

Navarro County Local Rules

(As Approved December 6, 2022)

13th District Court
Navarro County Court at Law
Navarro County Court

Navarro County Local Rules

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PART I: GENERAL RULES OF DECORUM AND CONDUCT

Rule 1. *Scope of these Rules*

These are the Local Court Rules for all courts of law in Navarro County, including the 13th Judicial District Court, the Navarro County Court at Law, and the Navarro County Court. The Presiding Judge has the sole authority to waive, modify, or interpret these Rules as applied to the courtroom or proceeding over which they preside. Furthermore, the Presiding Judge has the sole authority to enact, modify, vacate standing order to the courtroom or proceeding over which they preside.

Rule 2. *Sanctions for Violations of These Rules*

Unless otherwise stipulated, any party or person in violation of one or more of these Rules may be held in contempt of court in accordance with Texas law.

Rule 3. *Superior Rules*

Nothing in these Rules shall supersede any provision in any Texas statute, code, the State or Federal Constitution, or state rule. These superior rules include, but are not limited to: the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, the Texas Rules of Code of Criminal Procedure, the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure, and the Texas Rules of Evidence. Should any provision within these Rules conflict with any Texas statute, code, or state rule, the Court or parties shall give deference to the Texas statute, code, or state rule.

Rule 4. *Definitions*

Within these Rules, the following terms have the following meanings unless otherwise noted:

- (1) Court – the court of law in which a cause is being heard;
- (2) Judge – the judicial officer presiding over the Court; besides a duly-elected judge, may also include visiting judges, senior judges, associate judges, special masters, or any other judicial officer;
- (3) Cause – the lawsuit, motion, or other matter before the Court; the cause includes the full scope of the matter's pleadings, oral arguments, record, evidence, and exhibits;
- (4) Pleading – a specific motion or request by a party in a cause before the Court;
- (5) Clerk – the District Clerk of Navarro County, or any of his or her deputies or office staff; the County Clerk of Navarro County, or any of his or her deputies or office staff;

- (6) Bailiff – the Court’s bailiff or any other security personnel for the Navarro County Courthouse or the presiding Judge;
- (7) Attorney – any attorney at law appearing before the Court in any cause before it; for the sake of these Rules, parties proceeding *pro se* shall be treated as if they were an attorney at law, except as these Rules stipulate otherwise; except as noted otherwise, these Rules apply with equal force to any agent acting on the attorney’s behalf, including secretaries, paralegals, legal assistants, clerks, investigators, or interns (but not, *e.g.*, hired expert witnesses);
- (8) Party – any party involved in a cause pending before the Court, or the party’s attorney on the party’s behalf;
- (9) Officer(s) of the Court – anyone performing an official duty before the Court; generally includes the attorneys, Bailiff, court coordinators, the Judge’s clerk, the Court’s reporter, and the Judge.

Section 1 – Conduct by All Persons

Rule 5. Court Opening Procedure and Decorum

At the Judge’s discretion, immediately prior to the scheduled time for the first court session of each day, the bailiff shall direct all persons present in the courtroom to take their seats and come to order. As the Judge enters the courtroom, the bailiff shall direct everyone present to “please rise.” All will remain standing while the bailiff announces the following:

“The _____ Court of Navarro County, Texas, is now in session, the Honorable Judge _____ presiding.”

Upon the Judge taking his or her seat, the bailiff shall direct everyone to “please be seated.”

Rule 6. Court Recess Procedure and Decorum

At the Judge’s discretion, whenever the Judge announces a recess, the bailiff shall direct everyone present to “please rise.” All will remain until the Judge has left the bench.

Rule 7. Entrances and Exits by a Jury

In jury trials, the bailiff shall direct everyone present to “please rise” whenever the jury enters or exits the courtroom. All are to remain standing until the bailiff has conducted the jury from the courtroom, or until all jurors have taken their seats in the jury box.

Rule 8. *Conduct in the Courtroom (Generally)*

Prior to entering the courtroom, all persons, including counsel, shall ensure all electronic devices are silent. All persons except for witnesses placed under Texas Rule of Evidence 614 shall promptly enter the courtroom upon arrival and shall arrive prior to the scheduled time for each court session. None shall loiter in the doorways to the courtroom. The bailiff may direct persons outside the courtroom to move away from the courtroom's doors or to become silent if the persons outside the courtroom are disturbing court proceedings. When the bailiff or Judge calls for order in the court, all persons shall become silent and shall take their seats until order is restored.

