

INDIVIDUAL PRACTICES IN CIVIL CASES
ALISON J. NATHAN, United States District Judge

<u>Chambers</u>	<u>Courtroom</u>
United States District Court	Sayra DeCasseres, Courtroom Deputy
Southern District of New York	Courtroom 23B
500 Pearl Street, Room 615	500 Pearl Street
New York, NY 10007	(212) 805-4505

Unless otherwise ordered by Judge Nathan, these Individual Practices apply to all civil matters except for (i) civil pro se cases (see Rules for Pro Se Cases) and (ii) cases designated to be part of one of the Court’s pilot programs or plans if so designated by Order of the Court (e.g. Section 1983 Plan, the Case Management Plan for Complex Civil Cases, or Initial Discovery Protocols for Employment Cases Alleging Adverse Action). In cases designated to be part of one of the Court’s pilot programs or plans, those procedures shall govern to the extent that they are inconsistent with these Individual Practices.

1. Communications with Chambers

- A. Letters.** Except as otherwise provided below, communications with chambers shall be by letter, which shall be e-mailed to the Court (NathanNYSDCChambers@nysd.uscourts.gov) as .pdf attachments with copies simultaneously delivered to all counsel. Emails shall state clearly in the subject line (i) the full caption of the case, including the party names and docket number, and (ii) the contents of the email. The beginning of the email communication must clearly state the contents and purpose of the email. Copies of correspondence between counsel shall not be sent to the Court.
- B. Telephone Calls.** Telephone calls to Chambers are permitted only for urgent matters requiring immediate attention. In such rare situations, call Chambers at (212) 805-0278.
- C. Faxes.** Faxes are permitted only with prior approval of the Court, which will be granted only in **rare** circumstances. All faxes must clearly identify the person in Chambers who authorized the sending of the fax and copies must simultaneously be faxed or delivered to all parties. Faxes sent without prior permission will not be read.
- D. Hand Deliveries.** Hand-delivered mail should be left with the Court Security Officers at the Worth Street entrance of the Courthouse and may not be brought directly to Chambers. Hand deliveries are continuously retrieved from the Worth Street entrance by Courthouse mail staff and then forwarded to Chambers. However, if the hand-delivered letter is urgent and requires the Court’s immediate attention, ask the Court Security Officers to notify Chambers that an urgent package has arrived that needs to be retrieved by Chambers staff immediately.

E. Requests for Adjournments or Extensions of Time. All requests for adjournments or extensions of time must be sent to Chambers by e-mail (NathanNYSChambers@nysd.uscourts.gov) and state: (1) the original date(s), (2) the number of previous requests for adjournment or extension, (3) whether these previous requests were granted or denied, (4) whether the adversary consents, and, if not, the reasons given by the adversary for refusing to consent, and (5) if the adversary consents, counsel shall confer amongst each other and propose three (3) alternate conference dates. When parties seek to adjourn an initial pretrial conference, all of the proposed times should be on a Friday morning. These emails shall state in the subject line “SCHEDULING” and provide the caption for the case, including party names and docket number.

Any request for adjournments of court conferences shall be made at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled appearance. If the requested adjournment or extension affects any other scheduled dates, a proposed Revised Scheduling Order must be attached. Absent extraordinary circumstances, requests for extensions will be denied if not made before the expiration of the original deadline.

F. Preservation of Letters. Letters to the Court are not ordinarily docketed. If a party wishes to preserve such letters for the record on appeal, it must submit a written request to the Court within ten days of closure of the case.

G. Related Cases. After an action has been accepted as related to a prior filing, all future court papers and correspondence must contain the docket number of the new filing, as well as the docket number of the case to which it is related (*e.g.*, 11 Civ. 1234 [rel. 10 Civ. 4321]).

H. ECF: All attorneys representing parties before Judge Nathan are required to register promptly as filing users on ECF.

2. Conferences

A. Attendance by Principal Trial Counsel. The attorney who will serve as principal trial counsel must appear at all conferences with the Court.

