

FILED IN OFFICE

SEP 04 2026

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF FULTON COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

CHÉ ALEXANDER
Clerk of Superior Court

Fulton County, Georgia



IN RE: PROCEDURES FOR ALL
CIVIL CASES ASSIGNED TO JUDGE
RICKMAN'S DIVISION

26-EX - 001156

JUDGE DEBBIE-ANN RICKMAN

STANDING ORDER FOR CIVIL CASES
IN JUDGE RICKMAN'S DIVISION

The following terms govern the parties and their practice for civil cases in this Division. All parties are responsible for reviewing, understanding, and complying with the instructions and procedures set forth herein without further direction or additional guidance from the Court.

SECTION 1. CONTACTING THE COURT

Lara Percifield, Senior Staff Attorney, is your principal contact for civil matters. Whenever possible, communication with Ms. Percifield should be via e-mail to lara.percifield@fultoncountyga.gov. Ms. Percifield will respond to all matters as time permits. If further follow up is needed, please email Judicial Assistant Katrina Devine-Weaver at katrina.devine-weaver@fultoncountyga.gov.

Parties are reminded to copy the opposing party/parties or counsel, as appropriate, on all communications with the Court, including all court staff.

Documents e-mailed for the Court's review (motions and other pleadings) should be sent in PDF format. Documents e-mailed for the Court's signature (proposed orders, etc.) should be sent in Microsoft Word format.

SECTION 2. E-FILING

E-filing is mandatory for civil cases filed in Fulton County Superior Court. Electronic service of pleadings, other than the initial complaint and summons, is legally sufficient for service on parties. Every attorney of record and every self-represented litigant **must** register with the

Court's e-filing system. This can be accomplished at www.efilega.com. (See also fultonsuperiorcourtga.gov/efile.)

E-filing does not provide automatic notice to the Court of filings. While e-filing ensures that your pleadings and other documents are made part of the official record, it does not result in notice to the Court that a filing has been made and does not result in the filing reaching the desk of either the Senior Staff Attorney or the Judge. FOR ANY FILING THAT YOU WANT TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COURT, YOU MUST E-MAIL A COPY OF SAME AT THE TIME OF FILING TO lara.percifield@fultoncountygga.gov. See Uniform Superior Court Rule 6.1.

SECTION 3. CASE MANAGEMENT

3.1 Service

Petitioner/Plaintiff must promptly obtain service on Respondent(s)/Defendant(s) and file proof of same with the Court. To seek an order for service by publication, Petitioner/Plaintiff must file proof of attempted service on Respondent/Defendant at Respondent's/Defendant's last known address, together with a Motion for Service by Publication and an Affidavit of Diligent Search. If a Motion for Service by Publication is granted by the Court, Petitioner/Plaintiff must promptly comply with all statutory requirements for such service.

3.2 Scheduling Orders

The Court will enter a Case-Specific Scheduling Order ("CSSO") which establishes the discovery period and deadlines. In the event a modification to the CSSO is requested, the moving party shall submit a proposed revised scheduling order setting forth all requested extensions and deadlines, together with a statement identifying whether the Court has previously granted any requests for extensions. Any request for an extension shall be submitted by email to Ms. Percifield. The Court will not automatically set a scheduling conference unless requested by the parties. Unless the Court receives a modification request, the Court will generally enter a CSSO as follows:

Event	Deadline
Plaintiff Expert Disclosures	90 days before the close of discovery
Defendant Expert Disclosures	60 days before the close of discovery
Rebuttal Expert Disclosures	45 days before the close of discovery
End of Discovery	6 months from the date of the answer
Dispositive & Daubert Motions	30 days after the close of discovery
Deadline to Mediate	60 days after the close of discovery or following resolution of any dispositive motions

3.3 Conferences

Discovery, pre-trial, and settlement conferences promote the speedy, just, and efficient resolution of cases. The Court encourages the parties to request a conference whenever they believe that such will be helpful and they have specific goals for the conference. Conferences may be in chambers, in court, telephonic, or by video-conferencing. Conference requests should be via email to lara.percifield@fultoncountyga.gov.

3.4 Extensions of time

Parties seeking an extension of time or any deadline should explain, *with specificity*, circumstances necessitating the extension and should set forth a timetable for the completion of the task(s) for which the extension is sought, such requests should be made prior to any deadline. The Court shall be notified immediately of any problem or dispute (*e.g.*, discovery issues, witness unavailability, illness, or the late addition of parties or claims) that could delay the case or cause a party to miss a deadline. Such notification should be by email to lara.percifield@fultoncountyga.gov.