Rule 9. *Forms of Address*

All officers of the court are to treat others with respect at all times. This includes the manner in which officers of the court address and refer to others. Participants in any proceeding are to refer to and address others using only appropriate and respectful titles. (E.g., attorneys may refer to each other as Mr., Mrs., or Ms. _____, "The State," "The Defense," etc., as is appropriate.) The Judge is to be addressed as "Your Honor," or "Judge _____," and is to be referred to as "[His/Her] Honor," "Judge _____," or "The Court."

Rule 10. *Prohibited Items*

The following items are prohibited in the courtroom:

- (1) Tobacco in any form;
- (2) Chewing gum;
- (3) Food or drink, except for water, coffee, or tea in spill proof containers;
- (4) Knives, weapons, or firearms, except for those carried by bailiffs or other sworn law enforcement personnel on duty.

The bailiff may confiscate any such items that are discovered in the courtroom, or require the person possessing them to leave the courtroom.

Rule 11. *Prohibited Behavior*

The following behavior is prohibited in the courtroom:

- (1) The use of cellular phones, except by leave of the Court;
- (2) The use of other electronic devices, except as used by officers of the court, including attorneys, in the conduct of their official duties;
- (3) Propping feet on tables or chairs, or otherwise misusing furniture in any way;

- (4) Sleeping or napping;
- (5) Creating noise that disturbs court proceedings;
- (6) Swearing, cursing, or using otherwise inappropriate language;
- (7) Wearing any kind of headgear, except for medical or religious purposes;
- (8) Wearing sunglasses or having sunglasses perched on top of one's head, except for medical purposes.

Rule 12. *Dress Code for the Courtroom*

All officers of the court shall dress appropriately for all court proceedings; appropriate dress entails attire suitable for formal, professional business engagements. Further, all persons appearing before the Court should maintain adequate levels of personal hygiene, and the Court reserves the right to order persons to leave until such a time as the offending person remedies any hygienic problems.

Rule 13. *Conduct for Virtual Hearings and Appearances*

All persons virtually appearing before the Court on Zoom or some other platform approved by the Court shall conduct themselves the same way as if they were in the courtroom. Further, such persons shall keep their microphones muted when they are not on the stand or otherwise required to speak. Additionally, persons must keep their video cameras on unless otherwise instructed by the Court. Such persons shall not have a distracting background and shall keep themselves within the frame of the camera.

See Local Rules 53 for Requesting a Virtual Appearance.

Section 2 – Conduct by Attorneys and Their Agents

Rule 14. *Ethical Behavior*

Attorneys shall observe the letter and spirit of all applicable ethical cannons and rules, including those dealing with the discussion of causes with the press, and those concerning improper *ex parte* communications with the Judge, jurors or potential jurors, or witnesses.

Rule 15. *Responsibility to Advise Clients, Witnesses, and Guests of Local Rules*

Attorneys shall advise their clients, witnesses, and any of their guests or agents of the Local Rules as related to decorum and conduct.

Rule 16. *Obligation to Be Ready to Proceed Prior to Appearance*

Attorneys shall be fully prepared to proceed prior to making an appearance before the Court. This includes, but is not limited to, having previously discussed any plea bargains, having previously met with and advised their clients of any necessary matters, and having all documents or paperwork completed to the extent possible.

Rule 17. *Obligation to Meet Clients Prior to Appearance*

Except where the Court appoints an attorney to represent a client at the same proceeding, all attorneys have an affirmative obligation to have met with their clients prior to entering an initial appearance on the client's behalf. Failure to do so may be a violation of the attorney's ethical obligations to adequately prepare.

This Rule shall not apply in the case of an attorney serving as a guardian *ad litem*, or an attorney representing an estate. Attorneys acting on behalf of the State of Texas are exempt from this Rule except as otherwise required by law.

Attorneys may satisfy this Rule by meeting their clients over the telephone or through other reasonable communication.

Rule 18. *Audience for Objections, Arguments, and Comments*

All objections, arguments, and other comments by counsel shall be directed to the Judge, or when appropriate, the jury, and not to opposing counsel.

