

HONORABLE KEITH MEYER  
315 COURT STREET, ROOM 468  
CLEARWATER, FL 33756  
727-464-3548  
*\*updated 1/11/23*

**Judicial Practice Preferences  
Circuit Civil**

*If the attorney thinks the offered hearing date/time is too far out or limited in duration, they may request an expedited telephonic hearing with the Judge for scheduling purposes. **Be prepared at this scheduled hearing to advise the Court as to why your case should be prioritized over other matters.** All parties must be noticed for the expedited scheduling hearing. Send hearing request to [section20@jud6.org](mailto:section20@jud6.org).*

**IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A LAWYER:** 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. The Clerk of Court has a Self Help Program for self-represented litigants on the first floor in the courthouse at 315 Court Street, Clearwater, FL 33756. Gulfcoast Legal Services can be reached at (727)443-0657 in Clearwater and (727)821-0726 in St. Petersburg. Bay Area Legal Services is available at (800)625-2257. Community Law Program in St. Petersburg can be reached at (727)582-7480. Lawyer referral services can be contacted through the Clearwater Bar Association at (727)461-4880 and the St. Petersburg Bar Associations at (727)821-5450.

**It is expected that all parties and attorneys will adhere to ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2015-052 PA/PI-CIR RE: STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL COURTESY FOR THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT.**

**AS OF JANUARY 1, 2023 MANY HEARINGS WILL RETURN TO IN PERSON ATTENDANCE. TELEPHONIC AND VIDEO CONFERENCE TECHNOLOGY (VCT) ATTENDANCE MAY STILL BE USED AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARTIES. SEE BELOW FOR INFORMATION ON REMOTE HEARINGS.**

**HEARINGS**

*\*As of January 1, 2023 hearings will be in person (unless already set as remote). Parties may request to have a telephonic hearing on hearings lasting 30 minutes or less by sending an email requesting same to [section20@jud6.org](mailto:section20@jud6.org). If the parties wish to have a telephonic or VCT hearing on hearings set for more than 30 minutes, a motion must be filed and sent to our office for review. Please follow our procedure for submitting motions and orders.*

*If a telephonic hearing is approved the scheduling party must provide a conference call in number for all parties including the Judge. An office number or direct number to the attorney will not be acceptable. **Please make sure the attorney knows that they are the host and must enter a host code.** This conference number must be in the notice of hearing.*

*If a VCT hearing is approved/granted the Court will set up the VCT hearing and provide the information to the requesting party.*

**HEARING DOCUMENTS:** Our office accepts hearing documents via email. If there are multiple documents please send as one pdf with a searchable index, bookmarked, or another “user friendly” format.

**Pertinent information should be highlighted.** Anything provided to the Court must be contemporaneously provided to opposing counsel/parties in the same format. Documents can be emailed to [section20@jud6.org](mailto:section20@jud6.org). Documents should be sent at least 48 hours before a hearing.

### **TO SCHEDULE HEARINGS:**

\*Section 20 utilizes the JAWS system for scheduling most hearings:

*Hearing time for UMC, UMC Foreclosure Summary Judgment, 15 minutes, 30 minutes, and 1 hour hearing time can be requested through JAWS. JAWS will have the most up to date available dates.*

***If the attorney thinks the hearing date/time available in JAWS is too far out or limited in duration, they may request an expedited telephonic hearing with the Judge for scheduling purposes. All parties must be notified for the expedited scheduling hearing. Send hearing request to [section20@jud6.org](mailto:section20@jud6.org).***

Hearings are to be requested by the moving party in JAWS. The website is [https://jawspinellas.jud6.org/jaws\\_attorney/login.aspx](https://jawspinellas.jud6.org/jaws_attorney/login.aspx). Please select the “Section 20 – Meyer” calendar to request your hearing. A Uniform Motion Calendar (UMC) may be available to request hearings of 5 minutes or less for **uncontested** issues (NO CMC hearings or Motions to Compel). Hearings of 15 or 30 minutes and 1-hour hearings may also be requested directly online. **For hearing times not listed above can be requested via email to [section20@jud6.org](mailto:section20@jud6.org).**

### **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.**

If you have requested a hearing time via JAWS it is not necessary to send an email to confirm. You will receive a 2<sup>nd</sup> confirmation from the JAWS system confirming that the case has been scheduled or if the hearing has been rejected (cancelled). The reason for the rejection/cancellation will be listed. The motion to be heard must be viewable on the Clerk’s docket before requesting hearing time. There is some lag time between e-filing a document and when it shows on the docket. If the motion is not viewable on the docket the hearing will be cancelled.

