

Alison Kerestes
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State of Florida
Ninth Judicial Circuit of Florida

Division 44 Judicial Practices and Procedures
(last modified April 24, 2025)

WebEx Link: <https://ninthcircuit.webex.com/meet/44orange>

PLEASE NOTE: These procedures only apply to Judge Alison Kerestes in Division 44. Where a [Ninth Circuit Administrative Order](#) or the [Florida Family Law Rules](#) conflict with these Practices and Procedures, the Admin Order or Rule will control. Please read these rules in their entirety. If you have questions not answered below, please inquire via the [division email](#).

CONTACT: The division email should be used for all hearing requests or other matters. You must copy opposing counsel and self-represented litigants on all correspondence to the Judicial Assistant (JA). The division email is:
44orange@ninthcircuit.org

SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS: Please review [Administrative Order 2017-08-01](#), which establishes procedures for self-represented litigants in the Domestic Relations Division. The judge and JA cannot provide legal advice regarding your case. If you need additional assistance and cannot afford to hire an attorney, please contact the [Orange County Bar Association](#), [Community Legal Services](#), [Family Court Case Management](#), [the Self-Help Center](#), or [Legal Aid](#). The [Family Court Case Management Office](#) has an [online form](#) for self-represented litigants to request assistance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Additional information, resources, and forms can be found at the following links:

[Judge Alison Kerestes](#)
[Judge Kerestes' Ninth Circuit Page](#)
[Judge Kerestes' aiCalendar Online Docket](#)
[Ninth Circuit Administrative Orders](#)
[Family Law Forms](#)
[Ninth Circuit Family Court Case Management Services](#)
[Domestic Violence Resources](#)

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A. Communications with the Judicial Office

- **Method of Communication:**

- ☐ Division E-mail

- ☐ All communications to the judicial office must be submitted by e-mail to the [division email](#). The subject line of any e-mail to the judicial office must contain the case number, case name, and relevant matter (e.g., 2024-DR-001234-O – Doe v. Doe – 2-Hour Hearing Requested).

- ☐ Telephone

- ☐ Self-represented litigants and attorneys excused from e-mail service may communicate with the judicial office by telephone call to (407) 836-4502. The judicial office does not accept text messages.

- **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:**

- ☐ Parties may only contact the judicial office in accordance with these Practices and Procedures. Unsolicited communications from non-parties will not be considered by the court.

- **E-Filing Portal Contact Information:**

- ☐ All attorneys and self-represented litigants must make and receive service by e-mail, which is generally through the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, unless excused. [Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.516](#).
- ☐ 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 12.915](#) 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.
- ☐ The judicial assistant strives to substantively respond to all inquiries within one business day. If the judicial assistant is unable to substantively respond within one business day, your message will be acknowledged as received with an indication of when to expect a substantive response and alternate contact for immediate assistance.
- ☐ When the judicial assistant is out of the office, your message will be acknowledged as received with an indication of when to expect a substantive response and an alternate contact for immediate assistance.

- **Other Communication Procedures:**

- ☐ Any e-mail sent to or from the judicial office may be a public record subject to disclosure.

B. Scheduling Procedures

- **Court Schedule:**

- ☐ Four judges are currently assigned to Domestic Violence Injunctions (DV) and related Domestic Relations (DR) cases. The judges rotate through the courtrooms on a four-week rotation. Below is a description of what is heard in each courtroom.

