

CIVIL CASE PRE-TRIAL PROCEDURES
11TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF COMMONWEALTH OF PA
(LUZERNE COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS)
Amended (12/2020)

1. MOTIONS

All Motions will be decided in accordance with the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure (“Pa.R.C.P.”) and the Luzerne County Rules of Civil Procedure (“Luz.R.C.P.”). If a pending motion becomes moot or is withdrawn, counsel for the moving party shall promptly notify Chambers in writing and shall provide the Court with a time-stamped copy of a praecipe withdrawing said motion.

2. CORRESPONDENCE AND FILINGS

- a) Correspondence and filings with the Court may be conducted via mail, email, facsimile or hand-delivery; provided, however, that any such submissions more than ten pages should be sent by mail or hand-delivered.
- b) Electronic mail (email) addresses shall be included on all filings and correspondence to the Office of Judicial Services & Records (Prothonotary), Court Administration, and the Court.
- c) Responses from Court Administration and the Court may be by email at the Court’s (and Court Administration’s) discretion, which shall be deemed the same as if the responses were sent by regular U.S. mail.
- d) In the event of an email address change, the sender or filer shall provide an updated email address to the Clerk of Judicial Records, Court Administration and, if the case is individually assigned, to the Judge to whom the matter is individually assigned, within one (1) business day.
- e) In the event a self-represented litigant (SRL) does not have an electronic mail address (email), correspondence shall be done by regular mail. Should the SRL get an email address, all filings and correspondence thereafter shall be updated accordingly.

3. CONTINUANCES

Continuances will only be granted upon good cause shown; the timing of the request is a factor that the Court will consider in deciding the request.

4. SCHEDULING CONFERENCES & PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCES

As to cases that have either been assigned to a trial judge or certified as “trial ready”, at any Scheduling Conference, the Court will review the procedural posture of the case and settlement possibilities, and will set dates for discovery, expert reports, dispositive motions, Pre-Trial Conference and Trial (as needed). As to all other cases, the Court will set dates for discovery, expert reports, dispositive motions and a date on or after which a Certificate of Trial Readiness may be filed. It is preferred, but not required, that Trial Counsel appear at the Scheduling Conference. A substitute may attend in place of Trial Counsel, provided said substitute is fully informed about the case, is prepared and authorized to discuss case management dates, and has access to the calendar of Trial Counsel for the 24 months following the Scheduling Conference in order to commit Trial Counsel to dates for case management purposes. All trial counsel and self-represented parties must attend the Pre-Trial Conference in person and shall not request alternative arrangements absent compelling circumstances.

5. ATTENDANCE AT COURT APPEARANCES

Counsel or self-represented parties shall appear for all court appearances, unless express permission otherwise has been granted by the Court, and shall be prompt, properly attired and prepared.

6. ORAL ARGUMENT

If counsel or a self-represented party seeks oral argument, they shall submit a written request upon submission of their motion or reply thereto. Even if the parties do not request oral argument, the parties may be required to appear for oral argument by request of Court. Each party will have fifteen (15) minutes to present argument. If a party requires additional time or rebuttal time, it must be requested and approved before oral argument begins.

7. SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES

Upon the request of counsel or a self-represented party, the Court will conduct a Settlement Conference in accordance with Pa.R.C.P. 212.5.

8. SETTLEMENT

If, at any point in litigation, a case settles, Plaintiff’s counsel shall furnish the Court with a letter which clearly and unequivocally states that the case is settled. Unless and until such a letter is received by the Court, the parties and counsel will be required to appear at all court proceedings as ordered. Plaintiff shall provide the Court with a time-stamped copy of the Praecepto to Discontinue in the ordinary course.

9. TELEPHONE CONFERENCES

Telephone conferences may be held to resolve scheduling matters or limited matters. The Court will notify counsel of the date and time for any telephone conferences. Counsel for the requesting party shall be responsible for initiating the telephone conference and establishing contact with the Court after all parties are represented on the call.

10. INTERPRETERS

If a party or witness requires the use of an interpreter during Court proceedings, the interpreter will be provided free of cost pursuant to the Pennsylvania Interpreters Act and Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964.

For civil trials, due to scheduling issues relating to the availability of interpreters, the Court requires 30 days advance notice, and for all other matters, 10 days notice. If a party fails to provide this notice, then sanctions, including associated court costs, may be imposed.