

152ND CIVIL DISTRICT COURT



JUDGE TAKASHA L. FRANCIS

152ND CIVIL DISTRICT COURT POLICIES **AND PROCEDURES**

Effective July 2025

(The following procedures are standard and may be updated or altered where appropriate, at the Court's discretion.)



Section One: OPENING STATEMENT

Welcome to the 152nd Civil District Court! These guidelines are established to ensure order, promote respect for the legal process, and facilitate the timely resolution of cases. Please also take note of the Local Rules for Harris County Civil Courts

<https://www.justex.net/info/21/8>

Each section is organized using legal terminology that reflects the rhythm of a trial—intentionally structured to align with the natural progression of a case from initiation to resolution. Each section is titled using legal or trial-related terms. That’s intentional. It reflects the natural flow of a civil case and helps organize the information in a way that’s both familiar and functional—moving from pre-trial matters through trial and beyond. This thematic approach is meant to help practitioners navigate the Court’s expectations in a familiar and accessible format.

Adherence to these procedures is essential to maintaining decorum and ensuring that the business of the Court is conducted with the highest level of professionalism. Your full cooperation is sincerely appreciated and will help support the fair, orderly, and efficient functioning of this Court. While these are the Court’s standard procedures, they may be updated or adjusted when necessary to meet the demands of the docket or to address specific circumstances.

I look forward to meeting and working with each of you who have matters before this Court. Let’s move cases forward with integrity and purpose—working together with respect for the process to ensure justice is served for all.

All the best,

TaKasha L. Francis

The Honorable TaKasha L. Francis

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Section Three: CALL TO ORDER

Courtroom Decorum and Professionalism

The 152nd Civil District Court is a place of justice, order, and respect. As a civil court, civility is not just expected—it is required. All attorneys, parties, witnesses, and observers must conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner to preserve the dignity of the proceedings and the integrity of the court.

General Conduct

- Upon entering the courtroom, all individuals must do so quietly and respectfully, as court may already be in session.
- Electronic devices, including cell phones and tablets, must be turned off or silenced before entry.
- Conversations should be minimal in the courtroom and the vestibule. If it is absolutely necessary to speak, please whisper and keep your voice low.

Courtroom Etiquette

- Stand when the judge or the jury enters or exits the courtroom.
- Stand when addressing the judge, and always request permission before approaching the bench or a witness.
- Do not interrupt opposing counsel, witnesses, or the Court at any time.
- You may examine witnesses from counsel's table or from the podium, at your discretion.

Professionalism at All Times

- All persons must address the Court, court staff, opposing counsel, witnesses, and each other with respect and professionalism at all times.
- Outrageous theatrics, tirades, or uncivilized behavior directed at anyone in the courtroom—including opposing counsel, witnesses, court staff, or the Court—will not be tolerated.
- All attendees must follow the directions of court staff, including the bailiff and clerk, to ensure the proceedings remain orderly and respectful.

Maintain your professionalism at all times—it reflects not only on you, but on the legal profession and the justice system as a whole.

Attire

All individuals appearing in court—whether in person or via video conference—are expected to dress in a manner that reflects the formality and respect due in a court of law.

For Attorneys and Legal Professionals:

- Business or professional attire is required.
- Men: Suit or dress slacks with a collared shirt and tie, or a blazer.
- Women: Business suits, dresses, or slacks/skirts with a blouse or blazer.
- No jeans, casual t-shirts, sneakers, or revealing clothing.

For Litigants, Witnesses, and Other Participants:

- Business casual at minimum (e.g., collared shirt or blouse, slacks or skirt).
- Clothing should be clean, neat, and free from offensive or distracting graphics or language.
- Hats, sunglasses, and head coverings are not allowed unless for religious or medical reasons.

Section Four: PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCE

Proper Spelling of the Presiding Judge’s Name

As a matter of professionalism and respect, all references to the Court should reflect the correct spelling of the presiding judge’s name:

The Honorable TaKasha L. Francis

(With a capital “K” — not “Takasha” or other variations.)