- ☐ **Courtroom 16-A Injunction Compliance Hearings:**

- ☐ Compliance hearings are scheduled on Wednesday mornings.
- ☐ The Court unilaterally sets all Injunction Compliance Hearings. They may be held virtually or in person, so check your Order Setting Compliance Hearing for information on how to appear. Compliance hearings are set following the entry of an Injunction or at a prior Compliance Hearing. Cases requiring a Spanish interpreter are heard on Wednesdays between 11 am and noon. For all languages, please notify the JA via the [division email](#) if an interpreter is needed.
- ☐ If you are scheduled for a Compliance Hearing and have proof of compliance to submit to the court, please email it to InjunctionsOrange@ocnjcc.org at least seven (7) business days before the hearing date.
- ☐ **Courtroom 16-B Injunction Return Hearings:**
 - ☐ Monday – Thursday at 8:30 am, 10:00 am, 1:00 pm, and 2:00 pm; Fridays 8:30 am and 10:00 am (as needed)
 - ☐ Return Hearings are the final hearing on a Petition for Injunction, where the Court determines whether a Final Judgment of Injunction will be entered. All return hearings are held in person. You may request permission for a witness, party, or attorney to appear virtually via Motion. The e-filed Motion and proposed Order must be sent to the [division email](#) at least one business day before the hearing. Cases requiring a Spanish interpreter are heard on Thursdays. If your case requires a Spanish interpreter and is not currently set for a Thursday, please notify the JA via the [division email](#). For all languages, please notify the JA by via the [division email](#) if an interpreter is needed.
- ☐ **Courtroom 16-C Domestic Relations Cases:**
 - ☐ Hearing time availability can be viewed on the [aiCalendar Online Docket](#). However, due to the four-week rotation and the complexity of the calendar, the best practice is to request hearing time via the [division email](#). To search availability on [aiCalendar](#), it is suggested that you click on “[Available Hearings](#)” and then toggle to view the “[Weekly Docket](#).”
 - ☐ Parties and attorneys may appear virtually for non-evidentiary hearings of less than 30 minutes by agreement or Motion/Order. Please see the Remote Appearances section below for more guidance

on appearing virtually.

- ☐ The Court does not provide interpreters for DR cases. If an interpreter is needed, you must bring your own.

☐ **Courtroom 16-D Miscellaneous DV Hearings:**

- ☐ Longer or special set return hearings and other miscellaneous motions in DV cases are heard this week. Hearing time availability can be viewed on the [aiCalendar Online Docket](#). However, due to the four-week rotation and the complexity of the calendar, the best practice is to request hearing time via the [division email](#). It is suggested that you click on [“Available Hearings”](#) and then toggle to view the [“Weekly Docket.”](#)
- ☐ Parties and attorneys may appear virtually for non-evidentiary hearings of 30 minutes or less by agreement or Motion/Order. Please see the Remote Appearances section below for more information on appearing virtually.
- ☐ Cases requiring a Spanish interpreter are heard on Wednesday afternoons. For all languages, please notify the JA by emailing the [division email](#) if an interpreter is needed.

• **Scheduling Hearings:**

- ☐ Hearings must be requested via the [division email](#).
- ☐ Counsel shall comply with [Administrative Order 2014-19](#) before coordinating a hearing. Specifically, the hearing coordination and “meet and confer” portions of the Admin Order must be met before scheduling a hearing. Additionally, mediation is required before seeking temporary relief or setting a case for trial in a DR case. Please see the Pretrial Procedures and Conferences section below for additional information.
- ☐ The judge will review requests for hearing time, and an Order may be entered without a hearing. If either side receives an Order contrary to their position, you may file a timely Motion for Reconsideration.
- ☐ Once you have satisfied the “meet and confer” requirement, obtain hearing time availability. Hearing time availability can be viewed on the [aiCalendar Online Docket](#). However, due to the four-week rotation and the calendar’s complexity, the best practice is to request hearing time via the [division email](#).

- ☐ Next, coordinate your hearing with opposing counsel or self-represented litigant. Please refer to [Administrative Order 2014-19](#) for guidance where the opposing counsel or self-represented litigant fails to “meet and confer,” does not respond, or refuses to coordinate the hearing.
- ☐ Finally, email the [division email](#) to reserve the hearing time. Please attach an e-filed copy of the relevant Motion to your request. You must copy opposing counsel or self-represented litigant on all correspondence to the [division email](#). If any party or attorney wishes to appear virtually, please refer to the instructions on Remote Appearances before scheduling your hearing. Please include the following information in your request:
 1. Case Number
 2. Both Petitioner’s and Respondent’s Name and Attorneys’ Name(s)
 3. Title of Motion and Date Filed
 4. Date, Time, and Length of Time Being Requested
 5. Whether the Hearing is Evidentiary (Testimony or Evidence Expected)
 6. Certificate of Compliance with “Meet and Confer” and Hearing Coordination Requirements in [Administrative Order 2014-19](#)
 7. Requests or Agreements to Appear Virtually
 8. If DV, Whether an Interpreter is Needed, and Language Requested
 9. Whether any Party is in Jail and Needs to be Transported to Court
- ☐ All hearings, including ex/parte short matters, must be confirmed by the JA to appear on the docket. Once the hearing is confirmed, the Court shall enter an Order Setting Hearing. Cross-notices are not permitted without the agreement of the opposing side and approval from the Court.
- ☐ **Ex Parte/Short Matters:**
 - ☐ Ex parte and short matters are typically held virtually via [WebEx](#) on most Tuesdays and Thursdays. This may be used for uncontested matters such as Motions to Withdraw, Uncontested Final Hearings, Agreed Orders, Motions to Continue, and matters involving legal arguments of 15 minutes or less. Hearings requiring testimony, evidence, or more lengthy argument are not appropriate. If you intend to hire a court reporter or appear in person, the matter is not appropriate to be heard on the ex parte docket.
 - ☐ Request via the [division email](#) to confirm available ex parte dates and coordinate a date with opposing counsel or self-represented litigants. Include an e-filed copy of the Motion and a Word copy of the proposed Order. Once you have coordinated a date, confirm the date and time via the [division email](#). If unable to coordinate the date with opposing

counsel or self-represented litigant, detail your efforts to coordinate the hearing when you confirm the hearing time. The Court will enter an Order Setting Hearing once the date is confirmed.

- ☐ Note: Many issues can be ruled upon in Chambers without a hearing. Before setting the hearing, you may inquire via the [division email](#) whether a hearing is required.

- **Notice of Hearing:**

- ☐ Due to the high frequency of self-represented litigants and the sensitive nature of DV cases, the Court typically enters an Order Setting Hearing rather than requiring a Notice of Hearing to be filed by the litigants or attorneys.

- **Submission Deadlines:**

- ☐ Where you desire to submit pleadings, courtesy copies, or case law to the court in advance of a hearing, the court must receive all materials for the hearing no later than three (3) business days before the hearing.

- **Order of Proceedings:**

- ☐ Matters will be heard in the order in which they appear on the docket.

- **Continuance Procedure:**

- ☐ Motions for continuance are disfavored and will be granted only upon good cause shown. Successive continuances are highly disfavored. Lack of due diligence is not grounds for granting a continuance. 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\(e\)](#).
- ☐ Motions for continuance must be submitted at least three (3) days prior to the scheduled court date for which the continuance is sought, barring exigent circumstances.
- ☐ Motions for continuance must state with specificity: (1) the basis of the need for the continuance, including when the basis became known to the movant; (2) whether the motion is opposed; (3) the action and specific dates for the action that will enable the movant to be ready, including, but not limited to, confirming the specific date any required participants are available; and (4) the proposed date by which the case will be ready to proceed and whether that date is agreed by all parties.

- ☐ If the opposing side objects to the continuance or you cannot obtain their position, the Motion should be set for hearing before the time the hearing or trial is scheduled where feasible. Motions to Continue may be set on the ex parte/short matters docket. If no earlier hearing time is available, the Motion will be heard when the hearing or trial is scheduled. A new hearing or trial time will be set if the continuance is granted. If the continuance is denied, the scheduled hearing or trial will proceed.

- **Cancelling Hearings:**

- ☐ To request the cancellation of a hearing, email your request to the [division email](#) before the hearing date (whenever possible). If no confirmation of the cancellation is received from the JA, the parties are expected to appear on the date and time the hearing is scheduled. The parties may not unilaterally cancel a hearing or trial but must obtain approval from the Court or appear as scheduled.

C. Remote Appearance

- **Remote Appearance Procedure:**

- ☐ The court maintains a hybrid virtual courtroom, allowing parties to appear either in person or remotely, as provided by [Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530](#).
- ☐ Generally, certain hearings are eligible for remote appearance. These include non-evidentiary hearings that are 30 minutes or less. “Non-evidentiary” means there will be little to no testimony, and nothing will be entered into evidence.

- **Platform Used:**

- ☐ The court uses [WebEx](#) for remote appearances.

- **Platform Meeting ID#:**

- ☐ WebEx Link: <https://ninthcircuit.webex.com/meet/44orange>

- **Requirements:**

- ☐ Where there is agreement to appear virtually, please notify the JA while scheduling the hearing. If there is no agreement, the party or attorney requesting a virtual appearance should file a Motion and send a copy of the e-filed Motion and proposed Order in Word format to the division email while scheduling the hearing, or no later than two (2) business days before the hearing. The Motion should state the good cause basis

for a virtual appearance and include the opposing party's position on the request.

