

# Judicial Practices and Procedures

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Judge Steve Henderson  
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## Contact Information

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## Table of Contents

A. Communications with the Judicial Office.....	1
B. Scheduling Procedures .....	2
C. Courtesy Copies of Case Law and Other Documents .....	3
D. Emergency and Other Urgent Matters.....	3
E. Exhibits for Evidentiary Proceedings.....	3
F. Pretrial Procedures and Conferences .....	4
G. Other Division Procedures.....	4

## A. Communications with the Judicial Office

- **Method of Communication:** All communications to the judicial office regarding scheduling must be submitted by e-mail to [Traci.Moss@flcourts18.org](mailto:Traci.Moss@flcourts18.org). The subject line must contain the case number, case name, and relevant matter (e.g., 24CF12345 – State 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 the 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 in accordance with 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 or aid in any filing of motions. Judge Henderson cannot overturn another Judge's order as he does not sit upon an appellate panel.

## **B. Scheduling Procedures**

- **Court Schedule:** Calendars can be found on the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial website
- **Scheduling Hearings:** Hearings must be requested by e-mail to Traci.Moss@flcourts18.org. The scheduling party should e-mail the judicial assistant, copying opposing counsel and any self-represented litigant, to coordinate the scheduling of the hearing. The email request should include a copy of the motion and the requested amount of hearing time.
- **Notice of Hearing:** A notice of hearing must be filed and served immediately after confirmation from the judicial assistant, a copy shall be sent via email to the Judicial Assistant. The Notice of Hearing should include the document number of the motion off of the register of actions and the time reserved for the motion. A notice of hearing involving any remote appearance must list the judicial Teams credentials. All notices of hearing must contain the ADA notification required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.540.
- **Motion for Early Term or Modification:** Please email a copy of the e-filed motion and the State's response to the Judicial Assistant. If the State objects, the Judicial Assistant will provide the hearing time for the State and Defense to coordinate.
- **JAC Motions:** Please email a copy of the e-filed motion, JAC's response, any other necessary attachments, and proposed order to the Judicial Assistant. If JAC objects, this matter will have to be set for a hearing.
- **Submission Deadlines:** The court must receive all materials for Evidentiary Hearing no later than three business days before the hearing.

- **Order of Proceedings:** Those present in the courtroom will be addressed first. Appearing via Teams is a privilege therefore those on Teams will be taken last.
- **Continuance Procedure:** Continuances are disfavored and will be granted only upon good cause shown. Any motions to continue filed the day before a set hearing will be addressed on the scheduled hearing date.
- **Submission Method:** Motions to continue Trial or any long hearing shall be submitted in writing and efiled in the case.
- **Deadline for Submissions:** Proposed orders must be submitted in WORD format within 7 days after any hearing.
- **Cancellation of Hearings:** Please contact Judicial Assistant prior to canceling any hearings. If granted, please email a copy of your notice of cancellation as soon as you know a hearing is not going forward. Ensure the opposing party is copied on the email.

### **C. 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:** A courtesy copy can be brought to court or emailed to the Judicial Assistant prior to the hearing.

### **D. 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.

### **E. Exhibits for Evidentiary Proceedings**

- **Submission Method:** Shall be brought to court 15 minutes prior to the hearing to allow time for the opposing side to review and the clerks to mark properly.
- **Format:** Exhibits must be submitted to the clerk of court in paper format. 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.

## **F. Pretrial Procedures and Conferences**

**All pretrial motions shall be timely filed and scheduled within 45 days of Calendar Call.**

- **Calendar Call:** Defendant's appearance in person is required, unless excused by court. If your client is in custody and wishes to plea at calendar call, you must request for transport 1 day prior to the hearing.
- **Jury Trial:** The attorney must appear in person with the Defendant. If you were advised you are on a 4-hour call at the last Calendar Call, you do not need to appear until the court advises you to do so.
- **4 Hour Call:** The State attorney will send a proposed Trial list shortly after Calendar Call. You will receive a second email from the Judicial Assistant notifying you which specific date your case is being called up. The attorney and Defendant will appear in person on that date.
- **Docket Sounding:** Inmates are not transported. Parties shall appear in person unless an email request to appear via teams was sent to the Judicial Assistant. The court addresses all in-person appearances first before logging into teams. Paper Dockets will be accepted in lieu of attorney appearance on teams.
- **VOP Arraignment:** Inmates are transported unless the attorney requests no transport. VOP arraignments will not be continued, you will go to a VOP hearing after arraignment.
- **VOP Hearing:** Inmates are transported. If you will not be going forward with a VOP hearing notify witnesses as soon as possible so they are not appearing unnecessarily.

## **G. Other Division Procedures**

- **Interpreter Requests:** If an interpreter is needed for a hearing or trial, please contact Court Admin via email [jeanne.chipman@flcourts18.org](mailto:jeanne.chipman@flcourts18.org). For Spanish interpreters please contact via email [Alejandra.Martinez@flcourts18.org](mailto:Alejandra.Martinez@flcourts18.org) and [marta.vittitoe@flcourts18.org](mailto:marta.vittitoe@flcourts18.org).
- **Other Division Procedures:** The parties shall not argue with one another through the Court or Judicial Assistant's inbox. In the event the parties have a conflict regarding the setting of a hearing or scheduling a matter, they may place the issue on the Court's calendar using 5 minutes of hearing time. The Court will not tolerate arguing over substantive matters and/or scheduling through email communications. The court reserves the right to sanction any party who violates this provision..