



Judicial Practices and Procedures
Division 54 – Unified Family
Putnam County, Florida
(last modified 6/23/2025)

Hon. Rose Marie K. Preddy, Circuit Judge
Katelyn Lee, Judicial Assistant

Contact Information

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IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A LAWYER: The Judicial Assistant (JA) cannot answer your legal questions and will not explain your situation to the Judge. Your opportunity to speak to the Judge happens only in court. If you are self-represented, the following information may be helpful:

The Circuit has a Self-Help Program for self-represented (pro se) litigants in Putnam County for assistance with forms and can be reached at: (386) 329-1911. (See page 9 for link to forms)

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A. Communications with the Judicial Office

- **Method of Communication:**

Division E-mail : All communications to the judicial office must be submitted by e-mail to Division54@circuit7.org the dedicated division e-mail account. The subject line of any e-mail to the judicial office must contain the case number, case name, and relevant matter (e.g., 2024 DR 001234 SC – Doe 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:**

Parties may only contact the judicial office in accordance with these practices and procedures. Unsolicited communications from non-parties will not be considered by the court.

- **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 email account registered for electronic service.

- **Response to Inquiries:**

The JA is not authorized to provide legal advice.

The JA strives to substantively respond to all inquiries within one business day. If the judicial assistant is unable to substantively respond within one business day, your message will be acknowledged as received with an indication of when to expect a substantive response and alternate contact for immediate assistance.

When the JA is out of the office, your message will be acknowledged as received with an indication of when to expect a substantive response and an alternate contact for immediate assistance.

Other Communication Procedures:

Any e-mail sent to or from the judicial office may be a public record subject to disclosure.

B. Scheduling Procedures

- **Court Schedule:**

Family Law Trials are scheduled during Case Management Conferences, held once a month. Please see the remaining Case Management Conference dates for 2025 listed below.

Attorneys and Pro Se:

- July 15, 2025
- August 19, 2025

Attorneys:

- September 16, 2025
- October 21, 2025
- November 18, 2025

Pro Se:

- September 9, 2025
- October 14, 2025
- November 4, 2025

- **Scheduling Hearings:**

Motions must be filed with the Clerk of Court and sent to opposing counsel/self-represented parties prior to scheduling a hearing. All hearings must be coordinated with opposing counsel. Hearings must be requested by contacting the Judicial Assistant at klee@circuit7.org.

- **Notice of Hearing:**

A notice of hearing must be filed and served immediately after reserving hearing time. Should hearing time be reserved with the JA, the time will not be confirmed until a courtesy copy of the Notice of Hearing is emailed to the division email (Division54@circuit7.org).

A notice of hearing involving any remote appearance must list the judge's Zoom credentials.

All notices of hearing must contain the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) notification required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.540.

- **Order of Proceedings:**

Matters will be heard in the order in which they appear on the docket.

Matters involving parties represented by counsel will generally be heard before other matters.

Matters involving in-custody defendants will generally be heard before other matters.

- **Continuance Procedure:**

Motions for continuance are disfavored and will be granted only upon good cause shown. Successive continuances are highly disfavored. Lack of due diligence is not grounds for granting a continuance. Except for good cause shown, the motion must be signed by the party requesting the continuance, as required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.545(e).

Motions for continuance must be submitted at least 3 days prior to the scheduled court date for which the continuance is sought, barring exigent circumstances. Except for good cause shown, the motion must be signed by the party requesting the continuance, as required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.545(e).

Motions for continuance must state with specificity: (1) the basis of the need for the continuance, including when the basis became known to the movant; (2) whether the motion is opposed; (3) the action and specific dates for the action that will enable the movant to be ready, including, but not limited to, confirming the specific date any required participants are available; and (4) the proposed date by which the case will be ready to proceed and whether that date is agreed by all parties. Except for good cause shown, the motion must be signed by the party requesting the continuance, as required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.545(e).

- **Cancelling Hearings:**

You must cancel hearings by notifying the JA immediately. You must also immediately file and serve a Notice of Cancellation on opposing counsel and any self-represented litigant. A courtesy copy of the Notice of Cancellation should be emailed to the JA at klee@circuit7.org

All counsel noticed for hearing (including case management). Remember that your hearing is with the Court, and not just each other. Once the time of hearing has been firmly calendared, the hearing may be cancelled only in accordance with the cancellation policy of the judge before whom the hearing is scheduled.

If a case is set for a Case Management Conference or Final Hearing/Trial and the matter has resolved, a Final Judgment or Final Order must be signed before the case can be removed from the calendar. Simply calling, or filing an agreement, does not remove the case or excuse the parties from attending the scheduled matter.