Please ensure accuracy in all filings, correspondence, and communications. Attention to this detail is appreciated.

Contacting the Court

For matters relating to filing documents or scheduling pre-trial matters such as hearings on motions, and case updates contact the clerk, Katina Williams at 832.927.2425

For matters relating to trials and scheduling of trials contact the trial coordinator, Nalani Callico at 832.927.2434.

Mandatory E-Filing

By order of the Supreme Court of Texas all courts are now mandatory E-File Court. All documents must be filed electronically with the Harris County District Clerk. Hand-delivered

or faxed documents delivered directly to the court will not be accepted. Please do not file courtesy copies of a motion/response unless the motion/response will be in the court's file in time for the court to review it.

Docket Control Order

Please adhere to the Docket Control Order (DCO) to ensure efficiency, prevent delays, and help the court manage cases effectively. No variances from the deadlines are allowed except by leave of court.

Case Inquiries

You may call the court to check on the status of rulings on motions. The district clerk will inform you of the court's rulings.

Referring Cases to Mediation

The Docket Control Order sets a date for the parties to submit the name of a mediator for the Court's consideration and for the completion of mediation. The parties may object to mediation by filing a motion and setting the motion for submission or an oral hearing. If the parties fail to comply with this order, the court may appoint a mediator.

Self-Represented Litigants

The Court recognizes that some individuals may choose to represent themselves in civil matters. While every party has the right to proceed without an attorney, self-represented litigants are held to the same laws, rules, deadlines, and evidentiary standards as licensed attorneys.

The Court cannot and will not provide legal advice, advocacy, or attorney referrals. Judicial ethics strictly prohibit the Court and its staff from:

- Offering legal strategy or opinions;
- Assisting in the drafting or filing of pleadings;
- Making recommendations about how to proceed in your case;
- Referring you to specific attorneys or law firms.

However, upon request, the Court may provide a list of neutral public legal resources to assist self-represented individuals in understanding the civil litigation process. These may include:

- Public legal aid organizations,
- Law libraries,
- Self-help legal centers,
- Online tools and resources provided by the State Bar of Texas or the Harris County District Clerk.

Disclaimer: These resources are provided strictly for informational purposes. Their inclusion does not constitute an endorsement or guarantee by the Court of any services or outcomes. The Court does not review or verify the quality of the services provided by any external entity.

Expectations for Self-Represented Litigants:

- You are responsible for complying with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, Texas Rules of Evidence, Harris County Local Rules, and all applicable court procedures and deadlines.
- Filings must be accurate, timely, and formatted in accordance with court rules.
- You are expected to act professionally and respectfully in court, with opposing counsel, and with court staff.
- The Court cannot waive requirements or extend leniency based on your lack of legal training.
- Missing deadlines or filing incorrect pleadings may result in dismissal or adverse rulings.

Self-representation is a serious undertaking. The Court encourages all parties, particularly in contested or complex cases, to consult with a licensed attorney when possible. To request public legal resources, please contact the Court Clerk. While the Court cannot provide legal advice, the Clerk may help direct you to publicly available tools or support services.

Section Five: MOTION PRACTICE

Motions/Orders

- Every motion must be set for consideration either by submission or by oral hearing unless it is an agreed or unopposed motion. Unopposed means that either opposing counsel or party was contacted and stated that they were not opposed to a particular motion. (*An attorney's motion to withdraw is an exception to this.*)
- When preparing motions, please clearly and concisely state the relief you are seeking and why you believe you are entitled to it, based on the applicable law and the record before the Court. Avoid unnecessary argumentation, personal attacks, or criticisms of opposing counsel. The Court values professionalism, clarity, and civility at all times.
- Always attach a proposed order whether you are the movant or nonmovant. The clerk will reject incomplete filings and they will not be reviewed.
- Exhibits must be filed separately from the lead document and labeled in proper alphabetical or numerical order (e.g., Exhibit A, Exhibit B, or Exhibit 1, Exhibit 2). ***Do not combine multiple exhibits into one file.*** Each exhibit must be uploaded as a separate PDF with a clear label. Filings that do not follow this format may be rejected or require correction.