B. Initial Case Management Conference. The Court will generally schedule a Fed. R. Civ. P. 16(c) conference for a Friday within three months of the filing of the Complaint. The Notice of Initial Pretrial Conference will be docketed on ECF; plaintiff’s counsel is directed to notify all counsel of this Order forthwith and to confirm to the Courtroom Deputy that all counsel will attend the conference on the designated date and time. This Notice will, *inter alia*, direct the parties to submit a proposed Civil Case Management Plan and Scheduling Order to the Court at least three business days prior to the conference date. The parties shall use the form Proposed Case Management Plan and Scheduling Order available at the Court’s

website (<http://nysd.uscourts.gov/judge/Nathan>). Prior to the conference date, one courtesy copy of the pleadings should be sent to Chambers.

C. Discovery Disputes. Parties should follow Local Civil Rule 37.2 with the following modifications. Any party wishing to raise a discovery dispute with the Court must first confer in good faith with the opposing party, in person or by telephone, in an effort to resolve the dispute. If this meet-and-confer process does not resolve the dispute, the party may write a letter to the Court, no longer than three pages, explaining the nature of the dispute and requesting an informal conference. Such a letter must include a representation that the meet-and-confer process occurred and was unsuccessful. If the opposing party wishes to respond to the letter, it should file a responsive letter within three business days. Counsel should be prepared to discuss with the Court the matters raised by such letters, as the Court will seek to resolve discovery disputes quickly, including by telephone conference call.

3. Motions

- A. Pre-Motion Conferences in Civil Cases.** Pre-motion conferences are not required, except for disputes concerning discovery, which are governed by Rule 2.C above.
- B. Memoranda of Law.** The Court encourages and appreciates brevity. Unless prior permission has been granted, memoranda of law in support of and in opposition to motions are limited to 25 pages, and reply memoranda are limited to 10 pages. All memoranda of law shall be in 12-point font or larger and be double-spaced. Memoranda of 10 pages or more shall contain a table of contents and a table of authorities, neither of which shall count against the page limit. Sur-reply memoranda will not be accepted without prior permission of the Court. All appendices to memoranda of law must be tabbed and indexed.
- C. Filing of Motion Papers.** Motion papers shall be filed promptly after service. Discovery disputes are not to be raised by motion unless directed by the Court.
- D. Courtesy Copies.** Two courtesy copies of all motion papers, marked as such, should be submitted for Chambers by the movant at the time the reply is served. All courtesy copies should be three-hole punched and tabbed. Courtesy copies need not be bound.
- E. Oral Argument on Motions.** Parties may request oral argument by letter at the time their moving or opposing or reply papers are filed. The Court will determine whether argument will be heard and, if so, will advise counsel of the argument date.
- F. Motions to Dismiss.** When a motion to dismiss is filed, the non-moving party must, within ten days of receipt of the motion, notify the Court and its adversary in writing whether (1) it intends to file an amended pleading and when it will do so, or (2) it will rely on the pleading being attacked. If the non-moving party elects not to amend its complaint, no further opportunities to amend will be granted and the motion to

dismiss will proceed in the regular course. This provision does not alter the time to file a response in the Fed. R. Civ. P. or Local Rules. If the party amends, the opposing party may then (a) file an answer; (b) file a new motion to dismiss; or (c) submit a letter stating that it relies on the initially-filed motion to dismiss.

- G. Failure of the Court to Schedule Argument or Decide a Motion.** If a motion is not decided within 60 days of the time that it has become fully briefed, counsel for the movant shall send a letter to alert the Court.
- H. Preliminary Injunction Motions.** The Court generally follows the procedure for the conduct of non -jury trials described in Section 5.C below.
- I. Default Judgments.** A plaintiff seeking a default judgment must proceed by way of an order to show cause pursuant to the procedure set forth in Attachment A.
- J. Proposed Orders.** All proposed orders that parties wish the Court to sign should be submitted as attachments or exhibits to an appropriate formal application to the Court for the endorsement of such order.

