



706 City-County Building
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Telephone: 412-350-0390

Standard Operating Procedures
for
Judge Chelsa Wagner
(Civil Division)

Effective as of March 2024

Please note that the below operating procedures are in addition to and supplement the applicable Rules of Civil Procedure and Local Rules.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Counsel, parties, witnesses, observers, and any person present in court and/or doing business with the Court shall conduct themselves with professionalism and civility.
2. Unless otherwise notified by the Court, all matters and proceedings are being conducted in person. Counsel/the parties shall appear in person for arguments, trials, conciliations, conferences, *etc.* in Courtroom 706, City-County Building.
3. Judge Wagner cannot (and will not) address matters that are not properly presented to the Court. All matters requesting action by the Court shall be presented in the form of a motion or petition to the court. The Court will not entertain requests for action that are submitted by unsolicited mail, fax, telephone or email. This includes but is not limited to requests for clarification, reconsideration or modification of orders issued by the Court.
4. Do not send electronic communication directly to Judge Wagner unless specifically directed to do so. Any correspondence or filings should be directed to Judge Wagner's Law Clerks, Brad Korinski, at Bkorinski@alleghenycourts.us. And Rob Helwig at RHelwig@alleghenycourts.us You may also contact Chambers at 412-350-0390.
5. When communicating with the Court via email about a particular case, ALL parties must be included on the email unless directed otherwise. The email addresses of the other parties/opposing counsel must be included either in the

“To” or the “CC” boxes so that they are visible to the Court. Do NOT “BCC” the parties/opposing counsel on your communications.

6. With respect to filings, note that the Court does not automatically receive copies of documents filed with the Department of Court Records. If you would like the Court to have a courtesy copy, then you must mail, or hand deliver to Chambers. However, Courtesy copies are not required unless explicitly requested by the Court.
7. All documents must include attorney or party (if self-represented) contact information including a phone number and an email address.
8. If counsel/a party has concerns or needs clarification about scheduling in a case, they should contact chambers at (412) 350-0390.

PRETRIAL CONCILIATIONS

Counsel for Plaintiff and Defendant must bring their respective clients. If the clients are business entities, individuals from the business entities who have the authority to settle the case must attend in person. If a party is insured, a representative of the insurance carrier with “check writing and signing” authority must be physically present. The Court requires the physical attendance of all persons mentioned in this paragraph and will excuse such attendance only under exigent circumstances.

CIVIL JURY TRIALS

1. Pretrial Conference - Upon assignment of the trial judge, the judge will schedule a pretrial conference as soon as practicable. Counsel will receive an email from the Court scheduling the conference as well as instructions for what Counsel will need to provide the Court for the conference. At the conference, Counsel is expected to advise the court on the status of settlement discussions. Counsel must also be prepared to identify and discuss the nature of the trial, any unusual legal or evidentiary issues, matters that must be decided prior to trial, plans for visual aids/technology, stipulations, other forms of evidence to be introduced at trial, and schedule.
2. Motions in Limine - The trial judge will schedule these motions prior to trial. All counsel should resist the temptation to conduct the trial by Motions in

Limine. The parties shall also meet and confer regarding resolution of any Motions in Limine prior to presentation to the Court.

3. Witness List - At the commencement of trial, counsel for each party shall provide a complete list of potential witnesses to the court reporter and the Court. The list should also include the name of any witness whose testimony will be presented by deposition or videotape and the approximate length of that testimony.
4. Exhibits - Counsel shall submit joint exhibits / stipulations to the Court prior to trial. Plaintiff shall identify exhibits with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3,...), and Defendant shall use letters (A, B, C,...). At a minimum, the witness, opposing counsel and the Court must be provided with a copy. Tabbed exhibit binders are preferred.
5. Objections During Trial - When making objections to questions or testimony during trials, the basis for the objection shall be described briefly. Argument concerning objections shall be conducted outside of the jury and/or witnesses, usually at sidebar. Whenever an objection is stated, examination of a witness shall be suspended and shall not continue until the objection is resolved or counsel is directed to go forward. This procedure is not intended to discourage parties from fully stating on the record their objections to or disagreements with the Court's rulings. It is intended only to have such matters conducted outside the hearing of the jury.
6. Videotaped Depositions/Transcripts - If depositions will be read or videotaped depositions played during a jury trial, full transcripts shall be submitted to the court. Additionally, counsel shall attempt to resolve any objections between themselves. If any objections cannot be resolved, then counsel shall notify the Court prior to the Pretrial Conference and the disputed matters will be addressed at the Pretrial Conference.
7. Prior Deposition Testimony - Counsel seeking the use of prior deposition transcripts to impeach a witness should first advise all counsel of which deposition(s) and page and line number(s) he/she intends to use and then provide the witness with a copy before commencing to question the witness on same.
8. Trial Motions - Motions for non-suit, *etc.* may be oral, but a writing is preferred.
9. Charge/Verdict Slip - Counsel shall confer on points for charge and a proposed verdict slip prior to the Pretrial Conference and submit the proposed joint points for charge and verdict slip in Word format prior to the Pretrial

Conference. If the parties are unable to agree on a point for charge and/or verdict slip question, then they shall include both proposals in the joint proposal and the Court will hold a charging conference to resolve any matters to which the parties have not agreed. Please note that the Court would like to use the Pennsylvania Suggested Standard Civil Jury Instructions (“PaSSJI”) when possible.

10. Miscellaneous/Trial Matters - Counsel shall agree as to what exhibits, photos, *etc.* may go out with the jury. All counsel shall provide the tipstaff with telephone numbers for quick contact once the verdict is returned.

NONJURY TRIALS

1. Applicable Civil Trial SOPs - Please refer to all applicable SOPs in the Civil Jury Trial section above.
2. Exhibits - Plaintiff shall identify exhibits with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3...), and Defendant shall use letters (A, B, C...). At a minimum, the witness, opposing counsel and the Court must be provided with a copy. Exhibit binders are preferred.
3. Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law - The Court may request submission of proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and/or a proposed Order. These shall be submitted to chambers as directed by the Court with a copy to opposing counsel.

POST-TRIAL MOTIONS

A copy of any filed post-trial motion must also be served upon the trial judge in chambers. The Court will contact the parties about scheduling argument. The post-trial motion must contain a copy of the request for transcript of the trial testimony and the moving party must promptly see that the Court Reporter is timely paid for preparing the transcript.

CONTACT INFORMATION

You may contact Chambers through the following contact information for judicial staff:

- Inde Barber – Tipstaff/ Judicial Secretary – 412-350-0390;
Ibarber@allegheencourts.us

- Brad Korinski – Law Clerk- 412-350-0392; Bkorinski@alleghenycourts.us
- Rob Helwig – Law Clerk – 412-350-0391; Rhelwig@alleghenycourts.us