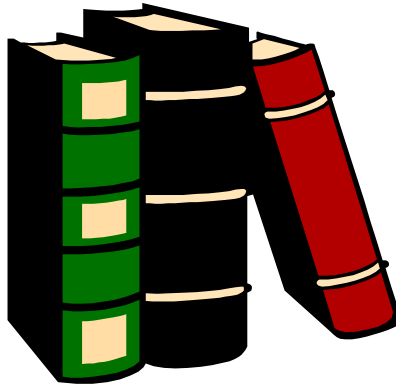


EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
SEMINOLE COUNTY
CIVIL DIVISION



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CIVIL GENERAL MAGISTRATE

KRISTINA L. PAULTER

Last Updated November, 2023

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I. PROCEDURES FOR REMOTE VIDEO HEARINGS

You will need a laptop or smart phone with a camera and a microphone and an internet connection to participate. If you are using a smartphone or tablet, you must download the Microsoft Teams application prior to your scheduled hearing. Some hearings are “cattle call” style, so your hearing may not start at the exact time it is scheduled. Please make sure to click the camera icon and microphone icon when asked to ensure you are seen and heard by the Civil General Magistrate.

The party scheduling the hearing shall be responsible for including the Virtual Hearing Instructions in the Notice of Hearing which will include a link and a QR code for the parties to access the virtual courtroom.

The Virtual Courtroom Links and Instructions for the Civil General Magistrate can be found in Section VII.

II. GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR THE CIVIL GENERAL MAGISTRATE’S DIVISION

A. REFERRAL TO THE CIVIL GENERAL MAGISTRATE

A General Magistrate will preside over all matters related to any motion or petition which is specifically referred to the Civil General Magistrate, without objection, pursuant to Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.490. All hearings conducted by the Civil General Magistrate are recorded by Digital Court Reporting.

Any party may request that a Motion, or portions of their case, be heard by the Civil General Magistrate. To request an Order of Referral, you must contact the Judicial Assistant to the assigned judge. Each Order of Referral to the Civil General Magistrate must state with specificity the matter (or category of matters) being referred.

B. OBJECTIONS TO A REFERRAL TO THE CIVIL GENERAL MAGISTRATE

After the judge refers your case to the Civil General Magistrate, either party may object to the referral within 10 days of the date that the referral is made (if the Order of Referral is served by mail, the parties have an additional 5 days within which to object to the referral). A copy of the Objection to the Order of Referral to the Civil General Magistrate should be sent to the Magistrate’s Assistant to request cancellation of a hearing if one has already been scheduled.

The Court does not provide written transcripts of any proceedings. For information regarding Digital Court Reporting, please contact the Seminole Digital Court Reporting Department at 407-665-6012 or by email at SeminoleDCR@flcourts18.org. To order a copy of the recording, please follow the link below which explains the procedure, and the cost.

<https://flcourts18.org/court-programs/seminole-digital-court-recordings/>

C. COMMUNICATION WITH THE COURT

Ex parte communication (any communication to the Civil General Magistrate without the other party's presence or knowledge) is strictly prohibited. You must copy the opposing party or attorney when sending email messages or correspondence to the Magistrate's Assistant.

- Office Telephone: (407) 665-4239
- Assistant's email address: CivilGMDept@flcourts18.org
- Mailing Address: 301 North Park Avenue, Sanford, FL 32771

III. HEARINGS

A. SCHEDULING

Non-evidentiary hearings and short matters are held via Teams. *Prior to scheduling any hearing time before the Civil General Magistrate, you must ensure that the matter has been specifically referred by an Order of Referral from the assigned Circuit Judge.* Once the Order of Referral has been entered, parties may schedule hearing time utilizing the Judicial Automated Calendaring System (JACS) at <https://jacs.flcourts18.org/>. All parties are required to give a good faith estimate of the time needed for the hearing. If you need more hearing time than is available in a single block, please find two or more time slots to equal the amount of time needed to secure up to 1 hour of hearing time.

B. COORDINATING

Reasonable attempts need to be made to clear a date with opposing counsel before confirming a hearing date/time. Several attempts on the same day is insufficient. Please do not contact the Magistrate's Assistant to determine what a reasonable attempt is or how much time is reasonable. This must be determined by the attorney.

Self-Represented Litigants (pro se parties) Only: If the opposing party is a *self-represented litigant* and a telephone number or email address is listed on any of their pleadings, you must make attempts on two different days to coordinate the hearing. A message must be left by email or phone on both days requesting a response 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 request to set a hearing unilaterally giving at least ten (10) days' notice of the hearing to the self-represented litigant. If no phone number or email address is listed in the Court file, you may request to set a hearing unilaterally giving at least fifteen (15) days' notice of the hearing to the self-represented litigant.

C. CANCELLING

Only the party who scheduled the hearing may cancel the hearing. Please send a copy of the Notice of Cancellation to the Magistrate's Assistant (civilgmdept@flcourts18.org). If a hearing is continued or cancelled, it is the responsibility of the scheduling attorney/party to immediately advise the Magistrate's Assistant that the scheduled hearing is continued or cancelled so that it is removed from the court's docket. Should a hearing be cancelled less than 24 hours prior to the

hearing, the scheduling party and/or attorney's office must email and call the Magistrate's Assistant to advise the court of the cancellation.

D. CROSS-NOTICING

If you wish to add a motion to a previously set hearing and you do not need more time, you must contact the party who scheduled the hearing and obtain permission to share their time. If you need additional time, you may either obtain new dates by emailing the Magistrate's Assistant (civilgmdept@flcourts18.org) or have the party who set the original hearing cancel theirs and reschedule for a timeslot with enough time for both hearings. Please make sure that Amended Notices and/or Cross-Notice of Hearings are filed with the Clerk. NOTE: YOU MAY NOT CROSS-NOTICE ANY MATTER THAT HAS NOT BEEN SPECIFICALLY REFERRED TO THE CIVIL GENERAL MAGISTRATE.

E. 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. You must e-file the Notice of Hearing in the court file and provide a courtesy copy by email to the Civil General Magistrate's Assistant (civilgmdept@flcourts18.org).

The party scheduling the hearing shall be responsible for including the Virtual Hearing Instructions in the Notice of Hearing which shall also include the link and the QR code for the parties to access the virtual courtroom. The Virtual Hearing Links and Instructions for the Civil General Magistrate can be found in Section V below.

IV. SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS (Pro Se)

Florida Self-Represented Litigants (Pro Se)

For general information on representing yourself in Seminole County, please visit our website at <https://selfhelp.flcourts18.org/>.

If you are self-represented you should register and file documents in your case through the Florida E-filing Portal <https://www.myflcourtaccess.com/>. This will ensure you get timely notice of documents filed in your case and that your documents are delivered to the opposing party registered with the portal.

V. VIRTUAL COURTROOMS – LANGUAGE TO BE INCLUDED IN NOTICE OF HEARING

On the appointed day and time, the parties (and attorneys) shall contact the Court by typing the Court's dedicated link <https://fl18.org/civil-gm> into Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome web browser or by scanning the QR code below:

General Magistrate Paulter's Virtual Courtroom

<https://fl18.org/civil-gm>



Backup Telephone Line: +1 386-310-1754

Conference ID: 930 887 861#

Notice of Communication Technology

Pursuant to Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.530 (b), a party may file an objection in writing to the use of communication technology within 10 days after service of the motion or notice or within such other period as may be directed by the court official. A party waives objections to the use of communication technology by failing to timely object to the motion or notice unless, before the date of the proceeding, the party establishes good cause for the failure to timely object.