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CASSANDRA NOEY WILSON, DISTRICT CLERK
LEON COUNTY, TEXAS

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BY 

LOCAL RULES OF THE DISTRICT COURTS OF LEON COUNTY, TEXAS

87TH, 278TH and 369TH Judicial Districts

Revised June 2026

Local Rules of the District Courts of Leon County

PURPOSE

The Local Rules of the District Courts of Leon County have as their primary purpose the management of the court dockets in a fair, just, equitable and impartial manner. These rules are designed to be an aid in achieving that goal and to do so in a timely and economical manner.

RULE 1

APPLICATION, JURISDICTION AND ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

RULE 1.1 APPLICATION

These rules apply to all cases, civil, criminal and family, of which the District Courts have exclusive jurisdiction in Leon County.

RULE 1.2 JURISDICTION

Exclusive jurisdiction of District Courts encompasses matters defined by the constitution, statute or case law as the sole province of District Courts.

RULE 1.3 ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

A. Assignment of Civil and Family Law Cases

The District Clerk shall assign all civil and family law cases equally between the 87th, 278th and 369th District Courts on a mandatory rotation basis unless specially instructed otherwise by these rules or by the Board of Judges.

B. Assignment of Criminal Cases.

The District Clerk shall assign all criminal law cases equally between the 87th, 278th and 369th District Courts on a mandatory rotation basis unless specially instructed otherwise by these rules or by the Board of Judges.

C. Assignment of Juvenile Cases

The District Clerk shall assign all juvenile cases to the 87th District Court.

RULE 2

LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE, BOARD OF JUDGES AND RULES OF DECORUM

2.1 POWERS AND DUTIES OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT JUDGE

A. Election of the Administrative Judge

Pursuant to Section 74.091 of the Texas Government Code, a majority of the District Judges will elect a Local Administrative District Judge for a two-year term at the August meeting of each odd numbered year to commence on October 1st of that year.

B. Duties

The Local Administrative Judge will have the duties and responsibilities provided in Rule 9 of the Rules of Judicial Administration, the Regional Administrative Rules and these rules.

RULE 2.2 BOARD OF JUDGES

The Board of Judges shall consist of the Judges of the 87th, 278th and 369th Judicial Districts. The board shall meet to discuss and resolve questions that are of common concern to all of the members thereof. The Local Administrative District Judge or any member of the Board of Judges may call meetings of the board as needed. The Local Administrative District Judge shall preside over such meetings; and in his/her absence, a temporary Chairperson may be elected by a majority of the quorum.

RULE 2.3 RULES OF DECORUM

The Judges has a duty to maintain order and proper decorum in the courtroom. The Board of Judges has adopted the Rules of Decorum set forth in **Addendum 1** to these rules which shall apply to all attorneys and others appearing in the courtrooms of Leon County. The rules may be enforced by contempt or referral to the State Bar of Texas for grievance proceedings, or both, as the judge deems proper.

RULE 3

CIVIL CASES

RULE 3.1 GENERAL

All civil cases in which the District Courts of Leon County have exclusive jurisdiction shall be filed in the District Clerk's office located at 139 East Main, PO Box 39, Centerville, Texas 75833. The District Clerk shall assign all civil law cases equally

between the 87th, 278th and 369th District Courts on a mandatory rotation basis unless specifically instructed otherwise by these rules or the Board of Judges.

RULE 3.2 TRANSFER OF CASES; DOCKET EXCHANGE; BENCH EXCHANGE

A. Transfer

After assignment to a particular court a case may be transferred to another court by order of the Judge of the Court in which the case is pending with the consent of the Judge of the Court to which it is transferred.

B. Exchange of Cases

The courts may at any time exchange cases and benches to accommodate their dockets or to expedite the court's trials, as permitted by law.

C. Previous Judgment of filing

Any claim for relief based upon a previous judgment shall be assigned to the court of original judgement. If a case is filed in which there is a substantial identity of parties and causes of action in a previously non-suited case, in a case dismissed for want of prosecution, or in any other disposition of a previous filing, the case shall be assigned to the court where the prior matter was pending.

D. Consolidation

A motion to consolidate cases shall be heard in the court where the lowest numbered case is pending. If the motion is granted, the consolidated case will be given the number of the lowest numbered case and assigned to that court.

E. Severance

If a severance is granted, the new case will be assigned to the court where the original case is pending; however, a new file date and a new cause number will be assigned to the now severed case.

F. Presiding for another Judge

In all cases where a judge presides for another court, the case shall remain pending in the original court.

G. Prove-up Divorce Cases and Default Cases

Uncontested divorce cases, default judgments or other uncontested matters, may be heard by any of the District Judges if the Judge assigned the case is unavailable, subject to the requirements of jurisdiction.

RULE 3.3 SERVICE OF PROCESS

The Courts have adopted a blanket order permitting private service of process pursuant to Rule 103 of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. Application for approval to be added to the list shall be presented to the local administrative judge. A list of approved process servers is maintained in the District Clerk's office.

RULE 3.4 REQUESTS OF THE DISTRICT CLERK

A. Written Requests of Documents

A person must request a copy of a filed document in writing. If the document is filed electronically or the clerk's file contains an electronic version of the document, the clerk may send the document to the person electronically. If the clerk's file contains only a paper version of the document, the person must furnish the clerk with a return envelope properly addressed and stamped. Except as provided elsewhere in these rules, no conformed copies shall be made or furnished nor shall searches or research be performed for counsel or the public, free of charge. All mail received with postage due will be returned to sender.