SECTION 4. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)

The parties shall contact the Fulton County Superior Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Program or a private mediator of their choice and participate in mediation by the deadline established in the applicable Scheduling Order.

A party may seek an exemption from the mediation requirement upon a proper showing to the Court. In lieu of mediation, a party may request arbitration or a judicially hosted settlement conference.

Participation in mediation or any other form of alternative dispute resolution shall not delay discovery, the filing or resolution of motions, or trial. Absent prior approval of the Court, participation in alternative dispute resolution shall not constitute grounds for extending any deadline previously established in the case.

SECTION 5. DISCOVERY

5.1 Deadlines

In the event an extension to any discovery deadline(s) imposed by statute or a Scheduling Order is requested, the moving party shall submit a proposed Scheduling Order or Revised Scheduling Order, which must include all proposed deadline extensions as well as a statement indicating whether the Court has previously granted extension requests. All requests for discovery extensions shall include a basic description of discovery conducted thus far, the requested deadline extension, a specific schedule of outstanding discovery to be completed during the requested extension, and an explanation as to why the original deadline was insufficient.

All discovery requests must be served early enough so that the responses thereto are due on or before the last day of the discovery period. The Court typically will not enforce private agreements between the parties to conduct discovery beyond the end of the discovery period, nor will the Court ordinarily compel responses to discovery requests that were not served in time for responses to be made before the discovery period runs. Similarly, the Court typically will not mandate depositions for the preservation of testimony after the close of discovery if an objection is raised by the opposing party.

5.2 Responses

Boilerplate objections in response to discovery requests are prohibited. Parties should not mindlessly invoke the usual litany of rote objections, *e.g.*, attorney-client privilege, work-product immunity, overly broad/unduly burdensome, irrelevant, not reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence, etc.

General objections are also prohibited, *i.e.*, a party shall not include in its response to a discovery request a “Preamble” or “General Objections” section stating that the party objects to the discovery request “to the extent that” it violates some rule pertaining to discovery, *e.g.*, attorney-client privilege; work product immunity; the prohibition against discovery requests that are vague, ambiguous, overly broad, or unduly burdensome; etc. Instead, each individual discovery request must be met with *specific* objections thereto -- but only those objections that *actually* apply to that particular request. Otherwise, it is impossible for the Court or the party upon whom the discovery response is served to know exactly what objections have been asserted to each individual request. All such general objections shall be disregarded by the Court.

Finally, a party who objects to a discovery request but then responds to the request must indicate whether the response is complete, *i.e.*, whether additional information or documents would have been provided but for the objection(s). For example, in response to an interrogatory, a party is not permitted to raise objections and then state, “Subject to these objections and without waiving them, the response is as follows . . .” unless the party expressly indicates whether additional information would have been included in the response but for the objection(s).

5.3 Experts

Unless otherwise established in the written Scheduling Order, Plaintiff(s) shall disclose the names and opinions of all experts three months before discovery closes. Defendant(s) shall disclose the names and opinions of all experts two months before discovery closes.

5.4 Disputes

Direct, informal communication is encouraged between the parties to address potential discovery disputes before they become actual discovery disputes. If that fails, an aggrieved party must notify the Court of the discovery dispute by submitting a letter/e-mail demonstrating compliance with Uniform Superior Court Rule 6.4 and providing sufficient information and/or documentation to permit a meaningful conference between the parties and the Court.

No party may file a motion to compel or a motion for a protective order without first having discussed the issue with the opposing party. This requirement applies to disputes with non-parties as well. Motions to compel that do not comply with Rule 6.4 will be denied. The Court will not hesitate to sanction a party and/or counsel found to have abused the discovery process or to have flouted the rules and laws governing it.

5.5 Depositions

Absent extraordinary circumstances, opposing counsel (or self-represented litigants) should be consulted before a deposition is noticed. Objections lodged during depositions should be noted, but questions should be answered over those objections. If a serious, legitimate dispute arises during a deposition, the parties are encouraged to contact the Court to seek an on-the-spot resolution so that the deposition may continue.

