

Judge Ranjan's¹ Practices and Procedures (rev. 4/23/25)

These procedures are intended to supplement the local and federal rules of civil and criminal procedure. They apply to all counsel and *pro se* parties.

I. General procedures

- a. **Telephone calls and e-mails to chambers.** Counsel may contact chambers for routine scheduling matters, and to raise any discovery disputes. In any communications, court staff will not provide any legal advice or discuss the merits of any cases. Members of the public may also contact chambers to obtain information regarding public access to any proceedings, such as dial-in or videoconference information. All inquiries should be directed to the Courtroom Deputy, Peter Kosloski, at peter_kosloski@pawd.uscourts.gov, or (412) 208-7495.
- b. **Decorum.** Counsel shall not exhibit familiarity with witnesses, jurors, opposing counsel, or the Court. During trial, counsel must not block the jurors' view of a witness and must not approach a witness without permission. Counsel must stand when speaking for the record and when addressing the Court, except for brief objections during testimony, or when informally discussing the case during status conferences.
- c. **Court reporter.** In criminal cases, the Court will have a court reporter present for all proceedings. In civil cases, the Court will generally only have a court reporter present for oral arguments on substantive motions, evidentiary hearings, the final pre-trial conference, and all trial proceedings. If no court reporter is present and counsel has an objection, or otherwise desires the proceeding be on the record for any reason, counsel has the right to and should request a court reporter to be present and then place the objection or proceedings on the record.
- d. **Continuances.** If a party seeks to continue a court proceeding, it is helpful if counsel includes within the motion alternative proposed dates/times near the original hearing date when all

¹ Judge Ranjan pronounces his last name "Ron John."

counsel are available. Motions to continue court proceedings will be granted for good cause (such as an illness, medical procedure, family emergency, pre-paid vacation, or previously scheduled court proceeding).

II. Civil case procedures

- a. **Appearances.** To ensure efficient communication of early scheduling orders through ECF, all counsel must enter their appearances as soon as practicable.
- b. **Initial case management conference.** After all defense counsel have entered appearances or all Defendants have answered the complaint, the Court will schedule an initial case management conference. Before that conference, the parties will be ordered to confer and submit a Rule 26(f) report and ADR stipulation. Judge Ranjan prefers to use a shortened form for the Rule 26(f) report, which is linked on his webpage. In completing the ADR stipulation, counsel must ensure that the time/date of the ADR session is within 60 days of the initial case management conference, the names/titles of the individuals who will attend are listed, and any representative has full settlement authority. The Court will strike ADR stipulations that do not comply with these requirements. The initial case management conference will typically occur in person, in the courtroom. If any lead counsel are from out of town, they may file a motion to request that the conference occur by telephone or videoconference. Counsel must be prepared to engage in substantive discussion at the initial case management conference.
- c. **Commencement of discovery.** Counsel shall not propound written discovery requests or otherwise commence any formal discovery until after the initial case management conference and after issuance of a case management order.
- d. **Rule 12 motions.** In a civil case, if a defendant elects to file a Rule 12 motion, defense counsel must meet and confer with plaintiff's counsel before filing to determine whether any purported defects with the complaint can be cured. Any motion to dismiss must come with a certificate stating that the defendant has made good-faith efforts to confer with the plaintiff to

determine whether the identified pleading deficiencies properly may be cured by amendment. Rule 12 motions that do not contain the required certification will be denied. This requirement applies to all Rule 12 motions, including motions for judgment on the pleadings under Rule 12(c).

- e. **Discovery length.** The Court has no set period for the completion of discovery, but the date that is proposed in the Rule 26(f) report should be a realistic deadline based on the nature of the case—*i.e.*, a deadline by which both parties can reasonably complete all discovery without further extension. The reason for this is that the Court does not like motions for extensions, and is unlikely to grant such motions, even consent motions. In cases where the Court has set a “presumptive trial date” at the onset, the parties’ proposed discovery deadlines should account for that date.
- f. **Discovery disputes.** For all discovery disputes, if the matter cannot be resolved after the parties confer in good faith, the parties shall contact chambers to raise the issue. At that time, the Court will typically have counsel provide a brief e-mail summary of their respective positions, and then the Court will provide guidance, decide the dispute, or order briefing. No discovery-related motions shall be filed until after the e-mail exchange. In the event discovery motions are subsequently filed, counsel for each side should, pursuant to Rule 37, provide support for their reasonable expenses (including attorneys’ fees), as expenses will be awarded to the prevailing party when permitted under Rule 37.
- g. **Routine motions.** For routine motions (including motions for leave to amend the pleadings, extensions of time, or continuances), counsel for movant must confer with opposing counsel to obtain consent, and state in the motion whether consent was obtained. Briefs are not necessary.
- h. **Rule 56 motions.** The Court will issue a briefing schedule for all Rule 56 motions, and will typically not consider any motions filed before the completion of discovery. For most motions, the Court excuses the requirements under Local Rule 56, such as having the parties forego the submission of separate concise statements and responsive statements of material facts. For cross-motions for summary judgment, the Court uses a briefing schedule like that