Certificates of Conference

Both parties are **REQUIRED** to make reasonable effort to attempt to resolve the issue, in good faith, before filing any motion related to discovery. All discovery-related motions must include a Certificate of Conference that clearly states:

- The dates on which the parties conferred or attempted to confer;
- The methods of communication used (e.g., telephone call, email, in-person meeting);
- A summary of the efforts made and the outcome of those efforts.

The Court requires that parties make at least three (3) separate good faith attempts to resolve the issue using at least two (2) different forms of communication before filing a motion. The Court strongly encourages parties to confer in person or via video conference before seeking court intervention.

A generic certificate of conference stating that you sent a letter or email to opposing counsel or that you made a reasonable effort to confer with opposing counsel and he/she did not respond is improper.

Any discovery motion filed without a proper Certificate of Conference will not be accepted or considered for hearing.

Motions for Continuances and Requests to Modify Docket Control Order

Requests for continuances and motions to modify docket control orders are not automatic and will be reviewed closely by the Court. These requests must demonstrate good cause and comply with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. A signed order is required before any continuance or schedule change is considered granted. All requests must be made by written motion that clearly states:

- The reason for the continuance or requested modification;
- The applicable rule(s); and
- The proposed new dates or deadlines.

If the request is agreed, a signed motion must be filed with the proposed amended docket control order attached.

The Court will not favorably consider:

- Delay caused by failure to act timely in discovery;
- Lack of cooperation between parties;
- Failure to comply with the Court's prior orders; or
- Mere agreement between the parties without a valid reason for the change.

The fact that parties agree does not, by itself, justify modifying the Court's schedule. Counsel are expected to manage their cases diligently and meet all deadlines unless a clear and timely showing of good cause is made.

Motions for Summary Judgment

Motions can be set on the submission docket at 8:00 a.m. on the first Monday following 21 days following filing the motion. Requests for oral hearing on motions for summary judgment on the

submission docket must be filed with the court no later than ten (10) days before the submission date to ensure the court has time to schedule it.

No requests for oral hearing on the date of submission will be granted.

All responses and exhibits must be filed with the court at least seven days before the hearing or submission date. Anything filed within seven (7) days of the hearing will not be considered without leave of court and only for extenuating circumstances.

When proving damages in a motion for summary judgment, show the court how you calculated the damage figure and provide the corresponding evidence to support your calculation. When proving attorney's fees in a motion for summary judgment, in your affidavit provide the court with evidence to support your claim for reasonable and necessary attorney's fees. At a minimum you should show (1) your experience, (2) the work you did on the lawsuit, (3) how long it took you to do it and (4) your hourly rate.

Motions to Dismiss/Nonsuit

File motions to dismiss/nonsuit with an order. No hearing is required.

Motions to Withdraw as Attorney of Record

Motions to withdraw as attorney of record require strict compliance with Rule 10 of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure and **MUST** include the most recent home and business telephone numbers and email addresses for the pro se party (ies). Notice or delivery to a party shall be either made to the party in person or mailed to the party's last known address by both certified and regular first-class mail. The Court requires proof of notice to the party to be filed as an exhibit to this motion. Motions, regardless of whether they are agreed to by opposing counsel, must be set for submission or oral hearing with notice to the client. Motions to withdraw are generally not granted if filed within sixty (60) days of a dispositive event such as a trial setting or a hearing on a motion for summary judgment. If the withdrawing attorney represents a corporation, he/she must notify the corporate party that corporations cannot proceed pro se in Texas courts, and that if the corporation has not obtained counsel within thirty (30) days of the order of withdrawal, either its claims may be dismissed if it is the plaintiff, or the pleadings struck and a default judgment may be entered if it is the defendant.

