

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS - WESTERN DIVISION  
JUDGE PHILIP G. REINHARD

TRIAL PROCEDURES - CIVIL CASE

JURY SELECTION

**A. SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

Counsel should submit to the court an agreed statement of the case to be read to the jury which explains in simple terms the nature of the case and the limited details of where and when the occurrence at issue took place. The purpose of the summary is to acquaint the jurors with the case in preparation for voir dire.

**B. LIST OF POTENTIAL WITNESSES**

Counsel for each party shall submit to the court a list of potential witnesses and their current addresses to be read to the jury for purposes of voir dire.

**C. INTRODUCTION OF PEOPLE AT COUNSEL TABLE**

Counsel for each party shall submit to the court the names of all counsel, the law firm[s], and the party[s] seated at counsel table.

**D. NUMBER OF JURORS AND PEREMPTORY CHALLENGES**

In civil cases there are three peremptories per side including when there are multiple parties. However, the court may consider

additional peremptories on motion of a party. Normally, seven jurors shall be selected.

**E. VOIR DIRE**

The court will conduct all questioning of the jurors from a prepared list of court questions and will consider additional questions submitted by counsel at a time set by pretrial order prior to trial.

**F. CURRENT JURY SELECTION PROCESS**

Seven jurors shall be randomly called to the jury box. The court will conduct the questioning. Upon the completion of the court's examination of the original seven jurors or any juror called to replace an original juror excused for cause, counsel and the court shall proceed to a side bar. Any challenge for cause shall be made first. Acceptance or peremptory challenge to a juror shall proceed by plaintiff's counsel first for juror number 1, then by defendant's counsel as to that juror. Thereafter, beginning with defendant's counsel as to the next juror, each counsel will alternate who goes first in accepting or challenging a juror.<sup>1</sup> Once a juror is accepted by both sides, the juror cannot be later challenged or back struck. Additional jurors will be called to

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<sup>1</sup> The court, alternatively, may employ either a challenge system whereby each lawyer shall tender to the court a private list naming those jurors to be challenged and the court will excuse from that list such jurors of the first six and, using the same method, replacement jurors or the "struck" jury system.

replace challenged jurors. Additional side bars will be held each time replacement jurors totaling seven have been examined by the court. Counsel at a side bar may request of the court clarification questions or follow up questions to a juror before exercising a challenge or acceptance.

### **EXHIBITS**

Exhibits will be premarked by the parties. In conformance with the Final Pretrial Order, each side shall prepare a trial exhibit list which is to be exchanged with opposing counsel 14 days prior to trial. Objections to exhibits shall be listed in the Final Pretrial Order. Exhibits not objected to in the Final Pretrial Order shall be admitted at trial. At the beginning of trial, the trial exhibit list will be provided the court and the court reporter.

Generally, offer exhibits into evidence as soon as the foundation has been laid unless otherwise directed by the court. Objections to foundation are to be made at that time. Any other objection and the reason for objection shall be made at that time. If there is to be extended argument on admission, the court shall rule at a side bar or during a recess. Exhibits not objected to in the pretrial order or joint and stipulated exhibits may be offered at any time during trial.

Offer exhibits that have identical foundation requirements at the same time laying one foundation and identifying all the exhibits.

Exhibits may or may not be circulated to the jury upon admission depending on the nature of the exhibit at the court's discretion. In complex cases or cases of many exhibits, exhibit books for the jurors may be prepared by a party.

All admitted exhibits normally go to the jury room; however, the court will make a ruling outside the presence of the jury on each exhibit going to the jury room prior to final argument.

#### **MOTIONS IN LIMINE**

Motions in limine are to be filed with the final pretrial order and responses thereto within a time set by the Magistrate Judge. Parties are limited to no more than five motions in limine per side unless otherwise ordered by the court.

#### **TRIAL BEHAVIOR**

Stand when addressing the court, questioning a witness and making an objection. State the precise reason for the objection without a speech. A response to an objection from the opposing party is not required unless invited by the court or requested of the court. Counsel shall not argue between themselves but shall address arguments through the court. The court discourages side bars on objections. If counsel wishes to make a further record on

a ruling on an objection, it will be allowed during a recess or, in limited circumstances, during a side bar.

Counsel shall be courteous toward each other and the court. During court proceedings counsel shall not address each other using the person's given name.

Counsel must ask permission of the court to approach a witness for the first time; thereafter, counsel may approach that witness without further permission.

Counsel shall ask questions from the podium except when given permission to approach a witness. Counsel during questioning and opening and final argument are to remain within the area of the podium. Non-examining counsel should remain seated during witness examination unless standing to make an objection or, with the court's permission, to see an exhibit.

Do not greet or introduce yourself to adverse witnesses.

All persons at counsel table shall avoid facial expressions, reactions, and other expressions, verbal or nonverbal, that might be observed by the jury.

Beepers and cell phones must be turned off.

#### **SCHEDULING**

Once a jury trial is set, the court rarely grants a trial continuance. Generally, jury cases are tried from the beginning date through completion. The court schedules its other matters around the jury trial so that the jury trial will proceed as

expeditiously as possible to completion. Trial normally begins at 9 A.M. The morning session ends at noon and trial resumes at 1:15 P.M. The afternoon session will last until 5 P.M. There will be one 15 to 20 minute recess in the morning and in the afternoon. Counsel are expected to be prompt in attendance, as will the court. The court will not tolerate tardiness. Witnesses shall be scheduled to fill up the day.

### **JURY INSTRUCTIONS**

The parties shall submit instructions as ordered by the court prior to trial. The parties shall use as general instructions those available in the clerk's office.

### **TRIAL NEEDS**

Should an attorney, party or anticipated trial witness have a physical handicap which would require any special need or adjustment in my courtroom, the requesting attorney should advise the court in advance of any proceeding so that an accommodation can be made. Use of audio, video or other special equipment shall be arranged prior to trial through the court or its staff.

**POST-TRIAL CONTACT WITH JURORS**

Pursuant to Local Rule 48.1, no lawyer or agent thereof shall ask questions or make comments to a juror without first obtaining leave of court.

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND LOCAL RULES**

All counsel are to read and familiarize themselves with the Rules of Professional Conduct of the Northern District of Illinois, Local Rule 83.50, and in particular ABA Model Rule 3.6 on trial publicity. Cases will not be tried in the news media and the court will insure the rights of the parties to a fair trial.

Counsel are expected to be familiar with the Local Rules of this District.