



CIRCUIT JUDGE PREFERENCES: Judge Robin J. Houwman

ATTORNEY CONTACT

1. **Generally, how do you prefer attorney contact?** Email.
2. **How do you prefer to receive briefs?** Email with hard copy also sent to the Court.
3. **Would you like to receive copies of pleadings and affidavits related to a brief or motion?** Yes.
4. **How do you prefer to receive proposed orders?** Through File and Serve.

CIVIL SCHEDULING AND PRACTICE

5. **What is the preferred method for setting a civil motions hearing, other than in open court?** Attorney conference call with Court Administration and all attorneys must agree to date. A motion must be on file before a hearing can be scheduled on the motion.
6. **Do you want courtesy copies of the main statutes or cases relied upon in briefs or motions?** No.
7. **Who should be contacted to request/schedule a telephonic appearance?** Court Administration
8. **Do you require a motion or want some form of notice if the parties have stipulated to an extension of a deadline in a scheduling order?** No.
9. **Should stipulations between counsel on evidentiary issues and/or legal issues be submitted to you in writing?** Yes.
10. **What is the preferred method for scheduling a civil jury trial?** File a motion for scheduling and set for a motions hearing. Trial dates can only be scheduled during a pre-trial conference with the Court and attorneys present. The parties should be prepared to assure the Court that discovery is complete or near completion.

11. **Do you require pretrial conferences and what agenda do you have for pretrial conferences?** No. Counsel should be prepared to update the Court of the status of the case and discovery. At the pretrial conference deadlines will be set for jury instructions, motions in limine, witness and exhibit lists. Counsel shall also be prepared to inform the Court whether any substantive motions will be filed that would require a separate hearing.
12. **Do you have a standard pretrial order?** No.
13. **Do you have any requirements for court trials that are different from your jury trial expectations?** Yes. Parties should contact the Court for permission to schedule a court trial on a civil matter. The parties may also be required to submit pre-trial briefs depending upon the nature of the case.
14. **How do you conduct voir dire?** Voir dire is conducted using the strike down method with the jury seated in the galley of the courtroom.
15. **Do you require a pretrial brief?** No. If the matter is scheduled for a jury trial, a pretrial brief is not required. If the matter is set for a court trial, please follow the steps outlined above.
16. **Do you require pretrial findings of fact and conclusions of law in a court trial?** No. Unless specifically requested prior to trial.
17. **Is there anything else you would like attorneys to know about how you conduct civil matters?** When emailing copies of briefs to the Court, please include a copy of your brief in Word format. Please ensure that you send a hard copy of all briefs and supporting documents to the Court.

CRIMINAL SCHEDULING AND PRACTICE

18. **What is the preferred method for setting a criminal motions hearing, other than in open court?** Attorney conference call with Court Administration and all attorneys must agree to date.
19. **What is the preferred method for seeking a reset of a routine criminal court appearance?** Email Court directly with cc: to other attorneys of record.
20. **When a suppression motion is filed, do you require or request a pre-evidentiary brief to lay out the issues to be argued?** Yes.
21. **Do you have any standard sentences or sentencing policies of which attorneys should be aware?** No.
22. **If answer to previous question is yes, please provide examples.** (e.g., no suspended imps in certain situations, fine paid in full on day of sentencing, etc) Respondent skipped this question.

23. **Is there anything else you would like attorneys to know about how you conduct criminal matters?** Respondent skipped this question.

COURTROOM PROTOCOL

24. **Does the Court prefer that lawyers:**
- a. **Stand when addressing the court:** Yes
 - b. **Ask permission to approach an adverse witness:** No
 - c. **Ask permission to approach their own witness:** No
 - d. **Ask permission before moving about the well of the courtroom:** No
 - e. **Ask permission to publish an admitted exhibit to the jury:** Yes.
25. **Do you allow lawyers to have cell phones in your courtroom?** Yes.
26. **Do you mind if lawyers check email, etc while waiting in the gallery for their case to be called?** No.
27. **Is there anything else you would like attorneys to know about your preferred courtroom protocol?** If you resolve a case prior to a scheduled hearing, please make sure that Court Administration is notified of the cancelation. Notify the Court directly if a hearing is canceled within 48 hours of the scheduled hearing.

DOMESTIC CASES

28. **Are there any special issues that arise in your courtroom in domestic cases that you would like the Bar to be aware of?** Please contact the Court via email prior to setting a full-day or multiple-day trial on the calendar in a divorce or custody matter. The Court requires that the parties have completed or have neared completion of discovery prior to setting days on the calendar. A hearing may not be scheduled if a motion has not been filed. Please file your motion and then call Court Administration to schedule the hearing with the other party. Please adhere to the requirements of the pretrial order. If there is a reason you cannot comply, please contact the Court via email prior to the scheduled hearing or trial. Additionally, your case will be limited to the time reserved, so plan accordingly.
29. **Do you have a standard pretrial order?** No.
30. **Do you require:**
- a. **Pre-trial conference:** No
 - b. **Pre-trial mediation:** Yes
 - c. **Asset/Debt spreadsheet** (if so, please provide a copy of the required form): Yes
 - d. **Pre-trial brief:** Yes
 - e. **Pre-trial submission of proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:** No

31. **If the parties stipulate to temporary or final matters, how do you prefer attorneys proceed?** Contact the Court via email as soon as possible to alert the Court that a stipulation has been reached.
32. **Is there anything else you would like attorneys to know about how you conduct domestic cases?** Respondent skipped this question.

COURTHOUSE

33. **Does your courtroom/courthouse have any of the following:** (please list all applicable counties)
 - a. **Separate tables for counsel:** Yes
 - b. **Accessibility for attorneys, parties and witnesses who use wheelchairs:** Yes
 - c. **Podium:** Yes
 - d. **Microphone system:** Yes
 - e. **Photocopier:** Yes. Court Administration for limited copies.
 - f. **Free internet access or law library for visiting lawyers:** Yes. Free internet is available. Law Library access is provided at the Downtown Public Library.
 - g. **Screen for video presentation:** Yes
 - h. **Computer or television for video presentations:** Display for video presentations is available, but counsel or parties must provide the computer.
34. **Is there anything not previously addressed that you would like attorneys practicing in your court to know?** Respondent skipped this question