- ☐ Any person appearing remotely must be in a private location that is quiet and free from distractions. Under no circumstances will a participant be permitted to appear remotely from a moving vehicle.
- ☐ Any person appearing remotely must dress and behave professionally in the same manner as if physically present in the courtroom.
- ☐ Any person appearing remotely must enable the person's camera when joining the proceeding and keep the camera turned on until instructed otherwise by the court.
- ☐ Any person appearing remotely must mute the person's microphone when joining the proceeding and keep the microphone turned off until instructed otherwise by the court.
- ☐ If a witness appears remotely, the party calling the witness must ensure the witness has a functioning camera and microphone and has tested the internet connection before the hearing. The oath will be administered in accordance with [Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530](#).

- **Technology Needs:**

- ☐ If any witness, party, or attorney will appear by [WebEx](#), please ensure you are familiar with the technology. If you are not comfortable with the technology, please email the [division email](#) to set up a time to practice when the court is not in session.

D. Submission of Orders and Judgments

- **Format:**

- ☐ All proposed orders must be submitted in Word format and provided to opposing counsel and any self-represented litigant.

- **Submission Method:**

- ☐ All proposed orders must be submitted to the court via the [division email](#). Please note: this does not apply to proposed Exhibits for entry into evidence. See the Exhibits for Evidentiary Proceedings for more information.

- **Deadline for Submissions:**

- ☐ Proposed orders must be submitted no later than seven (7) days after any hearing or as otherwise ordered by the Court.

- **Other Procedures Relating to Submission of Orders and Judgments:**

- ☐ **Support or Income Deduction Orders:**

- ☐ When submitting an Order or Final Judgment directing a party to make payments to the State Disbursement Unit, please submit an Income Deduction Order (IDO) (with attached Income Withholding Order (IWO) if there is child support) to be entered by the Court. Please use [Form 12.996 \(IDO\)](#) and the [OMB-approved form \(IWO\)](#) available online. The receiving party is responsible for ensuring the Obligor's employer receives a copy of the Withholding Order.

E. Courtesy Copies of Case Law and Other Documents

- **When Required:**

- ☐ Courtesy copies of case law, required documents, or other pleadings must be submitted to the court for any hearing or trial when required by order of the Court or these Practices and Procedures.

- **Format:**

- ☐ Courtesy copies may be submitted as PDFs, Word Documents, or Excel spreadsheets, as appropriate and required by these Practices and Procedures and the Court's order.

- **Submission Method:**

- ☐ All courtesy copies must be submitted to the court by e-mail to the [division email](#). Please note: this does not apply to proposed Exhibits for entry into evidence. See the Exhibits for Evidentiary Proceedings section for more information.

- **Deadline for Submissions:**

- ☐ Courtesy copies must be submitted to the court no later than three (3) days before any hearing or trial.

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.

- ☐ All Emergency Motions must include "EMERGENCY MOTION" in their title. The Motion should also be verified. An Emergency Motion is only appropriate in "an emergency situation, such as where a child is threatened with harm, or where the opposing party plans to remove the child from the state improperly. [*Loudermilk v. Loudermilk*, 693 So. 2d 666, 668 \(Fla. 2d DCA 1997\)](#). If it is expedited relief that you are requesting, title your Motion "EXPEDITED" rather than "EMERGENCY," and proceed accordingly.

- **Scheduling:**

- ☐ Please email the e-filed copy of the Motion to the [division email](#) and indicate in the email's subject line that it is an Emergency Motion.
- ☐ Once an Emergency or Expedited Motion is received via the [division email](#), the Court will review the Motion and either (1) enter a ruling on the Motion without a hearing, (2) set a hearing for the Motion to be heard on an emergency basis, or (3) deny the Motion as to being an emergency, and provide further direction to the parties. If the Motion requests temporary relief, mediation may be required before the Court sets the matter for a hearing.
- ☐ 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:**

- ☐ Hand-deliver all printed exhibits and media to the trial clerk at the hearing or trial.
- ☐ Please note: The judge cannot play a CD or DVD, and you should provide a USB drive with any video, audio, or photos (unless printed) or make arrangements for the CD or DVD to be played. The judge cannot play a USB or any other media in the courtroom for all to view. If you wish to publish your evidence to the entire courtroom, bring a device or contact the [AV Department](#) for further assistance.

- ☐ Final Hearings for Injunctions: Attaching proposed evidence to the Petition for Injunction or other pleadings is insufficient. Copies must be brought to the hearing under these Practices and Procedures and any Orders relating to the hearing for consideration.

- **Format:**

- ☐ Exhibits must be labeled in the following format: Exhibits should be pre-marked using the court-approved tags. You may obtain tags from the trial clerk or the clerk's office. Exhibits should be marked as Petitioner/Respondent's Exhibit A, B, C (for identification purposes), and so on, to be entered into evidence as Petitioner/Respondent's Exhibit 1, 2, 3, etc.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ If you wish to provide copies of proposed exhibits to the Court before the hearing or trial, email the [division email](#) to obtain a link to upload exhibits or receive further instructions on providing them to the Court. Do not email the exhibits. You must still bring a hard copy of all exhibits to court for the trial or hearing. The Court cannot print your exhibits, and uploading them to the drop box or filing them in the court file is insufficient for admission into evidence.

- **Deadline for Submissions:**

- ☐ For all evidentiary hearings set for one hour or more, and all non-jury trials, the litigants must file a Witness and Exhibit List and exchange all exhibits no later than three (3) days before the hearing or as otherwise ordered by the Court.
- ☐ You must comply with any time constraints or other requirements set by these Practices and Procedures and any Orders relating to the hearing or trial where you wish to offer the evidence. Failure to comply may result in the denial of your request to enter the item into evidence.

H. Pretrial Procedures and Conferences

- **Case Management Conference (CMC):**

- ☐ Any party may request a CMC when a case requires.
- ☐ Unless excused by the court in advance, all CMCs are mandatory for attorneys and litigants.

- ☐ CMCs will generally be held virtually using the [WebEx link](#). If any party or attorney wishes to appear in person, please send a request to the [division email](#). If the case is ready for trial, a Pretrial Conference (PTC) will be set at the CMC, and the Court will enter a Uniform Pre-trial Order (UPTO). Another CMC will be set if the case is not ready for trial.

- **Status Conference:**

- ☐ Any party may request a status conference when a case requires.

- **Requirements:**

- ☐ After the Court receives a Notice for Non-Jury Trial and [Form 51](#), the Court will issue an Order setting a Case Management Conference. The Court may also set a CMC on its own accord and routinely sets all DR cases for a CMC. Please note that where the Court sets a CMC, it is held according to [Florida Family Rule of Procedure 12.200](#), which may include the setting or disposition of any outstanding Motions and place other requirements on the parties. Before the CMC, counsel and self-represented litigants must comply with all aspects of the Order setting the CMC.

- ☐ **Scheduling:**

- ☐ The Court has a CMC/PTC/TMC docket once every four weeks. The Court may accommodate a request to set a CMC, PTC, or TMC on a different date on the ex parte docket where the litigants or attorneys have a conflict with the CMC/PTC/TMC docket date.

- **Other Procedures Relating to Pretrial Procedures and Conferences**

- ☐ **Mediation Requirement:**

- ☐ Under [Administrative Order 2004-14-02](#), parties must attend mediation before seeking temporary relief or setting a case for a Non-Jury Trial. More information on this process is below.
- ☐ After attending mediation, parties may seek temporary relief or file a Notice of Non-Jury Trial. Motions to Dispense with Mediation can be sought for those parties with a history of domestic violence under [Florida Statute 44.102\(2\)\(c\)](#).

- ☐ **Temporary Matters ([Form 50](#)):**

- ☐ Parties should attend Mediation before requesting hearing time for

temporary relief in DR cases. To schedule a mediation, file [Form 50](#) with Dispute Resolution. [Form 50](#) may be emailed to OrangeCountyDRS@ocnjcc.org or faxed to 407-836-2367.

- ☐ If, after Mediation, the parties cannot reach an agreement, a hearing on temporary matters may be scheduled with the Court.

I. Setting Case for Trial

- **Procedure:**

- ☐ **Notice of Non-Jury Trial, Form 50 and Form 51:**

- ☐ Before trial, the parties must attend Mediation within the last 180 days before filing a Notice for Non-Jury Trial to attempt a resolution of all matters in the case or obtain approval from the Court to dispense with mediation. [Form 50](#) should be prepared and emailed to OrangeCountyDRS@ocnjcc.org or faxed to Dispute Resolution at 407-836-2367 to schedule Mediation.
- ☐ After Mediation is concluded, if any or all issues are unresolved, a Notice for Non-Jury Trial should be filed with the Clerk's office. Pursuant to [Administrative Order 2004-14-02](#), counsel or self-represented litigants must attach a [Form 51](#) to their Notice of Trial.
- ☐ In a Dissolution of Marriage with Children or a Paternity case, proof of completion of a Parent Education and Stabilization Course must be filed with the Clerk's Office according to [Florida Statute 61.21](#) and [Administrative Order 07-98-37-01](#). The class must be approved by DCF, and a list of approved classes can be found on the [DCF website](#).
- ☐ Email a copy of the e-filed Notice and [Form 51](#) to the [division email](#) for the trial procedure process to begin. A CMC will be scheduled. At the CMC, a Pretrial Conference (PTC) may be scheduled, and a Uniform Pretrial Order (UPTO) will be entered.