SECTION 6. MOTIONS

6.1 Deadlines

Unless otherwise established in a written Scheduling Order, dispositive motions must be filed within thirty (30) days after the close of discovery. Movants must provide courtesy copies of motions and related filings to the Court contemporaneous with filing. *See* USCR 6.1. Electronic copies of pleadings are preferred; hard copies of lengthy exhibits or other attachments are required. Failure to respond to a motion within the time afforded by the Uniform Superior Court Rules (or as extended by Court order) will not prevent the Court from ruling once a motion is ripe for adjudication. Reply Briefs, if filed, will not postpone or delay the Court's ruling on any pending motion(s).

6.2 Format

Precision and concision are strongly encouraged. Absent advance permission, no party may file a motion, brief, or response in excess of twenty-five (25) pages (excluding affidavits, deposition extracts, and other relevant exhibits). Documents exceeding twenty-five (25) pages that are filed without permission may be stricken from the record.

Every ministerial motion (*e.g.*, motion to file reply brief, to extend discovery, etc.) must be copied to chambers and accompanied by a proposed order submitted to chambers electronically as a Microsoft Word document.

6.3 Hearings

As a general practice, motions will be decided upon the written submissions of the parties; however, the Court may schedule oral argument *sua sponte* or allow it upon good cause shown or as otherwise prescribed in the Civil Practice Act and Uniform Superior Court Rules. A party

seeking oral arguments on a motion for summary judgment must comply with Uniform Superior Court Rule 6.3 and file a pleading to that effect. That Rule 6.3 pleading must also be e-mailed to Ms. Percifield.

6.4 Court Reporter

Parties must arrange for their own court reporter. If take down is not arranged in advance, a court reporter may not be available at the time of the hearing. If a party chooses not to participate in take down, they are not entitled to receive a copy of the transcript. Attorneys have an affirmative duty to notify their clients that failure to have a proceeding reported may have an adverse effect on any appeal.

6.5 Proposed Orders

When a dispositive motion is ripe for adjudication, the parties are invited to submit proposed orders for review. All proposed orders should be submitted electronically via email directly to Ms. Percifield in Microsoft Word format. Proposed orders on motions for summary judgment should include detailed findings of facts and conclusions of law which the Court may adapt as appropriate.

SECTION 7. TRIAL

7.1 Scheduling

The Court will set a case for trial once the time for discovery has expired and there are no dispositive motions pending, pursuant to statute and/or a scheduling order. Pre-trial deadlines and required submissions will be set forth in the Trial Notice. Pre-trial motions and issues will be heard and/or discussed at the scheduled pre-trial conference. Any questions or issues related to trial should be directed to Ms. Percifield via email: lara.percifield@fultoncountyga.gov with all parties/counsel copied.

7.2 Courtroom Technology

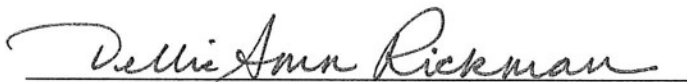
Counsel should contact Ms. Percifield in advance of trial to ensure that any viewing equipment counsel intends to use for a presentation is equipped with all necessary players, drivers, cables, and other accessories. Counsel shall also ensure that they are familiar with the operation of the equipment and have received any necessary training before the first day of trial. The Court will

not delay or recess trial proceedings due to counsel's failure to ensure that presentation equipment is properly configured and operational.

SECTION 8. SANCTIONS

The Court reminds the parties that failure to strictly adhere to the Uniform Superior Court Rules, the Civil Practice Act, or the Court's Orders may result in sanctions. Sanctions for failure to abide by the terms of this Order or of any of the Court's other Orders, including, without limitation, the deadlines set out in this or any other Order; failing to timely supplement discovery responses as required by O.C.G.A. § 9-11-26(e) and this Order; or failing to maintain confidentiality as required by this or any other Order may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the striking of pleadings, exclusion of evidence, exclusion of witnesses, and charging of fines, attorney's fees, and/or costs against the offending party. *See Hart v. Northside Hosp., Inc.*, 291 Ga. App. 208 (2008). Further, the Court may choose to consider motions filed outside of any deadlines set in this Order to prevent manifest injustice. *See Velasco v. Chambliss*, 295 Ga. App. 376, 377 (2008).

SO ORDERED this 4th day of September, 2026.


JUDGE DEBBIE-ANN RICKMAN
SUPERIOR COURT OF FULTON COUNTY
ATLANTA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT