

SUPREME COURT - NASSAU COUNTY - IAS PART 28
PART RULES & PROCEDURES (effective 1/9/19)

Justice: Hon. Helen Voutsinas
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These rules are in addition to the provisions of the CPLR, the Uniform Rules for New York State Trial Court and the Local Rules of Court. Failure to comply with any rules or orders of this Court may result in preclusion and/or sanctions without further notice.

I. COURT APPEARANCES

- A. All preliminary, compliance, certification, and status conferences shall be scheduled for 9:30 a.m., on Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday or such other time as the Court shall direct.
- B. All motions shall be made returnable on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m., or such other time as the Court shall direct.
- C. Attorneys and Pro Se litigants must advise the Court Officer or Court Clerk of their presence and complete a sign-in sheet. If counsel must also appear before another judge, counsel must advise the Part Clerk or Court Officer where counsel can be reached
- D. **All parties and attorneys are required to appear for every appearance, except as set forth below for motions.**
- E. Conferences may be conducted via telephone conference appearance if a request is granted by the Court.
- F. If there are any outstanding motion(s) (submitted or pending) at the time of the conference/trial, the Law Clerk and/or Judge must be so informed of same.
- G. All conferences will be held in the order in which **all** attorneys and parties have checked in.
- H. **Court personnel.** The Court functions with the aid and support of the courtroom and chambers personnel. The Court and the personnel assigned

to the Court will treat counsel, litigants and other persons present with dignity and courtesy which is indispensable to the proper administration of justice. The Court expects the Court personnel to be treated in like manner.

II. ADJOURNMENTS

A. Motions and Conferences:

1. Applications to adjourn motions and conferences (other than preliminary conferences) may be granted if there is consent of all parties and **prior approval of the Court**. If all parties do not consent to the adjournment, an application shall be made by conference call, **no later than 3:00 p.m.** of the day preceding the scheduled conference or motion. No requests for an adjournment will be entertained without all parties participating in the conference call, including the Attorney for the Child(ren).
2. Applications made on consent of all parties **MUST** be made using the Request for Adjournment Form attached hereto. The Request for Adjournment Form is to be filled out completely. Incomplete forms or forms received after **2:00 p.m.** on the business day prior to the conference date or return date shall be summarily denied, unless the Court is advised of extraordinary circumstances, which will be taken into consideration.
3. Letters confirming approved adjournments shall state that the Court has adjourned the conference or motion on consent of the parties to the specified date, and shall contain the full names of both parties, the index number, a notation indicating the current date the matter is on the Court's calendar, and that all parties have been simultaneously copied.
4. Adjournment requests which are left on the Chamber's Voice Mail shall be **disregarded**.
5. Adjournments requested because of the actual engagement **on trial** of counsel must be accompanied by an Affirmation of Engagement in conformity with 22 NYCRR Part 125.

B. Preliminary Conference:

1. Adjournments of the Preliminary Conference will **not** be granted, absent a compelling reason for same. Counsel are directed to review the provisions of 22 NYCRR §202.16(f) concerning

conferences. The Preliminary Conference Form **must** be filled out by counsel **prior** to the Preliminary Conference date.

2. In addition to scheduling a Certification Conference as part of the Preliminary Conference Order, the Court may direct that a pre-trial conference also be held in which event, the rules concerning pretrial conferences, as set forth below, shall be applicable.
3. Discovery deadlines, Certification deadlines, and Note of Issue deadlines, will be strictly enforced. Deadlines may not be extended, absent approval by the Court.

III. MOTIONS

A. Application for a Stay or Temporary Restraining Order:

1. Any Order to Show Cause seeking **any** injunctive relief, including a stay or TRO, must be made in accordance with 22 NYCRR 202.7(f). The moving party shall advise the Court as soon as practicable of counsel's intent to make such application.
2. Requests to continue or vacate a stay or TRO beyond the return date of the motion shall be made at a conference with all parties present. Failure to apply for such extension shall result in the automatic vacatur of the stay or TRO, unless the Order to Show Cause provides otherwise.
3. An "Emergency" Order to Show Cause requires a special affidavit based upon personal knowledge and an affirmation explaining in detail the nature of the emergency. In addition, the movant should be prepared to appear in Court as soon as possible to make a record, if the Court requires same.

B. Pre-Motion Rules:

1. Prior to making or filing any motions, counsel for the moving party is urged to communicate with the Court in writing and arrange for a conference call to be held with his/her adversary and the Court to discuss the issues involved and the possible resolutions thereof. The Attorney for the Child(ren), if any, shall also be notified and included in such conference calls. Counsel fully familiar with the matter and with authority to bind the client should be available to participate in the conference.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved, the Court will set a briefing schedule for the motion which shall be "So Ordered."

3. This rule does not apply to applications for counsel to be relieved.

C. Submission of the Motion:

1. Unless settled by the return date, all motions shall be marked **submitted** on the return date.
2. Appearances of all counsel and parties are **not** required on motion return dates, unless counsel requests a conference and same is granted, or otherwise as ordered by the Court.
3. All motions seeking *pendente lite* relief **must** include a completed temporary maintenance guidelines worksheet utilizing each party's gross income for the most recent tax year after FICA/Medicare taxes have been deducted.
4. All exhibits **must** be clearly tabbed. Motions not consistent with this rule will be rejected and returned to counsel.
5. Except for good cause shown, no affidavit or affirmation shall exceed twenty five (25) pages (double spaced) in length. Affidavits and/or affirmations in excess of the above limits will be returned to counsel to be made compliant with the above limit.
6. Motions are to be served and filed in conformity with CPLR §2214.
7. No sur-reply, affidavit, affirmation, memorandum of law, or letter will be accepted or considered by the Court without leave of the Court.
8. The Court will determine, after submission, whether oral argument is warranted. Upon such determination, counsel for all parties will be contacted and advised of the new adjourned date for purposes of oral argument.
9. Any motion seeking an award of counsel fees must be supported by a detailed affirmation of services.
10. Any party seeking to make a motion for discovery should conference the matter with chambers prior to filing any motions.

D. Interim Partial or Full Settlement:

If all or part of a submitted motion is settled, counsel shall forward the original stipulation of settlement to the Court within fifteen (15) days of the submission date. Such stipulation shall be accompanied by a letter setting forth the date the motion was submitted, what aspects of the motion have been settled, and what issues remain to be decided. If the motion is resolved in its entirety, the movant shall indicate same. If the motion is resolved, in whole or in part, on the record, counsel shall obtain such transcript so that same can be “so ordered”, unless the Court otherwise directs.

IV. COMMUNICATION WITH CHAMBERS

- A. In all communications with chambers by letter, the title of the action, names of the parties, date matter is next on the Court’s calendar, and index number shall be set forth, with copies simultaneously delivered to all counsel. *Ex parte* written communications will be disregarded.
- B. Copies of correspondence between counsel shall **not** be sent to the Court. Such copies shall be disregarded and will not be placed in the Court’s file.
- C. No out of Court settlement will be recognized or accepted unless counsel submits a letter to the Court, along with the executed settlement agreement/ stipulation, on notice to opposing counsel, as well as to the Attorney for the Child(ren), if applicable; or in the alternative, a letter certifying that such agreement/stipulation has, in fact, been executed.
- D. The Court will not accept *ex parte* telephone communications on substantive issues.

V. SANCTIONS

The Court will consider a sanctions application only if the moving party first seeks withdrawal or discontinuation of the offending act or action, or demands required or necessary action which is refused. Proof of such request must be made part of the sanctions application.

VI. TRIAL RULES: APPLICABLE TO ALL TRIAL AND HEARINGS

- A. A Note of Issue and Certificate of Readiness are to be filed within thirty [30] days after certification, unless otherwise instructed by the Court. A Statement of Proposed Disposition shall be filed with proof of service along with the Note of Issue. 22 NYCRR §202.16(h). The opposing party

shall serve and file a Statement of Proposed Disposition within twenty (20) days thereafter.

Failure to comply may result in the imposition of sanctions, which may include preclusion or dismissal of the action.

After a matter has been certified as trial-ready, the Court may set a date for a Pre-Trial Conference. Pre-Trial Conferences will be scheduled approximately 30 days prior to the trial date. The parties, as well as counsel with knowledge of the case, **must** attend.

There will be no adjournments without the Court's consent. At the Pre-Trial Conference, the Court shall provide for the submission or scheduling of the following, to the extent not previously ordered:

1. *In limine* applications, which must be on notice to all parties, and returnable at least two [2] days prior to the first day of trial.
2. Annotated Statements of Proposed Disposition, in which all of the criteria listed in the statute are provided, and counsel's position stated as to each such criteria for both equitable distribution and maintenance issues shall be submitted.
3. Exhibits: Counsel for the parties shall consult prior to the Trial and shall in good faith attempt to agree upon the exhibits that will be offered into evidence without objection, if possible. On the first day of trial, each side shall begin to mark its exhibits into evidence as to those to which no objection has been made. All exhibits not consented to shall be marked for identification only. If the trial exhibits are voluminous, counsel shall consult the clerk of the part for guidance. The Court will rule upon the objections to the contested exhibits at the earliest possible time. Exhibits not previously demanded, which are to be used solely for credibility or rebuttal, need not be pre-marked.
4. A list of proposed witnesses must be submitted to the Court at least 1 business day prior to the first day of trial, together with the order in which they will testify, as well as their testimony. **A proposed witness list of any experts expected to testify at trial must also be submitted to the court at least 3 business days prior to the first day of trial, together with the scope and estimated length of their testimony.**
5. Marked pleadings, to be submitted before opening statements, must be submitted on the first day of trial.

