



MEMORANDUM

TO: Fourth Circuit Court Practitioners and Litigants

FROM: Judge Stephanie J. Williams and Fourth Circuit Court Staff

DATE: September 17, 2024

RE: Fourth Circuit Court Updates for Week of September 16, 2024

Thank you for your continued support and feedback as we continue to fine tune the operations of Fourth Circuit Court. It is our goal to have Chamber Rules completed and posted by the first part of next month. In the interim, we will keep you informed and updated about new processes and procedures through weekly memorandums. In that vein, please see below our announcements for this week.

WE ARE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS THROUGH THE END OF THE WEEK!

We are seeking to fill the positions of Staff Attorney and Court Improvement and Communications Coordinator. The job announcements with descriptions and application information may be found at: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/nashville>. Please feel free to share with anyone you think may be interested.

ID AND DEFAULT DIVORCE SCHEDULING

We have enjoyed great success with the ID Divorce cases that have waived appearances and are excited to continue this new process. This allows us to start with contested cases earlier and has prompted us to open an additional day for ID and Default hearings. **Effective immediately, you may schedule ID and Default divorces on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week!**

Absent an Agreed Order to Set, there must be an 11-day window of time between the filing of the Order to Set and the final hearing date. This 11-day period includes weekends and holidays.

VENUE WAIVER

While we are waiving personal appearances in final hearings for ID Divorce cases, the Fourth Circuit Court is not waiving venue, even if there is an agreement to do so.

LET US KNOW WHO YOU ARE 😊

The bar is continually changing and growing. Please assist us by announcing your name before addressing the Court.

SIGNATURE BLOCKS

All pleadings shall include a signature block for the lawyer or litigant (if *pro se*) filing the pleading. The signature block shall include:

- Name of the person filing the pleading
- Board of Professional Responsibility number (if a lawyer)
- Address of the person filing the pleading
- Phone number of the person filing the pleading
- Email address of the person filing the pleading

MOTIONS

1. Posted on the Circuit Court Clerk's website is a document entitled [Fourth Circuit Court Staggered Motion Docket and Zoom Participation Information](#). This document sets forth information about the weekly staggered motion docket, as well as how to participate via Zoom for cases as set forth in the document.
2. All Motions shall state the underlying Complaint or Petition that is pending.
3. All Motions shall include the following language:

THIS MOTION IS EXPECTED TO BE HEARD ON _____ (insert date), AT 9:00 A.M. THE COURT MAY SET A DIFFERENT HEARING TIME AT ITS DISCRETION. ALL HEARING TIMES WILL BE POSTED ON THE FINAL MOTION DOCKET, BY 12:00 P.M., ON THE TUESDAY IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE MOTION DATE. PLEASE REFER TO THE FINAL MOTION DOCKET LOCATED ON THE CIRCUIT COURT CLERK'S WEBSITE <https://circuitclerk.nashville.gov/dockets/> TO CONFIRM THE HEARING TIME.

4. All Motions to Set contested matters shall include:
 - The matter that is being set for final hearing;
 - The date the matter was filed;
 - The date of service for the matter;
 - The date an answer or counter-complaint was filed (if applicable);

- The date of an answer to a counter-complaint (if applicable);
 - The date mediation was completed (if applicable);
 - The date the parenting seminar was attended by each party (if applicable);
 - The date a notice of insurance was filed (if applicable);
 - The date a proposed parenting plan was filed (if applicable)
 - A statement that a Certificate of Readiness (COR) has been filed and signed by both parties or their respective counsel (*if represented*). If only one party has executed the COR, a statement as to why it is not executed by both parties; and,
 - The amount of time expected for the final hearing.
5. Continuances of Motions should be to a date certain versus indefinitely.
 6. Motions for Default in divorces with children or in cases where a modification of parenting time is requested must have a Proposed Parenting Plan filed and served on the adverse party before the Motion will be granted. Service may be effectuated by mailing a copy of the Proposed Parenting Plan to the adverse party at their last known address. The same should be reflected in a Certificate of Service on the Proposed Parenting Plan.

ORDERS

1. All proposed orders shall include a line for the date of the order and a line for the judge's signature.
2. Proposed orders submitted for entry by Judge Williams shall reference her as Stephanie J. Williams, Judge.
3. All proposed orders shall be filed on or after the date of the hearing on the matter and within five (5) business days of the hearing.
4. All proposed orders shall include the following:
 - The opening paragraph shall state the pleading that was addressed in the hearing;
 - The opening paragraph shall state the date of the hearing;
 - The opening paragraph shall state lawyers and parties who were present at the hearing;
 - The opening paragraph shall state the name of the Judge or Special Master that heard the matter; and
 - If signing an order with permission of opposing counsel, the order must be sent to opposing counsel and a Certificate of Service reflecting the same must be included in the order.

STATUS CONFERENCE DOCKET

All cases filed on, or after, October 1, 2024, will be assigned a date for a status conference upon filing. The status conference will occur approximately 6 months from the date of filing the Complaint or Petition, with the Special Master presiding. Appearance of attorneys of record and unrepresented litigants is required at the status conference; represented litigants may appear if they choose to do so. The status conference shall take place via videoconference, or via teleconference at the discretion of the Special Master.

This will be an opportunity to ascertain the status of a case and put in place any scheduling orders or address any issues that may be helpful in moving a case to final hearing.

As always, should you have any questions with anything contained in this memorandum or any other matters about our Court, please feel free to contact us at: 615-862-5910.

Have a great week!

Judge Williams and the Fourth Circuit Court Staff