B. Telephone Requests

The court clerk shall limit response to telephone requests for information to the following:

- If answer has been filed.

- Existence of case on file.

- Return of service and date.

- Correct style of case when correct case number is supplied.

- If an order has been signed.

- Whether or not a jury fee has been paid and date of payment.

- Whether or not a specific document has been filed. But this does not authorize a fishing expedition.

RULE 3.5 GUARDIANS AND ATTORNEYS AD LITEM

When it is necessary for the court to appoint a guardian ad litem for a minor or incompetent parties or an attorney ad litem for absent parties, independent counsel, not suggested by any of the parties or their counsel, will be appointed. However, the court may appoint an attorney who is already counsel of record for one of the parties if the court finds that no conflict of interest or other circumstances exist which would prevent such attorney from providing adequate representation for such minor, incompetent or absent defendant.

RULE 3.6 DOCKET SETTINGS

A. Court Coordinator/Administrator

Each court shall appoint a court coordinator/administrator. It shall be the duty of each court coordinator/administrator to:

Provide the court, the clerk assigned to that particular court and the general public with published docket of the cases set or hearing for each day of court;

Notify all counsel of setting and rulings of the court as is provided by these rules or at the direction of the court;

Prepare scheduling orders for cases assigned to their court when directed by the court to do so;

Coordinate all setting requests; and

Coordinate with the District Clerk's office concerning jury trials and jury requirements.

B. Requests for Settings

All requests for pre-trial or trial settings shall be made on the setting request form, which is available on the district clerk's website. The requesting party must file the form with the clerk and send a copy of the form to the court coordinator for the court in which the action is pending. All opposing counsel and unrepresented parties shall be copied. If the request is granted, it will be confirmed in writing.

C. Docket Control Orders

Each court may generate docket control orders for each civil case pending. The order shall contain a trial setting, cut-off date for discovery, pretrial conference date and any other requirements as established by each individual court.

D. Calendars

Court calendars are established by the 87th, 278th and 369th Judicial District Courts for each calendar year that set forth the availability of the respective courts for trials and other hearings in the county of Leon. Copies of these calendars may be obtained from the District Clerk or Court Coordinator.

RULE 3.7 PRETRIAL MOTIONS

A. Pre-trial Motions (Non-Summary Judgment)

Form

Motions and responses shall be in writing and shall be accompanied by a proposed order granting or denying the relief sought.

Response

Responses shall be in writing. Responses shall be filed before the hearing date. Failure to file a response may be considered a representation of no opposition. A reply may be filed at any time after the response is filed prior to the court's ruling.

Certificate of Conference

Opposed motions and responses shall contain a Certificate of Conference indicating that the counsel involved have attempted to resolve the dispute prior to filing of the motion or response, the date of such attempt and the manner of communication of such an attempt, or any other requirement of the Court.

B. Pre-Trial Motions (Summary Judgment Rule 166(c) TRCP)

Motion

The Motion shall state the specific grounds thereof in numerical order and shall state the specific fact relied upon in each ground, identify the source of those facts and specify where in the summary judgment evidence the facts are found. The motion shall contain a clear and concise argument for each ground with appropriate citations to authorities relied upon any specific references to the summary judgment evidence.

Response

The response shall address the motion in the same numerical order established in the motion for summary judgment. The response shall state the specific facts relied upon, identify the source of those facts, and specify where in the summary judgment evidence the facts are found. The response shall set out a clear and concise argument with appropriate citations to authorities relied upon and specific references to the summary judgment evidence.

RULE 3.8 ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION

A. Alternate Dispute Resolution

In order to encourage early settlement of disputes and to carry out the responsibilities of the courts as set out in Chapter 154 of the Texas Civil Practices and Remedies Code, appropriate alternative dispute resolution procedures will be encouraged and utilized.

B. Mediation

The courts encourage mediation in order to facilitate the settlement of disputes and litigation. Each court shall adopt a procedure for the use of mediation in all civil cases. It is in the sound discretion of the trial court whom to use as a mediator and the procedures for same.

3.9 CONTINUANCES

Any motion for continuance of the trial setting shall be presented to the court pursuant to the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. The proposed order granting or denying such motion shall contain a provision for resetting the case for trial on a specific date and time.

3.10 SETTLEMENTS

All trial counsel re required to make a bona fide effort to settle cases at the earliest possible date before trial. The Court will expect counsel to confer with his/her client and with opposing counsel concerning settlement offers. When an attorney settles or dismisses a case that is set for trial, he or she shall give notice to the court as soon as possible.

3.11 MOTIONS IN LIMINE

The Standing Order in Limine, which is available on the district clerk's website, shall apply to all civil cases tried in the District Courts of Leon County. Should counsel desire that additional matters be included, a motion will be required.

RULE 3.12 JURY CHARGE, DEFINITIONS, INSTRUCTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Each party shall prepare in proper written form and present to the court prior to the trial or the jury selection all jury charge definitions, instructions and questions which are expected to be raised by the pleadings and evidence and upon which the party has an affirmative burden. The charge shall be provided in both written form and in an electronic form specified by the court.