Rule 19. *Appropriate Interruptions*

While another attorney ("Attorney B"), the Judge, or a witness is speaking, an attorney ("Attorney A") shall not stand or speak for any purpose except to make a proper request of the Court or to make a proper objection, unless Attorney A is conducting cross-examination of a witness or responding to a question from the Judge.

Rule 20(a). *Grounds for Objections (Clear and Concise Requirement)*

The grounds upon which an objection is made must be clearly and concisely stated to the Judge at the time the objection is made.

Rule 20(b). *Speaking Objections and Sidebar Remarks Prohibited*

Once a proper objection has been made, none present in the courtroom are to speak unless prompted by the Judge, until such a time as the Judge makes a ruling on the pending objection. Attorneys may only ask for permission to respond to the pending objection, or they may ask for a ruling on their objection.

Rule 21. *Approaching the Bench, Jury Box, or Witness Stand*

Attorneys should not approach the bench, jury box, or witness stand without leave of the Court.

Rule 22. *Permission to Leave the Courtroom*

Attorneys who have appeared before the Court that day shall not leave the courtroom without leave of the Court.

Rule 23. *Conduct During an Appearance Before the Court*

Attorneys appearing before the Court should remain at counsel's tables at all times, except when otherwise directed or allowed to act by leave of the Court.

Rule 24. *Conduct While Not Appearing Before the Court*

Attorneys not currently appearing before the Court but in the courtroom should not loiter anywhere on the Judge's side of the bar without leave of the Court.

Rule 25. *Moving Furniture or Setting Up Displays (Easels, Projectors, etc.)*

Attorneys should anticipate any need to move furniture, appliances, or easels, and should make advance arrangements with the Bailiff. Whenever possible, attorneys or the Bailiff shall rearrange furniture, or set up appliances or easels prior to the Court session's commencement.

Section 3 – Conduct by Members of the Press

Rule 26. *Conduct by Members of the Press (Generally)*

The Court will treat all members of the press as members of the general public, and with the exceptions listed below, will hold any members of the press to the same standards of decorum and conduct as the general public.

Rule 27. *Cameras in the Courtroom (Permission Required)*

No film, video, or any other form of visual recordings of court proceedings may be taken without the prior written permission of the presiding Judge. The presiding Judge reserves the right to withdraw their permission at their discretion.

Rule 28. *Cameras in the Courtroom (Operation)*

In the event that the presiding Judge grants permission for visual recordings to be taken in the courtroom, all press and media entities will be collectively allowed to have one camera with one operator present at a fixed location in the courtroom. Multiple media entities, if any, are required to share the visual recordings taken as a prerequisite to permission to film. The media entities will also be required to agree upon the equipment to be used, the operator, and the location of the equipment in the courtroom before permission will be granted, and the Court reserves the right to deny the media entities permission to use certain equipment, operators, or filming locations. The use of flashes or special lighting is prohibited.

Rule 29. *Audio Recording of Court Proceedings*

Audio recordings are to be treated analogously to visual recordings. *See* Local Rules 26 and 27, *supra*. The Court's official reporter shall be exempt from this Rule.

Rule 30. *Interviews*

No press interviews of any form are allowed within the courtroom without the prior written permission of the Court.

Rule 31. *Media Depictions of Jurors*

At no time shall any members or potential members of any jury be depicted in the press without the prior written permission of the presiding Judge. Should any juror be inadvertently or accidentally depicted, described, or identified in any form of media recording or representation, the media entity should edit that juror from the recording or representation so that they are not depicted to the public in any way.

PART II: RULES GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF LITIGATION

Rule 32. *Required Conference Prior to Filing Pleadings or Motions*

In an effort to reduce the number of contested motions that come before the courts, and to allow each court to use its time more efficiently, all parties are required to confer with all other parties in any cause prior to filing a pleading or motion. At the conference, the parties shall make good faith efforts to come to an agreement.

This Rule shall not apply to criminal prosecutions following a grand jury indictment.

This Rule shall not apply to any matter for which an emergency hearing is required.

This Rule shall not apply to the application for any protective order.

See Local Rules 33-35 (Required Certificates Required of Filings), *infra*.

See Local Rule 57 (Emergency Hearings), *infra*.