Substitution or Appearance of Counsel

If you are an attorney substituting in on a case or making a new appearance, you must file the appropriate motion or notice of appearance with the Court.

Simply signing and filing a pleading does not constitute proper notification and will not allow the clerks to accurately record your appearance or update court records.

To avoid delays or missed communications, ensure that your appearance is formally entered through the correct filing procedure.

Motions to Sever

The party requesting the severance must identify all pleadings that need to be transferred to the new file. You must obtain certified copies of all pleadings. Coordinate with the clerk on the procedure. A less cumbersome and less expensive alternative in some cases is to ask for abatement of one cause of action or separate trial on a cause of action.

Motions for Default Judgment

If you are filing a motion for default judgment—whether for oral hearing or submission—you must include all required evidentiary documents with your motion. Documents must be filed together, properly labeled in alphabetical or numerical order, and complete.

The following must be submitted with your motion:

- The proposed default judgment;
- The certificate of last known address;
- The affidavit or proof of service;
- The service member's military status affidavit, along with the supporting printout verifying the individual's military status (e.g., from the Department of Defense website);
- Evidence of damages, including: Affidavits, Contracts or agreements, Business record affidavits, and the actual bills or invoices supporting the claimed damages.

If the type of default judgment you are seeking requires notice to the defaulting party, you must also file as evidence, a copy of the notice letter, and proof of delivery. Do not rely on the Court to search prior filings. Incomplete motions may be denied or reset without further notice.

Default judgments asking for liquidated damages can be set for submission or oral hearing. Default judgments asking for unliquidated damages require an oral hearing.

When proving damages in a motion for default judgment, show the court how you calculated the damage figure and provide evidence to support your calculation.

When proving attorney's fees in a motion for default judgment, in your affidavit provide the court with evidence to support your claim for reasonable and necessary attorney's fees. At a minimum you should show (1) your experience, (2) the work you did on the lawsuit, (3) how long it took you to do it and (4) your hourly rate.

A default judgment will not be granted without corresponding evidence or witness testimony to support the claims made in the case whether by submission or oral hearing.

Agreed Protective Orders

An Agreed Protective Order which contains a provision that states that any documents filed in the records of the court shall be sealed and not open for viewing by the general public must be changed in order to comply with Rule 76a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. The Agreed Protective Order must contain the following paragraph or something similar to it:

“The party seeking to maintain the confidentiality of a document containing confidential information shall, within 30 days from the date the document containing confidential information is filed in the court records, file a motion in compliance with Rule 76a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, provide all notices required by Rule 76a and set the motion for an oral hearing on the earliest available date.”

If such a motion is not filed by the 30th day after the document containing confidential information is filed in the court records, then the confidential information shall no longer remain sealed and will be open for full viewing by the general public.

Motions for Substitute Service

Motions for substitute service under Rule 106 should be filed promptly once it's clear that personal service cannot be reasonably accomplished after diligent effort. All motions must be filed with the attached standing order. Do not make any changes to the attached order without permission from the Court.

All motions must be accompanied by a detailed affidavit that includes **RECENT** efforts taken to verify that defendant actually lives or works at the subject address. You must make at least six attempts of service at different times of day with the specific dates and times when a working person would most likely be home, include the identity of person(s) present at the subject address and what was said, the identity of the owners of any cars in the driveway or other indications that defendant resides at the subject address. Motions for substituted service must include evidence demonstrating diligent efforts to locate the defendant and confirm their most recent address. This may involve searches using LexisNexis Accurant, CLEAR, or TLOxp, along with public records such as voter registration, property tax, and driver's license records.