4. Other Pretrial Guidance

- A. Redactions and Filing Under Seal.** Any party wishing to file in redacted form any pleading, motion, memorandum, exhibit, or other document, or any portion thereof, must make a specific request to the Court by letter explaining the reasons for seeking to file that submission under seal. The party must attach to its letter: (1) one full set of the relevant document(s) in highlighted form (i.e., with the words, phrases, or paragraphs to be redacted highlighted); and (2) one partial, loose leaf set of solely those pages on which the party seeks to redact material. Upon receiving these documents, the Court will individually review the proposed redactions. Chambers will file under seal the unredacted pages for which the Court has approved redactions, and the party shall then file the redacted version of the document(s) on ECF.
- B. Settlement Agreements.** The Court will not retain jurisdiction to enforce confidential settlement agreements. If the parties wish that the Court retain jurisdiction to enforce the agreement, the parties must place the terms of their settlement agreement on the public record. The parties may either provide a copy of the settlement agreement for the Court to endorse or include the terms of their settlement agreement in their stipulation of settlement and dismissal.
- C. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases.** In any action in which subject matter jurisdiction is founded on diversity of citizenship pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332, the party asserting the existence of such jurisdiction shall, prior to the Initial Pretrial Conference, submit to the Court a letter no longer than two pages explaining the basis for that party's belief that diversity of citizenship exists. Where any party is a corporation, the letter shall state both the place of incorporation and the principal place of business. In cases where any party is a partnership, limited partnership, limited liability company,

or trust, the letter shall state the citizenship of each of the entity's members, shareholders, partners, and/or trustees.

D. Bankruptcy Appeals. Briefs must be submitted in accordance with Fed. R. Bankr. P. 8009–8010. Counsel may extend the default deadlines by stipulation submitted to the Court no later than two business days before the brief is due.

5. Trial Procedures

A. Joint Pretrial Order. Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, within ~~30~~40 days from the date for the completion of all discovery, or, if a dispositive motion has been filed, within 14 days of a decision on such motion, the parties shall submit by email (NathanNYSDCChambers@nysd.uscourts.gov) to the Court a proposed joint pretrial order, which shall include the following:

- i. The full caption of the action;
- ii. The names, law firms, addresses, and telephone and fax numbers of trial counsel;
- iii. A brief statement by plaintiff as to the basis of subject matter jurisdiction, and a brief statement by each other party as to the presence or absence of subject matter jurisdiction. Such statements shall include citations to all statutes relied on and relevant facts as to citizenship and jurisdictional amount;
- iv. A brief summary by each party of the claims and defenses that the party asserts remain to be tried, including citations to any statutes on which the party relies. Such summaries shall also identify all claims and defenses previously asserted which are not to be tried. The summaries should not recite any evidentiary matter;
- v. A statement as to the number of trial days needed and regarding whether the case is to be tried with or without a jury;
- vi. A statement as to whether or not all parties have consented to trial by a magistrate judge, without identifying which parties do or do not consent;
- vii. Any stipulations or agreed statements of fact or law to which all parties consent;
- viii. A list of all trial witnesses, indicating whether such witnesses will testify in person or by deposition, and a brief summary of the substance of each witness's testimony;
- ix. A designation by each party of deposition testimony to be offered in its case in chief and any counter-designations and objections by any other party; and

- x. A list by each party of exhibits to be offered in its case in chief, with one star indicating an objection by the opposing party based on authenticity. When a party objects to an exhibit on any grounds other than authenticity, the objection should be noted by indicating the Federal Rule of Evidence that is the basis for the objection.

B. Required Pretrial Filings. Each party shall file and serve with the joint pretrial order:

- i. In all cases, motions addressing any evidentiary issues or other matters which should be resolved *in limine*;
- ii. In all cases where a party believes it would be useful to the Court, a pretrial memorandum of law;
- iii. In jury cases, joint requests to charge and joint proposed *voir dire* questions as specified by Rule 5.C below; and
- iv. In non -jury cases, proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. The proposed findings of fact should be detailed and should include citations to the proffered trial testimony and exhibits, as there may be no opportunity for post-trial submissions.
- v. One copy of each documentary exhibit sought to be admitted, contained in a loose leaf binder, organized such that the Court can easily refer to the exhibits.

C. Requests to Charge and Proposed *Voir Dires*. In jury trials, joint requests to charge, joint proposed verdict forms, and joint proposed *voir dire* questions shall be filed as attachments to the proposed joint pretrial order. For any requests to charge or proposed *voir dire* for which the parties cannot agree, each party should clearly set forth its proposed charge or question, as well as the grounds on which the Court should use that charge or question and should include citations to any supporting case law sufficient to enable the Court to render a decision. When feasible, proposed jury charges should also be submitted on a DVD/CD-ROM in Microsoft Word 2007.

D. Additional Submissions in Non-Jury Cases. At the time the joint pretrial order is filed, each party shall submit to the Court and serve on opposing counsel, but not file on ECF, the following:

- i. All deposition excerpts which will be offered as substantive evidence, as well as a one-page synopsis of those excerpts for each deposition. Each synopsis shall include page citations to the pertinent pages of the deposition transcripts; and

- ii. All documentary exhibits sought to be admitted, contained in a loose leaf binder, organized such that the Court can easily refer to the exhibits.