Rule 33. *Accessibility of Parties and Counsel*

All counsel, or the parties themselves if proceeding *pro se*, must be generally accessible to be contacted by all other counsel or *pro se* parties throughout the course of litigation. This means that, at minimum, attorneys and parties are expected to return phone calls or respond to any form of written correspondence with reasonable promptness and provide a reasonable number of times during which they will be available for any necessary meetings. *Pro se* parties who are incarcerated must make reasonable efforts to make themselves available to communication. Reasonableness in such cases will be based on the circumstances of the individual's incarceration. A party or attorney found to be evading reasonable attempts by another party to contact them shall be held in contempt of court. The Court shall judge the reasonableness of the party's or counsel's behavior given the totality of the circumstances.

See Local Rule 58 (Vacation of Counsel), *infra*.

PART III: RULES RELATED TO DOCUMENTS FILED WITH THE COURT

Section 1 – Prerequisites to Filing Certain Documents

Rule 34(a). *Motions (Generally)*

Prior to filing any motion in a civil case, the movant shall be required make a good faith effort to determine whether the other parties oppose the pleading's requested action. For the purposes of this Rule, a good faith inquiry shall consist of, at a minimum, one oral conversation with the party or the party's lead counsel, during which the movant informs the other party of what they will be asking the court to do in their pleading. The movant need not go into their legal arguments, but must provide the other parties with enough information so that they understand the pleading's requested relief or action, and the general legal grounds for the pleading.

Rule 34(b). *Uncontested Motions*

If no party contests the motion, the movant shall affix a certificate to the pleading that is signed by lead counsel for all parties, indicating as such.

Rule 34(c). *Contested Motions in Civil Cases*

If a party contests the pleading, the movant shall affix a certificate to the pleading stating that the movant made a good faith effort to resolve the matter with all parties prior to filing the contested pleading. The movant shall state, specifically, with whom they consulted, via what medium (e.g., in person, over a conference call, etc.), on what date, and the movant shall provide a brief explanation of why an agreement could not be reached.

Rule 35. *Documents Related to Discovery Disputes Specifically in Civil Cases*

Appended to or included in any document related to a discovery dispute should be a statement that clearly and concisely lists the efforts that were made to resolve the dispute without the aid of the Court, the pertinent issues upon which the parties continue to disagree, and why those disagreements were not resolved despite the good faith efforts to do so.

See Local Rule 49, *infra*.

Rule 36. *Documents Related to Scheduling Disputes Specifically*

Documents related to scheduling disputes are to be treated analogously to documents related to discovery disputes. *See* Local Rule 34, *supra*.

Rule 37. *Motions Requesting Entry of Judgment*

Pleadings requesting the entry of a judgment in a civil case shall include a proffered draft of the judgment. The proffered draft shall be separate from the pleading itself, and shall be clearly marked as a draft on all pages of the document, unless otherwise ordered by the Court.

Section 2 – Form of Documents

Rule 38. *Stylistic Requirements in the Event Paper Filing is Permitted*

All filing is to be done electronically (*See* Rule 41). However, in the event paper filings are needed or permitted, all documents filed with the Clerk shall be printed on plain, white, 8 ½ inch by 11 inch paper. For both physical and electronic filings, all text is to be written or printed in black ink, and the selected font must be a commonly used font acceptable to the Court, no smaller in size than 12 point font. Margins are to measure one inch on all sides of the document, no more, no less, and all text is to be double space except for where *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* requires otherwise.

Rule 39. *Page and Word Count Limits*

Without the leave of the Court, no pleading other than a plaintiff's original petition, an indictment by the State, or a defendant's corresponding original answer shall exceed twenty (20) pages, or 5,000 words if in electronic format, in length, not including attachments and certificates.

Original petitions, indictments, and original answers may not exceed fifty (50) pages, or 15,000 words if in electronic format, in length without leave of the Court, not including attachments and certificates.

All attachments collectively may not exceed fifty (50) pages in length without leave of the Court.

Rule 40. *Citations to Case Law, Statutes, etc.*

All citations to case law, statutes, or other extraneous documents (including other court documents related to the cause at issue) found within any document shall conform to the stylistic requirements set forth in the most recent edition of *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*. Parties should pay special attention to the *Bluebook's* Rules B3 (Introductory Signals), B4.1.2 (Reporter and Pinpoint Citations), B7.1.1 (Abbreviations), and B11 (Explanatory Parentheticals).