Also required is a printout of the public record or online database, confirming the most recent address referenced in your affidavit. Failure to meet these requirements will result in denial of your motion. ***Please utilize the Court's standing order for Rule 106 motions on the Court's main website page.***

Setting Motions for Submission or Oral Hearing

Submission

Motions may be considered by written submission. Motions shall state Monday at 8:00 a.m. following ten (10) days as the date for written submission. This date shall be at least ten (10) days from filing, except on leave of court. When setting hearings for submission, or oral dockets, please state the date the motion you are referring to was filed with the Court in your motion for easier reference.

Responses and hearing requests shall be filed at least three (3) working days before the date of submission, except on leave of court. Any responses filed outside of this time frame will not be considered. Hearing requests filed for motions for summary judgment on the date of submission will not be considered.

Oral Hearings

Oral hearings are heard on the court's Law Day Docket, every Thursday with settings at 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 11:00 a.m., unless otherwise scheduled. Please contact the court clerk to request an oral hearing, and the clerk will assist with scheduling.

The 152nd Civil District Court conducts docket call promptly at the scheduled time. All attorneys and self-represented litigants are expected to be present and ready to proceed.

If you are scheduled to appear in multiple courts at the same time, please check in with the Court's clerk **before the docket begins** to advise of the conflict and your estimated time of arrival. You may check in in person, by email, or by phone—but you must also leave a mobile number where you can be reached. The Court will make reasonable efforts to accommodate conflicting appearances when timely notice is provided. If you fail to check in or cannot be reached, your matter may be passed or reset at the Court's discretion, or other appropriate action may be taken.

If you anticipate needing an oral hearing, please do not wait until the last minute to make your request. The Court limits the number of hearings it schedules per hour during its Thursday docket, so please plan accordingly.

If your motion involves evidence, testimony, or complex legal issues requiring extended argument, you must request a special setting that allows for adequate time outside the standard Law Day docket. The Court will make every effort to schedule your matter based on its availability, but settings are considered in light of the Court's broader docket, including pending trials, submissions, and already-scheduled hearings. Timely requests allow for more flexibility.

If you need to reschedule or pass a hearing that's set on the Law Day docket or any other scheduled date, you must notify the clerk as soon as possible by both phone call and email.

Prompt notice helps the Court manage its docket efficiently and may allow another matter to be heard in your place.

Remote Court Appearances via Zoom

The Court permits remote appearances by Zoom on a case by case basis, and is not automatically approved. Witness, parties, lawyers, etc., may no longer routinely appear by Zoom (or other remote means), absent prior consent or order from the Court.

Telephone or video conferences are handled by the court staff to accommodate counsel in special circumstances. Arrangements can be made for lawyers to appear at non-evidentiary hearings by telephone or by video when approved.

For remote participation, remote hearing requests must be submitted in writing to the Court Clerk no later than fourteen (14) days before the scheduled hearing. Last-minute requests for Zoom hearings will not be considered, except in extraordinary circumstances.

The written request must include a brief explanation for the request and the name(s) of the party(ies) or witness(es) who will appear remotely. Do not assume approval simply because a request was sent. If you do not receive confirmation that your request has been approved, you are expected to appear in person.

Each individual participant must be approved separately; one person's approval does not extend to others in the case.

Approved participants are responsible for ensuring:

- A stable internet connection (for Zoom),
- Access to the required technology and software, and
- A quiet, professional environment suitable for court.
- Wearing appropriate attire per the Court's guidelines.

Failure to follow this procedure may result in the hearing being reset, delayed, or denied.

Expedited Hearings

For expedited or emergency hearings, you may contact the court staff by telephone or make your request in writing. The court will review and make determinations on a case by case basis.

Dismissal for Want of Prosecution (DWOP) /Motions to Retain

If you receive notice that a case is set for dismissal for want of prosecution (DWOP), please adhere to the instructions and deadlines stated in the notice.

Parties may file a Motion to Retain in accordance with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure and the Harris County Local Rules. The motion must be filed before the deadline and should be set

either for submission or oral hearing. However, the filing of a motion to retain does not guarantee that the motion will be granted.

