

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

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

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 so check the rules regularly throughout the pendency of the case here:

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

Case Management

This matter is automatically 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 CMC, counsel and any unrepresented parties are required by Civil Rule 26(F) 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 using the template provide on the Court’s website no later than five business days before the CMC date. Pending motions to dismiss or other motions do not excuse parties from complying with this rule. Please email a courtesy copy of the 26(F) Report to the Court’s Law Clerk, BranchLawClerk@cms.hamilton-co.org. A sample 26(F) Report can be

found on the Court's website: <https://hamiltoncountycourts.org/index.php/common-pleas-court-judge-jennifer-l-branch/>

Save the Videoconferencing Link

The videoconferencing link to be used for the CMC and all conferences is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7045269737?pwd=VmZ4TndYK2pGVkpJZFZsK21YWDZadz09>

Meeting ID: [704 526 9737](#)

Passcode: 110981

Save the videoconferencing link since it will be used for all future video conferences during

the pendency of the case. The Court will conduct all conferences by video conference, unless all parties agree to appear in person instead. The Court is unable to provide the zoom link before each conference. You must save this information and use it for all videoconferences.

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/counsel since all parties will then be required to appear in person.

Perfect Service Before CMC

At least one defendant must be served before the Case Management Conference. If no defendant has been served 21 days before the CMC, Plaintiff must file a motion to extend the CMC to a date after which service is expected to be accomplished and explain Plaintiff's plans to obtain service.

If good cause is shown, the Court will reschedule the CMC to the new requested date. If this Order is not followed, the CMC will be vacated and a new CMC date will be set for a CMC Friday Docket at 1:30 p.m. in person in Courtroom 320.

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. All

time expended to complete service counts toward the two-year time period to complete the case. The longer service takes, the shorter the time to conduct discovery and complete pretrial litigation.

Default Motions

If Plaintiff, or other party, files a motion for default judgment prior to the Case Management Conference, the CMC date will be vacated and the Court will set a status report on the progress of the motion for default. The moving party **must hand deliver** to the Magistrate the motion, along with a proposed entry, within seven days of filing the motion. If a hearing is required by Local Rule 13, the moving party must schedule the hearing with the Assignment Commissioner within seven days of filing the motion for default. Please refer to Local Rule 13 for more details about this process.

If the moving party does not follow Local Rule 13, the motion for default judgment may be denied or the case may be dismissed for lack of prosecution.

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 at branchlawclerk@cms.hamilton-co.org.

The Court 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 referred to as a “pro se” party. “Pro se” parties are required to file a Notification Form with the Clerk of Courts providing a mailing address, email address, and phone number. Each unrepresented pro se 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.

Date: _____

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