Section 3 – Methods of Filing Documents

Rule 41. *Electronic Filing*

Electronic filing is mandatory in Navarro County for all practicing attorneys in both civil and criminal cases. Electronically filed documents must be in text-searchable portable document format (PDF) and be directly converted to PDF, rather than scanned, if possible. All e-Filing shall be done through EFileTexas.gov, and an email address must be provided on any electronically filed document.

Filings from *pro se* parties are submitted on paper and will be scanned and made available electronically on the Court's docket.

Rule 42. *Original Record for Electronically-Submitted Documents*

An electronically-submitted document accepted for filing will be recognized as the original record of file for evidentiary purposes when it bears the Clerk's official date and time stamp.

Rule 43. *Filing Fees and Fee Schedule*

A fee schedule for filing fees shall be adopted by the Clerk as close as is possible to the first of January of each new year, and any changes from the previous year's fee schedule must be approved by a simple majority of the judges of the courts served by the Clerk's office.

PART IV: RULES GOVERNING DISCOVERY IN CIVIL CASES

The Local Rules that follow only pertain to civil cases and do not apply in criminal cases. Discovery in criminal cases shall be done pursuant to Tex. Code Crim. Proc. Art. 39.14.

Rule 44. *Required Submission of Level 3 Discovery Control Plans*

All parties intending to conduct discovery under Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 190.4 (Level 3 discovery control plans) shall submit a proposed discovery control plan to the Court no later than thirty (30) calendar days after filing their first petition, indictment, plea, or answer. The proffered discovery control plan shall:

- (1) Clearly identify a proposed date for the close of discovery;
- (2) Provide a brief explanation of why the party believes discovery will last longer than nine (9) months if the proposed date for the close of discovery is more than nine months in the future;
- (3) Propose a maximum number of hours that each *side* shall be allowed to take depositions;
- (4) Propose a maximum number of interrogatories to be allowed to each side;
- (5) Propose a maximum number of requests for admission to be allowed to each side;
- (6) Propose a maximum number of requests for production to be allowed to each side.

In cases involving more than one party on either side, each party may argue, in no more than three pages, why the Court should or should not allot each *party* the proposed number of any of discovery tools listed above.

The Court shall order a discovery control plan by either adopting one of the proffered plans, or creating its own. If the Court does not explicitly adopt one of the proffered plans, parties shall presume to be operating under a discovery control plan analogous to a Level 2 discovery control plan, until told otherwise. *See* Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 190.3. *See also* Local Rule 54, *infra*.

Rule 45. *Date for the Close of Discovery*

The date for the close of discovery is determined by Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 190. Causes proceeding under Level 3 discovery control plans, Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 190.4, shall be presumed to be operating under discovery deadlines identical to those for Level 2 discovery control plans, *id.* 190.3, unless the Court enters a discovery control plan specifying otherwise.

Rule 46. *Discovery Disputes*

Parties are required to make a good faith effort to resolve discovery disputes without the Court's intervention. For the purpose of this Rule, good faith means at least one oral conversation regarding the dispute at which all relevant parties make a sincere effort to come to an agreement that is acceptable to all relevant parties.

See also Local Rule 34, *supra*.

PART V: RULES GOVERNING SCHEDULING AND TRIAL SETTINGS

The following rules contained in Part IV do not apply to cases in which no opposing counsel have entered appearances, or to matters involving family violence, *habeas corpus*, attachment, contempt of court, or emergency matters.

Section 1 – General Scheduling Rules

Rule 47. *Continuances*

Parties may agree to continuances in any litigation for which there has not been a trial date set without the approval of the Court, provided the Court has not scheduled a hearing or oral argument on any matter that would be affected by the continuance. All parties must agree to the continuance, and the parties shall notify the Court in writing of the continuance's length, and of any relevant limitations or caveats. The Court may reject the continuance at its discretion. Continuances in criminal cases must comply with Chapter 29 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure.

Rule 48. *Mandatory Scheduling Conferences (Schedule)*

All parties to any cause shall hold a conference, in person or telephonically, prior to making any scheduling or trial setting request. At this conference, all parties shall make a good faith effort to find a time and date that is acceptable for all parties on which to hold the requested hearing or trial.