C. Remote Appearance

- **Remote Appearance Procedure:**

The court maintains a hybrid virtual courtroom, allowing parties to appear either in person or remotely, as provided by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530. Requests to use communication technology for an appearance must be made by motion.

- **Platform Used:**

The court uses Zoom for remote appearances.

- **Platform Meeting ID:**

Meeting ID #. 985 2570 3348

- **Requirements:**

Requests for remote appearance must be submitted three days prior to the hearing.

Certain hearings are eligible for remote appearance. These include:

- Hearings on Motions to Withdraw
- Hearings with litigants in custody

- Foster parents and Guardian ad Litem
Volunteer who is out of county

Any person appearing remotely must be in a private location that is quiet and free from distractions. When appearing remotely dress and behave professionally in the same manner as if physically present in the courtroom. Under no circumstances will a participant be permitted to appear remotely from a moving vehicle.

Any person appearing remotely must insert their name and case number as your Zoom name. (Use of generic names such as “iPhone” will not be admitted into the hearing.

When appearing remotely, enable the camera when joining the proceeding and keep the camera turned on until instructed otherwise by the court. Mute the microphone when joining the proceeding and keep the microphone turned off until instructed otherwise by the court.

If a witness appears remotely, the party calling the witness must ensure the witness has a functioning camera and microphone and has tested the internet connection before the hearing. The oath will be administered in accordance with Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530.

D. Submission of Orders and Judgments

- **Submission Method:**

All proposed orders must be submitted to the court by e-mail to Division54@circuit7.org.

- **Format:**

All proposed orders must be submitted in MSWord format and provided to opposing counsel and any self-represented litigant. The email and/or cover letter **MUST** state if the opposing counsel or party has agreed with the form and content and the parties must be copied in the email.

- **Deadline for Submissions:**

Proposed orders must be submitted no later than 15 days after any hearing.

E. Courtesy Copies of Case Law and Other Documents

- **When Required:**

Courtesy copies of case law can be submitted to the court prior to the hearing or trial by email to Division54@circuit7.org.

F. Emergency and Other Urgent Matters

- **Requirements:**

All Emergency or Expedited Motions must be filed with the Clerk of Court prior to the Court determining emergency or expedited status. **PLEASE NOTE that the Court does not receive motions through the Portal.** You must notify the JA that you have an emergency and/or expedited motion and email the motion to Division54@circuit7.org. The Court will review and determine the appropriate action.

If a party believes there is a factual basis for setting an emergency hearing, a detailed motion setting forth the following must be filed: 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.

G. Exhibits for Evidentiary Proceedings

- **Submission Method:**

Hand-deliver or mail all printed exhibits to the clerk of court.

- **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.

- **Deadline for Submissions:**

All exhibits must be received by the Clerk of Court's Office 3 days before the evidentiary proceeding.

H. Pretrial Procedures and Conferences

- **Case Management Conference (CMC):**

Any party may request a CMC when a case requires.

The court strongly encourages the early use of CMCs in more complex cases, multiple-party litigation, or any case that might benefit from court intervention.

Unless excused by the court in advance, all CMCs are mandatory for attorneys to appear via Zoom and self-represented litigants to appear in person. Parties represented by counsel are not required to appear at a CMC.

- **Status Conference:**

Any party may request a status conference when a case requires.

- **Requirements:**

Any request for a CMC or status conference must articulate the reasons for the necessity of the conference.

- **Scheduling:**

If the court grants the request for a CMC or status conference, the moving party must schedule the CMC or status conference pursuant to the procedures noted under the above Scheduling Procedures.

I. Setting Case for Trial

- **Procedure:**

Family Law Trials are set during CMC.

Injunctive relief Final Hearings are set by the court.

- **Notice Period:**

The court does not set date-certain trials. After the pre-trial conference, the court will assign cases to specific days during the trial period and may assign back-up cases. Attorneys, self-represented litigants, parties, and witnesses are expected to be available during the entire trial period.

J. Forms

- **Access:**

Florida Supreme Court approved forms for Family Courts are available at:

Florida Family Court Forms

“Do It yourself” Florida forms are available at <https://putnamclerk.com/forms/>

Other legal services in the Putnam County: Community Legal Services at
Community Legal Services - no-cost legal services

K. Other Division Procedures

- **ADA Accommodations:**

Information on ADA accommodations can be found on the circuit’s website at the following link: [ADA Information](#)

- **Interpreter Requests:**

Information on interpreters’ services can be found on the circuit’s website at the following link: [Find an Interpreter](#)