RULE 3.13 VOIR DIRE

The District Clerk shall align the Juror Information Cards in numerical order and seat the panel in numerical order. The Judge will qualify the panel and accept or reject any excuses. After the final panel is determined, the attorneys must make their decision on whether or not a shuffle will be requested. The court will recess the panel to give the clerk time to copy the jury cards, either in shuffled order or in numerical order. When the cards have been copied, the clerk will re-seat the jury according to the list and voir dire will begin. The attorneys and judge will be furnished a copy of the list and jury information cards.

Challenges for cause will be made after all parties are completed with their voir dire examination of the panel. After all counsel have completed their voir dire examination, the attorneys will be asked to approach the Bench. Counsel will be asked in turn for the Juror Number of the jurors whom they wish to challenge for cause. If, in the opinion of the Court, sufficient evidence has been adduced to support the ruling, the challenge will be granted or denied without further questions. Otherwise, the panel member will be called to the

Bench and each counsel will be allowed a few questions. The panel member will then be excused to return to their seat, and the challenge will be ruled on outside the presence of the panel member.

If any panel member responds to questions during voir dire examination in a manner which makes it clear that they possess such strong opinions that a challenge for cause will clearly be good, and there exists a possibility that further responses may “poison” the entire panel, counsel should diplomatically terminate the inquiry and avoid further inquiries in the presence of the panel. If adverse counsel has a good-faith belief that the panel member can be rehabilitated, it will be pursued on an individual basis after the general voir dire examination.

Counsel will be allowed to tell the panel what their contentions are in order to provide a context for their voir dire examination. Detailed recitations of facts should be reserved for opening statement.

If panel members ask counsel about the existence of insurance or any other specific factual matter, counsel should direct the question to the Court.

RULE 3.14 DISMISSAL DOCKET; INVOLUNTARY DISMISSALS

A. Time Standards for Civil Case Disposition (except complex cases)

1. Civil Jury Trials

All civil jury cases shall be tried or dismissed within 18 months from appearance date.

2. Civil Non-Jury Cases

All civil nonjury cases shall be tried or dismissed within 12 months from appearance date.

B. Dismissal Dockets

All cases not brought to trial or otherwise disposed of which have been on file for more than the specified time period as established by these rules shall be placed on the dismissal docket by the Court.

C. Notice

When a case has been placed on the dismissal docket, the court shall promptly send notice of the court’s intention to dismiss for want of prosecution to each attorney of record and pro se party whose address is shown in the clerk’s file. A copy of such notice shall be filed with the papers of the cause.

RULE 4
FAMILY LAW CASES

RULE 4.1 GENERAL

The filing, assignment and transfer of cases under the Family Code shall be in accordance with Rule 1 of these rules. All cases filed pursuant to the Family Code shall be governed by Rule 3 and 4 of these rules.

RULE 4.2 TIME STANDARDS FOR FAMILY LAW CASE DISPOSITION

Cases shall be tried or dismissed within 6 months from the appearance date or within 6 months from the expiration of the waiting period provided by the Family Code where such is required, whichever is later. Cases not concluded within these time periods will be placed on the Dismissal for Want of Prosecution Docket.

RULE 4.3 JUVENILE CASES

The Juvenile Board of Leon County has designated the 87th District Court as the Juvenile Court of Leon County. Rules for the disposition of juvenile cases will be adopted by the Juvenile Court in conformity with Rule 1 of the Tenth Administrative Judicial Region of Texas Regional Rules of Administration and Title 3 of the Texas Family Code. These cases shall be filed in the District Clerk's office pursuant to the rules established by the Juvenile Judge and District Clerk, copies of these rules may be obtained from the Juvenile Judge or District Clerk.

RULE 4.4 DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES CASES (Child Protective Services)

Disposition of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (CPS) cases shall be in conformity with those provisions set forth in Title 5 of the Texas Family Code. These cases shall be filed in the District Courts of Leon County in accordance with Rule 1 of these Rules.

RULE 4.5 TEMPORARY ORDERS

A. Except in emergencies when the District Clerk's office is not open for business, no application for immediate or temporary relief shall be presented to the judge until it has been filed and assigned to a Court. If the judge of the court to which such case is assigned is absent or is occupied with other matters, the coordinator of the assigned court shall insert a date and hour for hearing in any form of a proposed order before such application may be presented to any other Judge, who may sit for the Judge of the court in which the case is pending and shall make all writs and process returnable to the assigned court.

B. Whenever immediate action of a Judge is required in an emergency when the Clerk's office is not open for business, the case shall, at the earliest practicable time be docketed and assigned to a court, and all writs and process shall be returnable to the assigned court. If the Judge of such court is not available to hear the application for temporary relief at the time set, any court with jurisdiction may preside over the case.

RULE 4.6 EX PARTE ORDERS

A. All application for ex parte relief shall be presented to the court in which the case is assigned, unless emergency circumstances exist and then shall be presented in accordance with Paragraph 4.5.B.

B. In any case in which counsel of record for the nonmoving party has been designated, the party filing the application must serve opposing counsel in a manner calculated to give opposing counsel immediate notice of the filing.

