

## **Standing Order Governing Civil Jury Trials**

This Standing Order sets forth the procedures and requirements for parties' pre-trial submissions in civil jury trials. It also contains information on trial protocols. The purpose of this Standing Order is to promote a fair and expeditious trial.

When scheduling the trial date, the Court will also set a Pre-Trial Conference date, which triggers the parties' pre-trial submission deadlines, as set forth below. The Court may change the below deadlines and will specify exact submission deadlines in a minute entry before the Pre-Trial Conference. The dates in the minute entry shall govern timing of submission of the documents below.

### **I. Exchange and Filing of Trial Materials – Plaintiff's Pre-Trial Statement**

**49 days (7 weeks) before the Pre-Trial Conference**, Plaintiff shall e-file Plaintiff's Pre-Trial Statement, comprised of the below items (listed in Section I.a–d) using CM/ECF. To e-file it, select the appropriate CM/ECF event, "Other Filings" and then "Other Documents," and choose the Supplement event. Separately, Plaintiff shall e-mail a Microsoft Word version of Plaintiff's Exhibit Chart and Plaintiff's Deposition Designation Chart to Defendant.

#### **a. Witness List**

The party must provide a list of witnesses, including expert witnesses and rebuttal witnesses, identifying the following:

1. witnesses that the party will call to testify at trial;
2. witnesses that the party may call to testify at trial; and
3. witnesses whose testimony the party plans to present by deposition or other prior testimony, indicating whether the presentation will be by transcript or video.

For each witness, the party must provide a *very* concise (i.e., no more than two or three sentences) description of the witness's role in the case. For example: "George Washington is Plaintiff's cousin. Washington witnessed the arrest of Plaintiff where Defendants allegedly used excessive force." Or: "John Adams is Defendant's Chief Operating Officer. Adams made promises concerning the timing of payments under the contract at issue in the case." The names of witnesses on the lists will be read to the jury during jury selection to ensure that potential jurors do not personally know any witnesses.

Witnesses who are not on the lists are **barred** from testifying unless the proponent shows an absence of prejudice to the opposing party or good cause for the failure to disclose the witness.

Additionally, as indicated above, pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 32, the party must provide a list of witnesses for which it intends to use deposition testimony at trial in lieu of live testimony. Next to the witness's name, the party shall cite to the applicable provision of Rule 32 allowing for use of the deposition and provide a brief explanation. The party must indicate whether the opposing party objects to the introduction of witness testimony via deposition. If Rule 32 *does not* provide for the use of deposition testimony in lieu of live testimony and the opposing party does not stipulate to the use of deposition testimony, the Court will not allow the testimony to be introduced via deposition. Finally, absent exceptional circumstances, the Court will not allow the introduction of witness testimony via deposition unless the party's Pre-Trial Statement so indicated *and* the party provided a deposition designation chart with its Pre-Trial Statement.

#### **b. Exhibit Chart**

The party must submit an exhibit chart of the exhibits the party will definitely use at trial (*including demonstratives, summaries, or other specially prepared exhibits*), which includes the following:

- (a) the exhibit number;
- (b) the date of the document or exhibit, if applicable;
- (c) a concise, neutral description of the exhibit; and
- (d) a concise statement of the exhibit's relevance.

The chart's format shall be substantially similar to the example below (landscape orientation is encouraged).

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
001	02/15/2006	2005 Performance Review	Proves record of satisfactory job performance.

With regard to creating and naming the electronic versions of the exhibits, the parties must use the **exhibit-file format and exhibit-naming convention** for the Jury Evidence Recording System (JERS). Information on JERS is attached to this Standing Order as Exhibit 3.

Do not over-designate exhibits, because the Court will examine exhibits one-by-one in advance of and/or during the Pre-Trial Conference, and plainly inadmissible exhibits will needlessly consume time.<sup>1</sup> In addition to substantive exhibits and Rule 1006 summary exhibits, the chart should also include proposed demonstrative exhibits.

### c. Deposition Designation Chart

Pursuant to the list provided in Section I.a, if a party proposes to introduce a witness' testimony via a deposition rather than live testimony, then the offering party must provide: (1) the page/line designations of the deposition transcript, (2) a description of the testimony, and (3) relevance of the testimony. These designations should be in a chart format substantially similar to the example below (landscape orientation is encouraged).<sup>2</sup>

Witness	Page/Line	Description	Relevance
Jane Doe	10:22-11:3	Defendant's counsel questioning Ms. Doe whether John Doe adequately explained how to operate cherry-picking machine.	Causation and damages.

### d. Motions *in Limine*

The parties must confer on all motions *in limine* before filing them. If there is no objection to a motion, but the movant wishes to file a motion memorializing the non-objection, then the motion must state that there is no objection.

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<sup>1</sup>There is no need to list every conceivable exhibit that can possibly be used. The parties should submit a list of trial exhibits they definitely intend to introduce. Exhibits not likely to be used need not be listed. If, due to unforeseen circumstances during trial a party wishes to introduce an exhibit not previously listed, notice should be given as soon as possible to the opposing side and to the Court so that any objections can be discussed. Absent abuse of this process, an exhibit will not be deemed inadmissible simply because it was not included on the original exhibit list, provided the exhibit/document was produced earlier to the opposing side during discovery.

<sup>2</sup>A party does not need to create a Deposition Designation Chart for deposition transcripts/excerpts it plans to use to impeach a witness or to refresh a witness' recollection.

Motions *in limine* (not including exhibits) are **limited to a total of 15 pages per side (not per motion)**.

