



IN THE STATE COURT OF FULTON COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: PROCEDURE FOR ALL  
CIVIL CASES ASSIGNED TO  
JUDGE DIANE E. BESSEN.

JUDGE BESSEN  
25EX000015

**STANDING PRETRIAL ORDER**

This Standing Order concerns certain matters that routinely come before this Court and shall govern the conduct of this case.

1. **Special Settings:**

For complex cases a request for a special setting will usually be honored. Parties are advised to make such a request as early as possible as calendars are often already booked six months out.

2. **Immediately Prior to Trial:** The following tasks must be completed shortly, prior to trial:

- (a) **Submission of Consolidated Pretrial Orders.** Parties are to confer and submit a Consolidated Pretrial Order. The Court will not accept proposed orders that are not consolidated. Any party that fails to confer and submit their portion of a CPTO may have their case dismissed or pleadings struck.
- (b) **The parties must retain a court reporter.** The State Court of Fulton County does not provide court reporters for civil cases. The parties' failure to retain a court reporter will be deemed a waiver of same, and not delay trial.

(b) **The parties must mark and exchange exhibits and demonstrative aids.** Any demonstrative aids or videos particularly those intended to be shown in opening statements, may not be used unless consented to by both parties or approved by the Court prior to jury selection.

(c) **The parties must confer on all motions in limine** and notify the Court which if any cannot be resolved by consent. The Court will address contested Motions in Limine prior to trial.

(d) **The parties must notify the Court of all objections to deposition designations and exhibits** no later than the week before trial, so that timely rulings and redactions can be made.

(e) **Each party is to prepare a List of Witnesses** for the Court's use. Each party shall provide the Court with a list of witnesses and/or videos he/she intends to present each day, indicating the approximate length of each witness's testimony on the first day of trial. This is to facilitate the Court's understanding of the timing and progress of the trial. It should not be filed, and it will not be shared with opposing counsel.

3. **Motions in Limine:** The parties must meet and confer on all motions in limine and inform the Court prior to the first day of trial of only those matters that are still in contention. The Court typically resolves any unresolved motions in limine immediately prior to jury selection.

The Court expressly discourages motions in limine on the following issues, and hereby finds that the following are NOT PERMITTED absent a specific exception moved for and granted by the Court:

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(a) financial conditions of the parties (unless in a punitive damages phase of a trial);

(b) lay testimony regarding medical conditions or diagnosis, with the exception that a Plaintiff may discuss their understanding of their treatment and condition;

(c) hearsay evidence that does not fall within a designated exception;

(d) testimony of any witness not previously identified during discovery or listed on the pre-trial order;

(e) documentary evidence not previously disclosed during discovery or listed on the pre-trial order;

(f) summaries of medical expenses, unless the actual bills have been admitted;

(g) personal opinions of counsel;

(h) reference to settlement discussion and/or settlement demands;

(i) when or how plaintiff retained counsel;

(j) conveying any apologies or sorrow for the condition of a plaintiff;

(k) any reference that plaintiff is playing the lottery, that any recovery is not subject to income tax, or that money will not undo damages; and

(l) financial consequences of judgment against any party.

They parties are encouraged to object to any such evidence during trial as the needed arises.

5. **Voir Dire**: There will be no separate general and individual Voir Dire. In most cases the Court will permit Plaintiff 45 minutes and Defendant(s) 45 minutes to ask both general and follow-up/individual questions of the panel. Jurors will be seated in rows of 10, with the

first juror seated in the far-right-handed seat from the bench's perspective.

6. **Electronics**: The Court uses the share screen function of Zoom to facilitate the electronic display of information to the jury. All parties are therefore encouraged to bring their laptops and a power cord with them to trial. Prior to all proceedings the Court will initiate a Zoom meeting and allow the parties to share their screens in order to enable the display of documents and videos to the Court, jury, and gallery on the courtroom's large display screens.

If a courtroom technology company is being used to assist with trial, courthouse security will require Rule 22 order containing the name of the tech prior to the start of trial. The tech must bring a copy of the Rule 22 with them to the courthouse to avoid problems with security.

6. **Early Entry**: A Rule 22 order is required to permit attorneys and/or parties to enter the building before 8:30 AM or to set up any equipment. The Rule 22 order must be presented to security each time early entry is requested, or same will be denied.

This 5<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2025.



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Judge Diane E. Bessen  
State Court of Fulton County

cc:  
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