the other party is *pro se*, a copy of the proposed order is to be sent simultaneously to the *pro se* party and to the court with a cover letter stating that the *pro se* party must voice any objections in writing to the court within 5 days.

21. MOTIONS FOR JUDICIAL DEFAULT: Judicial defaults should only be sought if you're unable to obtain a Clerk's default and must be set for hearing.

22. FINAL JUDGMENTS OF DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE:

The final judgment must contain the following:

(a) Appropriate paragraphs relating to any child issues, for example, support, time sharing, abatement of support, etc., if any. The final judgment can not merely ratify and confirm the agreement. It must specifically state what is also in the agreement.

(b) Signature page must contain text. It cannot only contain the "DONE AND ORDERED" clause or a line for the judge's signature.

(c) Certification that conformed copies are being forwarded to all counsel and pro se parties, giving their names and addresses and a place for the judicial assistant to sign and date.

(d) A separate sheet with identification information of the parties - name, address, and the last four (4) digits of their social security number, as well as name and date of birth of children.

(e) A separate paragraph regarding payments which are to be through the Clerk's office similar to the following:

The husband/wife, _____ whose address is _____, shall pay child support in the amount _____ per _____, commencing _____, and on the _____ of each month thereafter, to the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Support Division,

Seminole County Courthouse, Sanford, Florida (mailing address: P. O. Box 819, Sanford, FL 32772-0819), together with the statutory service charge of 4% of the payment or \$5.25 whichever is less. Payment shall be made in the form of cash, cashier's check, certified check, money order, or other payment form acceptable to the Clerk, and must include the case number, name of the payer and payee for proper identification.

Child Support payments shall continue until the minor child(ren) reach the age of 18 years, marries, dies, becomes emancipated, or otherwise ordered by this court, whichever event shall occur first.

The Clerk of the Circuit Court is instructed to forward any payments received to the husband/wife, _____ whose address is

_____. Each party shall inform the other and the Clerk of the Circuit Court immediately of any change of name or address,

(f) If there are matters that cannot be completed by the final judgment or are ongoing, such as alimony, child support, security, etc., then the final judgment shall contain a statement that each party shall keep the other party advised of their current address and telephone number.

(g) All final judgments of dissolution of marriage shall be accompanied by a final disposition form.

The attorney preparing the final judgment is to submit the proposed final judgment to opposing counsel for approval as to form and content prior to submission to the court. All final judgments are to be accompanied by a cover letter stating opposing counsel has approved the form of the order. This applies whether the proposed order is hand delivered to the judge's office or mailed. If the attorneys cannot agree on the order, then a hearing is to be scheduled.

TRIALS

A. FAMILY DIVISION:

FAMILY COORDINATOR:

Sandy Gorman (407) 665-4222

(Contract regarding: Pre-trial Conferences & Trials)

Notice For Trial: A Notice For Trial stating that the cause is at issue must be filed with the Clerk's office, accompanied by stamped, self addressed envelopes to all counsel of record or pro se parties. If envelopes do not accompany the Notice for Trial the Court will take no action. The notice shall include an estimate of the time required, and whether the trial is on the original action or a subsequent proceeding. The case will then be forwarded to the **Family Division Coordinator** for review.

ALL CONTESTED CASES WILL BE REQUIRED TO ATTEND AND COMPLETE A MEDIATION SESSION

Pretrial Conference: Orders Requiring Mediation, Setting Pre-Trial Conference and Trial Date will be entered by the Court. Pretrial Conferences will be conducted telephonically. Parties are to be available for at least one (1) hour from the stated time for a phone call from the Court. If the party is *pro se*, they must contact the trial coordinator before the pre-trial conference with a phone number if they wish to appear by phone. A time certain trial time will be given during the pretrial conference. If it becomes necessary to place a case on the trial docket as a back up, the parties will be notified of the actual time of trial no less than 24 hours prior to trial time. The court will not address any pending motions at this time.

Case Management Conference: A Case Management Conference will be set if both parties are Pro Se. The Case Management Conference will be conducted by the General Magistrate's Office. The General Magistrate will determine the status of the case, order the parties to attend mediation and ensures the parties meet full compliance with Florida Statutes Chapter 61 prior to trial.

B. CIVIL DIVISION:

CIVIL COORDINATOR:
Kelley Rowland (407) 665-4203
kelly.rowland@flcourts18.org

(Contact regarding: Case Managements, Pretrial Conferences, & Trials)

Notice For Trial: A Notice For Trial stating that the cause is at issue must be filed with the Clerk's office, and must contain complete, current e-mail addresses to all counsel of record or pro se parties. The notice shall include an estimate of the time required, whether the trial is to be by a jury or not, and whether the trial is on the original action or a subsequent proceeding. The case will then be forwarded to the **Civil Division Coordinator** for review. The court will issue an Order Setting Case Management Conference which is required for all cases requiring one day or more to complete. Cases requiring less time will simply be placed on a one or two week trial docket.

Case Management Conference: The trial coordinator will conduct a Case Management Conference telephonically to determine the exact status of the case. Parties are to be available for at least one (1) hour from the stated time for a phone call from the trial coordinator. *Pro se* parties must contact the trial coordinator before the case management conference with a phone number if they wish to appear by phone. Parties will be required to strictly adhere to the

Order Setting Case Management Conference. The trial coordinator may, at the time of the conference, schedule expert disclosure deadlines and/or set a Pretrial Conference and trial date.

Pretrial Conference: Pretrial Conferences are automatically set for any case requiring more than one day. If less time is required, a pretrial conference will have to be requested at the time of noticing the case for trial. The court will expect full compliance with the Order Setting Pretrial Conference and Trial Date. Unless specifically excused by the judge, all attorneys/parties are required to attend in person the pretrial conference, even if a time certain for trial has been set. The court may designate counsel to send written notice to opposing counsel or *pro se* party who did not appear at the pretrial conference. The court will not address any pending motions at this time.

C. MOTIONS TO CONTINUE PRE-TRIAL/TRIAL: Opposed Motions for Continuance of Case Management, Pre-Trial, and/or Trial must be heard at Short Matters/Ex Parte. Any motion for continuance must be made in writing, signed by counsel for the parties, and shall state when the cause will be ready for trial. In ruling upon such motions, the court will weigh the following factors:

- What are the legal grounds?
- When was the case filed?
- When was the case noticed for trial?
- When was the motion filed?
- Will the parties be prejudiced?
- Has the case been previously continued and if so how many times?
- Has there been compliance with the temporary support order?
- What is the condition of court's calendar?