

239TH DISTRICT COURT GENERAL GUIDELINES

Court:

239th District Court, Brazoria County

Judge's Name:

Greg Hill

Court Address:

237 E. Locust, 1st Floor
Angleton, Texas 77515

Staff:

Court Coordinator: Debbie Selleck (979) 864-1256
Court Reporter: Ida Salinas (979) 864-1258

CLERKS FOR THE 239TH DISTRICT COURT:

Civil Clerk: (979) 864-1874
Criminal Clerk: (979) 864-1129

Judge's Profile:

Date Licensed:

2006

Year Elected:

2022 – 239th District Court

General

1. Can the Court be contacted by e-mail or fax?

Yes. debbies@brazoriacountytx.gov fax: (979) 864-1056 or (281) 756-1056

Does the Court accept filings by fax or e-mail?

No. E-filing only.

2. What is your preferred procedure for contacting the Court in a true emergency?

Contact the Court Coordinator, Debbie Selleck, at (979) 864-1256 or (281) 756-1256

3. Do you have any particular rules governing pre-trial orders?

No.

Is a form available?

No.

4. What is your procedure regarding pre-trial conference, pre-trial settings, and schedule of same?

Pre-trial settings are once a month during ancillary week which is the fourth week of the month. Pre-trial conferences are set upon request or by the Judge on his own motion.

5. Do you have a limited number of non-issues/pre-trial settings and a certain time period between settings?

Non-issue and pre-trial settings are always during ancillary week with no time period between settings. All ancillary matters are heard on the fourth (4) Monday and Tuesday of the month. All requests for settings are to be made through the Court Coordinator.

6. When and how should motions be set for submission/oral hearing? (i.e, set on a particular date or time, amount of notice to opposing parties for oral hearing other than summary judgments, etc.) See No. 5 above.

Settings should be made 10 days in advance.

7. What is your preferred procedure for contacting the Court or court staff regarding the status of motions? What procedures should be followed to obtain an expedited hearing?

Contact the Court Coordinator Mrs. Debbie Selleck by phone or e-mail.

8. When do you regularly have docket call?

There is no docket call for civil cases. The last week of the month, the Court will have civil ancillary and criminal announcement and criminal pre-trial dockets.

9. What requirements do you have concerning the dismissal docket and motions to retain?

Counsel is required to appear at the dismissal docket if they are requesting that a case be retained on the docket. If the case is retained on the docket, it will be assigned a trial date at that time.

10. Do you have any special rules governing courtroom decorum (i.e., addressing the Court, opposing counsel or witnesses, requirement that counsel use only the podium, approach the witness, talking or passing notes at counsel table, beverages allowed at the counsel table, attire?)

No special requirements. Please be professional. Beverages are allowed at counsel table with permission from the Judge. Proper attire is required.

11. What is your procedure for setting a trial?

A trial setting request for a particular month is to be sent to the Court Coordinator.

Any special procedures?

Lengthy civil cases must have a DCO on file. Trial request along with a copy of the DCO must be sent to the Court Coordinator.

Different for jury versus non-jury trial?

No.

12. Do you have any general guidelines in your court for opening statements and closing arguments (time, etc.)?

Generally no time limits for opening statements. The Court always sets a time limit for final arguments.

13. Do you allow telephone conferences for the resolution of motions or any other matters?

No, except in rare circumstances and they must be cleared by the Judge.

If so, who arranges them and when are they scheduled?

If the Judge agrees to a telephone conference, the Court Coordinator will schedule a time and the requesting attorney will make all the arrangements.

14. What criteria do you use for granting attorney's fees; i.e., is legal assistant, law clerk or other support staff time included?

Time determination. Paralegal time may or may not be included as well as law clerks. Secretaries, etc., are not included.

15. What are your procedures and requirements for criminal court appointments?

Criminal appointments are handled by the Indigent Defense Department pursuant to the Fair Defense Act.

16. What are your procedures and requirements for court appointments of ad litem?

Ad litem: I first determine (1) if it is an agreed motion; (2) or a motion by the Plaintiff or the defendant; (3) if the case is to be settled or tried, then I make an appointment of an ad litem.

17. What are your procedures for jury voir dire (time periods per side, procedures for striking jurors)?

Maximum time allowed in major cases, usually one hour per side. After voir dire, challenges for cause and then peremptory strikes. Capital Murder: Questionnaire filled out on opening day. Two days later each side gets to voir dire panel as a group – no questions allowed; just legal theories. Next day: Individual voir dire limited to one half hour per side, eight jurors per day scheduled.

