

PROCEDURES FOR DIVISION 6, COUNTY CIVIL JUDGE THOMAS J. BROWN (Effective July 1, 2022)

As of July 1, 2022, this division will be conducting in-person hearings. All hearings will be in person, unless approved by the Court in advance. All parties are responsible for keeping updated with Florida Supreme Court and Administrative Orders of the 18th Judicial Circuit. Masks and social distancing are no longer required in the courthouse.

Judicial Assistant: Nancy Hickman–Nancy.Hickman@flcourts18.org– at the present time, email is the most effective way to communicate with the Court.

PROCEDURES FOR SCHEDULING HEARINGS ON JACS:

1. All motions must be e-filed and docketed prior to setting a hearing.
2. You must coordinate the date and time with opposing counsel, or opposing party, if pro se.
3. Judge Brown does publish his “Docket” online. You can search for all available time slots at www.flcourts18.org.

Click on “Resources,” then “Attorneys Resources” then “JACS Dockets and Calendars” and then “Available Hearing Time.”

From that screen, you will then have to select “Procedures for Division 6 -County Civil Judge Thomas Brown.”

Leave the minimum duration slot blank and it will bring up ALL of the available hearing timeslots, so you can coordinate with opposing counsel.

4. After you have coordinated a date with opposing side, to schedule a hearing on JACS, go back to the home screen on www.flcourts18.org:

Click on “Resources”

- Then click on “JACS Login”
- Enter login information AND from drop down screen select “County Civil– Judge Thomas Brown” and then click on log in.
- On the next screen, select Schedule an In-Person Hearing (even if you will be requesting to appear remotely)
- On the next screen you will select the type of motion from the drop down screen that best fits the motion you are scheduling for hearing. For specific motions not listed, use “other motion.”
- Leave the amount of time you are requesting at the lowest amount of time. This will pull up ALL of the available timeslots. If you need additional time for your hearing, you can reserve multiple consecutive times slots to amount to the time needed for your hearing. **You will need to reserve all timeslots you are requesting so they are not taken. If you do not reserve the timeslot on JACS and it is taken by someone else, you will need to reschedule the hearing on a different day**
- Do not select courtroom, leave that blank. All hearings will be held in chambers unless otherwise notified by the Court.

5. Please use the first available time slot in the morning or the first available time slot in the afternoon rather than leaving big blanks in the schedule.
6. Please fill in ALL the information for the hearing in the time slot, including attorneys' information. This will insure both attorneys receive JACS confirmations.
7. If there is a pro se party, type "pro" into the attorney slot and click "find." This will give you the number to use for pro se parties, or you can type in "99999" and it will find "pro se."
8. In cases where there are multiple attorneys attending the hearing beyond the fields provided, please list those attorneys' names and who they represent in the "Notes" section.
9. Please enter the attorney's name who is setting the hearing in the "Set By (Name)" box and your DIRECT PHONE NUMBER in the "Phone #" box. This information will be used if the Court needs to contact you regarding the hearing. (i.e.: "Set By: Nancy Hickman" "Phone #: 321-617-7285")
10. After reserving your timeslot(s) on JACS, please immediately file your notice of hearing and email a copy of the motions being heard and the notice of hearing listing all motions and their Doc ID #(s) to the JA at Nancy.Hickman@flcourts18.org

TELEPHONIC OR MICROSOFT TEAMS HEARINGS:

1. Judge Brown only allows telephonic or Microsoft Teams appearances at hearings, if approved by the Court prior to the date of the hearing, and if there will be no evidence presented by that witness, unless approved by the Court due to extraordinary circumstances. A motion to appear telephonically or by Microsoft Teams is not required.

For all telephonic or Teams hearings:

- After you have reserved your timeslot(s) on JACS and you have filed your notice of hearing, in your email to the JA with copies of the motions and notice of hearing, please include the following information:
 - a. Submission number for your notice of hearing;
 - b. The name of the attorney or party, and whether they are requesting to appear via phone or Teams;
 - c. If the attorney or party is requesting to appear by phone, that attorney or party will need to call in for the hearing at the time scheduled. If there are multiple attorneys or parties appearing by phone, they will need to conference in together prior to calling in for the hearing;
 - d. If the attorney or party is requesting to appear by Microsoft Teams, please list the email address to be used to send the link for said hearing. The JA will email invites to Teams hearings no later than the day before the hearing.
2. Any requests to appear remotely shall be approved by the Court no less than 3 days prior to the hearing. Requests made after that time will be denied. All requesting participants are expected to download the app/program in advance of the hearing and become sufficiently proficient to permit the hearing to proceed. Each participant shall ensure that he or she has sufficient bandwidth to permit the hearing to proceed. Each participant shall ensure that he or she has the proper equipment to properly

participate in the proceeding. Any individual that will be presenting testimony to the Court must be identifiable by a form of government-issued photographic ID. 3. The Court will only send a Teams meeting invitation link to counsel for a party or a party (if unrepresented). It will be the responsibility of counsel and/or the parties to forward the Teams meeting link to any individuals that party intends to call as a witness and only if approved by the Court in advance.