The Court reviews these motions carefully, considering the overall activity and progress in the case. Importantly, the Court expects all parties to participate in the timely disposition of cases. Continued inactivity, lack of discovery, or failure to comply with deadlines or docket control orders may result in dismissal, even if a motion to retain has been filed.

Status Conferences

To request a status conference, counsel should contact the Court's clerk by sending a letter to the Court or an email, and follow up with a phone call to confirm receipt. The request must include a brief explanation of the reason for the conference so the Court can evaluate whether a status setting is appropriate. Unless otherwise directed, status conferences will be scheduled to occur remotely via Zoom.

Court -Appointed Officers

(Guardians/Attorneys Ad Litem, Mediators, and Receivers)

Guardians/Attorneys Ad Litem

Appointments of guardians/attorneys ad litem, mediators, and receivers are made solely at the discretion of the Court. To maintain impartiality and preserve the integrity of the process, please refrain from recommending specific individuals in motions or requests for these appointments. The Court will handle the selection and appointment process. If there is a need for language translation please indicate this in your motion.

Once a guardian/attorney ad litem is appointed by court order, the party or parties involved are responsible for initiating contact with the ad litem promptly—preferably within three (3) business days of the appointment. The Court expects timely communication to allow the ad litem to fulfill their duties efficiently and avoid unnecessary delays in the progress or resolution of the case. Ad litem are also expected to be responsive upon being contacted.

Appointment process: If you seek civil **ATTORNEY AD LITEM** appointments, please visit the following link on the Harris County District Courts website:

<https://www.justex.net/info/23/95>.

Attorneys interested in being considered for **GUARDIAN AD LITEM** appointments should submit a formal letter of interest to the Court, along with a current résumé, curriculum vitae, or other documentation reflecting their relevant experience and qualifications. Please note that submission does not guarantee placement or appointment; it simply provides the Court with notice of your interest and background for future consideration.

Duties: As a part of their duties, guardians/attorney's ad litem are required to maintain a detailed time and expense record throughout the course of their appointment. Ad litem must

file a report of their recommendations, and a time and expense report prior to the minor settlement hearing. The record should include the date of each task, a brief description of the work performed, the time spent, and the applicable hourly rate. Ad litem are encouraged to use the sample time and expense report provided by the Court below, or submit a comparable format that clearly outlines their work and associated fees. ***Please utilize the Court's standing order for the Ad Litem Recommendation and Fee Report on the Court's main website page.***

This documentation is necessary to support any request for compensation and ensure transparency in the fee approval process. Fees are determined based on the ad litem's level of experience, the nature and extent of the work performed, the actual hours expended, and the complexity of the matter involved. The parties are encouraged to reach an agreement on the ad litem's fee. If an agreement cannot be reached, the court will assess the fee based upon the criteria listed above.

Proposed minor settlement orders, ad litem recommendation report, and expense report must be pre-filed at least 72 hours before the hearing or the case may be passed or reset. Orders must be properly formatted and reflect the relief sought.

For settlements involving annuities, if the Next Friend seeks to modify or access funds before the annuity takes effect, they must seek leave of Court and present at least three (3) factoring companies for review. All orders must include the following:

"It is further ordered that if the Next Friend of Minor _____ seeks to return to the Court at a time or date prior to the annuity described in this order taking effect, the Next Friend and Minor _____ shall seek leave of Court and appear before this Court with at least three (3) factoring companies for the Court to review and consider as part of the Court's determination of Minor _____ best interests findings."

The Court will review all proposed annuity modifications to ensure they serve the minor's best interests.