18. When do you want proposed jury issues presented (i.e., prior to trial, first day of trial, etc.)?

On the first day of trial.

Generally do you prefer jury issues to be broad (global) form or special issue form interrogatories?

Broad form.

19. When, if ever, do you want a courtesy copy of a pleading?

Usually just prior to arguments unless earlier requested.

20. Do you prefer copies of cases attached to briefs/motions?

Yes.

If so, do you prefer pertinent provisions of the cases to be highlighted?

Yes.

21. Is notice of rulings given by the Court in writing?

Yes, if the matter was taken under advisement.

By telephone?

Occasionally but always followed by a written ruling.

On party inquiry only?

No.

22. Does the Court provide its own blackboard, chart stand, ELMO, video equipment?

The Court has a blackboard and chart stand. The Court also has a Hovercam that has ELMO capabilities and video capabilities.

23. What are your procedures for referring cases to alternative dispute resolution?

Either on request or by me if the case is close to trial.

24. Under what circumstances do you order mediation, when is it ordered, and how is the mediator chosen?

If the parties cannot agree on a mediator, then one will be appointed by the Court.

25. What is your procedure for continuing trials?

On dismissal docket cases, request must be made in writing 30 days in advance and approved by me.

How early will you grant/deny a request and how early do you want the request made?

Motions for continuance on cases that are set on a docket call will be heard either on the ancillary docket or immediately after the docket call.

26. Are there special practices or procedures lawyers appearing before you should know about?

No.

27. Any pet peeves?

Yes. Side-bar remarks, lawyers arguing my ruling, personal attacks between attorneys (these I usually handle up front), and if you announce ready at docket call, I assume your case is ready for trial.

28. Any special suggestions, admonitions, or recommendations you would make to lawyers appearing before you?

Don't argue rulings. Don't argue objections unless I ask. Don't submit boilerplate Motions in Limine that a secretary prepared. If the limine request is so inflammatory an objection in trial would be useless, then submit it to me, otherwise object during trial.

CIVIL CASES

29. Do you have any particular rules governing motions and orders?

No specific rules.

When should proposed orders be submitted with the Court?

At the time of filing a motion or after the Judge has made a ruling.

a. Discovery motions, Motions for Summary Judgment:

Motions are set on Monday and Tuesday during ancillary week which is normally the fourth Monday and Tuesday of the month. Please contact Court Coordinator for dates and times.

b. Motions to dismiss/nonsuit:

Motions to dismiss/nonsuit will be heard on Monday or Tuesday of ancillary week. Motions should be filed with the District Clerk along with an order.

DWOP: DWOP's will be set for a hearing. Contact the Court Coordinator to get a date and time. Requesting party is responsible for notifying opposing counsel.

c. Motions in Limine (i.e., when presented day of voir dire or before):

Motions in Limine will be heard the day of voir dire. Please do not file boilerplate Motions in Limine.

d. Other motions (special exceptions, sanctions, severance/consolidation, default judgment, etc.)

All are heard during ancillary week. Please contact the Court Coordinator for dates and times to obtain a setting.

Motions to Sever in multi-party cases:

I rarely ever grant Motions to Sever.

CRIMINAL CASES

30. Do you have any particular procedure regarding filing, hearing, or granting motions?

a. Bond hearings:

Contact the District Court Administrator at (979) 864-1263 to set the hearing. These are usually held during criminal week or ancillary week.

b. Pre-trial release hearings:

None – except on special request.

c. Identification hearings:

At the time of trial.

d. Suppression hearings:

These are held at the time of trial but may be heard prior to trial if approved by the Court. Contact the District Court Administrator for a hearing date.

e. Competency hearings:

Usually at the time the case is set for trial on the merits. If found competent, another jury is empaneled on the merits.

31. Does the Court have any special procedures regarding viewing DWI's?

No.

32. Are any forms required by counsel to prepare at the initial setting?

No.

33. Do you have any special procedures regarding arraignment?

No.

34. Do you have any general guidelines in your court for opening statements and closing arguments (time, etc.)?

A time limit for closing arguments will be given by the Judge.

35. Do you have any special procedures regarding the handling of pre-sentence investigation?

No.