Parties should keep in mind that motions *in limine* are meant to provide a mechanism for the court and parties to resolve particular evidentiary issues prior to trial. A proper motion *in limine* “performs a gatekeeping function and permits the trial judge to eliminate from further consideration evidentiary submissions that clearly ought not be presented to the jury because they clearly would be inadmissible for any purpose.” *Jonasson v. Lutheran Child and Fam. Servs.*, 115 F.3d 436, 440 (7th Cir. 1997). They are particularly useful in streamlining a trial so that extensive argument becomes unnecessary after a jury has been impaneled. *See id.* (“The prudent use of the *in limine* motion sharpens the focus of later trial proceedings and permits the parties to focus their preparation on those matters that will be considered by the jury.”). They also provide economies to the parties such that certain witnesses will not be called to testify. Finally, an accurate assessment of the admissible evidence may cause parties to reconsider settlement negotiation positions.

However, motions *in limine* should not be so granular that no rational ruling can be made outside of the context of the trial itself. *See Jonasson*, 115 F.3d at 440 (“Some evidentiary submissions . . . cannot be evaluated accurately or sufficiently by the trial judge in [a pretrial] environment.”). “In these instances it is necessary to defer ruling until during trial, when the trial judge can better estimate its impact on the jury.” *Id.*; *see also Anglin v. Sears, Roebuck & Co.*, 139 F. Supp. 2d 914, 917 (N.D. Ill.), *modified*, 179 F. Supp. 2d 836 (N.D. Ill. 2001) (“[W]hen admissibility determinations are not clear, evidentiary rulings must be deferred until trial so questions of foundation, relevancy, and prejudice can be resolved in their proper context.”) (cleaned up).

Moreover, the fact that a motion *in limine* was not filed as to a particular piece of evidence does not operate as a waiver. Counsel is always free to object to evidence at trial for all of the grounds permissible under the Federal Rules of Evidence. *See Moore v. General Motors Corp.*, 684 F. Supp. 220, 220 (S.D. Ind. 1988) (Tinder, J.) (“A ruling on a motion *in limine* is not a final ruling on the admissibility of the evidence which is the subject of the motion. An order on a motion *in limine* has been characterized as an advisory opinion subject to change as events at trial unfold.”). Like any other evidentiary ruling, the Court’s rulings on motions *in limine* are based on the facts and theories of the case as the Court understands them at the time the Court makes its ruling. These rulings do not preclude any party from renewing a request for either admission or exclusion of evidence if the facts as developed at trial make reconsideration appropriate.

## **II. Exchange and Filing of Trial Materials – Defendant’s Pre-Trial Statement and Objections**

**42 days (6 weeks) before the Pre-Trial Conference**, Defendant shall e-file Defendant’s Pre-Trial Statement and Objections, comprised of the below items (listed in Section II.a–g) using CM/ECF. To e-file it, select the appropriate CM/ECF event, “Other Filings” and then “Other Documents,” and choose the Supplement event. Separately, Defendant shall e-mail a Microsoft Word version of Defendant’s Exhibit Chart and Defendant’s Deposition Designation Chart to Plaintiff.

### **a. Witness List**

*See* Section I.a.

### **b. Exhibit Chart**

*See* Section I.b. For Exhibit numbers, Defendant shall use 001, etc.

### **c. Deposition Designation Chart**

*See* Section I.c.

### **d. Objections to Plaintiff’s Exhibit Chart**

Defendant shall use the Microsoft Word version of Plaintiff’s Exhibit Chart, and add a column to the chart listing whether there is an objection to the exhibit, and if so, a concise explanation of the objection, similar to the example below. If Defendant does not have an objection to a specific exhibit, Defendant shall not remove that row from Plaintiff’s Exhibit Chart, but instead can leave the objection column for that exhibit row blank.

Defendant shall then e-file Defendant’s Objections to Plaintiff’s Exhibit Chart as part of Defendant’s Pre-Trial Statement and Objections. Separately, Defendant shall e-mail a Microsoft Word version of Defendant’s Objections to Plaintiff’s Exhibit Chart to [Proposed\\_Order\\_Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Proposed_Order_Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov).

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Objection</b>
001	02/15/2006	2005 Performance Review	Proves record of satisfactory job performance.	R. 402: relevance; R. 403: confusion - Plaintiff fired in 2021, so probative value of 2015 Performance Review, if any,

				substantially outweighed by risk of confusing the jury
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A party must limit the objections to only good-faith objections. Frivolous and boilerplate objections will waste time, because in preparation for the Pre-Trial Conference, the Court will review, as much as possible, the exhibits and the objections.

Objections to foundation should be based on the knowledge of the case and likely testimony of the witnesses; a foundation objection should be made in the party's exhibit chart objections only if the party knows that there is no witness on the witness list who could establish the proper foundation of the exhibits. If a foundation objection is asserted and the offering party proffers a foundation that the Court believes overcomes the objection, the offering party still must lay the foundation at trial.

Additionally, any substantive exhibit not objected-to shall be deemed admissible, but not admitted, into evidence by this Order. The Court notes that a party must still lay proper foundation for such an exhibit at trial, either via a stipulation or witness testimony (remember, however, that the exhibit must still be referred-to during trial testimony or otherwise published to the jury in order for the exhibit to be admitted). **The Court encourages the parties to stipulate to the authenticity and/or foundation of exhibits whenever possible.** During the trial, for the clarity of the record, a party must still move the exhibit into evidence before publishing it to the Court.

Apart from objections to foundation, all other objections not included on the exhibit charts shall be deemed waived, unless the objecting party shows at trial an absence of prejudice to the opposing party or good cause for the failure to object to the exhibit in the pretrial materials.