Mediators/Receivers

Appointments of mediators and receivers are made solely at the discretion of the Court. The Court welcomes reasonable agreements between the parties regarding the selection of a mediator or receiver under certain circumstances, if presented or requested. If the parties wish for a specific individual to be considered as a mediator or receiver, they should make a request for the Court to approve that person in the motion and proposed order—rather than simply naming the individual as if the appointment is automatic. The Court will review the request and determine whether the appointment is appropriate. All requests should be properly filed, and informal or off-the-record recommendations are discouraged to ensure fairness.

Appointment process: Attorneys or professionals who are interested in being considered for appointment as a mediator or receiver in the 152nd Civil District Court may submit a formal

letter of interest to the Court. The letter should be accompanied by a current résumé or curriculum vitae that outlines relevant experience, certifications, and qualifications for serving in the requested capacity. This submission does not guarantee placement on any appointment list, but all submissions will be considered.

Courtesy Copies

Do not provide a courtesy copy of motions or copies of cases attached to briefs/motions without first contacting the court to see if one is needed. For appellate matters such as petitions for writ of mandamus, if you are required to serve copies on the Court, please do so on a USB flash drive.

Section Six: CALL TO TRIAL

Setting a Case for Trial

Once an answer is filed the court will issue a Docket Control Order with a trial setting. If a case is not reached, the case will be reset for a later date available on the court's docket.

Preferential Trial Settings

A request for a preferential trial setting is considered on a case by case basis, and rarely granted unless there are extremely unusual circumstances.

Assignment for Trial and Court Notification

Please do not need to come to the courthouse for trial until you are specifically called and assigned by the Court's trial coordinator. A case is officially set for trial only when you receive direct notice from the Court to appear and begin the trial on the merits. You will be contacted at least 24 hours before the day your trial is expected to begin.

You can check your docket position anytime using the Trial Docket Inquiry on the Court's website. It is advisable to check frequently, as positions change daily due to settlements or resets.

If your case is called to trial, you are expected to appear as instructed. If you are unable to proceed, it is your responsibility to promptly notify the Court. Failure to do so may prevent another case from being reached and result in avoidable disruption to the docket.

Trial Preparation Orders (i.e. Exhibit Lists, Motions in Limine, Deposition Offers, Proposed Jury Charges, etc.)

A trial preparation order is sent to all counsel or pro se parties approximately 30 days before trial. The trial preparation order requires the parties to file, among other things, exhibit lists, motions in limine, witness lists, deposition offers and draft jury charges or findings of fact and conclusions of law. All trial preparation information must be filed at least two weeks before the trial date.

Pre-Trial Conference

A pre-trial conference is held at the time of trial, unless otherwise scheduled. At that time the court will review, among other things, the motions in limine, exhibit lists and objections to deposition offers. If the parties believe more than an hour or so is needed for the pre-trial conference, contact the trial coordinator so additional time can be scheduled.

Exhibits and Exhibit lists

Exhibit lists should be exchanged and exhibits made available for review and copying before appearing for the pre-trial conference. At the pre-trial conference the parties need to be able to inform the court which trial exhibits can be pre-admitted. Please provide a hard copy to the Judge and the court reporter with the following requirements:

- Exhibits, whether admitted in person or via Zoom, should be printed on one side, marked with numbers only, and placed in a 3-ring binder, along with a USB. This helps maintain consistency in the trial record and ensures clarity during presentation of the evidence. If admitted via Zoom, please have them sent to the court reporter, Ms. Cantrece Addison, via courier, no later than two days after admission and advise the Reporter that they have been sent by email at Cantrece_Addison@justex.net.
- A copy of any PowerPoint presentations and/or case law should be given to the court reporter at the same time they are handed to the Court.
- If daily copies or expedited transcripts will be requested of the court reporter, notice should be given to the court reporter as soon as possible before the start of the hearing or trial, so that the reporter may prepare appropriately. Please contact the court reporter at Cantrece_Addison@justex.net.