**It is the scheduling party’s responsibility to confirm that all counsel/associated parties are case connected in JAWS when requesting hearing time to ensure all parties receive emails regarding the scheduling and cancellation of hearings. Failure to comply with this procedure can result in cancellation of your hearing.** Attorneys only should be added as Associated Parties. Additional email addresses for notification may be added for staff under email address. **Please make sure to use the drop down menu for plaintiff/defendant when connecting parties.**

### **Cancelling Hearings:**

**Filing a Notice of Cancellation does not cancel a hearing with Judge Meyer.** Hearings scheduled through JAWS may be cancelled via JAWS if not within 5 days. All other hearings will need to be cancelled via email to [section20@jud6.org](mailto:section20@jud6.org). A notice of cancellation will need to be filed with the Clerk.

### **Miscellaneous hearing information**

A motion will not be added to the calendar without approval of the Court and opposing party/counsel. If a Cross Notice of Hearing is filed without the approval of the Court, the Judge will probably not hear the motion.

Notice of hearings should be sent via email to [section20@jud6.org](mailto:section20@jud6.org).

**Our office will accept hearing documents via email. Please do not send until a couple of days before hearing. All documents should have the pertinent parts highlighted whether sending in via US Mail or via email. If submitting via email please submit in one pdf with a searchable index or other easily accessible format.** Any documents can be provided to the Judge at the hearing or sent in ahead of time.

## **ORDERS**

\*Section 20 utilizes the JAWS system for submission of orders. Please make sure to read these instructions before requesting/submitting to JAWS.

Proposed orders may now be uploaded to JAWS for Judge Meyer's electronic signature or they may be sent in via US Mail. You must include an explanatory cover letter\* see #5 below. All documents are to be uploaded as PDF documents. The instructions for uploading orders are as follows:

- (1) JAWS submissions of proposed orders to the court should consist of one upload with cover letter and order uploaded via different tabs:
  - a. The cover letter, with any motion, or stipulation (plus exhibits) should be uploaded in the Include Cover Letter section as one pdf file.
  - b. The order or judgment ONLY to be reviewed and signed goes in the Document Title section. Title the document and then upload the order in the "browse" section.
- (2) It should never be necessary to make a duplicate upload. *If there is a problem with uploading, contact the JAWS Help Desk, 727-453-4357.*
- (3) **Please make sure to leave plenty of space between the last line and the signature line to allow for the electronic signature.**
- (4) Do not submit proposed orders through JAWS in advance of a scheduled hearing unless specifically requested by the judge.
- (5) **Foreclosure Summary Final Judgment orders cannot be uploaded via JAWS. They must be sent in via US Mail with copies for conforming and self-addressed stamped envelopes.**
- (6) Cover letter requirements:
  - a. Your cover letter should include express confirmation by a member of the Florida Bar that the proposed order has been shared with all other non-defaulted parties, and that they have no objection as to its form or that they have failed to respond in a reasonable time with any specific objections. (If there **is** an objection, submit the order via mail with an explanatory cover letter.)
  - b. If your order is based on the judge's ruling after a hearing, state that fact, including the date of the hearing.
  - c. **The cover letter must be copied to all parties including pro se and defaulted parties and reflect same on the cover letter.**

**Electronically conformed copies will only be provided to the email addresses which have been associated to the case in JAWS. It is the responsibility of the party uploading a proposed order to confirm all email addresses have been added to JAWS including any Pro Se parties. The JA and the clerk DO NOT maintain the associated party data base.**

### **SUBSTITUTION OF COUNSEL:**

Rule of Judicial Administration 2.50(e)(3) REQUIRES that all substitutions of counsel contain the written consent of the CLIENT.

### **MOTIONS TO COMPEL:**

1. Without hearing: ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-011 PA/PI-CIR – An ex parte order may be entered requiring compliance with the original discovery demand within ten days when a motion alleges a complete failure to respond or object, and no request for extension. No sanctions will be awarded ex parte. **(Use form of order provided by the above AO).**
2. With hearing: per Sixth Judicial Circuit Local Rule 5(c). Motions shall quote in full each interrogatory, question on deposition, request for admission or request for production to which the motion is addressed, and the objection and grounds therefore as stated by the opposing party.
3. With or without hearing: All motion must comply with Local Rule 5(c). Any motion not conforming to this rule will be returned to the moving party.