6. Net worth statements MUST BE updated and sworn to within sixty [60] days of the first day of trial.
7. Parties are encouraged to stipulate to facts and/or exhibits.
8. If deposition transcripts are to be utilized, a copy of the witness' deposition transcript should be available to the Court. Counsel for the parties shall consult prior to trial and shall, in good faith, attempt to agree upon the portions of deposition testimony to be offered into evidence without objection. The parties shall delete from the testimony to be read the questions and answers that are irrelevant to the point for which the deposition testimony is offered. Each party shall prepare a list of deposition testimony to be offered to which no objection has been made and a separate list of deposition testimony as to which objections have been made. At least one [1] day prior to trial, or such other time as the Court may set, each party shall submit its list(s) to the Court and all counsel. The Court will rule upon the objections at the earliest reasonable time, after consultation with counsel.
9. Valuations: **In the event there are any valuations of a business interest or increased earning capacity, a cash flow chart shall be submitted by each side**, listing counsel's proposal for payment thereof, as well as any other payments claimed due (such as payor's obligations for maintenance, child support, income taxes, etc.).
10. A list of issues to be determined by the Court, including any pretrial motion issues referred to the trial by the Court shall be submitted by the parties at least one [1] day prior to Trial.
11. Both sides shall have available at least **four [4] copies of all exhibits ([5] if there is an Attorney for the Child(ren))** which are expected to be introduced into evidence.
12. Both sides shall have available at least **four [4] copies of all deposition transcripts and prior statements ([5] if there is an Attorney for the Child(ren))** , which are expected to be read into the record or utilized on cross-examination at the trial.
13. Both sides shall have available at least four **[4] copies, ([5] if there is an Attorney for the Child(ren))** of any and all of the following:
 - a) relevant orders issued by another court, such as final orders of custody, support, or temporary or permanent order of protection issued by the Family and/or Criminal Courts;

- b) any order of this Court that referred issues raised in motion practice to the trial of the action;
 - c) any relevant “so-ordered” stipulation of this Court, as well as transcripts of stipulations read into the record in open court during the pendency of the action; and
 - d) any properly executed and acknowledged stipulation or agreement relating to material issues in this action.
14. Counsel are urged to stipulate that any issue relating to an award of counsel and expert fees be resolved by the Court, without testimony, upon the submission of affirmations and other appropriate documentation from counsel.
15. On the date the trial is scheduled, counsel are expected to be prepared to stipulate in writing to any and all relevant material facts that are not and should not be in dispute, to discuss settlement of all unresolved issues, and to have complied with each of the trial rules set forth herein.
16. All trials and hearings shall continue **day-to-day** until completed, subject to the Court’s availability. All parties must be prepared at the outset to set aside the required number of days necessary to complete the trial.
17. **On the day before the scheduled trial, counsel are directed to contact the Part Clerk or Chambers to confirm the Court’s availability.**
18. Proposed Judgment and Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law are to be submitted within sixty [60] days after the Court renders its decision. The submission of the Divorce Packet will NOT be adjourned unless expressly permitted by the Court for good cause shown.
19. Closing Arguments/Summations: It shall be determined by the Court (on the first day of trial), in consultation with counsel, whether oral closing arguments will be made, or if a post trial memorandum will be submitted. If oral arguments will be made, said arguments will **not** exceed thirty [30] minutes and will be scheduled to begin immediately after the trial has concluded. Counsel for the defendant shall give their closing first, followed immediately by counsel for the child(ren), if any, then by counsel for the plaintiff.

If a post-trial memorandum is required, said memorandum shall be submitted by both sides, as well as the Attorney for the Child(ren) simultaneously, said submission date to be determined by the Court after consultation with all counsel. The right to submit a post-trial memorandum shall be deemed waived if not timely submitted to the Court. Said post-trial memoranda shall contain the following clearly delineated sections (as well as a table of contents):

- a) a chronological procedural history of the action, including copies of all relevant orders, written stipulations, and transcripts of stipulations placed on the record;
- b) **a clear and concise recitation** of the issues to be determined;
- c) an in depth summary of the testimony of each witness;
- d) a summary of the findings of any expert report received in evidence;
- e) a summary of the exhibits in evidence;
- f) a detailed recitation of counsel's contentions as to the testimony and exhibits in evidence; and
- g) applicable law.

Post-trial memoranda will be marked as Court Exhibits and shall be part of the record.

A copy of each side's, and if applicable, the child's and/or children's post trial brief shall be served on all other parties, simultaneous with such filing with the Court. Responses to the post-trial memoranda are prohibited and will not be considered. The Court is to be provided with the original of each post-trial memorandum.