

Judicial Practices and Procedures

(last modified Nov 5, 2025)

Judge - Vacant

Kristy Lofton, Judicial Assistant

Contact Information

Mailing Address: 410 St. Johns Ave, Suite 310 Palatka, FL 32177

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A. Communications with the Judicial Office

- **Method of Communication:** All communications to the judicial office **must** be submitted by e-mail to klofton@circuit7.org. The subject line **must** contain the case number, case name, and relevant matter (e.g., 2024-001234 MM – State v. Defendant - 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. Additionally, if the Judicial Assistant is out of the office, you will receive an out-of-office reply with further instructions. Any request that is a true emergency as defined by statute will need to be addressed to the on-duty Judge through their Judicial Assistant.

B. Scheduling Procedures

- **Court Schedule:** Docket sounding will be held on Fridays, two weeks before the trial week unless it falls on a holiday, then it will be held on a Thursday. Attorneys and their clients **MUST** appear in person for Docket Sounding, unless a motion to appear by zoom is filed with the Court.
- **Scheduling Hearings:** All hearings **must** be scheduled with the Court's Judicial Assistant, Kristy Lofton at klofton@circuit7.org.
- **Notice of Hearing:** A notice of hearing **must** be filed and served immediately after reserving hearing time. A notice of hearing involving any remote appearance must list the judicial Zoom credentials. All notices of hearing **must** contain the ADA notification required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.540.
- **Submission Deadlines:** The court **must** receive all materials for the hearing no later than two business days before the hearing.
- **Order of Proceedings:** Parties represented by attorneys will generally be heard first.
- **Continuance Procedure:** A request for continuance should be submitted at least two days prior to the scheduled court date, unless there exists 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). The motion **must** also state what efforts were made to contact the opposing party and what their position is regarding the continuance.
- **Cancelling Hearings:** It is the Attorney's responsibility to cancel a hearing that was previously set by notifying the judicial assistant, immediately. You **must** also immediately file and serve a notice of cancellation on opposing counsel and any self-represented litigant.

C. Remote Appearance

- **Remote Appearance Procedure:** All court proceedings in Division 62 are noticed to occur in person at the Putnam County Courthouse, 410 St. Johns Ave, Courtroom 316, Palatka, Florida 32177. Any defendant wishing to appear by Zoom must submit the request **in writing** through the Clerk of Court. Attorneys are permitted to appear remotely for arraignments and pre-trial conferences without the need to file a motion, unless otherwise ordered by the Court. Attorneys and their clients **must** appear in person for Docket sounding, **unless** a motion to appear by zoom is filed with the court
- **Platform Used:** The court uses Zoom for remote appearances.
- **Platform Meeting ID#:** Contact the judicial assistant, Kristy Lofton klofton@circuit7.org to obtain the platform meeting ID#.
- **Other Remote Appearance Procedures:** Anyone appearing by zoom must put their name on the screen and be familiar with the platform.

D. Submission of Orders and Judgments

- **Format:** All proposed orders **must** be submitted in Word Format.
- **Submission Method:** klofton@circuit7.org and E-Filing Portal.
- **Deadline for Submissions:** Proposed orders **must** be submitted within 10 days after any hearing.

E. 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:** Case law may be in PDF or Word document format
- **Submission Method:** klofton@circuit7.org or division62@circuit7.org.
- **Deadline for Submissions:** Courtesy copies must be delivered to the court no later than three (3) days before any evidentiary proceeding.

F. 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.

G. Exhibits for Evidentiary Proceedings

- **Submission Method:** Submit all exhibits electronically by e-mail to the division email at division62@circuit7.org
- **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. Exhibits must be labeled in the following format: Petitioner/Plaintiff 1' or Respondent/Defendant A.
- **Deadline for Submissions:** All exhibits must be received in chambers at least three days before the evidentiary proceeding.

I. Setting Case for Trial

- **Procedure:** Trials will be set during the Docket sounding proceeding.
- **Notice Period:** The court will set date-certain trials, with jury selection being the Monday of the trial week.

K. Other Division Procedures

- **ADA Accommodations:** If you need an ADA accommodation, please contact Tracy Woodman at twoodman@circuit7.org, Phone: 386-736-5903 ext. 15903.

Interpreter Requests: If an interpreter is needed for a hearing or trial, please advised the Judicial Assistant, Kristy Lofton at klofton@circuit7.org at least two business days before the scheduled hearing.