CANCELLING HEARINGS: If you are cancelling a hearing, you MUST immediately cancel the hearing on JACS and then immediately file a notice of cancellation. If you are cancelling a hearing within 5 days from the date of the hearing, please contact the JA because dockets will already be printed and worked up for the Judge.

HEARINGS MAY BE CANCELLED BY THE COURT IF INSTRUCTIONS ARE NOT FOLLOWED. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHEDULING YOUR HEARING, PLEASE CONTACT THE JA, NANCY HICKMAN, BY EMAIL OR BY PHONE.

EMAIL CONTACT IS PREFERRED.

EVIDENTIARY HEARINGS:

1. The parties must exchange exhibits and confer about the admissibility of each exhibit at least seventy-two (72) hours before the hearing; this time is seven (7) days for non-jury trials. The parties are encouraged to reach an agreement as to the admissibility of all evidence. Exhibits shall be delivered to the Court at least three (3) business days before the scheduled commencement date of the hearing. The format for all exhibits submitted to the Court and the opposing party, is set forth below in paragraph 2.

2. Format of Exhibits:

a. Each party shall provide the Court with hard-copy, printed exhibits. If an exhibit consists of a video or audio recording, it shall be submitted to the Court on a compact disk or digital video disk. The face of the disk shall bear the case number and exhibit label as described below. The Court will no longer accept exhibits in digital or electronic format

b. A label shall appear in the lower right-hand corner (or as close thereto as is possible without interfering with the text or substance of the document).

c. Each label shall state "Petitioner's Exhibit *" or "Respondent's Exhibit *" with "*" being each letter of the alphabet beginning with the letter "A." When/If you get to "Z" on your exhibits, you will continue with "AA," etc. d. Each label shall state the case number and date of the hearing. e. All submissions shall include an index of the exhibits. All of the exhibits shall be Bates stamped for easier identification. The index shall identify the exhibit, with the corresponding exhibit letter and the Bates stamped number series for each such exhibit. (Example: Petitioner's Exhibit A – Petitioner's Financial Affidavit – 1 – 13).

3. Identification of witnesses and the administration of an oath shall be governed by AOSC20-16 or any successive administrative order.

4. In lieu of witness testimony, the parties may stipulate to the facts to be considered by the Court by emailing a signed stipulation with said facts set forth therein to the Court.

PREPARATION OF ORDERS:

1. The moving party shall be responsible for preparation of any orders following the hearing. All such orders shall be submitted for review to the opposing party prior to submitting same to the Court.
2. If the parties agree to the language of an order, it may be submitted to the Court by email, in Word format, with a certification that all parties agree to the entry of the order as proposed. If the parties cannot agree to the language of the order, each party may submit a proposed order for the Court's consideration, in Word format, along with a certification that attempts were made to agree upon the language of the order. If there is no certification that all parties have reviewed the proposed order, the order will be held for five (5) business days to allow for objections.

MATTERS WHICH HAVE BECOME UNCONTESTED: 1. Where the parties have reached a complete written final agreement on all issues, the Court will consider entering a final judgment without a hearing; To qualify, the parties must:

- a. Each file a financial affidavit (where required by the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure)
- b. Email a copy of all signed agreements to the Court; or, alternatively, advise the Court as to the docket ID number of any e-filed agreements.
- c. Agreements not signed by counsel must bear the notarized signature of the party whose counsel has not signed the agreement or is pro se.
- d. File and email to the Court child support guidelines worksheets (where appropriate).
- e. Email a proposed final judgment pre-approved by all parties in Word format;
- f. Email a valid driver license or affidavit of corroborating witness demonstrating residence.
- g. If a party is seeking the restoration of a prior legal name, that party must appear before the Court, in person or remotely if approved by the Court in advance, to present testimony in support thereof.

MOTIONS TO WITHDRAW AS COUNSEL: 1. If the attorney obtains a signed consent from their client, the signed consent and proposed order, in Word format, may be submitted to the Court by email. If the case has a trial date set, the stipulation shall include a statement that the client understands the case is set for trial and that the release of counsel does not cancel the court date.

2. If consent is not obtained, obtain hearing time as noted above. The motion and notice of hearing must indicate that they were mailed to the client. Unless the client has filed a Designation of Email Address form with the clerk, service must include a mailing address

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCE: In addition to complying with the applicable rules of procedure, a party seeking a continuance shall certify in writing that the party has conferred with opposing counsel/party concerning the request and that the opposing party/counsel agrees or objects. Absent a showing of extraordinary good cause, failure to comply with this requirement shall be deemed adequate grounds to summarily deny the request.

Any questions regarding these procedures may be submitted for the Court's review to:
Nancy.Hickman@flcourts18.org