



HONORABLE REBECCA L. HAMILTON

**Family Law Division Section 17
545 1st Avenue North, Room 302
St. Petersburg, FL 33701**

Section17@jud6.org

JUDICIAL PRACTICE PREFERENCES

Dignity and Respect are the watchwords of professional practice. Everyone should treat everyone involved with dignity and respect.

COVID PROCEDURES

ALL HEARINGS WITH JUDGE REBECCA HAMILTON WILL BE CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE PURSUANT TO THE RECENT FLORIDA SUPREME COURT ORDERS AND JUDGE RONDOLINO'S ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-08. TELEPHONIC HEARINGS WILL BE SCHEDULED WHEN A ZOOM HEARING IS IMPRACTICABLE. FOR ZOOM HEARINGS, THE ATTORNEYS WILL RECEIVE A ZOOM SCHEDULING INVITATION WITH THE LOGIN INFORMATION AND ALL NOTICES OF HEARING SHALL INCLUDE THE ZOOM LOGIN INFORMATION FOR THE HEARING.

JAWS (Judicial Automated Workflow System)

*****JAWS per the directive of the Florida Supreme Court*****

ALL attorneys handling a case in Section 17 should affiliate themselves with their case on the Judicial Automated Workflow System (JAWS) – AND add in the known e-mail addresses for the opposing parties (or opposing counsel if represented), as the Judge prefers (whenever possible) to render orders electronically via JAWS, Also JAWS has a tutorial to assist system users. Please do not contact the Judicial Assistant for help with JAWS access or usage. <https://www.jud6.org/legalcommunity/JAWS/howto.html>

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A LAWYER: If you are self-represented, the following information may be helpful:

The Clerk of Court has a Self Help Program for self-represented (pro se) litigants at:

<https://www.mypinellasclerk.org/Home/Family>

The Clerk of Court has several self-help Videos at:

<https://www.mypinellasclerk.org/Forms#660206-videos>

The Clerk of Court has several forms that are provided free of charge, if citizens wish to download and/or print any forms, to assist themselves in their interactions with the Court at:

<https://www.mypinellasclerk.org/Forms>

In addition, the Sixth Judicial Circuit has a number of Locally Approved Family Law Forms which may be found on the www.jud6.org website under “Representing Yourself in Court”.

<https://www.jud6.org/GeneralPublic/RepresentingYourselfInCourt.html>

Approved Family Law Forms can be found at <https://www.flcourts.org/>

Pinellas County Courthouse, phone (727) 464-5150 315 Court Street Clearwater, FL 33756

St. Petersburg Judicial Building, phone (727) 582-7941 545 1st Avenue North St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Other legal services:

Lawyer referral services through the Clearwater Bar Association (727-461-4880)

Gulfcoast Legal Services: (727) 443-0657) in Clearwater (727) 821-0726 in St. Petersburg

Bar Area Legal Services: (800) 625-1757

Community Law Program: (727) 582-7480

St. Petersburg Bar Association: (727) 821-5450

COMMUNICATION WITH THE COURT:

The Judicial Assistant CANNOT answer your legal questions, and will not explain your situation to the Judge. Your opportunity to speak to the Judge happens in Court only.

All communications can typically be handled by e-mail to our office via section17@jud6.org. All parties must be copied on any correspondence to the Court.

DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED:

ALL DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE JUDGE'S OFFICE VIA US MAIL and/or BINDER (TAB APPROPRIATELY) THREE (3) BUSINESS DAYS PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED HEARING. E-MAILING OF DOCUMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. DOCUMENTS CAN BE HAND DELIVERED TO THE COURTHOUSE BUT MUST BE DELIVERED BY 9:00AM THREE (3) BUSINESS DAYS PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED HEARING. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE DOCUMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE SPECIFIC TIME INDICATED WILL BE ACCEPTED BY THE COURT.

SCHEDULING A HEARING:

Section 17 utilizes the JAWS system for scheduling 15 and 30 minute hearings. The website is https://jawspinellas.jud6.org/jaws_attorney/login.aspx Please select the "Section 17 – Hamilton" to request your hearing. Hearings of 15 or 30 minutes may be requested directly online. PLEASE DO NOT SEND OUT A NOTICE OF HEARING UNTIL YOU RECEIVE A SECOND CONFIRMATION FROM JAWS THAT THE DATE/TIME REQUESTED HAS BEEN SCHEDULED.

After a hearing has been scheduled, a courtesy copy of the Notice of Hearing and motion(s) should be sent via e-mail at section17@jud6.org . If a party wishes to change the matters to be heard (deleted, added, or otherwise), that party must relate to the Judicial Assistant that they have contacted the opposing counsel and have an agreement. For any cancellation of a hearing, counsel must advise the Judicial Assistant of the reason for the cancellation and send a courtesy copy of the Notice of Cancellation.

MOTIONS:

Motions must be e-filed with the Clerk of the Court and sent to opposing counsel/self-represented party prior to scheduling a hearing. Motions requiring a hearing time of one (1)

hour or more require a short case management conference or telephone conference with the Judge. Contact the Judicial Assistant at section17@jud6.org for available times.

Hearing times are not reserved, so please choose several dates when coordinating with opposing counsel because the calendar fills quickly. Please wait for the Judicial Assistant's confirmation reply before sending out Notice of Hearing.