Motions in Limine

Motions in limine must be exchanged and reviewed prior to the pre-trial conference. Do not duplicate or restate items already covered in the Court's standing order in limine, which applies to all cases. Instead, limit your motion to matters that are fact-specific and relevant to the unique issues in your case. ***Please utilize the Court's Standing Order in Limine on the Court's main website page before preparing and submitting your motion.***

Deposition Offers

If you intend to offer portions from video depositions at trial, you must get rulings on any objections at least one day before the day you intend to play the video deposition so that each side can get their respective offers edited. If you intend to offer a video deposition on the first day of trial, you must inform the court coordinator of this so arrangements can be made to obtain rulings on any objections to the depositions prior to the first day of trial.

Submission of Proposed Jury Charges and Findings of Fact & Conclusions of Law

Jury Trials: Proposed Jury Charge

For all jury trials, the proposed jury charge must be prepared, filed, exchanged, and emailed to the Court at least five (5) days before trial. Proposed charges should:

- Be tailored to the specific claims, defenses, and issues in the case;
- Be submitted in editable format (such as Microsoft Word); and
- Be emailed to the Court Coordinator, Nalani Calico in editable format.

Bench Trials: Proposed Findings of Fact & Conclusions of Law

In non-jury trials, parties are encouraged to prepare and submit proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law at or before the start of trial, and email them to Nalani Calico in editable format.

Courtroom Technology

The courtroom is equipped with technology to support your presentation of evidence, including laptop connections, DVD capability, and a document camera. A chart stand, easel, and projector are also available for your use. No prior arrangements are required to use the Court's equipment.

However, counsel is strongly advised not to wait until the first day of trial to get familiar with the setup. You should contact the Court's clerk in advance to schedule a time to come in and test your devices. It's highly recommended that you test compatibility with the Court's audio-visual system before trial to avoid unnecessary delays once proceedings begin.

Challenge to Experts

The deadline to challenge expert witnesses is clearly stated in the Docket Control Order. Waiting until the day of trial to file a challenge will not be considered. Expert challenges should be resolved early enough to allow the opposing party—if their expert is excluded—a reasonable opportunity to designate a replacement without needing to seek a continuance. The Court expects all parties to manage expert issues proactively and in compliance with applicable deadlines.

Trial Disclosure/Production Disputes

If a dispute arises during trial about what was or was not disclosed in discovery, you will be expected to have your full discovery responses on hand. This includes responses to interrogatories, requests for disclosure, requests for production, and requests for admissions. Be prepared—do not assume the Court or opposing counsel will have copies of your discovery.

Voir Dire

The amount of time allowed for voir dire will depend on the complexity of the case and the Court's docket availability. Time limits will be discussed with counsel before trial begins. While the Court is committed to ensuring parties have meaningful time for voir dire, it will not allow the process to be unnecessarily prolonged. Be efficient and purposeful with your questions.

Counsel may state general contentions, but arguing the facts of the case during voir dire is not permitted.

If you are requesting the use of a written jury questionnaire, all parties must agree to the questions in advance. The request should be made before the pretrial conference to allow adequate time for consideration.

Challenges for cause will be heard at the bench, outside the presence of the panel, after voir dire concludes.

Section Seven: CLOSING STATEMENT

Thank you for taking the time to review the 152nd Civil District Court's Policies and Procedures. These guidelines are intended to foster professionalism, ensure procedural fairness, and maintain the integrity of the court process from start to finish.

As each section has reflected, legal matters move in rhythm—with structure, order, and purpose. Whether you are preparing a motion, setting a case for trial, or participating in a hearing, these procedures exist to support both clarity and civility in your practice before this Court.

Everyone who enters this courtroom—parties, attorneys, witnesses, and observers—is expected to contribute to the fair and efficient administration of justice. Respect for the law, the process, and each other is not optional—it is foundational.

The Court reserves the right to revise or supplement these procedures as necessary to reflect best practices and to meet the needs of the docket.

Thank you for your attention to these expectations and for your commitment to the just resolution of every case brought before this Court.