



**STATE OF FLORIDA  
NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA**

COUNTIES OF ORANGE AND OSCEOLA  
OSCEOLA COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
2 COURTHOUSE SQUARE, SUITE 6465  
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PATRICIA STROWBRIDGE  
Circuit Judge

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**Policies and Procedures for Unified Family Court Division 41  
Courtroom 4-C**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**The best way to reach the Judicial Assistant is by email.** For all attorney requests for hearing time, cancellation of hearing(s) and/or to obtain general information, please email the Judicial Assistant at the address listed above. Division 41 consists of all Dependency cases, Juvenile, and final hearings for uncontested dissolution of marriage and paternity cases regardless of the initial Division assignment. All domestic relations, juvenile delinquency and domestic violence, stalking, repeat violence, dating violence and sexual violence injunction cases with a related dependency case. As dependency and injunction matters are confidential cases, only limited information regarding these cases is provided. The Judicial Assistant may not provide any legal advice, answer questions or provide details regarding any case.

**ALL MOTIONS**

The original motion must be filed with the Clerk of Court. Do not send originals to chambers. **ALL** motions must contain the specific attorneys' names, **their position regarding the motion**, or that a response has not been received in a timely manner. The Court will not take action on motions that do not contain this information.

**If the motion is opposed, it requires hearing time.** It is the moving party's responsibility to coordinate hearing time on the docket. It is requested that you email a courtesy copy of motions to the Judicial Assistant, (copying opposing counsel) at the time you email the request to schedule hearing time. Please bring a proposed order to

the hearing. **DO NOT** send proposed orders to chambers prior to the scheduled hearing on opposed motions, unless requested to do so by the Judicial Assistant.

**For unopposed motions**, please submit a hard copy to the Court, including email confirmation from opposing counsel, clearly indicating that the motion is not opposed, along with the motion and the proposed order. When the order is signed in chambers, a scanned copy of the order will be emailed to all parties. A hard copy will not be mailed out unless a party is pro se. Therefore, unless a party is unrepresented, additional copies of the proposed order and self-addressed stamped envelopes are no longer needed. The certificate of service in the order must reflect copies by email with email addresses listed for all parties.

If the Court determines that a hearing is necessary, irrespective of the agreement of all parties, the Judicial Assistant will notify all parties to schedule a hearing

## **SCHEDULING MOTIONS FOR HEARING**

**\*\*NO HEARINGS WILL BE SET BY PHONE\*\***

### **For Dependency Cases:**

The original motion is to be filed with the Clerk's office as outlined in **ALL MOTIONS**. Available hearing time can be obtained by accessing the division's Judicial Automated Calendaring System (JACS) page located on the circuit's website [www.ninthcircuit.org](http://www.ninthcircuit.org). Once on the JACS page, from the drop down menu that starts with Business Court, scroll down until you see Osceola Dependency Division 41. Clicking the retrieve button will pull all available dates/times for hearing. Follow the directions on the JACS header for scheduling. Attorneys are responsible for coordinating motion hearings with each other. Once the hearing date/time has been coordinated, email the Judicial Assistant copying opposing counsel with the request and including a copy/copies of the motion(s). Hearing time will not be secured until you receive an email confirmation from the Judicial Assistant.

### **For Domestic and Delinquency Cases:**

The original motion is to be filed with the Clerk's office as outlined in **ALL MOTIONS**. Please email the Judicial Assistant to obtain available hearing times.

## **EMERGENCY MOTIONS**

Emergency motions, along with the proposed order, may be emailed to the Judicial Assistant and attorneys must email a courtesy copy to all opposing counsel. Please provide a detailed explanation as to the nature of the emergency. The motion will be reviewed by the Judge and once a decision has been made, the Judicial Assistant will

contact the parties. Please note that there is a difference between an “emergency” motion and a time-sensitive motion.

Emergency motions may be set for hearing with very little advance notice, or may be ruled on in chambers, therefore all counsel should attempt to quickly convey any opposition to the moving party or their counsel. Time-sensitive motions may be quickly scheduled by the Court in accordance with the needs of the case.

### **SHELTER HEARINGS**

Unless otherwise indicated by the Judge, all shelter hearings are held at 1:30 p.m. each day in Courtroom 4-C.

### **DETENTION HEARINGS**

Unless otherwise indicated by the Judge, Detention hearings in Division 41 will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Monday afternoons in Courtroom 4-C.

### **JUDICIAL REVIEW HEARINGS**

The Department is expected to have Judicial Review Reports filed at least 72 hours (or two full business days if hearing is on a Monday) prior to the scheduled hearing. A completed “Memorandum to the Court” shall be filed as a cover sheet to the report. The Department shall deliver a hard copy of the “Memorandum to the Court” to the Judicial Assistant at the time that the JR Report is filed. The Department shall provide copies of all updated compliance documents in their possession to the GAL attorney and the parents’ attorney(s) at least 72 hours prior to the hearing.

The GALP attorney is expected to file their report at least 72 hours (or two full business days if hearing is on a Monday) prior to the scheduled hearing. A hard copy of the GAL report shall be delivered to the Judicial Assistant at the time that the GAL Report is filed.

### **PRE-TRIAL**

All cases will be scheduled for a Pre-Trial Conference at least ten (10) days prior to the start of the trial period. Continued or rescheduled trials may be reset for a Pre-Trial Conference.

The parties may file either a Joint Pre-Trial Statement with one or more other parties, or may file an individual Pre-Trial Statement. All Pre-Trial Statements are to be filed and served on all parties at least 72 hours (or two full business days if Pre-Trial Conference is on a Monday) prior to the scheduled Pre-Trial Conference. All Pre-Trial Statements are to include a complete list of witnesses anticipated to be called, and a specific,

detailed list of exhibits. No witnesses will be permitted to testify if they were not disclosed in the Pre-Trial Statement, and no exhibits will be received into evidence if they were not disclosed in the Pre-Trial Statement. **A Motion for Continuance is not a substitute for a Pre-Trial Statement.** The attorney trying the case must appear for the Pre-Trial Conference unless leave of court has been obtained.

### **SUBMITTING ORDERS**

At the conclusion of evidentiary hearings, if the Court designates one of the attorneys to prepare a written order or judgment consistent with the Court's ruling, or a proposed order consistent with the position of that attorney, the attorney is expected to submit the order or judgment within five (5) business days of the hearing, unless otherwise directed by the Court.

### **CANCELLATION OF HEARINGS**

Please notify the Judicial Assistant promptly when there is a cancellation. It is the responsibility of the moving party to file a Notice of Cancellation with the Clerk of Court and to notify other parties of the cancellation.

### **REQUESTS FOR INTERPRETER**

If the Court will require an interpreter to speak to and understand your client, **please inform the Judicial Assistant of this at the time you schedule your hearing or at least two (2) business days prior to the scheduled time for Spanish interpreters and at least ten (10) business days for any language other than Spanish.** Osceola County has Spanish interpreters on staff but special arrangements need to be made for any other type of interpreter.

### **TRANSPORTATION OF INMATES**

If an inmate is incarcerated in the Osceola County Jail, they are automatically transported to the Courthouse for every hearing unless their parental rights have been terminated. If you do not need to have a parent transported for the hearing, please advise the Judicial Assistant by email **no later than 2:00 pm the day before the hearing.**

All inmates that are incarcerated out of county **must** have a transportation order so that they can be brought for their court hearing. Please submit a detailed Transport order to the Judge's office, stating the party's name, alias, inmate number (if known), date of birth and correctional facility where he/she is currently incarcerated. You must specify a date when the individual must be lodged in the Osceola County Jail and the date that the hearing is scheduled in the transportation order. **Transportation MUST have 14 days advance notice to transport an individual from another county.**

## ABSENCE FROM THE COURTROOM

All attorneys are required to give the Court advance notice of any absence from the courtroom, except in cases of emergency. Unless excused by the Court, cases are called as scheduled and the attorney is responsible for having coverage in any absence. Covering attorneys are expected to be familiar with the status of the case, and should have conferred with the client and/or counsel of record prior to the court proceeding.

## TELEPHONIC APPEARANCE

All requests for telephonic appearance must be coordinated with ALL other attorneys in the case. If the Court can accommodate, parties will be given permission to appear telephonically when they reside out of state, an emergency situation necessitates it (as determined by the Court), or when they are incarcerated and counsel of record has made arrangement for their telephonic appearance. Attorneys for parents and children are expected to physically appear for all hearings unless prior arrangements have been made with all other attorneys in the case, or they have been excused by the Court. Attorneys for DCF and the GAL Program are expected to physically appear for all hearings and will not be permitted to appear by phone unless prior approval has been obtained from the Court. As there is only one telephone line assigned to the courtroom, only one party may appear via telephone unless a conference call is made prior to calling the courtroom (if permitted by Judge). Attorneys who wish to appear by phone must insure that no other parties or witnesses will need to appear by phone also. Attorneys who do not conform to this procedure will be prohibited from appearing by telephone.

## CHILDREN IN COURT

### **Dependency Cases**

Children who are the subject of a dependency proceeding, and young adults under the continuing jurisdiction of the Dependency Court, **are permitted** to be present in the courtroom for all proceedings in their case, and shall not be excluded from proceedings unless good cause is shown to establish that their participation is not in their best interest, or they are too young to understand the proceedings.

If the child or young adult wishes to speak with the Judge regarding **any** issue in their case, the child or young adult can meet with the Judge immediately before or after the scheduled hearing. These meetings will be held in the courtroom and the courtroom will be cleared for the hearing. The JA should be notified, at least 24 hours prior to the hearing if the child or young adult desires to speak with the Court, when such advance notice can reasonably be given. The child or young adult can designate their Case

Manager, GAL, Caregiver or any other individual they wish to have with them, as a person permitted to remain in the courtroom for the meeting with the Judge. The designation of one individual to remain in the courtroom with the child or young adult, does not give any other individual a right to remain in the courtroom.

Any child or young adult who would benefit from the assistance of the Division's facility dog and/or an escort from Bikers Against Child Abuse will have their court appearance scheduled to accommodate the attendance of the facility dog and/or BACA.

### **Delinquency Cases**

Children who are the subject of a delinquency proceeding are expected to be present for any conferences, hearings or trials in their case, unless their appearance has been excused by the Court.

### **Domestic Relations and Injunction Cases**

No children are permitted to be present in the courtroom unless a motion has been filed requesting that the child be permitted to testify, that the child be granted an in camera meeting with the Judge, or when the Court has entered an Order requiring or permitting the presence of the child.

Please note: These procedures apply to **Judge Patricia Stowbridge** only. It is recommended that you refer to the procedure of each Judge or contact the Judicial Assistant in the division for instructions.