Rule 49. *Mandatory Scheduling Conferences (Subject Matter)*

In addition to attempting to agree upon a time for the scheduling or trial setting request, the parties shall confer on the subject matter to be heard. If no party opposes the matter to be heard, the Court will not schedule a hearing on the matter absent special circumstances. No party shall oppose a matter so that they may induce the Court to schedule a hearing at which they intend to bring up a different matter. Unopposed matters shall be submitted to the Court in writing with a certificate signed by all parties indicating that the matter is unopposed.

Rule 50. *Scheduling Disputes*

Parties are required to make a good faith effort to resolve scheduling disputes without the Court's intervention. For the purpose of this Rule, good faith means at least one oral conversation regarding the dispute at which all relevant parties make a sincere effort to come to an agreement that is acceptable to all relevant parties.

See also Local Rule 35, *supra*.

Rule 51. *Requests for Hearings or Trial Settings*

All requests for hearings to be scheduled, or for trial settings to be made shall be directed to the Court Coordinator or Administrator for the court in which the case is pending. No requests for hearing dates or trial settings shall be directed to the Judge. Even if requests are made orally or in person, the party making the request should e-file a written copy of the request to the Court Coordinator.

Rule 52. *Preferential Scheduling or Trial Settings*

A preferential setting before a visiting or senior judge may be obtained if the parties are willing to waive in writing their objections to having *any* visiting or senior judge that is available hear the case. The preferential setting is subject to the availability of a visiting or senior judge in addition to the budget constraints of the respective court. A preferential setting may also be obtained if the case has been set for trial on three prior occasions but has not been reached by the Court. Otherwise, there will be no preferential settings before a sitting judge.

Should a party later discover that he or she had a conflict of interest with the visiting or senior judge appointed, the party may file a Motion to recuse or disqualify the judge pursuant to Tex. R. Civ. P. 18a,b and Tex. Code Crim. Proc. Art. 30.01.

Rule 53. *Requests for Virtual Hearings and Appearances*

Any party seeking to appear virtually must file a motion for a remote hearing and provide the Court with a legitimate reason for the need to appear virtually. All virtual hearings are conducted at the discretion of the Court.

In assessing the need for a virtual hearing, the Court will consider the location of the parties, any documented illness of a party, efficiency, negative effects that would result on a party, and any other considerations the Court deems relevant in a particular situation.

Section 2 – Dismissal Docket / Lack of Prosecution

Rule 54. *Causes Placed on Dismissal Docket after Ninety (90) Days of Inactivity*

After the date for the close of discovery in a civil cause has passed, the cause may be placed on the dismissal docket for lack of prosecution at the judge's discretion if there is no trial set, no continuances have been filed, and there has been no other activity on the cause for the past ninety (90) calendar days.

See Local Rules 47 and 48, supra.

PART VI: EMERGENCY HEARINGS

Rule 55. *Presiding Judge Unavailable*

Causes or pleadings requesting extraordinary or emergency relief shall be presented to the judge in whose court the case is pending. If that judge is unavailable, and if waiting for that judge to become available would result in an emergency situation or irreparable harm, then the matter may be presented to any other judge for consideration. The judge in whose court the cause is pending shall review the other judge's ruling at the earliest possible date thereafter.

Rule 56. *Notice to Opposing Counsel and Interested Parties*

Parties presenting an emergency motion or pleading shall make a good faith effort to notify opposing counsel and all interested parties of the time, date, and location where the pleading will be heard. If the party requesting the emergency motion or pleading is unable to notify opposing counsel or an interested party following good faith efforts to do so, the emergency hearing may proceed without opposing counsel or an interested party. Parties that were not reached prior to an emergency hearing shall be notified by the Court of the hearing and the hearing's results at the earliest possible date thereafter, and the Court shall give the party that was not notified the opportunity to be heard on the matter at the earliest possible date thereafter.

PART VII: MISCELLANEOUS RULES

Section 1 – Events Requiring Notice to the Court

Rule 57. *Vacation of Attorneys*

Attorneys with any cause pending before the Court, and any attorney on the Court's list of potential Court-appointed counsel may not designate more than four weeks during any calendar year as vacation. Written notice of any vacations must be filed with the Clerk with a copy to all applicable court coordinators no less than thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the vacation. This Rule operates only where lead counsel, as defined by Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 8, is affected, unless the Court expands coverage of this Rule to other counsel.

Rule 58. *Addition of Attorneys to a Cause*

So that the Court may keep track of which attorneys represent which parties, any attorney entering an initial appearance in a cause shall give written notice to the Court of which party they represent and with whom they are working, if anyone.

The written notice shall include the attorney's name as he or she shall use it in practice, the attorney's state bar membership number, and the attorney's full contact information including mailing address, an address at which the attorney may be served process, the attorney's phone number, facsimile number (if any), and e-mail address (if any). A short statement of who the attorney represents on sufficiently informative letterhead may suffice.

This Rule applies even if the attorney's firm or partner has previously entered an appearance, if the particular attorney was not previously listed as counsel for their client at that time. This Rule shall not apply if an attorney enters an initial appearance in person on the record before the Court. The Navarro County District Attorney and his or her assistants are exempt from this Rule insofar as they are prosecuting a criminal cause on behalf of the State.

Rule 59. *Bankruptcy of a Party*

Parties in a civil case have an affirmative duty to inform the Court if they file for protection under any bankruptcy law. Parties have a continuing obligation to inform the Court of the status of their bankruptcy proceedings until such proceedings are resolved.

Rule 60. *Death of a Party*

Attorneys have an affirmative duty to inform the Court of their client's death if their client was a party to a pending cause before the Court.

Rule 61. *Change in the Status of a Non-Human Party*

Attorneys have an affirmative duty to inform the Court of any change in the legal status of a non-human client (*e.g.* corporation) if the non-human client is party to a pending cause before the Court, and the change in the legal status of the party could affect the ability of any other party to collect payment from the non-human party, or for the Court to exercise jurisdiction over the non-human party. Examples of a change in the legal status of a non-human party that requires notice to the Court is if a partnership such as an LLP dissolves, or a corporation merges with or is purchased by another corporation.

Section 3 – Other

Rule 62. *Hearings Conducted by Phone*

At the discretion of the Judge, proceedings or hearings not requiring the introduction of evidence or exhibits may be conducted by telephone conference calls. The task of scheduling and making the appropriate arrangements shall fall on the party requesting that the hearing be conducted by phone. A court reporter may be provided by the Court during these calls, if requested by a party, and the costs of providing a court reporter shall be allotted by agreement between the parties, or by the Judge if the parties cannot agree.

PRIOR ORDERS RESCINDED AND VACATED

By adoption of these Rules, the affected courts hereby rescind and vacate the following prior standing orders and local rules:

13th Judicial District Court, Method of Operation (Mar. 28, 1989);

13th Judicial District Court, Standing Order Re: Media Coverage (Feb. 13, 2009);

13th Judicial District Court, Miscellaneous Standing Order #1 (Nov. 5, 2010);
Navarro County Court at Law, Miscellaneous Standing Order #1 (Mar. 12, 2012).

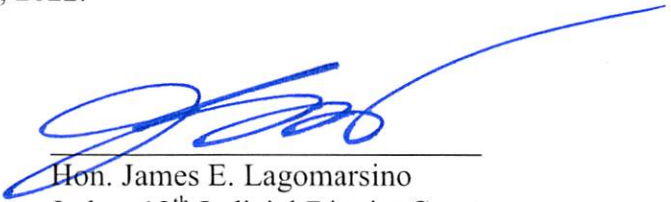
PRIOR ORDERS UNAFFECTED

By adoption of these Rules, the affected courts' following standing orders remain in force and shall be considered in addition to these Rules:

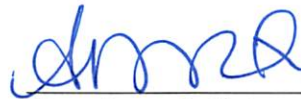
Navarro County Court at Law, County Court at Law Standing Order Regarding
Children, Property and the Conduct of Parties (January 1, 2012);
Navarro County Court at Law, County Court at Law Procedures (Sept. 12, 2022).

APPROVAL


Approved and signed, this 6th day of December, 2022.



Hon. James E. Lagomarsino
Judge, 13th Judicial District Court



12/6/22
Hon. Amanda Putman
Judge, Navarro County Court at Law



12-7-22
Hon. H.M. Davenport, Jr.
Judge, Navarro County Court