

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO**

_____ ,	:	Case No. _____
	:	
<b>Plaintiff,</b>	:	<b>JUDGE JENNIFER L. BRANCH</b>
	:	
<b>v.</b>	:	
	:	
_____ ,	:	<b><u>INITIAL CASE ORDER</u></b>
	:	
<b>Defendant.</b>	:	
	:	

**Judge Branch’s Rules of Court**

Please become familiar with Judge Jennifer Branch’s Rules of Court on the Court’s website. The rules may change and court staff contact information may change over time:

<https://hamiltoncountycourts.org/index.php/common-pleas-court-judge-jennifer-l-branch/>

**Case Management**

This matter is set for a Case Management Conference (“CMC”). However, due to the Court’s overcrowded docket, the exact date and time for your CMC may change. Any updates will be sent via the assignment commissioner and the Clerk of Court’s automated notification system or can be found on the docket.

Before the Case Management Conference, counsel and any unrepresented parties are required by Civil Rule 26(F)<sup>1</sup> to meet and confer, create a discovery plan, and file a 26(F) Report with the court. The Court **Orders** the parties to conduct the 26(F) conference as soon as practicable and to file the 26(F) Report no later than five business days before the CMC date. Please email a courtesy copy of the 26(F) Report to the Court’s Law Clerk, [BranchLawClerk@cmc.hamilton-co.org](mailto:BranchLawClerk@cmc.hamilton-co.org). A sample 26(F) Report can be found on the Court’s

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<sup>1</sup> The Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure were amended effective July 1, 2020.

website: <https://hamiltoncountycourts.org/index.php/common-pleas-court-judge-jennifer-l-branch/>

The Court will email a video conferencing link ahead of the CMC, so that you may appear remotely at the time and date scheduled. This link will be used for all future video conference appearances. The Court will conduct all conferencing by video conference, unless all parties agree to appear in person. Be sure to provide the Court with your current email address. If you do not have the ability to appear remotely, notify the opposing party/parties and all parties will be required to appear in person.

At least one Defendant must be served before the Case Management Conference. If no Defendant has been served 21 days before the Case Management Conference, **Plaintiff must file** a motion to extend the Case Management Conference to a date after which service is expected to be accomplished and explain Plaintiff's plans to obtain service. The Court will reschedule the CMC to a new date. Since the Supreme Court of Ohio expects most civil cases to be completed within two years of filing, if no Defendant is served within six months of filing the Complaint, the Court will issue an Order asking Plaintiff to show cause why the case should not be dismissed.

### **Perfect Service Before CMC**

If Plaintiff files a motion for default judgment prior to the Case Management Conference, the Case Management Conference date will be vacated once counsel schedules the motion for default hearing with the Assignment Commissioner. Please refer to Local Rule 13 for more details about this process.

**Final Entries**

If the case is settled before trial, the parties are required to inform the Court by emailing the Court’s law clerk as soon as the case is settled.

The Court, however, will not sign an entry of dismissal that requires the Court to retain jurisdiction, unless the parties have first filed a motion explaining the need for the Court to retain jurisdiction. If a motion is filed, the Court will promptly set a Report to set a hearing date to determine whether an enforceable agreement exists. See *Infinite Security Solutions, L.L.C. v. Karam Properties II, Ltd.*, 143 Ohio St.3d 346, 2015-Ohio-110, ¶ 31.

**Parties without Counsel**

Any party who is not represented by Counsel is required to file a Notification Form with the Clerk of Courts providing a mailing address, email address, and phone number. Each unrepresented party must keep their contact information updated until the case is closed. The Notification Form can be found here: <https://www.courtclerk.org/forms/notificationform.pdf>

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer L. Branch, Judge  
Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas

Date: \_\_\_\_\_