RULE 4.7 STANDING TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER

A. The Court hereby ORDERS that in all divorce suits filed, a Standing Temporary Restraining Order, in the form available on the district clerk's website, is imposed on all parties of the suit. All petitions for Divorce shall contain a statement signed by the Petitioner evidencing receipt of a copy of the Standing Restraining Order, and in the absence of such paragraph, it shall be DEEMED that Petitioner, by invoking the Court's jurisdiction, has constructive notice of the Standing Temporary Restraining Order and subjects himself or herself to it.

B. The clerk of this court shall attach to each citation to be served, a copy of the Standing Temporary Restraining Order. Said Standing Temporary Restraining Order shall become effective on the Respondent when citation is served, a waiver is signed or actual notice in some other manner is received.

C. The Standing Restraining Order remains effective until the temporary hearing, if any, or if a temporary hearing is not requested by either party, until the final hearing. Should a temporary hearing be requested by either party, then the court shall determine whether the Standing Temporary Restraining Order shall remain in effect until the final hearing and absent a ruling of the court to the contrary, the Temporary Standing Restraining Order shall remain effective until the final hearing.

RULE 4.8 PROPOSED PROPERTY DIVISIONS AND PROPOSED SUPPORT DECISIONS

A. Filing

Proposed Property Division Statements shall be filed in all domestic relations cases related to divorce. **Proposed Support Decision Statements** shall be filed in all cases

involving modification of conservatorship, support or periods of possession. These proposals must comply with the forms available on the district clerk's website.

B. Temporary Orders

In any hearing for temporary orders in which child support or spousal support is an issue, completion and exchange of **Proposed Support Decision Statements** with supporting documentation is required prior to commencement of the hearing. Any contested hearing for temporary orders shall be limited to thirty minutes per side, including time for cross-examination of opposing party's witness.

C. Trial

A party's final Proposed Support Decision Statement regarding child support and a Proposed Property Division Statement shall be exchanged no later than ten (10) days before trial, or as required by the docket control order, and filed with the court before the commencement of trial.

D. Failure to File Proposed Property Division and Proposed Support Decision Statements

Failure of either party to file Proposed Property Division and Support Decision Statements may result in the Court adopting as stipulated the information filed by the complying party. The non-complying party will be prohibited from contesting the accuracy of the information presented by the complying party. If both parties fail to comply with these rules, the court may dismiss the case from the docket.

RULE 4.9 PARENT EDUCATION AND COUNSELING

Referral may be made in suits affecting the parent-child relationship requiring the parents' attendance at an educational program for divorcing parent. In the discretion of the court, such a referral may also be made for parents involved in modification or enforcement litigation. Counseling may also be ordered in appropriate cases as authorized by the Family Code, including referral to a family violence program pursuant to a protective order under Chapter 71 of the Family Code.

RULE 4.10 DISCOVERY

In all cases the following items shall be exchanged within thirty (30) days, without objection, upon a written request of counsel. Failure to exchange these items may result in sanctions being imposed on the attorney, party, or both, as the court deems proper, to wit:

Income tax returns for the previous two years.

Copies of all insurance policies, including home, auto, life and medical

Copies of all promissory notes, deeds of trust and deeds evidencing ownership of real estate, including contract for deeds and time-sharing contracts.

Copies of all stocks, mutual fund participation and investment portfolios held by the party, in the name of the parties, or for the benefit of either party.

Copies of all documents concerning employee benefits, retirement benefits and pension funds.

The preceding six (6) months statements for all credit card accounts in the name of the parties or either party.

Wage statements or statements showing year-to-date earnings of the parties.

RULE 4.11 CHILD SUPPORT LOCAL REGISTRY

Pursuant to §154.241 of the Texas Family Code, the District Clerk of Leon County is designated as the Local Registry to receive court ordered child support payment or payment otherwise authorized by law.

RULE 5

CRIMINAL CASES

RULE 5.1 GRAND JURIES AND ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

A. Grand Juries

The Grand Jury shall be selected and impaneled on a rotating basis between the 87th, 278th and 369th Judicial District Courts. The 87th Judicial District Court selected the Grand Jury for the term beginning the first Monday in July 2014. Subsequent Grand Juries shall be selected based on the numerical designation of the district court for each six-month period thereafter. The grand juries shall hold all of their meetings in the Leon County Courthouse, in the room designated by the impaneling judge.

B. Grand Jury Minute Book

The rules regarding presentment of indictments by the Grand Jury to the District Court are set forth in Articles 20.21 and 20.22 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Article 20.21 requires that the Foreperson of the Grand Jury shall deliver the indictments to the Judge or District Clerk and that at least nine members of the grand jury must be present when the delivery is made. Article 20.22 requires that the fact of presentment be entered upon the minutes of the court. The "minutes of the court" are contained in the Grand Jury Minute Book. The Grand Jury Minute Book shall remain in the custody of the District Clerk at all times except when the Grand Jury is in session. The Grand Jury Minute Book is not a secret book or document.

When the grand jury begins a session, the District Clerk shall have all members present sign the Grand Jury Minute Book as proof of their presence at the session and make a record of the fact that a quorum was present at the session. The District Clerk shall then deliver the book to the secretary of the Grand Jury. When a true bill of indictment is voted in the affirmative by at least nine members of the Grand Jury, the following information shall be entered by the Secretary of the Grand Jury in the Grand Jury Minute Book, and nothing else, to wit:

1. The date of the session;
2. Name of the person indicted;
3. Offense; and
4. Names of the witnesses upon which the indictment was founded.