used in cross-appeals under Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 28.1. In complex cases, the Court will permit issue-specific briefs on summary judgment.

- i. **Briefing schedule.** Unless ordered otherwise, the principal brief in support of a motion should be no more than 20 pages. The Court will issue briefing schedules for all motions, which will provide the due dates and page limits for any later briefs.
- j. **Briefing content.** Counsel are free to structure their briefs in the manner and style that they believe to be most persuasive. Counsel are encouraged to review the “brief-writing preferences” document, which is on the Court’s webpage.
- k. **Oral argument.** The Court will entertain requests for oral argument on any motion. The Court encourages parties to have junior attorneys argue motions (or aspects of motions).
- l. **Injunctions.** If a complaint seeks a TRO or preliminary injunction, the Court will typically schedule a telephonic conference as soon as possible. The plaintiff should make all efforts to ensure that the defendant is served and has counsel, as the Court will rarely grant *ex parte* motions.
- m. **Class and collective actions.** For class and collective actions, the Court expects the named plaintiffs to attend all court conferences and hearings (either in person or remotely), and settlement conferences and mediations. Any request for an incentive award for a named plaintiff must demonstrate active involvement of the named plaintiff in the litigation. For classwide settlements, the parties should be prepared for a fulsome presentation at the preliminary-approval stage, as the Court will scrutinize the settlement closely at that stage and before notices are sent. For individual, non-collective FLSA settlements, the Court finds that court approval is not necessary; the parties may simply file a stipulation of dismissal at the appropriate time.
- n. **Trial.** The Court will issue a separate pre-trial order, which outlines trial procedures. In certain cases (usually personal-injury, UM/UIM, and non-complex employment and civil rights cases), the Court will issue an order setting a “presumptive trial

date,” with the trial to generally occur approximately 10-18 months from the date of the initial case management conference. In those cases, the trial date will be finalized at the initial case management conference, and all pre-trial deadlines will be set to account for that date. Requests to continue the trial date will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances.

III. Criminal case procedures

- a. **Initial case conference.** The Court will conduct an initial case conference about 40 days after arraignment, typically with only counsel present (unless defense counsel requests the defendant’s presence). After obtaining an extension from the magistrate judge at arraignment, defense counsel should not file any motions to extend the pre-trial motion deadline until after the initial conference. At the conference, counsel should be prepared to engage in a preliminary, substantive discussion of the case. For example, in most circumstances, the government should anticipate being asked to provide the Court with an overview of the evidence against the defendant and to answer questions about the scope of discovery.
- b. **Extensions to file pre-trial motions.** The Court will grant motions to extend the pre-trial motion deadline for good cause, such as where a case is factually complex, involves multiple defendants, or involves voluminous discovery. Otherwise, the Court is not inclined to grant serial extensions, and will require counsel to work expeditiously towards a plea or trial within the time frame of the Speedy Trial Act.
- c. **Change-of-plea hearings.** Counsel may call or e-mail chambers when they are prepared to schedule a change-of-plea hearing. If there is a plea agreement, the government must e-mail defense counsel and the Court a copy of the agreement seven days in advance of the hearing. At the same time, the government will be ordered to e-mail defense counsel and the Court the summary of the evidence it would present at trial so that defense counsel can review it with the defendant before the hearing. While the parties certainly are free to enter any plea agreements that are authorized

by law, counsel should be aware that the Court does not prefer Rule 11(c)(1)(C) plea agreements.

- d. **Sentencing.** The Court follows the schedule for pre-sentencing submissions and deadlines in the local rules.
- e. **Trial.** The Court will issue a separate pre-trial order, which outlines pre-trial procedures and deadlines.

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