### **FORECLOSURES:**

Administrative Order 2019-004 is the most recent order on Mortgage Foreclosure Procedures for the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit. Please review it carefully. Pretrial non-evidentiary motions will be subject to review and ruling by a judge based only upon the motion along with written argument and any authority timely filed in the action, unless the Court desires a hearing, whereupon Counsel or any Pro-Se party will be notified. For all pre-trial non-evidentiary matters which have not yet been set for hearing, but have been filed, follow the procedures and time limits in Section III (B).

### **To cancel a Foreclosure Sale:**

A Motion to Cancel Sale filed by the Plaintiff usually does not require a hearing, although it MUST comply with Administrative Order 2019-004. Please submit the following to our office via US Mail or hand delivery:

Copy of the Motion

Proposed Order

Postage – Paid, addressed envelopes for all parties on service list.

### **SCHEDULING NON-JURY FORECLOSURE TRIAL**

Once Notice for Non-Jury Trial has been e-filed, please submit the following via **US Mail**:

1. Copy of the Notice for Non-Jury Trial (including the amount of time requested)
2. Copy of Certificate of Compliance Verifying Readiness for Foreclosure Non-Jury Trial (see attached – **NO OTHER FORM WILL BE ACCEPTED**)
3. Order Scheduling Non-Jury Trial (see attached – **NO OTHER FORM WILL BE ACCEPTED**) **As of January 1, 2023 Non-Jury Foreclosure Trials will be held in person (unless previously set for remote appearance).** Self-addressed stamped envelopes will need to be provided for all parties.

Once the proposed order is received, the NJT will be set for the next available date. Be sure to list the amount of time anticipated for NJT. If you have more than one case and the time requested is less than 15 minutes we may schedule up to 3 cases at the same time.

### **UNIFORM MOTION CALENDAR:**

1. A Uniform Motion Calendar is established for Section 20 on non-jury trial weeks unless other circumstances prevent such hearings. Hearing dates can be obtained/requested through JAWS (see above) or by emailing [section20@jud6.org](mailto:section20@jud6.org).
2. Hearings are held in the Judge's Chambers in Room 468 and are limited to a total of five (5) minutes per case. **Telephone hearings are permitted by request.**
3. Counsel setting the hearing shall notice opposing counsel in accordance with the applicable rules of procedure. A copy of the notice of hearing shall be forwarded to the Judge's office via regular mail, or email. Cancellation of UMC hearings REQUIRES notification to the Court.
4. Hearings will be conducted in the order in which they were scheduled with our office. If a party chooses to wait for his/her adversary, the case may be moved to the end of the docket.
5. Non-routine evidentiary matters shall **NOT** be heard on the Uniform Motion Calendar. Contempt matters shall also **NOT** be heard on this calendar. Case Management Conference shall **NOT** be heard on this calendar. **Motions to Compel shall NOT be heard on this calendar.**
6. Ensure in the appropriate motion that counsel for the moving party certifies in the motion that a good faith effort has been made to contact opposing counsel to resolve by agreement the issues raised.
7. The Judge will require counsel to reschedule any matter that the Judge considers too complex to handle on the Uniform Motion Calendar.
8. All parties must appear at noticed time **and stand by until the case is called.**

#### **E-PORTAL FILINGS:**

Documents filed through the e-portal are NOT provided to the Judge's office. If you want the Judge's office to receive it, you MUST SEND IT DIRECTLY TO THE JUDGE by regular mail or email.

**MOTIONS:** All motions (including emergency and expedited) must be filed **prior** to requesting hearing times. The motion must be viewable on the docket before requesting hearing times except in those circumstances permitted by law.

#### **NON-EVIDENTIARY MOTIONS:**

The Court fully implements Administrative Order 2020-12 which permits the court to rule on non-evidentiary motions without oral argument. Strict compliance with the time limit in this AO is expected. Proposed Orders should be provided to the Court in substantially the same form as the order attached to the A/O. The motion, response if any and an order should be sent in via US Mail along with a cover letter, copies for conforming, and self-addressed envelopes. The Court will notify counsel if it desires oral argument after review of the motion and response

#### **EMERGENCY HEARINGS:**

Motions are to be submitted to the Court for determination of emergency status via US Mail, courier, or hand delivery. Emergency motions WILL NOT be accepted via email under normal circumstances. If the motion is granted, a hearing will be set at a date and time the Court dictates. Opposing counsel/party is to be provided with the Motion in the same manner as the Court, unless a reason for no notice is permitted by law and stated in the motion. If the Judge is unavailable, the Motion may be reviewed by the Emergency/Duty judge regardless of whether or not the duty judge is assigned to a civil section.