#### **e. Objections to Plaintiff's Deposition Designation Chart**

If Defendant objects to the introduction of witness testimony via deposition, Defendant should provide the basis for the objection. Even if Defendant objects, Defendant must still provide specific Objections to Plaintiff's Deposition Designation Chart.

Defendant shall use the Microsoft Word version of Plaintiff's Deposition Designation Chart, and add a column to the chart listing any objections, including a concise basis for the objection, similar to the Exhibit Chart. If Defendant does not have an objection to a specific deposition designation, Defendant shall not remove

that row from Plaintiff's Deposition Designation Chart, but instead can leave the objection column for that deposition designation row blank.

Defendant shall then e-file Defendant's Objections to Plaintiff's Deposition Designation Chart as part of Defendant's Pre-Trial Statement and Objections. Separately, Defendant shall e-mail a Microsoft Word version of Defendant's Objections to Plaintiff's Deposition Designation Chart to [Proposed Order Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Proposed Order Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov).

**f. Responses to Plaintiff's Motions *in Limine***

Responses (not including exhibits) are **limited to a total of 15 pages per side, not per motion**.

**g. Motions *in Limine***

See Section I.d.

**III. Exchange and Filing of Materials – Plaintiff's Pre-Trial Objections**

**35 days (5 weeks) before the Pre-Trial Conference**, Plaintiff shall e-file Plaintiff's Pre-Trial Objections, comprised of the below items (listed in Section III.a–d) using CM/ECF. To e-file it, select the appropriate CM/ECF event, "Other Filings" and then "Other Documents," and choose the Supplement event.

**a. Objections to Defendant's Exhibit Chart**

Plaintiff must carefully review the instructions in Section II.d.

Plaintiff shall use the Microsoft Word version of Defendant's Exhibit Chart, and add a column to the chart listing any objections, similar to the example in Section II.d. If Plaintiff does not have an objection to a specific exhibit, Plaintiff shall not remove that row from Defendant's Exhibit Chart, but instead can leave the objection column for that exhibit row blank.

Plaintiff shall then e-file Plaintiff's Objections to Defendant's Exhibit Chart as part of Plaintiff's Pre-Trial Objections. The Court's statements regarding objections in Section II.d apply here as well. Separately, Plaintiff shall e-mail a Microsoft Word version of Plaintiff's Objections to Defendant's Exhibit Chart to [Proposed Order Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Proposed Order Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov).

**b. Objections to Defendant's Deposition Designation Chart**

Plaintiff must carefully review the instructions in Section II.e.

If Plaintiff objects to the introduction of witness testimony via deposition, Plaintiff should provide the basis for the objection. Even if Plaintiff objects, Defendant must still provide Objections to Defendant's Deposition Designation Chart.

Plaintiff shall use the Microsoft Word version of Defendant's Deposition Designation Chart, and add a column to the chart listing any objections, similar to the example in Section II.e. If Plaintiff does not have an objection to a specific deposition designation, Plaintiff shall not remove that row from Defendant's Deposition Designation Chart, but instead can leave the objection column for that deposition designation row blank.

Plaintiff shall then e-file Plaintiff's Objections to Defendant's Deposition Designation Chart as part of Plaintiff's Pre-Trial Objections. Separately, Plaintiff shall e-mail a Microsoft Word version of Plaintiff's Objections to Defendant's Deposition Designation Chart to [Proposed Order Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Proposed Order Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov).

**c. Responses to Defendant's Motions *in Limine***

Responses (not including exhibits) are **limited to a total of 15 pages per side, not per motion**.

**IV. Final Pre-Trial Memorandum**

**28 days (4 weeks) before the Pre-Trial Conference**, Plaintiff shall e-file the parties' jointly prepared Pre-Trial Memorandum. Additionally, Plaintiff shall e-mail a Microsoft Word version of the Pre-Trial Memorandum to [Proposed Order Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Proposed Order Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov). The Pre-Trial Memorandum shall contain the following information:

**a. Trial Attorneys**

A list of the attorneys trying the case, including e-mail addresses, telephone numbers (both office and cell phone numbers), and business addresses. A list of the names of all people who will be sitting at counsel table, including parties, consultants, legal and technical assistants, etc., should also be provided.

**b. Jurisdiction**

State the jurisdictional basis for each claim. If the parties rely on either diversity jurisdiction or another jurisdictional basis that requires a threshold amount, then state whether the parties agree that the amount in controversy exceeds



the amount and include a concise explanation of how the evidence supports that statement.

**c. Case Statement**

The parties shall confer and provide a concise agreed statement of the case to be included on the juror questionnaire cover letter and to be read by Judge Valderrama to the jury pool during jury selection. This is a neutral description of the case, with just enough information to introduce the case to the jury and to ask potential jurors whether they happen to know anything about the case.

**d. Trial Length / Number of Jurors**

State the estimated number of trial days, including jury selection and deliberations, premised on six-hour trial-testimony days (the six hours already accounts for lunch and breaks). Provide estimated sub-totals for Plaintiff's case and Defendant's case. Propose time limits for opening statements and closing arguments, per side.

In civil cases, the Court typically will select 8 jurors and no alternates. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 48; *Delaney v. Detella*, 2004 WL 525007, at \*2 (N.D. Ill. Mar. 11, 2004) (“[A]lternate jurors are not required in civil or criminal cases. Rule 48 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires that juries be comprised of ‘not fewer than six and not more than twelve members.’”). If the parties request a different number of jurors, they should so state in the Pre-Trial Memorandum, as well as reasoning why more or less jurors is appropriate.

**e. Stipulations and Uncontested Facts**

In numbered paragraphs, set forth any stipulations and uncontested facts. No later than 5 business days before the due date of the joint Pre-Trial Memorandum, the parties must serve on each other proposed stipulations. No later than 2 business days before the due date of the joint Pre-Trial Memorandum, the parties must confer in good faith to arrive at as many stipulations and uncontested facts as possible.

**f. Itemization of Damages**

If any party is seeking damages, provide an itemization of damages and other relief sought, and provide a concise explanation of the evidentiary basis for each itemization.

### **g. *Voir Dire* Questions**

Attached to this Standing Order are the juror questionnaire cover letter (Exhibit 1) and a sample juror questionnaire (Exhibit 2) with standard background questions that the Court asks prospective jurors during *voir dire* (these will be provided to the jurors when they are in the Jury Department room a few days before trial). For additional questions to be included on the juror questionnaires, the parties must file a list divided into (a) agreed-upon questions and (b) proposed questions to which there is an objection. A short basis for any objection must accompany the list. Each side is limited to 15 proposed disputed questions, unless a motion is filed before the Pre-Trial Conference that explains good cause for proposing more than the limit. Each side shall provide the other with proposed *voir dire* questions 5 business days before the due date of the joint Pre-Trial Memorandum, and confer by 2 business days before the due date in order to generate this section of the Pre-Trial Memorandum.

As detailed below in Section VIII.a, during *voir dire*, the Court, not the parties, will ask the venire questions based upon their completed questionnaires.

### **h. Jury Instructions / Verdict Forms**

The parties must confer in order to attempt to agree on as many jury instructions as possible, as well as the verdict form. Where applicable, the Court generally prefers the Seventh Circuit's Pattern Instructions, but of course the parties may propose modifications to the Pattern Instructions and may propose additional, non-Pattern Instructions. The proposed jury instructions must state, on an instruction-by-instruction basis, the following information: the proponent of the instruction, the legal authority for the instruction, and whether there is an objection to the instruction. If an instruction is disputed, the proponent of the instruction should concisely explain the basis for the instruction, if more explanation is required beyond the identified legal authority (often citing to the Pattern Instruction or to a case will be explanation enough). Moreover, if an instruction is disputed, the objecting party must concisely state—**on the page immediately following** the instruction—the grounds for the objection, as well as any proposed modification or alternative. The same principles apply to proposed verdict forms.

No later than 5 business days before the due date of the joint Pre-Trial Memorandum, the parties must serve on each other proposed jury instructions, and confer by 2 business days before the due date in order to generate this section of the Pre-Trial Memorandum. The jury-instructions filing also must be e-mailed to [Proposed\\_Order\\_Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Proposed_Order_Valderrama@ilnd.uscourts.gov) in Microsoft Word format the same day the Pre-Trial Memorandum is due.

### **i. Signature**

The Pre-Trial Memorandum shall be electronically signed by counsel for each party.

## **V. Exhibits and Deposition Designations – Before Pre-Trial Conference**

**28 days (4 weeks) before the Pre-Trial Conference**, each party shall have delivered to chambers the following:

### **a. USB Key/Thumb Drive**

A USB Key/Thumb Drive with no password protection<sup>3</sup> containing a .pdf of each of each party's own proposed exhibits and deposition transcripts to which the opposing party has raised an objection. The parties must use the exhibit-file format and exhibit-naming convention for JERS. *See* Exhibit 3. All exhibits must have OCR-text recognition run on them.

### **b. Hard Copies**

One binder containing a copy of each party's proposed exhibits and deposition transcripts to which the opposing party has raised an objection. The exhibits and/or deposition transcripts must be printed double-sided and placed in a three-ring binder with tabs separating each exhibit and/or deposition transcript. Unless the parties agree otherwise, the party that is offering the exhibit or deposition transcript is responsible for providing the copy of the objected-to exhibit or deposition transcript.

## **VI. Pre-Trial Conference**

The Court will schedule the Pre-Trial Conference two to three weeks before the commencement of trial. Lead trial counsel for each party must attend the Pre-Trial Conference. The Court will address various topics at this conference, including, but not limited to: rulings on exhibit objections, deposition designation objections, *voir dire* questions, jury instructions, and motions *in limine*; use of demonstratives and timelines; trial logistics; sidebars; trial technology; and breakout rooms.

## **VII. Exhibits and Deposition Designations – After Pre-Trial Conference**

**5 days following the Pre-Trial Conference**, each party shall have delivered to chambers the following:

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<sup>3</sup>If the parties agree a password is necessary, they must send an e-mail to the Court's courtroom deputy, Jonathan Martinez ([Jonathan.Martinez@ilnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Martinez@ilnd.uscourts.gov)), with the password on the same day that the USB/Key Drive is delivered.

### **a. USB Key/Thumb Drive**

A USB Key/Thumb Drive with no password protection<sup>4</sup> containing a .pdf of each final trial exhibit and final deposition transcript that will be read in place of live testimony. The parties must use the exhibit-file format and exhibit-naming convention for JERS. *See* Exhibit 3.

For deposition transcripts, if the Court has sustained an objection, the entire objected-to portion of the transcript should be redacted in its entirety. If the Court has overruled an objection, and that objection is included in the transcript, the parties should remove/redact the objection from the transcript. Real-time objections within designated excerpts of deposition transcripts, which the parties did not include as part of their objections included with their pre-trial submissions, must also be removed/redacted from the transcripts.

### **b. Hard Copy**

One binder containing a copy of each final trial exhibit and final deposition transcript that will be read in place of live testimony. The exhibits and/or deposition transcripts must be printed double-sided and placed in a three-ring binder with tabs separating each exhibit and/or deposition transcript. For deposition transcripts, please see above, *see supra* Section VII.a.