If the defendant is not in custody or under bond at the time of the presentment of the indictment, upon request of the District Attorney, the entry of the name of the defendant in the book may be delayed until such time as the *capias* is served and the defendant is placed in custody or under bond, at which time the name of the defendant will be entered in the book by the District Clerk. It is the duty of the District Clerk to verify that the indictments delivered to the clerk conform with the information contained in the Grand Jury Minute Book. If there is a variance, it should be called to the attention of the Secretary, Foreperson and District Attorney immediately.

When a defendant is “no-billed,” meaning that a case was presented to the grand jury regarding an individual and less than nine affirmative votes were given for a true bill of indictment, a Certificate of No-Bill shall be signed by the Foreperson certifying that the case was presented to the Grand Jury and that a no-bill was returned. The District Clerk shall handle the certificates as follows:

- A. Defendant Under Arrest: If the defendant is under arrest, a copy of the certificate shall be delivered to the Sheriff and the Defendant immediately.
- B. Defendant Under Bond: A copy of the certificate shall be delivered to the surety (bondsman) and defendant immediately.
- C. All other certificates shall be held by the Clerk under seal, unless ordered released by the District Court.

C. Assignment of Cases after Indictment

Except as otherwise provided in this Rule, the Clerk shall assign all criminal cases on a rotating basis between the 87th, 278th and 369th District Courts.

D. New Indictments After Assignment

After assignment, the clerk shall assign any new indictment against a defendant to the same court.

E. Re-indictments

The clerk shall assign any re-indictment of the same defendant to the same court in which the prior indictment was assigned.

F. Co-Defendant Indictment

The clerk, after random assignment of an indictment to a court, shall assign any co-defendant subsequently indicted to the same court in which the first co-defendant's indictment was assigned.

G. Information to the District Clerk

The District Attorney shall note on a non-substantive part of the indictment the following information:

Whether there are other pending indicted cases on the defendant;

Whether the indictment is a reindictment and;

The names of any co-defendants not named in the indictment.

The District Attorney shall also furnish the clerk information in writing as to whether or not a non-standard bond will be sought by the State and the factors supporting the same.

RULE 5.2 BONDS

Bonds will be set on each criminal case in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas. The court may, in a proper case, dispense with the requirement of sureties and require only the personal recognizance of the defendant, with or without bond conditions.

RULE 5.3 BOND SURRENDER

Sureties requesting a release from their liability on a Bail Bond must complete the Affidavit to Release Surety and present the completed affidavit to the District Judge that the Defendant's case is assigned to. The form and requirements for release are available on the District Clerk's website. The District Attorney shall be served with a copy of the affidavit.

RULE 5.4 BOND FORFEITURE

Bonds will be forfeited on all defendants who do not appear in court when scheduled or otherwise ordered to appear in court. The name of the Defendant will be called three times at the courtroom door by the bailiff and if there is no answer, the bond will be forfeited and a capias issued by the clerk for his/her arrest. It is the duty of the District Clerk to prepare a Judgment Nisi with the aid of the District Attorney. The Judgment Nisi proceedings will be

docketed as a civil matter in the appropriate District Court, and the defendant and his sureties shall be served with citation. After the surety files an answer or defaults, the District Clerk shall notify the proper court coordinator for a trial setting to be docketed. The sureties shall be given forty-five days advance notice of any trial setting.

RULE 5.5 POST CONVICTION PROCEEDINGS

The Clerk shall file any motion to revoke probation or any post-conviction application for writ of habeas corpus in the court having granted probation or entered the judgment in this case.

RULE 5.6 ARRAIGNMENT

Defendants shall be arraigned at the earliest possible time after indictment. Presence of the defendant is mandatory at arraignment unless excused by the Court. At arraignment a Notice of Setting shall be entered setting dates of pretrial, docket call and trial date.

RULE 5.7 NOTICE OF SETTING

A Notice of Setting shall be delivered to the defendant and counsel at arraignment. The defendant, defense counsel and counsel for the State shall sign the Notice of Setting.

RULE 5.8 STANDING DISCOVERY ORDER

The State of Texas is hereby ordered to furnish to the defendant as provided in Article 39.14 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Said discovery shall be furnished no later than seven (7) days prior to the pretrial hearing as set forth herein.

RULE 5.9 PRETRIAL HEARING

A pretrial hearing shall be held within sixty (60) days from the date of arraignment. All matters preliminary to actual trial on the merits must be brought to the attention of the Court at this time.

RULE 5.10 DOCKET CALL

The court coordinator shall prepare a list of all cases on the trial docket. The defendant and defense counsel shall be present and announce ready or not ready. An announcement of "not ready" must be accompanied by a motion for continuance.

RULE 5.11 MOTIONS FOR CONTINUANCE

All motions for continuance, whether filed by the State or the defendant, must comply with the applicable law contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure and must be presented to and considered by the Court in accordance with the Notice of Setting. Except for good cause shown and upon compliance with these rules, the Court shall not consider any motions for continuance on the scheduled trial date.

RULE 5.12 STANDING ORDER IN LIMINE

The Standing Order in Limine, available on the district clerk's website, shall apply in all felony jury trials in the District Courts of Leon County.