#### **MOTIONS FOR REHEARING AND/OR RECONSIDERATION:**

Please submit a copy of the motion to the judge's office for review. If the Judge determines a hearing is required, your office will be contacted.

**PRE-TRIAL STATEMENTS:**

Utilize uniform pretrial statement form. Attorney attending pretrial will be the attorney who will attend the trial. No motions will be heard at the pretrial conference without leave of the court.

**MOTIONS IN LIMINE:**

Very short motions in limine may be heard the morning of trial. Longer motions must be heard before trial at a scheduled hearing. Motions in limine must be related to the issues in the case being tried and not generic in nature.

**IF CASE SETTLES:**

**Immediately** notify the Judge’s office to cancel any hearings or trials that may have been scheduled.

**CONTINUANCES:**

Motions must be signed by the CLIENT. **Stipulations to continue a trial do not automatically continue a trial.**

**ENSURING PROPER NOTICE:**

Ensure proper notice is sent to all parties. Even with defaults, ensure all parties are copied on everything at best address available. **NOTICE, NOTICE, NOTICE**, and opportunity to be heard are **KEY** concerns for every Judge.

**TRIAL SCHEDULING**

**MEDIATION:**

Mediation is required except in some unique cases (ex-constitutional issue). Trials (jury or non-jury) will normally NOT be held unless mediation is completed. A case management conference (15 minutes) will be set to discuss trial and mediation dates. The case must mediate within **one year** of the trial.

**NON-JURY TRIALS:**

Non-jury trials in excess of two hours should be set for a case management conference to discuss scheduling.

**JURY TRIALS:**

A Case Management Conference (15 minutes) is required to set a jury trial. The Court generally tries the oldest cases first. Submitting a Notice of Readiness for Trial does NOT mean a trial date will be set automatically. All Trial dates are set at the Case Management Conference. **After the Case Management Conference a Pretrial/Trial order will be prepared by our office. All juries are selected on the first day of the trial week. Compliance with Administrative Order 2021-012 PA/PI-CIR is mandatory for all cases.**

**2023 SECTION 20 JURY TRIAL DATES**

JANUARY 17	JULY 17
FEBRUARY 13	AUGUST 21
MARCH 20	SEPTEMBER 18
APRIL 10	OCTOBER 16
MAY 22	NOVEMBER 27
JUNE 12	DECEMBER 11

**VOIR DIRE:**

Attorneys will inquire of the entire jury panel seated in the gallery. A seating chart with jurors' names will be provided. The court will initiate voir dire questions and then counsel will follow with their inquiry. The time limit for voir dire will be set at the pre-trial conference.

**RESPONSE FROM COUNSEL WHEN BAILIFF BRINGS JURY IN OR OUT:** Please remain seated unless instructed otherwise by the bailiff or the Court.

**COURTROOM TRIALS:**

Time limits for openings and closings will be set at the Pretrial.

Request permission for the following:

To approach the bench.

No permission is necessary to approach the clerk or a witness with or for a document.

**MARKING EVIDENCE TO BE USED AT TRIAL:**

Exchange evidence prior to trial. All evidence is to be pre-marked in advance of its intended use by counsel. The clerk will mark exhibits as they are received into evidence. Counsel should not waste trial time looking at evidence for the first time. The parties should be prepared at the very beginning of the trial to move most of the exhibits into evidence by stipulation. This procedure does not waive any relevancy arguments or guarantee that the evidence will be received and/or considered by the Court and/or jury.

**SHOWING TANGIBLE EVIDENCE TO THE COURT:**

After showing the exhibit to opposing counsel it may be shown to a witness without first showing it to the Judge, unless the Judge specifically requests to see the exhibit.

**COURTROOM DEMEANOR COMMENTS:**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. PA/PI-CIR-2015-052: this AO contains the STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL COURTESY FOR THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT which will be strictly enforced. No speaking objections. All argument is to be directed to the Court. Examine witnesses from the podium. Do not argue after the Court rules. Stand while making arguments and/or objections.

**CASE LAW:**

Copies of case law and other legal authority are welcomed by the Court. Pertinent portions should be highlighted. Copies provided to the Court (including any highlighting) shall be provided to opposing counsel before the start of the hearing. Copies can be provide via email as one pdf bookmarked or via hard copy.