- ☐ **Uniform Pretrial Order Requirements:**

- ☐ Before the Pretrial Conference (PTC), counsel and self-represented litigants must comply with all Uniform Pretrial Order (UPTO) aspects. If modifications or extensions of time are needed, a timely Motion to Modify the UPTO is required. To streamline the issues that will be addressed at trial, parties and attorneys must prepare documents before the PTC to assist the Court. The UPTO will detail these

requirements. Sample forms and instructions are available at the websites listed under Additional Resources on the first page of these Practices and Procedures. Where an Injunction or criminal no-contact order prohibits unrepresented parties from communication, each party shall prepare their own documents and file or provide them to the Court as directed in the UPTO. Failure to follow the requirements of the UPTO may result in the cancellation of your PTC or trial and the imposition of other sanctions. Required documents may include the following:

- ☐ **Proposed Parenting Plan:** Where the parties disagree on a Parenting Plan, the court may require the parties to produce a joint redline Parenting Plan. [Instructions](#) for creating a redline Word document are available online. You may also refer to the Parenting Plan in [Family Law Form 12.995](#). If an Injunction or criminal no-contact order prohibits unrepresented parties from communicating, each party shall file their own proposed Parenting Plan. Where a party or attorney is unable to secure cooperation from the opposing party or counsel, they should file their own proposed Parenting Plan under the deadlines in the UPTO.
 - ☐ **Pre-Trial Statement:** The UPTO requires a Joint Pre-Trial Statement with stipulations or proposed stipulations. A [sample form](#) is available online for your use. If an Injunction or criminal no-contact order prohibits unrepresented parties from communication, each party shall file their own Pre-Trial Statement. Where a party or attorney cannot secure cooperation from the opposing party or counsel, they should still file their own Pre-Trial Statement under the deadlines in the UPTO.
 - ☐ **Equitable Distribution Spreadsheet:** The UPTO requires a Joint Equitable Distribution Spreadsheet. An [Excel spreadsheet](#) is available online for your use. If an Injunction or criminal no-contact order prohibits unrepresented parties from communication, each party shall provide its own Equitable Distribution Spreadsheet. Where a party or attorney cannot secure cooperation from the opposing party or counsel, they should still file their own Equitable Distribution Spreadsheet within the UPTO deadlines.
 - ☐ **Exhibits:** Attorneys and self-represented litigants must provide a copy of all exhibits to the opposing counsel or self-represented litigant according to the UPTO, even if the items were previously disclosed through the Discovery process.
- ☐ **Pretrial Conference:**

- ☐ All parties and their attorneys must appear at the PTC. PTCs will be held virtually using the [WebEx link](#). If any party or attorney wishes to appear in person, please send a request to the [division email](#). After PTC, the Court will issue an Order Setting Trial.
- **Notice Period:**
 - ☐ The Non-Jury Trial will generally be scheduled at the PTC. It will occur approximately 4 to 8 weeks after PTC, or as soon as practical, given the Court's availability of hearing time.
- **Other Procedures for Setting Case for Trial:**
 - ☐ Non-Jury Trials will be held in person. See the Remote Appearances section for more information on requesting that a witness appear virtually.
 - ☐ The Court generally issues an Order Governing Trial after the PTC. Attorneys and self-represented litigants must comply with all requirements in a timely fashion.
 - ☐ Both sides must provide an updated proposed Final Judgment, proposed Parenting Plan, and proposed Child Support Guidelines to the Court and opposing counsel or self-represented litigant at least three business days before or as detailed in the UPTO or Order Setting Trial.
 - ☐ Please send the proposed Final Judgment and Parenting Plan to the [division email](#) in Word format.

J. Forms

- **Access:**
 - ☐ Division forms are available for download at: [Judge Kerestes' Ninth Circuit Page](#)
 - ☐ Florida Supreme Court approved forms are available at: [Family Law Forms](#)
- **Usage:**
 - ☐ There are Florida Supreme Court approved forms for many family law pleadings, and Petitions for Injunction. The Court strongly encourages litigants to make use of the available forms.