RULE 5.13 VOIR DIRE

The District Clerk shall align the Juror Information Cards in numerical order and seat the panel in numerical order. The Judge will qualify the panel and accept or reject any excuses. After the final panel is determined, the attorneys must make their decision on whether or not a shuffle will be requested. The court will recess the panel to give the clerk time to copy the jury cards, either in shuffled order or in numerical order. When the cards have been copied, the clerk will re-seat the jury according to the list and voir dire will begin. The attorneys and judge will be furnished a copy of the list and jury information cards.

Challenges for cause will be made after all parties are completed with their voir dire examination of the panel. After all counsel have completed their voir dire examination, the attorneys will be asked to approach the Bench. Counsel will be asked in turn for the Juror Number of the jurors whom they wish to challenge for cause. If, in the opinion of the Court, sufficient evidence has been adduced to support the ruling, the challenge will be granted or denied without further questions. Otherwise, the panel member will be called to the Bench and each counsel will be allowed a few questions. The panel member will then be excused to return to their seat, and the challenge will be ruled on outside the presence of the panel member.

If any panel member responds to questions during voir dire examination in a manner which makes it clear that they possess such strong opinions that a challenge for cause will clearly be good, and there exists a possibility that further responses may "poison" the entire panel, counsel should diplomatically terminate the inquiry and avoid further inquiries in the presence of the panel. If adverse counsel has a good-faith belief that the panel member can be rehabilitated, it will be pursued on an individual basis after the general voir dire examination.

RULE 5.14 TIME STANDARDS

Criminal cases shall be completed within twelve (12) months from the earliest date of arrest or indictment.

RULE 5.15 FAIR DEFENSE ACT

The rules adopted by Leon County concerning the Fair Defense Act may be obtained from the Local Administrative Judge.

RULE 6

CONFLICTING ENGAGEMENTS OF ATTORNEYS

A. Attorney already in trial in another court.

When informed that an attorney is presently in trial, the Court will determine where and when assigned. This information will be verified upon request of opposing counsel. The case will be placed on "hold" or reset, depending on when the attorney will be released. If the attorney is not actually in trial as represented by the attorney or his agent, the case will be tried without further notice.

B. Attorney assigned to two courts for the same date.

It is the duty of the attorney to call the affected Judges attention to all dual settings as soon as they are known. Insofar as is practicable, Judges should attempt to agree on which case has priority, otherwise the following priorities shall be observed by the Judges of the respective courts:

Criminal Cases

Cases given preference by statute

Preferentially set cases

Case set at earliest date

Case with earliest filing date

Cases in Metropolitan areas should yield to courts in rural areas

If the conflict cannot be resolved between the two judges, the Local Administrative Judge or the Regional Presiding Judge will resolve the conflict.

C. Designation of Attorney in Charge

Every case shall have an attorney in charge designated.

RULE 7

ATTORNEY VACATIONS

A. DESIGNATION OF VACATION

Subject to the provisions of subparts B and C of this rule, an attorney may designate not more than four (4) weeks of vacation during a calendar year as vacation, during which that attorney will not be assigned to trial or required to engage in any pretrial proceedings. This rule operates only where lead counsel, as defined by T.R.C.P., is affected, unless the trial court expands coverage to other counsel.

B. SUMMER VACATIONS

Written designation for vacation weeks during June, July or August must be filed with the District Clerk by March 15. Summer vacation so designated will protect the attorney from trials during those summer weeks, even if an order setting the case for trial was signed before the designation was filed.

C. NON-SUMMER VACATION

Written designations for vacations in months other than June, July or August must be filed with the District Clerk by February 1. Non-summer vacation weeks may not run consecutively for more than two (2) weeks at a time. Non-summer vacation weeks so designated will not protect an attorney from a trial by an order signed before the date the designation is filed.

RULE 8

JUDGES VACATION

If a Judge will be out of the District for a month or more, for vacation, attending a seminar or illness he/she shall notify the Local Administrative Judge and the Presiding Judge of the Tenth Administrative Region so that the business of the court can be taken care of during any such absence.

RULE 9

LAWYER'S CREED

The Lawyer's Creed is applicable in all cases tried in the District Courts of Leon County. A copy is attached hereto as Addendum 2.

RULE 10

ADOPTION, APPROVAL AND NOTICE

RULE 10.1 ADOPTION

These rules are adopted by the District Judges for all purposes. All previous rules of the District Court of Leon County are hereby repealed.

RULE 10.2 APPROVAL

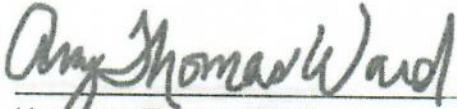
Upon approval by the Judge of the Tenth Administrative Region, these rules shall become effective immediately, and so long thereafter until amended, repealed or modified. Each numbered or lettered paragraph of these rules shall be considered to be separate and distinct from all other portions hereof, and if any portion should be declared by a higher court to be improper, such declaration will not affect any other portion not so declared to be improper.

RULE 10.3 NOTICE

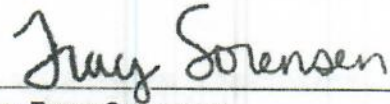
The District Clerk is directed to record these Rules in the Civil Minutes of the 87th, 278th and 369th Judicial District Courts of Leon County, Texas.

APPROVAL

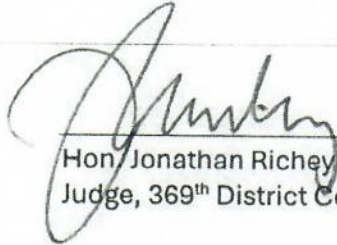
Approved and signed this 30 day of June 2026.



Hon. Amy Thomas Ward
Judge, 87th District Court



Hon. Tracy Sorensen
Judge, 278th District Court



Hon. Jonathan Richey
Judge, 369th District Court

ADDENDUM 1

RULES OF DECORUM

RULE 1: OPENING PROCEDURE

Immediately before the scheduled time for the start of the first court session of each day, the bailiff shall direct all persons present to their seats and shall call the courtroom to come to order. As the Judge enters the courtroom, the bailiff shall state:

“Everyone rise, please.”

And while everyone is still standing, the bailiff shall announce:

“The ____ District Court of Leon County, Texas is now in session, Judge _____ presiding. Be seated please.”

RULE 2: RECESS

When the Judge announces recess, the bailiff shall state:

“Everyone rise, please.”

And all shall remain standing until the Judge leaves the courtroom, whereupon the bailiff shall announce:

“This Court is recessed until _____ (a certain time).”

In reconvening after a recess, the bailiff shall call the courtroom to order and request everyone to rise as the Judge enters, and shall then state:

“Be seated please.”

Before a recess of a jury trial, the jury will be excused, and all other persons present shall rise while the bailiff conducts the jury from the courtroom to the jury room.

After a recess, the bailiff shall direct all jurors to the jury room and shall call the courtroom to order and request everyone to rise as the Judge enters, as in on-jury trials. After everyone is reseated, the jury shall be returned to the jury box from the jury room and everyone except the judge will rise again until the jury is seated.

RULE 3: GENERAL RULES OF COURTROOM CONDUCT

All officers of the court except the Judge and jurors and all other participants except witnesses who have been placed under the rule, shall promptly enter the courtroom before the scheduled time for each court session. When the bailiff calls the court to order, complete order should be observed.

In the courtroom, there shall be:

No tobacco used.

No chewing gum used.

No reading of newspaper or magazine.

No cell phone use.

No laptop, computer or tablet use.

No bottles, cups or beverage containers except court water pitchers and cups.

No edibles.

No propping of feet on tables or chairs.

No noise or talking that interferes with court proceedings.

The Judge, the attorneys and other officers of the court will refer to and address other court officers or participants in the proceedings respectfully and impersonally, as by using appropriate titles and surnames rather than first names. The form of address toward the Judge shall be "Judge" or "Your Honor."

The oath will be administered in a manner calculated to impress the witness with the importance and solemnity of the promise to adhere to the truth.

All officers of the court shall dress appropriately for court sessions.

RULE 4: CONDUCT OF ATTORNEYS

Attorneys should observe the letter and spirit of all canons of ethics, including those dealing with discussion of cases with representatives of the media and those concerning improper *ex parte* communications with the Judge.

Attorneys should advise their clients and witnesses of local Rules of Decorum that may be applicable to them.

All objections, arguments and other comments by counsel shall be directed to the Judge or jury and not to opposing counsel.

While another attorney is addressing the Judge or jury, an attorney should not stand for any purpose except to claim the right to interrupt the attorney who is speaking.

Attorneys should not approach the bench without leave of court and must never lean on the bench.

Attorneys shall remain seated at the counsel tables at all times except:

- a) When the Judge enters or leaves; and
- b) When addressing the Judge or jury and whenever it may be proper to handle documents, exhibits or other evidence. (Leave of court is not required.)

Attorneys should anticipate any need to move furniture, appliances or easels and should make advance arrangements with the bailiff. Tables should not be moved without leave of court.

Only attorneys and parties are permitted to sit at the counsel tables. All secretaries, paralegals, investigators and other personnel must remain outside the bar unless granted specific leave of the court to enter.

THE TEXAS LAWYER'S CREED

A Mandate for Professionalism

*I am a lawyer. I am entrusted by the People of Texas to preserve and improve our legal system.
I am licensed by the Supreme Court of Texas. I must therefore abide by the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct,
but I know that Professionalism requires more than merely avoiding the violation of laws and rules.
I am committed to this Creed for no other reason than it is right.*

I. OUR LEGAL SYSTEM

A lawyer owes to the administration of justice personal dignity, integrity, and independence. A lawyer should always adhere to the highest principles of professionalism.

1. I am passionately proud of my profession. Therefore, "My word is my bond."
2. I am responsible to assure that all persons have access to competent representation regardless of wealth or position in life.
3. I commit myself to an adequate and effective pro bono program.
4. I am obligated to educate my clients, the public, and other lawyers regarding the spirit and letter of this Creed.
5. I will always be conscious of my duty to the judicial system.

II. LAWYER TO CLIENT

A lawyer owes to a client allegiance, learning, skill, and industry. A lawyer shall employ all appropriate legal means to protect and advance the client's legitimate rights, claims, and objectives. A lawyer shall not be deterred by any real or imagined fear of judicial disfavor or public unpopularity, nor be influenced by mere self-interest.