**ATTORNEY FEES:**

The issue of entitlement may be tried in the main action or at a subsequent hearing. Issues regarding the amount of attorney fees shall be left for a subsequent hearing. Fee affidavits are sufficient in lieu of expert testimony if all parties agree to their use. Parties can usually expect an additional referral to mediation post-trial regarding attorney's fees & costs.

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

Plaintiff(s),

v.

UCN:  
Case No.

Defendant(s).

\_\_\_\_\_ /

**CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE VERIFYING READINESS  
FOR FORECLOSURE NON-JURY TRIAL**

I hereby certify the following:

*Using the following format, provide the name of each Defendant, the date and method of service of process on each Defendant, and the current status of each Defendant. For cases filed prior to July 1, 2010, indicate whether a Notice to Homeowner was provided at the time of service of process as required by Administrative Order 2009-065. For cases filed on or after July 1, 2010 but before July 1, 2015, indicate whether a Notice from the Court to Homeowner was provided as required by Administrative Order 2013-026. For cases filed on or after July 1, 2015, indicate whether a Notice to Homeowner, Form C, was provided to Defendant(s) at the time of service of process.*

Name of Defendant	Date and method of service [Date followed by personal, publication, or substitute]	Status of this Defendant [Dropped; Default; Represented by attorney (include name); or Filed pro se answer]	Defendant filed an affirmative defense	Defendant was provided with Notice per above format at the time of service of process (List type of Notice)
	___/___/___			
	___/___/___			
	___/___/___			

*Using the following format, provide the name of any borrower/defendant who has not answered or filed a motion to dismiss, and indicate whether an affidavit of non-military service or a memorandum for certificate of military service was filed with the clerk and the date of the document filing. Do not include any borrower/defendant for whom the Clerk of Circuit Court has entered a default.*

Name of Defendant	Indicate the type of document, i.e., Affidavit of non-military service (Affidavit) or memorandum of military service (Memo)	Date of filing with the Clerk of Circuit Court
		___/___/___
		___/___/___
		___/___/___

**STATUS OF OTHER REQUIRED CERTIFICATIONS:** I further certify to the following (**Initial next to each completed item**):

- \_\_\_\_\_ (initial) No outstanding Motions have yet to be heard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (initial) No suggestion of bankruptcy has been filed, or if one has, a Notice of Relief or Dismissal has been filed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (initial) The proposed final judgment is, or at submission will be, in the form of the Sixth Judicial Circuit's Uniform Final Judgment of Foreclosure and is in compliance with § 45.031, Florida Statutes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (initial) I have carefully reviewed this Certification of Compliance with Foreclosure Procedures and the supporting documents and I certify that the above styled matter is ready for non-jury trial.

I declare that I have read the foregoing Certification of Compliance with Foreclosure Procedures and the facts stated in it are true. I understand that falsifying this Certification of Compliance can result in the dismissal of the above styled case.

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I certify that a copy hereof has been furnished to \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name or names and addresses used for service by (e-mail) (delivery) (mail) (fax) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

**I declare that I have read the foregoing Certificate of Compliance and that the facts stated in it are true.**

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Attorney Signature)  
Attorney Name:  
Address:  
Direct telephone number:  
Fax number:  
E-mail address:  
Florida Bar No.:

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

CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ -CI-20

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

Plaintiff(s),

vs.

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

Defendant(s).

\_\_\_\_\_ /

**ORDER SCHEDULING NON- JURY TRIAL**

THIS CAUSE being at issue and the Court otherwise fully advised in the premises, it is

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that a Non-Jury Trial in the above styled cause is hereby scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes/hours before the Honorable Keith Meyer at the Clearwater Courthouse, 315 Court Street, Room 468, Clearwater, FL 33756. **All parties named herein and their counsel, if any, shall attend the Non-Jury Trial in person.** It is further

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that at least 30 days before the Non-Jury Trial, counsel for all parties, and any *pro se* party, must serve a list of the names and addresses of all lay and expert witnesses who are expected to testify at trial, whether for substantive, collaborative, impeachment or rebuttal purposes, as well as a list of all exhibits which are expected to be admitted at Trial, whether for substantive, demonstrative, collaborative, impeachment or rebuttal purposes. Witnesses and exhibits which are not listed as described above may provide testimony or may be admitted at trial only upon stipulation of all parties or as allowed by order of the Court.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers in Clearwater, Pinellas County, Florida this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

KEITH MEYER

Circuit Judge

Copies furnished to: