



## FACT SHEET FOR JUDGE CHRISTOPHER DUPUY COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 3

### FAMILY LAW CASES

#### Contacting the Court

1. Who is the Court's staff?

**Monica Gracia – Court Coordinator**  
**Lisa Fort – Court Reporter**  
**Olga Joseph - Bailiff**

2. Who should be contacted regarding hearing dates, scheduling?

**Monica Gracia at (409) 621-7920.**

3. May the Court be contacted by e-mail or fax?

**If required, the fax number is (409) 765-3154. No ex parte communications should be sent, and all pleadings must be filed with the Clerk's Office. Appropriate faxes relate to requests for hearings, and agreed scheduling conference letters.**

**E-mail is by permission only. When granted, the Judge's e-mail is [Christopher.Dupuy@co.galveston.tx.us](mailto:Christopher.Dupuy@co.galveston.tx.us) Please note that no action will be taken upon any e-mail, and no e-mail concerning a case shall be sent to the Court unless all attorneys are copied thereon. No pleadings shall be transmitted via e-mail.**

4. May the Court be contacted during depositions?

**Yes.**

#### General Pretrial Procedures

5. What is the court's procedure for issuance of scheduling orders in family law cases?

**Pursuant to Rule 166, the Court will enter a Docket Control Order upon either request, *sua sponte*, or at the Scheduling Conference date. A copy of the Court's forms are located at <http://www.co.galveston.tx.us/CountyCourt3/Courtforms.htm>**

6. What is the court's ADR policy in family law cases?

**Pursuant to TEX. FAM. CODE § 153.0071(c) and Local Rule 4.54, the Court will enter an ADR Order upon either request, *sua sponte*, or at the Scheduling Conference date.**

**In the event the parties fail to agree upon a mediator, the Court will appoint a highly qualified mediator.**

**Absent any serious allegation, ADR shall be required in all custody matters prior to the Temporary Order hearing. Absent any serious allegation, Local Rule 4.54 mandates that ADR shall be required in all matters prior to a final hearing. ADR may be waived in no-children, no-property divorces, or in other unique cases.**

7. What is required at the Pretrial Conference? What needs to be exchanged prior to this date?

**The Pretrial Conference is usually set 10 days prior to trial. All counsels are ordered to attend and must be prepared to discuss all aspects of the suit and trial. Failure to appear will be grounds for dismissal for want of prosecution.**

**Seven (7) days prior to this Conference, all counsels shall exchange proposed requests for relief, property division, witness lists, updated financial information statements with supporting documentation, exhibit lists and exhibits, and jury questions, definitions and instructions, if applicable.**

**Failure to exchange exhibits and witnesses lists shall be grounds for exclusion.**

**The parties shall also file a completed "Pretrial Conference Checklist."**  
<http://www.co.galveston.tx.us/CountyCourt3/Courtforms.htm>

8. Do the parties need to attend a parenting course prior to entry of a Final Order?

**If the Court orders a parenting class to be completed, then the parties shall furnish proof of the same prior to any Final Order being entered, even when the Order is agreed.**

#### Defaults

9. What is required for defaults?

**No default will be granted unless proof of service has been on file for the requisite period of time, a Notice of Last Known Address is on file, and an Affidavit of Non-Military Status as to the Respondent has been filed. The Affidavit of Non-Military Status must be based on personal knowledge and attach, at a minimum, a completed print screen from <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/scra/scraHome.do>**

**Unless it is a no-children, no-property Decree, the Court also requires proof that timely notice of the default hearing was provided to Respondent by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested.**

#### Entry of Uncontested

10. When does the Court hear uncontested cases?

**Uncontested family law entries are heard daily at 8:30 a.m. Upon timely request the Court will also hear uncontested cases at other times.**

**The parties are responsible for completing and supplying to the Court, on or prior to the date of hearing, the following documents:**

- a. BVS;
- b. New Child Support Account Form;
- c. Decree or Order;
- d. Completion of Parenting Course, if applicable; and,
- e. Any accompanying Orders, such as QDRO, Wage Withholding Order, etc.

### Court Reporter

11. Can the parties use the Court's Court Reporter for hearings before the Associate Judge?

**Yes, if (1) the case is a County Court 3 case, AND (2) the Court does not require Mrs. Fort for any other reason during the requested time period.**

### Temporary Order Hearings

12. What are the Court's procedures for setting and hearing Temporary Orders?

**The Court will preside over a percentage of all Temporary Order hearings, and will have the Associate Judge hear the remainder.**

**Absent good cause, and otherwise ordered, each party present at any hearing on temporary orders before this Court shall be limited to no more than sixty (60) minutes total to present its evidence, cross-examine, rebut, and argue its case.**

**How to organize and save time before the Court:**

- a. **Have a proposed order, or a statement of requested relief.**
- b. **Premark exhibits & exchange them prior to hearing.**
- c. **Use exhibit summaries when appropriate.**
- d. **Always have an updated FIS, & know the rules on required information that must accompany the FIS.**
- e. **Use record/business subpoenas.**
- f. **If you can anticipate certain arguments, then have hearing briefs with on-point cases attached.**
- g. **Use electronics and visual aids ... if you have a picture that is worth 1000 words, use it!**
- h. **Be respectful and cut the silliness out. If your client believes that they need to use the TO hearing, or any hearing, as an opportunity to embarrass or harass the other parent, then your client's future parenting plan may be in dire need of adjustment.**
- i. **Know the Rules and case law, and refrain from irrelevant matters.**
- j. **Avoid repetition.**

### Courtroom Technology

13. Is it possible to have time in the courtroom to familiarize oneself with the layout and available technology?

**Yes. Call the Court Coordinator to arrange a time with our Bailiff.**

### Docket Control Orders

14. Does the Court permit the parties to agree to extensions of time?

**After the scheduling order is entered, the parties may agree to extensions of all dates with the exception of the deadline to file dispositive motions, the pretrial conference, and trial date.**

### Courtroom Decorum

15. Does the court have special rules governing courtroom decorum (e.g., addressing opposing counsel; approaching the witness; talking or passing notes at the counsel table, etc.)?

- a. **The Court requires counsel and their clients to be on time and appropriately dressed.**
- b. **Cell phones and electronic devices should be turned to silent or vibrate.**
- c. **Persons in the courtroom should be addressed by only by their titles and surnames.**

- d. Stand when you speak to the Court.
- e. Hand to the bailiff all things for examination by the judge.
- f. Question witnesses while seated at counsel table or standing at the lectern.
- g. When it is necessary to question a witness about an exhibit, ask permission to approach the witness.
- h. Avoid disparaging remarks and acrimony toward counsel, and discourage ill will between the litigants.
- i. Treat all in the courtroom with courtesy, civility and respect.

#### Interview with Children

16. What is the Court's policy regarding interviews with children?

**The Court encourages parents to keep children away from litigation; but, in cases where that cannot be avoided the Court will interview children in chambers without counsel. Parties are also encouraged not to bring the children to the Courthouse unless prior permission has been granted.**