### **c. Impeachment and Refreshing Recollection Exhibits**

For any exhibits that a party plans to use at trial to impeach a witness or to refresh a witness' recollection, the party must include such exhibits on the above USB Key/Thumb Drive in a separate folder titled "Impeachment and RR Exhibits." The party must also include in this folder a separate .pdf exhibit chart of these exhibits in a format similar to the primary exhibit chart, with only columns for exhibit number, date, and description. The party should begin numbering these exhibits at least 50 numbers after its last exhibit on its primary exhibit chart. The party need not provide hard copies of these exhibits in advance of trial.

The Court assumes that parties will not disclose such exhibits to each other prior to trial. However, to the extent the parties agree, they may do so.

## **VIII. Additional Pre-Trial Information**

### **a. Jury Selection**

The Court will provide the parties a hard copy of the random-order list of potential jurors.

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<sup>4</sup>See Note 3 for instructions on what to do if the parties agree that a password is necessary.

As noted above, in the Jury Department, jurors are provided with a juror questionnaire cover letter and a juror questionnaire before trial. The jurors will complete the written juror questionnaire, and the Court will provide hard copies the completed juror questionnaires to the parties. The Court prohibits the parties and their counsel from taking the questionnaires off of the 19th floor. Counsel can take notes (but not photos). Counsel cannot write down the contact information for any of the jurors. Counsel must return all copies of the questionnaires to the Court once jury selection is complete.

When in-person jury selection begins, jurors will be seated in the jury box and in the gallery according to the random-order list. The Court, not the parties, will ask certain background and follow-up questions of all the venire based on their completed juror questionnaires. After that questioning, counsel will have a chance to propose follow-up questions at a side-bar, but the Court, in its discretion, will decide whether to follow up with the venireperson and will ask any follow-up questions itself. After the last round of questioning, counsel will exercise “for cause” strikes. That will leave the qualified pool on which peremptory challenges will be made (overlapping peremptory challenges count against both sides). Typically, each side will be allowed three peremptory challenges, unless the parties address the need for more during the Pre-Trial Conference. The first 8 non-struck jurors on the random-order jury list will comprise the jury. Then the parties will exercise their peremptory (or peremptories, if more than one) challenge for the alternate (or alternates, if more than one).

#### **b. Opening Statement**

Unless both parties agree, no exhibits will be shown during opening statements. Any request for the use of exhibits during opening statements must be made to the opposing party no later than two business days before the start of trial.

If exhibits are agreed-upon and non-argumentative, they may be used in opening statement. Opening statement should **not** be argumentative. Time limits will be imposed on lawyers, and such time limits will be discussed at the Pre-Trial Conference. As stated in Section IV.d, the parties should propose time limits in the Pre-Trial Memorandum.

#### **c. Daily Status Hearing / Timeliness**

Attorneys on trial before the Court may have their case called each morning of trial before the jury is brought into the courtroom. The purpose of this status hearing is to inform the Court of any issues that may have arisen overnight and should be addressed outside of the presence of the jury. To request such a status hearing, the parties **MUST** notify the Courtroom Deputy that morning by 7:30 a.m. via e-mail whether they wish to have such a hearing. The Courtroom Deputy will confirm the

time of such a hearing with the parties via e-mail; such a hearing likely will begin fifteen to thirty minutes before the beginning of trial. If there is no request from the parties for such a hearing, trial will begin promptly at the time stated by the Court and there will not be a break before bringing the jury into open court.

Please be on time for each court session. Trial engagements take precedence over any other business. If you have matters in other courtrooms, arrange in advance to have them continued or have a colleague handle them for you.

#### **d. Exhibits at Trial**

Just as at the pre-trial stage, when preparing exhibits for the trial itself, once again use the **JERS exhibit format and naming convention**. Court time may not be used for marking exhibits. This must be done in advance of trial.

Carefully review the JERS information attachment to this Order for more information about the necessary steps the parties must take to prepare admitted exhibits to be sent back to the jury for deliberations. *See* Exhibit 3.

As explained in detail in Exhibit 3, no later than one calendar day after the close of Plaintiff's case-in-chief, Plaintiff must confer with Defendant about admitted exhibits and file on the docket its list of Plaintiff's exhibits which were admitted into evidence during trial. The filed list must include any demonstratives the parties agree may be used during deliberations (keeping in mind that the default is that demonstratives will not be used during deliberations), as well as any disagreements about exhibits admitted into evidence or demonstratives to go back with the jury. Plaintiff must also submit a USB Key/Thumb Drive and one binder containing hard copies of exhibits to the Courtroom Deputy, as detailed in Exhibit 3.

After Defendant rests and before closing arguments, after consulting with Plaintiff, Defendant must file on the docket its list of Defendant's exhibits which were admitted into evidence during trial, following the same instructions included above regarding Plaintiff's list. Defendant must also provide to the Courtroom Deputy a USB Key/Thumb Drive and a binder containing hard copies, as described in Exhibit 3.

If Plaintiff puts on a rebuttal case, if new exhibits are admitted, after Plaintiff rests and before closing arguments, after consulting with Defendant, Plaintiff must file an updated exhibit list, including the exhibits admitted during Plaintiff's case-in-chief *and* the exhibits admitted during Plaintiff's rebuttal case, and distinguish which exhibits were admitted during the rebuttal case. Plaintiff must also provide to the Courtroom Deputy a USB Key/Thumb Drive and one binder including only the new exhibits admitted during Plaintiff's rebuttal case.

Once the parties file their respective lists, the Court will review them on the record and resolve any disputes. Depending on the Court's resolution of any disputes, the Court may request that the parties provide updated USB Key/Thumb Drive and hard copies of the exhibits.

In order to minimize the possibility of disruption due to technical issues, the parties shall work together to provide one binder containing all admitted exhibits, with tabs separating exhibits, to be sent back to the jury for deliberations. *See Exhibit 3.*

#### **e. Displaying Exhibits on the Video Monitors**

The Court expects the parties to have tested the courtroom technology prior to the start of trial, and will not allow for delays caused by technical issues. If the parties need instruction on the courtroom display technology equipment, please visit <https://www.ilnd.uscourts.gov/Pages.aspx?page=CourtRoomTechnology> and/or contact Alexander Zeier, the Courtroom Technology Administrator, to schedule a WebEx training session. Mr. Zeier can be reached at (312) 435-6045 or [alexander\\_zeier@ilnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:alexander_zeier@ilnd.uscourts.gov). When reaching out to Mr. Zeier, the parties should coordinate with each other to arrange for a time to come at the same time, and should also copy the Court's Courtroom Deputy, Jonathan Martinez, so he can be present to assist.

Please note that the courtroom's evidence-display technology has separate controls for the counsel-table video monitors, the witness' monitor, and the jurors' monitors. The judge will leave the counsel-table monitors set to display during the entire trial. When a party plans to show a witness an exhibit, in order to give the opposing party time to object to the witness seeing the proposed exhibit, the offering party should state something to the effect of, "Your Honor, I'd like to show Plaintiff's Exhibit 1 to the witness." If the opposing party objects to showing the witness the exhibit, that is the time to object. Otherwise, the offering party may display the exhibit to the witness via the offering party's laptop or the document camera.

To publish the exhibit to the jury, preface your request with something to the effect of, "Your Honor, may we publish Plaintiff's Exhibit 1 to the jury?" The Court will ask whether there is an objection, and then if publication is allowed, the Court will turn on the jury's video monitors. It goes without saying that an exhibit that has not been admitted into evidence cannot be published to the jury. When done with that exhibit, say something to the effect of, "Your Honor, we're done with that exhibit," and the Court will turn off the jury's video monitors (and that also will be a signal to your co-counsel or assistant if you have someone putting on and off an exhibit via a laptop).

As we get deeper into the trial, we might be able to avoid turning off the jury monitors at certain points. For example, if you're asking a witness about an exhibit or set of exhibits already admitted into evidence and already published, you may signal that you're going to move onto an exhibit that's already been published (e.g., "Your Honor, we're done with that exhibit, and I'd now like to show Plaintiff's Exhibit 1, which has already been published." The Court will ask whether there's any objection, and if not, the jury monitors will remain on into open court.

#### **f. Witness Examinations / Jury Addresses**

In order to respect the Court's and the jury's time, ***always*** have enough witnesses available so that we make use of the full trial day. The parties should not anticipate a recess between the direct examination and cross-examination of a witness. If the direct examination should end at about the time the court would recess anyway, e.g., lunch time, a recess will be taken. Otherwise, be prepared to commence cross-examination immediately upon conclusion of the direct.

All witness examinations must be conducted from the podium unless otherwise allowed by the Court. If counsel wishes to approach a witness, counsel must first ask the Court's permission to do so.

Jury addresses must take place at the podium as well: even if you speak loudly for us to hear you, the audio-recording system relies on the microphones to record what you say, and the recording is necessary for transcript preparation or to resolve a dispute over what a transcript says. Moreover, individuals seated in overflow rooms (if any) cannot hear what is said if attorneys do not speak directly into the microphones.

#### **g. Reading Deposition Testimony in Place of Live Testimony**

To the extent a witness is unavailable and the Court has allowed the use of deposition testimony instead of live testimony, or to the extent the parties have stipulated to the use of deposition testimony instead of live testimony, the party introducing that deposition testimony at trial should plan to have a person (whether a member of the trial team or another person) to sit on the stand and read aloud that witness' deposition answers.

#### **h. Objections**

When you object, you must speak directly into the **microphones** at counsel table so that the Court and the witness are on alert that an objection will be made. Before trial, counsel should instruct their witnesses not to answer a question when the opposing lawyer makes an objection and while an objection is pending. You must state a short, non-argumentative basis for the objection (e.g., relevance, hearsay), and



responses must be similarly short and non-argumentative. Ideally, there will be little or no need for a side-bar if objections and responses are succinct.

**i. Closing Argument**

The parties are permitted to use the Court's instructions in closing argument. The proper way to do so is to say, "Judge Valderrama will instruct you that. . . ." Time limits will be imposed on lawyers, and such time limits will be discussed prior to closing arguments. As stated in Section IV.d, the parties should propose time limits in the Pre-Trial Memorandum.

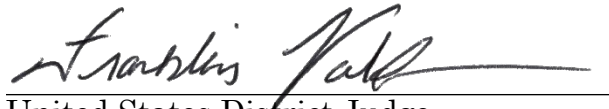
**j. Jury Deliberation**

Jurors will deliberate Monday through Friday approximately from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. unless otherwise stated for a specific reason. For security reasons, deliberation past 6:00 p.m. will only be permitted in rare circumstances.

**IX. Trial Briefs**

The Court does not require trial briefs in jury trials. Parties who wish to file a trial brief must seek leave of the Court to do so.

Dated: December 23, 2024

  
United States District Judge  
Franklin U. Valderrama

# Exhibit 1



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
219 SOUTH DEARBORN STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604**

CHAMBERS OF  
JUDGE FRANKLIN U. VALDERRAMA

312-435-5624

[Date]

Dear Prospective Juror:

Welcome to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. You are here to exercise one of the great privileges and responsibilities of American citizenship: jury service. Our system of justice depends on fair and impartial juries, and I thank you for your willingness to serve.