1. I will advise my client of the contents of this creed when undertaking representation.
2. I will endeavor to achieve my client's lawful objectives in legal transactions and in litigation as quickly and economically as possible.
3. I will be loyal and committed to my client's lawful objectives, but I will not permit that loyalty and commitment to interfere with my duty to provide objective and independent advice.
4. I will advise my client that civility and courtesy are expected and are not a sign of weakness.
5. I will advise my client of proper and expected behavior.
6. I will treat adverse parties and witnesses with fairness and due consideration. A client has no right to demand that I abuse anyone or indulge in any offensive conduct.
7. I will advise my client that we will not pursue conduct which is intended primarily to harass or drain the financial resources of the opposing party.
8. I will advise my client that we will not pursue tactics which are intended primarily for delay.
9. I will advise my client that we will not pursue any course of action which is without merit.
10. I will advise my client that I reserve the right to determine whether to grant accommodations to opposing counsel in all matters that do not adversely affect my client's lawful objectives. A client has no right to instruct me to refuse reasonable requests made by other counsel.
11. I will advise my client regarding the availability of mediation, arbitration, and other alternative methods of resolving and settling disputes.

III. LAWYER TO LAWYER

A lawyer owes to opposing counsel, in the conduct of legal transactions and the pursuit of litigation, courtesy, candor, cooperation, and scrupulous observance of all agreements and mutual understandings. Ill feelings between clients shall not influence a lawyer's conduct, attitude, or demeanor toward opposing counsel. A lawyer shall not engage in unprofessional conduct in retaliation against other unprofessional conduct.

1. I will be courteous, civil, and prompt in oral and written communications.
2. I will not quarrel over matters of form or style, but I will concentrate on matters of substance.
3. I will identify for other counsel or parties all changes I have made in documents submitted for review.
4. I will attempt to prepare documents which correctly reflect the agreement of the parties. I will not include provisions which have not been agreed upon or omit provisions which are necessary to reflect the agreement of the parties.
5. I will notify opposing counsel, and, if appropriate, the Court or other persons, as soon as practicable, when hearings, depositions, meetings, conferences or closings are cancelled.
6. I will agree to reasonable requests for extensions of time and for waiver of procedural formalities, provided legitimate objectives of my client will not be adversely affected.
7. I will not serve motions or pleadings in any manner that unfairly limits another party's opportunity to respond.

8. I will attempt to resolve by agreement my objections to matters contained in pleadings and discovery requests and responses.
9. I can disagree without being disagreeable. I recognize that effective representation does not require antagonistic or obnoxious behavior. I will neither encourage nor knowingly permit my client or anyone under my control to do anything which would be unethical or improper if done by me.
10. I will not, without good cause, attribute bad motives or unethical conduct to opposing counsel nor bring the profession into disrepute by unfounded accusations of impropriety. I will avoid disparaging personal remarks or acrimony towards opposing counsel, parties and witnesses. I will not be influenced by any ill feeling between clients. I will abstain from any allusion to personal peculiarities or idiosyncrasies of opposing counsel.
11. I will not take advantage, by causing any default or dismissal to be rendered, when I know the identity of an opposing counsel, without first inquiring about that counsel's intention to proceed.
12. I will promptly submit orders to the Court. I will deliver copies to opposing counsel before or contemporaneously with submission to the Court. I will promptly approve the form of orders which accurately reflect the substance of the rulings of the Court.
13. I will not attempt to gain an unfair advantage by sending the Court or its staff correspondence or copies of correspondence.
14. I will not arbitrarily schedule a deposition, Court appearance, or hearing until a good faith effort has been made to schedule it by agreement.
15. I will readily stipulate to undisputed facts in order to avoid needless costs or inconvenience for any party.
16. I will refrain from excessive and abusive discovery.
17. I will comply with all reasonable discovery requests. I will not resist discovery requests which are not objectionable. I will not make objections nor give instructions to a witness for the purpose of delaying or obstructing the discovery process. I will encourage witnesses to respond to all deposition questions which are reasonably understandable. I will neither encourage nor permit my witness to quibble about words where their meaning is reasonably clear.
18. I will not seek Court intervention to obtain discovery which is clearly improper and not discoverable.
19. I will not seek sanctions or disqualification unless it is necessary for protection of my client's lawful objectives or is fully justified by the circumstances.

IV. LAWYER AND JUDGE

Lawyers and judges owe each other respect, diligence, candor, punctuality, and protection against unjust and improper criticism and attack. Lawyers and judges are equally responsible to protect the dignity and independence of the Court and the profession.

1. I will always recognize that the position of judge is the symbol of both the judicial system and administration of justice. I will refrain from conduct that degrades this symbol.
2. I will conduct myself in Court in a professional manner and demonstrate my respect for the Court and the law.
3. I will treat counsel, opposing parties, the Court, and members of the Court staff with courtesy and civility.
4. I will be punctual.
5. I will not engage in any conduct which offends the dignity and decorum of proceedings.
6. I will not knowingly misrepresent, mischaracterize, misquote or miscite facts or authorities to gain an advantage.
7. I will respect the rulings of the Court.
8. I will give the issues in controversy deliberate, impartial and studied analysis and consideration.
9. I will be considerate of the time constraints and pressures imposed upon the Court, Court staff and counsel in efforts to administer justice and resolve disputes.

Mandated by the Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals on November 7, 1989.

Reaffirmed by the Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in April 2013.