CROSS-NOTICING/ PIGGYBACKING:

Cross-Noticing a motion upon another party's time is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. If you cross-notice, your motion will not be heard, unless agreed to by the Court and opposing party and time permits. Additional time will not be permitted to address a cross-noticed/piggybacked motion during a previously scheduled hearing time block and the cross-noticed/piggybacked motion will be required to be set for a separate hearing.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS:

When a motion or hearing has been confirmed, a written notice must be sent to opposing party and filed with the Court. *For Self-Represented Litigants, see bottom of this document for an example of a Notice of Hearing. All notices of hearing should include a statement indicating the date, time and method of how each party (regardless of if represented by counsel or self-represented) agreed to the scheduling of the hearing and should certify service upon all parties in accordance with Rule 2.516, Fla. R. Jud. Admin. **ALL NOTICE OF HEARINGS ARE TO HAVE THE EXACT NAME OF THE MOTION(S) AND THE DATE THE MOTION(S) WERE FILED.**

EMERGENCY/EXPEDITED MOTIONS:

All Emergency or Expedited Motions must be filed with the Clerk of Court prior to the Court determining emergency or expedited status. PLEASE NOTE that the Court does not receive motions through the Portal. You must notify the Judicial Assistant that you have an emergency and/or expedited motion via e-mail at section17@jud6.org . The Court will review, determine the appropriate action, and advise the attorney/party who filed the motion.

MOTIONS ON TEMPORARY ISSUES:

See Administrative Order 2011-006 PA/PI CIR. All temporary motions must be mediated prior to a hearing being held. Once a party has a mediation date, a hearing time can be reserved for

soon after the mediation date. Emergency Motions for temporary relief may be an exception, so you need to e-mail the Judicial Assistant in this regard via section17@jud6.org.

SETTING PRE-TRIALS and NON-JURY TRIALS:

Pre-trial Conferences and Non-Jury Trials requests will be set after a Case Management Conference with the Judge. When scheduling this, indicate that you are scheduling this CMC hearing in order to schedule Pre-trial and/or Trial time. Judge Hamilton schedules all her Pre-trial and Trial time. The Court will enter an Order Setting Pre-Trial Conference which requires the parties to draft and file an appropriate Pre-Trial Memorandum – including exhibits such as a proposed Equitable Distribution Worksheet, Proposed Parenting Plan, Proposed Child Support Guidelines, Witness List, Exhibit List, and other documents - in advance of the Pre-Trial Conference.

UNCONTESTED FINAL HEARINGS:

An uncontested Final Hearing may be scheduled either on the Court's UMC docket or on any 15 minute hearing time. Prior to scheduling an uncontested Final Hearing, the moving party should insure that the following items have been filed with the Clerk of the Court:

- Dissolution of Marriage without children: Financial Affidavit(s) – if financial relief is being granted by the Court; Marital Settlement Agreement, proof of identification for jurisdictional purposes.

- Dissolution of Marriage with minor children: UCCJEA Affidavit(s), Social Security Number Affidavit(s), Marital Settlement Agreement, Parenting Plan executed by both parties, Certificates of completing Parenting Course by each parent, Financial Affidavit(s), Child Support Guideline Worksheet, proof of identification for jurisdictional purposes.

- Paternity actions: UCCJEA Affidavit(s), Social Security Number Affidavit(s), Parenting Plan executed by both parties, Certificates of completing Parenting Class by each Parent, Financial Affidavit(s), Child Support Guideline Worksheet.

ADOPTION HEARINGS:

Adoption files are reviewed by the Court's Staff Attorney. Before a hearing can be scheduled, the Staff Attorney reviews the file and only after the Staff Attorney indicates that the matter is ready for a Final Hearing, can the Judicial Assistant schedule it. If you would like a Final Hearing, and you have not heard from the Staff Attorney, contact the Judicial Assistant who will

check with the Staff Attorney, and if everything is in order, will contact your office to schedule the same.

PROPOSED ORDERS:

All agreed upon proposed Orders /Judgments may be uploaded to JAWS and will be signed by Judge Hamilton's electronic signature. With that uploaded Order, must be a cover letter which MUST state that the opposing counsel or party has agreed with the form and content or that at least five (5) days have passed since the proposed order was sent to the opposing party and no objections have been received. All Orders must be uploaded as PDF documents.

If there are objections regarding the content and form of an Order or Judgment, each party must promptly submit an Order with an explanatory letter to Section17@jud6.org . The submitted Order should be sent in Word form.

All Orders/Judgments submitted through JAWS must include contact information uploaded into JAWS for all parties.

PARENTING CLASSES:

All persons required to take a 4-hour parent education and family stabilization course pursuant to § 61.21, Fla. Stat., may attend the parenting class online or via distance learning without need of any motion seeking, or order granting, permission to do so.

MEDIATION:

Pursuant to Administrative Order 2006-062 PI-CIR all initial hearings on temporary relief matters in original petitions shall be automatically referred to mediation prior to a hearing on the matter. In addition, all post-judgment matters shall be automatically referred to mediation prior to a hearing. Parties may contact section 17 via e-mail if not automatically referred to mediation. Once mediation is scheduled, a hearing may be set on the Court's calendar to occur after the mediation.

If the opposing party has not yet filed their required Financial Affidavit with the Court, the party requesting a referral for mediation may complete and file an Affidavit for Establishing Mediation Fees to assist in determining if the parties qualify for assignment of a mediator at a reduced cost through the Circuit's Family Mediation Services program.

E.g. of a Notice for Self-Represented Parties

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND
FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

FAMILY DIVISION

CASE NO: ____-FD section 17

Petitioner,
V,
Respondent.

_____ /

NOTICE OF HEARING:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Hearing on will be heard before the Honorable
Rebecca Hamilton, Circuit Judge, on ____, Day of _____, 202__ at _____
a.m./p.m., at the Judicial Building, 545 1st Avenue North, Room 302, St.
Petersburg, FL. _____ minutes have been reserved for the matter -
_____.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a copy of the foregoing has been furnished by U.S.
Mail or email to the below-named addressees this ____ day of _____,
202__.

Name: Address:

Cc: (Enter opposing parties information)