K. Other Division Procedures

- **ADA Accommodations:**

- ☐ Information on ADA accommodations can be found on the circuit's website at the following link: [Americans with Disabilities Act | Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida](#)

- **Interpreter Requests:**

- ☐ The Court can only provide interpreters for DV cases, not DR cases. If you need an interpreter for a DR case, you must supply your interpreter. The interpreter does not have to be court-certified but must understand English and your preferred language fluently. If you need an interpreter for a DV case, please send a request to the [division email](#) before the hearing so arrangements can be made.
- ☐ Information on interpreters' services can be found on the circuit's website at the following link: [Court Interpreters | Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida](#)

- **Other Division Procedures:**

- ☐ **Requests for Rehearing or Reconsideration:**

- ☐ Where parties or attorneys wish for the Court to rehear or reconsider an Order or Final Judgment, you must first timely file the Motion for Rehearing or Reconsideration pursuant to the [Florida Family Law Rules](#). Email the e-filed copy of the Motion to the [division email](#) for review.
- ☐ The Court will either (1) enter a ruling on the Motion without a hearing or (2) direct the parties to coordinate a hearing for the Motion for Rehearing or Reconsideration to be heard. A separate hearing will be set on the underlying issue if the request is granted.

- ☐ **Audio/Visual Equipment in the Courtroom:**

- ☐ If assistance with audio/visual equipment is needed, contact the IT Department/Help Desk Line at (407) 836-0522 or by [online request](#). Additional information can be found on the [Ninth Circuit's Technology Support](#) page.
- ☐ Please note that audio/video equipment may have changed since you last used it, so plan accordingly. The Court will make the courtroom

available for advance preparation. The requesting party is responsible for ensuring any digital media works and making arrangements for its use in court.

☐ **Reassignments:**

- ☐ Reassignments among divisions are done by Order of the Family Court Division Administrative Judge pursuant to [Administrative Order 2017-10-01](#). DV and DR cases may not be consolidated, but the same judge will generally hear related cases.
- ☐ If you have an active Final Injunction or a previously entered Final Injunction that has expired within the last two years and an active DR case with the same parties currently in front of different judges, email the [division email](#) to request they be set before the same judge.

☐ **Motions to Withdraw and Substitution of Counsel:**

- ☐ Please review [Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure 12.040](#) and [Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.505](#), concerning Motions to Withdraw. All Motions to Withdraw or for Substitution of Counsel should include the client's signature and must contain their last known address and an email address if available.
- ☐ The Motion must be served on the client.
- ☐ If you cannot obtain written consent to withdraw from the client, the Motion must be set for hearing with notice to the client. Motions to Withdraw or to Substitute Counsel may be set on ex parte/short matters or at a regularly scheduled hearing. Please allow sufficient time for the client to be notified and direct them to appear at the hearing. The Court considers a minimum of seven (7) days' notice sufficient time.

☐ **Uncontested Final Judgments:**

- ☐ Attorney Uncontested Dissolutions of Marriage are set before the Judge assigned to the case.
- ☐ Any Final Judgment in a case with children must include the children's full names and dates of birth and all child support details.
- ☐ The Parenting Plan and any Marital Settlement Agreement should be

incorporated into the Final Judgment and sent to be attached as exhibits.

- ☐ Complete the [Uncontested Dissolution Checklist](#), the proposed Final Judgment, and all agreements, and email it to the [division email](#). Send all documents to the [division email](#) when requesting a hearing. Send the Final Judgment in Word format.
- ☐ These may be set during regular hearing time or on the ex parte docket if the parties are confident it can be handled in fifteen minutes or less. Remember that the ex parte docket is virtual, and the proposed Final Judgment must be sent to the Court before the hearing.
- ☐ **Waiver of Final Hearing:**
 - ☐ Uncontested Final Hearings may be conducted in writing without requiring attorneys or parties to appear by filing a Motion and Waiver for a Written Final Hearing. The [Required Checklist for Entry of Final Judgment without Personal Appearance](#) must be submitted to the [division email](#) along with all applicable agreements and the proposed Final Judgment in Word format.
 - ☐ Uncontested Paternity Final Judgments and Supplemental Final Judgments may be emailed to the [division email](#) for review by the Judge without a hearing if all required documents have been filed. Please indicate whether the Final Judgment is agreed upon.