

**FAMILY COURT PRE-TRIAL AND TRIAL PROCEDURES FOR CASES
ASSIGNED TO JUDGE MELISSA T. PAVLACK**

NOTE: If a party or witness for a party requires the use of an interpreter at any Court proceeding, the party is responsible for notifying the Lehigh County Interpreter Office at 610-782-3387 so that arrangements can be made for an interpreter. Only certified court interpreters will be permitted to serve. A list of certified court interpreters is available from the Family Court Administrator's Office.

A. GENERAL AND PRE-TRIAL PROCEDURES

1. MOTIONS AND PETITIONS: Follow Leh.R.C.P. 208.3(a) with regard to Motions. If the case is assigned to another Judge it should not be brought to Court before Judge Pavlack.

A contested Petition, which requires testimony of a witness, must be filed with the Court and scheduled under a Rule Returnable by the Family Court.

If a pending motion or petition is being withdrawn, counsel or the pro se party shall file a Praecipe at the office of the Clerk of Judicial Records- Civil Division and deliver a time-stamped copy to Chambers and the opposing side of the case. If a pending motion is resolved prior to argument or hearing, counsel or the pro se parties shall sign a Stipulation and file it at the office of the Clerk of Judicial Records – Civil Division and deliver a time-stamped copy to Chambers and the opposing side of the case. The Court will enter an Order approving the Stipulation.

2. CORRESPONDENCE: Do not correspond with the Judge's Chambers by letters, faxes or emails. All requests for relief must be filed with the office of the Clerk of Judicial Records- Civil Division.

3. CONTINUANCES: Use the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas Application for Continuance found on the website. When the Application is fully completed and signed by both counsel or pro se parties, the Court will accept the Application via facsimile to Chambers. If counsel is requesting the continuance due to attachment in another Court proceeding, the Scheduling Order for the other Court proceeding must be attached to the Application.

4. CUSTODY PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCE: No later than five (5) days prior to the Pre-Trial Conference, Counsel or pro se parties shall file with the office of the Clerk of Judicial Records- Civil Division their Pre-Trial Statement and serve a time-stamped copy on the opposing side. The details for the requirements of the Pre-Trial Statement will be attached to the Pre-Trial Conference Scheduling Order.

Counsel and the parties must attend the Pre-Trial Conference. At the Pre-Trial Conference, the Court will review the Pre-Trial Statements, discuss the logistics of the case and conduct settlement discussions.

B. CUSTODY TRIAL PROCEDURES

1. TRIAL SCHEDULING ORDER: Following the Custody Pre-Trial Conference, the Court will issue a Trial Scheduling Order with the exact date and time for the Trial to commence.

2. OBJECTIONS TO QUESTIONS: Counsel or pro se litigants shall state their objection and the specific ground for the objection. Counsel or pro se litigants shall not use objections as an opportunity to offer argument on the case, reiterate testimony or guide the witness.

3. EXAMINATION OF WITNESSES: Examination is limited to direct, cross, re-direct and re-cross. Counsel and pro se litigants shall treat witnesses with fairness and consideration and shall not shout at or abuse witnesses in any manner. Counsel are required to request permission to approach witnesses.

4. EXHIBITS AND COURTROOM AIDS: Counsel or pro se litigants must make their own arrangements in advance of Trial for video, audio or other visual aid equipment that they need.

Prepare exhibits in advance and bring enough copies for the witness, opposing side and the Court.

Once an exhibit is admitted into evidence, it remains in the custody of the court reporter. The only exceptions are for firearms, ammunition, or contraband, for which special storage arrangements may be required. If counsel wishes to retain an original exhibit, he or she shall obtain a stipulation from opposing counsel to replace the original with a copy and then seek such permission from the Court. When admitting any exhibit that is something other than an 8½ by 11 inch piece of paper, counsel must present the Court with an 8½ by 11 inch piece of paper version of the exhibit. This may mean a photograph of the exhibit or a reduced copy of a larger piece of paper.

5. TRANSCRIPTS Counsel or pro se litigants shall complete a Request For Transcript Or Copy which may be found on the Court's website.