You have been summoned as potential jurors in the case of [Case Name and Description].

**DO NOT ATTEMPT TO LOOK UP INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CASE ON YOUR CELL PHONE OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.**

Jury selection will begin this morning with the completion of the attached questionnaire. All of these questions are intended to focus on your ability to be totally objective and completely free from prejudice about the issues, the witnesses, the parties, and their attorneys. Please review the questions carefully and respond to each of them truthfully and accurately. Please do your best to write legibly so that the lawyers and I can read your responses. When you come to the courtroom on [Day], we may ask you some additional questions as well.

Thank you again for your time and service today. We understand that jury duty can be inconvenient and burdensome, but it is one of the responsibilities of citizenship that all must shoulder. Our justice system depends on citizens like yourselves fulfilling that duty faithfully.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Franklin U. Valderrama", is written over a horizontal line.

United States District Judge  
Franklin U. Valderrama

# Exhibit 2

## **SAMPLE JUROR QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. What is your full name?
2. What is the name of the city, village, or town in which you live? (If you live in the City of Chicago, please tell us what part of the City.)
  - i. Do you rent or own your residence?
  - ii. If you have not lived at your current home for more than 5 years, please tell us where else you have lived in the past 5 years.
3. How far did you go in school and what degrees do you have, if any?
4. Please provide your employment information for the past 5 years:
  - i. name and nature of the business and employer;
  - ii. location of employer; and
  - iii. brief general description of your job duties.
5. Please provide your family information and their employment information:
  - i. if married, your partner's employment information for the past 5 years;
  - ii. if you have children, their ages and current employment information; and
  - iii. if any other adult lives in your household (e.g., any parent, brother, sister, partner, or anyone else), the same employment information about that person.
6. What are your major hobbies or interests, including what materials you like to read?
7. Where (if anywhere) do you get your news?
8. What television programs, if any, do you regularly watch?
9. Have you ever been party to a lawsuit?
  - i. Have you ever testified under oath?

- b. If the answer to either question is yes, please describe your experience(s).

- 10. Have you ever served on a jury?
  - i. If so, what sort of case was it?
  - ii. Did the jury deliberate to a verdict?
  - iii. Were you satisfied with the verdict?
  - iv. Were you the foreperson?
- 11. If you are selected as a juror in this case, can you commit to making your decision in this case based on the evidence presented and the instructions the Court will give you, even if you personally disagree with the law?
- 12. Is there any matter that we have not covered that should be brought to the attention of the Court because it would affect your ability to be a fair and impartial juror?

# Exhibit 3

# **JURY EVIDENCE RECORDING SYSTEM (JERS)**

## **1. Introduction to JERS**

JERS is a computer system that the jury will use to review exhibits on a wide-screen video monitor, rather than reviewing paper copies. The jury room has the JERS computer, a touchscreen monitor for the jury to pick an exhibit to display, and the wide-screen monitor. JERS can display what otherwise would have been on paper (including photos), and JERS also can play audio and video files.

With JERS, the jury can zoom-in on parts of an exhibit and search for text, and for audio and video, there's no need for a party to supply the jury with a laptop for deliberations. Thanks in advance for your patience as we continue to adapt JERS.

JERS is not directly used to present evidence in court during trial; right now, it's just used to display exhibits during deliberations. But JERS does indirectly affect your trial preparation because you must supply your exhibits to the Court in digital format, and you must name your exhibits using a specific convention. This in turn affects your preparation even for the pretrial conference, because Judge Valderrama requires that the parties exchange proposed exhibits before the pretrial conference (more on this below).

## **2. File types usable with JERS**

JERS accepts these common file types:

Documents and Photographs: .pdf, .jpg.

Video and Audio Recordings: .avi, .wmv, .mpg, .mp3, .wma, .wav

JERS **does not** accept .xls files. All spreadsheets need to be submitted as a .pdf file.

## **3. Exhibit-naming convention**

To use JERS, both sides must use the following exhibit-naming convention, which also will serve as the file name for the digital file: the exhibit number (3 digits), followed by an underscore, followed by a neutral description of the exhibit. The convention is thus:

<exhibit number>\_<exhibit description>.<file extension><sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>The file-type extension (e.g., .pdf, .wmv) is automatically added by your computer; it's included here for completeness.



Examples:

001\_Financial Statement 2009 Annual.pdf  
002\_Contract 2010 Renewal.pdf  
003\_Photo Front Door.jpg  
004\_Audio Dec 11 2013 Phone Call.mp3  
005\_Video Traffic Stop.wmv  
011\_Jan 1 2012 Email from John Doe to Jane Doe.pdf  
100\_Dec 31 2020 Damages Analysis Report.pdf

Use **consecutive numbers** to designate exhibits; do not use letters to distinguish exhibits. Also, do not use an “exhibit part,” such as 1A or 2A. Just use consecutive numbers (plus the neutral description). The neutral description cannot be more than 200 characters (hopefully, you’ll never come close to that limit).

You might reasonably wonder whether JERS will mix-up the parties’ exhibits because both sides are using numbers. We have tested this convention and it works because JERS itself adds a party prefix for each side (“Pla” (or “Gov” for government) and “Def”) when we import the files into JERS, party-by-party.

If there are **multiple parties** on a particular side, then you must coordinate with your co-counsel to generate a consecutively numbered set of exhibits. In the rare case of dual juries, we’ll discuss how to handle the JERS submission.

If you’re using litigation-display software that imprints a “**digital**” **exhibit sticker** on documentary exhibits, that’s fine, though you should confine the exhibit sticker to the party designation (e.g., Pla or Gov, and Def) and the exhibit number.

