



Standard Operating Procedures for Judge Matthew V. Rudzki Civil Division

820 City-County Building
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Telephone: 412-350-6883
rudzkichambers@alleghenycourts.us

Effective as of January 5, 2026

Please note that the below operating procedures are in addition to and supplement the applicable Rules of Civil Procedure and Local Rules, which should also be reviewed. Following review of these Standard Operating Procedures and applicable rules, if any party appearing before the Court has concerns or needs clarification about scheduling in a case, they should contact Chambers at 412-350-6883 or rudzkichambers@alleghenycourts.us. Contact information for all judicial staff is listed at the end of this document.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Except for initial conferences in land use matters (addressed below), unless otherwise notified by the Court, counsel/self-represented parties are expected to appear for arguments, trials, conciliations, conferences, etc. in person in Courtroom 820, City-County Building.
- When communicating with the Court via email about a particular case, ALL counsel/self-represented parties must be included on the email. The email addresses of other counsel/self-represented parties must be included either in the “To” or the “CC” boxes so that they are visible to the Court. Do NOT “BCC” any clients/parties/opposing counsel on your communications. Please note that communications through the Court’s email addresses shall be limited to transmission of petitions/motions/other filed chambers and inquiry regarding administrative (scheduling) matters. Please do not copy the Court on other forms of communication, such as disagreements amongst the parties/counsel. Unless the Court has specifically authorized transmission of the communication, it shall be treated as *ex parte*, will not be considered, and will be disclosed to the opposing party.
- With respect to filings, note that the Court does not automatically receive copies of documents filed with the Department of Court Records and a courtesy copy must be provided to Chambers at rudzkichambers@alleghenycourts.us. Please send all documents in PDF or Microsoft Word format. **Proposed orders must be attached separately in Microsoft Word format to allow editing by the Court. Share files, Dropbox transfers, and outside links may not be submitted to the Court. If a submission is voluminous, please contact Chambers for instructions.**

- All documents must include attorney or party (if self-represented) contact information including a phone number and an email address.

PRETRIAL CONCILIATIONS

Counsel for each party 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 emergency circumstances.

CIVIL JURY TRIALS

1. **Pretrial Conference** – Judge Rudzki will schedule a pretrial conference in cases assigned to him for trial. 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** - Counsel should resist the temptation to conduct the trial by Motions in Limine. The parties shall email and deliver two (2) paper copies of any Motions in Limine and written responses thereto to Judge Rudzki’s Chambers. 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** - Plaintiff shall identify exhibits with Arabic numerals, and Defendant shall use letters. At a minimum, the witness, opposing counsel, and the Court must be provided with a copy. Exhibit binders are preferred. Unless instructed otherwise, the proponent of the exhibit shall be its custodian and shall comply with Rules regarding retention, filing and other custodial responsibilities.
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, counsel shall attempt to resolve any objections between themselves. Counsel shall notify the Court if any objections cannot be resolved and the disputed matters will be decided.
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) they intend 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 at the earliest feasible point so that a joint submission for each is provided to the Court. A written supplement may be provided by each party to address points and matters upon which the parties are unable to agree. The Court will hold a charging conference to resolve any matters to which the parties have not agreed. Please note that the Court wishes to utilize PaSSJIs whenever possible.
10. **Miscellaneous/Trial Matters** - Counsel shall confer in an attempt to agree as to what exhibits, photos, *etc.* may go out with the jury. All counsel shall provide courtroom staff with telephone numbers for quick contact once the verdict is returned.

NON-JURY TRIALS

- Plaintiff shall identify exhibits with Arabic numerals, and Defendant shall use letters. At a minimum, the witness, opposing counsel and the Court must be provided with a copy. Exhibit binders are preferred.
- The Court may request submission of proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and/or a proposed Order. These shall be submitted in Word format to rudzkichambers@alleghenycourts.us with 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 or electronically at rudzkichambers@alleghenycourts.us. 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.

HOUSING COURT

- All Housing Court Motions should be filed with the Housing Court Help Desk. They do not operate on traditional business hours, nor do they operate on the same schedule as the Department of Court Records. Litigants and attorneys should check the schedule of the Housing Court Help Desk and familiarize themselves with it to avoid any issues. Their phone number is 412-350-4462. They are located within the Department of Court Records on the first floor of the City-County Building, 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.
- Once the Housing Court Help Desk gives you a date and time for your motion, file the Motion with the Department of Court Records. Getting a time from the Help Desk is not the same as filing with the Department of Court Records.
- Motions arguments are conducted by phone. All litigants for all cases use the same phone line. When you get on the line, everyone can hear you. Please stay silent until your case is called. If there is an issue, and your Motion is not currently being heard, please wait until the pending motion is concluded to raise the issue.
- Talking over others will not be tolerated.
- Parties will have ten minutes total to argue their motion.
- All self-represented litigants must visit and become familiar with the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas website: www.allegenycourts.us. Please read it before you direct inquiries to Chambers.

OTHER CASES SPECIALLY ASSIGNED TO JUDGE RUDZKI

For any other cases that are specially assigned to Judge Rudzki through order of the Administrative Judge of the Civil Division, Judge Rudzki will schedule an initial case management conference with the parties.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Jacqulyn Obara, Esq.
Law Clerk
jobara@allegenycourts.us

Melissa Girlando
Judicial Administrative Assistant
412-350-6883
mgirlando@allegenycourts.us

Dana Dougherty
Tip Staff
412-350-6885
ddougherty@allegenycourts.us