

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF THE
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE OF THE COURTS

Pursuant to the authority vested in me, and with the advice and consent of the Administrative Board of the Courts, I hereby amend the preamble to section 202.70(g) of the Uniform Rules for the Supreme and County Courts (Preamble to the Rules of Practice for the Commercial Division), effective January 1, 2019, to read as follows (new material underlined; deleted material bracketed and stricken):

(g) Rules of practice for the Commercial Division

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~~[Preamble. The Commercial Division understands that the businesses, individuals and attorneys who use this Court have expressed their frustration with adversaries who engage in dilatory tactics, fail to appear for hearings or depositions, unduly delay in producing relevant documents, or otherwise cause the other parties in a case to incur unnecessary costs. The Commercial Division will not tolerate such practices. The Commercial Division is mindful of the need to conserve client resources, encourage proportionality in discovery, promote efficient resolution of matters, and increase respect for the integrity of the judicial process. Litigants and counsel who appear in this Court are directed to review the Rules regarding sanctions, including the provisions in Rule 12 regarding failure to appear at a conference, Rule 13(a) regarding adherence to discovery schedules, and Rule 24(d) regarding the need for counsel to be fully familiar with the case when making appearances. Sanctions are also available in this Court under Rule 3126 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules and Part 130 of the Rules of the Chief Administrator of the Courts. The judges in the Commercial Division will impose appropriate sanctions and other remedies and orders as is warranted by the circumstances. Use of these enforcement mechanisms enables the Commercial Division to function efficiently and effectively, and with less wasted time and expense for the Court, parties and counsel. Nothing herein is intended to expand or alter the scope and/or remedies available under the above-cited sanction rules.]~~

PREAMBLE

Created in 1995, today's Commercial Division of the New York State Supreme Court is an efficient, sophisticated, up-to-date court dealing with challenging commercial cases. From its inception, the Commercial Division has had as its primary goal the cost-effective, predictable and fair adjudication of complex commercial cases. By virtue of its specialized subject matter jurisdiction, exceptional judicial expertise, rules and procedures dedicated to commercial practice, and commitment to high standards of attorney professionalism, the Division has established itself at the forefront of worldwide commercial litigation in the twenty-first century.

(1) Jurisdiction and Judiciary

The subject matter jurisdiction of the Commercial Division – including both substantial monetary thresholds and carefully chosen case types (see §202.70[a] and [b]) – is designed to ensure that it is the forum of resolution of the most complex and consequential commercial matters commenced in New York’s courts. Accordingly, the Division’s judges are chosen for their extensive experience in resolving sophisticated commercial disputes. Unlike jurists in other civil parts in New York’s court system, Commercial Division justices devote themselves almost exclusively to these complex commercial matters.

(2) Rules and Procedures

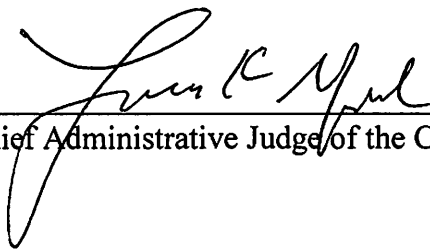
Since its inception, the Commercial Division has implemented rules, procedures and forms especially designed to address the unique problems of commercial practice. Such rules have addressed a wide range of matters such as proportionality in discovery, optional accelerated adjudication, robust expert disclosure, limits on depositions and interrogatories, streamlined privilege logs, special rules concerning entity depositions, model forms to facilitate discovery, expedited resolution of discovery disputes, simplification of bench trials, time limits on all trials, streamlined presentation of evidence at trials, and a strong commitment to early case disposition through the Division’s alternative dispute resolution program. Equally important, through the work of the Commercial Division Advisory Council – a committee of commercial practitioners, corporate in-house counsel and jurists devoted to the Division’s excellence – the Commercial Division has become a recognized leader in court system innovation, demonstrating an unparalleled creativity and flexibility in development of rules and practices.

(3) The Commercial Division Bar

Finally, the work of the Commercial Division has prospered through the strong cooperative spirit of the bar practicing before it. The subject matter jurisdiction of the court, the pace of high-stakes commercial practice, the sophistication of the judiciary and the specialized rules of the Division require that the practicing bar be held rigorously to a standard of commitment and professionalism of the highest caliber. For example, the failure to appear (or the appearance without proper preparation) at scheduled court dates, depositions or hearings is generally viewed as highly improper in the Commercial Division, and can readily result in the imposition of sanctions and penalties as permitted under statute and court rule (see, e.g., CPLR 3126; see also 22 NYCRR Part 130). At the same time, the Commercial Division’s judiciary is strongly committed to the ongoing development of New York’s commercial bar and, in that spirit, has instituted practices encouraging the participation of less experienced members of that bar in substantive and meaningful ways (including presentation of motions or examination of witnesses) in matters before it. In this manner, the Division seeks to ensure the continued development of the highest quality of commercial bar in New York State.

(4) Conclusion

“New York is the center of world commerce, the headquarters of international finance, the home of America’s leading businesses. As such, it strongly needs a modern, well-staffed, properly equipped forum for the swift, fair and expert resolution of significant commercial disputes.” In 1995, those words introduced the New York State Bar Association’s report proposing the creation of the Commercial Division (N.Y. St. Bar Ass’n, A Commercial Court For New York [Jan. 1995]). Since then, they have served as the central rationale for the Division’s commitment to excellence in the administration of the rule of law in business in New York. The practice rules of the Commercial Division, set forth below, are a crucial component of that commitment, and are designed to be a dynamic counterpart to the innovative and efficient business practices which are so essential to the economic health of our State and nation.



Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts

Date: November 19, 2018

AO/332/18