E. Filings in Opposition. Any party may file the following documents within one week after the filing of the pretrial order, but in no event less than three days before the scheduled trial date.

- i. Opposition to any motion *in limine*; and
- ii. Opposition to any legal argument in a pretrial memorandum.

F. Courtesy Copies. Two courtesy copies of all documents identified in Sections 5.A, B, C.i–ii, and D above should be submitted to Chambers on the date on which they are to be served or filed. Only one set of documentary exhibits is required. Voluminous material may be organized either in binders or manila file folders, but in any event, the courtesy copies shall be separately arranged into two independent sets.

G. Trial Schedule. Trials will generally be conducted Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

6. Policy on the Use of Electronic Devices

A. Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices. Attorneys' use of mobile phones, Blackberries, and other personal electronic devices within the Courthouse and its environs is governed by Standing Order M 10-468. Any attorney wishing to bring a telephone or other personal electronic device into the Courthouse must be a member of this Court's Bar, must obtain the necessary service pass from the District Executive's Office, and must show the service pass upon entering the Courthouse. **Mobile phones are permitted inside the Courtroom, but they MUST be kept turned off at all times.** Non-compliance with this rule will result in forfeiture of the device for the remainder of the proceedings.

B. Computers, Printers, or Other Electronic Equipment. In order for an attorney to bring into the Courthouse any computer, printer, or other electronic equipment not qualifying as a "personal electronic device," specific authorization is required by prior Court Order. Any party seeking to bring such equipment into the Courthouse should send a letter to Chambers at least 10 business days in advance of the relevant trial or hearing requesting permission to use such equipment. The request letter shall identify the type(s) of equipment to be used and the name(s) of the attorney(s) who will be using the equipment. Chambers will coordinate with the District Executive's Office to issue the Order and forward a copy to counsel. The Order must be shown upon bringing the equipment into the Courthouse.

ATTACHMENT A

DEFAULT JUDGMENT PROCEDURE

1. Prepare an Order to Show Cause for default judgment and make the Order returnable before Judge Nathan in Courtroom 23B. Leave blank the date and time of the conference. Judge Nathan will set the date and time when she signs the Order.
2. Provide the following supporting papers with the Order to Show Cause:
 - a. an attorney's affidavit setting forth:
 - i. the basis for entering a default judgment, including a description of the method and date of service of the summons and complaint;
 - ii. the procedural history beyond service of the summons and complaint, if any;
 - iii. whether, if the default is applicable to fewer than all of the defendants, the Court may appropriately order a default judgment on the issue of damages prior to resolution of the entire action;
 - iv. the proposed damages and the basis for each element of damages, including interest, attorney's fees, and costs; and
 - v. legal authority for why an inquest into damages would be unnecessary.
 - b. a proposed default judgment.
 - c. copies of all of the pleadings.
 - d. a copy of the affidavit of service of the summons and complaint.
 - e. if failure to answer is the basis for the default, a Certificate from the Clerk of Court stating that no answer has been filed.
3. Take the Order to Show Cause and supporting papers to the Orders and Judgments Clerk (Room 240, 500 Pearl Street) for initial review and approval.
4. After the Orders and Judgments Clerk approves the Order to Show Cause, bring all of the papers to Chambers (Room 615, 500 Pearl Street) for the Judge's signature. Also bring a courtesy copy of the supporting papers to leave with Chambers.
5. After the Judge signs the Order, serve a conforming copy of the Order and supporting papers on the defendant. (Chambers will retain the original signed Order for docketing purposes, but will supply you with a copy. You may also print a copy of the signed Order from the CM/ECF system after the Order has been docketed.)

6. Prior to the return date, file through the CM/ECF system: (1) an affidavit of service, reflecting that the defendant was served with a conforming copy of the Order and supporting papers; and (2) the supporting papers. (The signed Order itself will be scanned and docketed by Chambers.)
7. Prior to the return date, take the proposed judgment, separately backed, to the Orders and Judgments Clerk (Room 240, 500 Pearl Street) for the Clerk's approval. The proposed judgment, including all damage and interest calculations, must be approved by the Clerk prior to the conference and then brought to the conference for the Judge's signature.