One last thing: a **physical object** of course will not be imported into JERS, but you should still assign a consecutively numbered exhibit designation to it, along with a neutral description. Then create a one-page .pdf with the exhibit number and neutral description on it, and submit those exhibits as part of the JERS USB Key/Thumb Drive. By creating this stand-in for physical objects, we accomplish two things: (1) we can print a comprehensive exhibit list before the trial for the Court and for the parties, which we all can use to track whether an exhibit is admitted into evidence (including physical objects); and (2) the jury’s exhibit list will be complete, and it will serve as a reminder of what physical objects were admitted into evidence.

#### **4. Trial exhibits before the trial’s start**

After the Pre-Trial Conference, **do not renumber** the exhibits, even if during the Pre-Trial Conference the Court deemed some of them inadmissible. This will

preserve consistency of exhibit numbering from the Pre-Trial Conference and throughout trial, and the record will be clearer.

## **5. Trial exhibits newly added during trial**

When an exhibit is admitted into evidence during trial and the exhibit was not previously supplied on the USB Key/Thumb Drive, not surprisingly the exhibit must follow the same exhibit-naming convention as described above. Counsel for the offering party must supply the exhibit in digital format as soon as possible (via a USB Key/Thumb Drive) to the Courtroom Deputy.

## **6. Close of Plaintiff's Case-in-Chief and Close of Evidence**

### *Close of Plaintiff's Case-in-Chief*

No later than one calendar day after the closing of Plaintiff's case-in-chief, after consulting with Defendant, Plaintiff must file on the docket its list of Plaintiff's exhibits which were admitted into evidence during trial. *See supra* Standing Order Section VIII.d. Generally, the Court will not allow demonstrative exhibits to go back to the jury for deliberations, unless all parties consent. *See Baugh ex rel. Baugh v. Cuprum S.A. de C.V.*, 730 F.3d 701, 705 (7th Cir. 2013) ("The general rule is that materials not admitted into evidence simply should not be sent to the jury for use in its deliberations.") (internal citation omitted). To the extent the parties agree that any such demonstratives may be used in jury deliberations, they should be included on the exhibit list(s).

To the extent, as a result of the parties' meet and confer, there are any disagreements about which exhibits were admitted into evidence or demonstratives that should go back with the jury (keeping in mind that the default is that demonstratives will not be used during deliberations), Plaintiff shall identify those exhibits in its filing, and the parties should be prepared to discuss those exhibits before the Court.

At the same time (no later than one calendar day after the close of Plaintiff's case-in-chief), Plaintiff must submit the following to the Courtroom Deputy the following:

### **a. USB Key/Thumb Drive**

One USB Key/Thumb Drive with no password protection containing each admitted exhibit in the format required by JERS. The exhibits must have OCR-text recognition run on them.

## **b. Hard Copy**

One binder containing one copy of each admitted exhibit. The binder must include the filed exhibits list as the first page, and must include tabs separating exhibits. The jury will **not be supplied with this binder** unless JERS experiences technical issues, rendering access to JERS impossible.

Physical-object exhibits that the Court allows the jury to examine during deliberations will be provided to the jury as usual, via the court security officer.

### *Close of Defense Case*

After Defendant rests and before closing arguments, after consulting with Plaintiff, Defendant must file on the docket its list of Defendant's exhibits which were admitted into evidence during trial, following the same instructions included above regarding Plaintiff's list. Defendant must also provide to the Courtroom Deputy a USB Key/Thumb Drive and Hard Copies, as described above.

### *Plaintiff's Rebuttal Case*

If Plaintiff puts on a rebuttal case, if new exhibits are admitted, after Plaintiff rests and before closing arguments, after consulting with Defendant, Plaintiff must file an updated exhibit list, including the exhibits admitted during Plaintiff's case-in-chief *and* the exhibits admitted during Plaintiff's rebuttal case, and distinguish which exhibits were admitted during the rebuttal case. Plaintiff must also provide to the Courtroom Deputy a USB Key/Thumb Drive and a binder of hard copies including only the new exhibits admitted during Plaintiff's rebuttal case.

Once the parties file their respective lists, the Court will review them on the record and resolve any disputes. Depending on the Court's resolution of any disputes, the Court may request that the parties provide updated USB Key/Thumb Drive and hard copies of the exhibits.

## **7. Use of JERS generally**

Based on the Court's own experience with JERS, it understands that the system is finnick and getting it to function correctly can sometimes lead to delays in jury deliberations. If such delays are occurring—or if the timing of the close of evidence is such that the Court's Courtroom Deputy does not have sufficient time to set up or test the JERS system—the Court will instead provide the jury with a wiped laptop with no internet connection from which they can access the admitted exhibits included on the updated USB Key/Thumb Drive provided by the parties. The Court will also give the jury the paper-copy backup of the admitted exhibits.

## **8. Jury's use of JERS**

If JERS is functioning correctly, then at the end of jury instructions, the Court will inform the jury that they will be using the JERS system. The jury will watch a video tutorial that explains how to use the system. Judge Valderrama will instruct the jury that, like any other question during deliberations, the jury must ask questions about JERS in writing (and like any other jury question, the Court will share it with counsel before responding). The JERS computer is not equipped to allow the jury to access the internet, or indeed any other program other than JERS.

If JERS fails during deliberations, the jury will ask for help in writing. The systems staff will not be permitted in the jury room without the Court's express permission, and only after the jury has been escorted out of the jury room. If the problem is not fixable in a short time, the Court will provide the jury with the paper-copy backup of the admitted exhibits, as well as with the wiped laptop referenced in paragraph 7, above.