

**JUDGE SARA L. ELLIS**

**FINAL PRETRIAL ORDERS – CIVIL BENCH TRIALS**

In all civil bench trials scheduled before Judge Ellis, the parties shall jointly prepare and submit a final pretrial order. In each case, the Court will set the date in advance of trial on which the parties must file the final pretrial order. The final pretrial order (including the Court’s two courtesy copies) must include the following items:

1. **Jurisdiction:**

A statement of the basis for the Court’s jurisdiction.

2. **Trial Attorneys:**

A list of the attorneys trying the case, including business addresses and telephone numbers.

3. **Case Statement:**

A concise agreed statement of the case, including:

- (a) the nature of the case;
- (b) the claims, counterclaims and cross-claims; and
- (c) the defenses raised to those claims.

4. **Witness Lists:**

Separate lists for plaintiff and defendant providing the names of witnesses, including expert witnesses, divided into the following three categories:

- (a) witnesses who will be called to testify at trial;
- (b) witnesses who may be called to testify at trial; and
- (c) witnesses whose testimony a party will present by deposition or other prior testimony (indicating whether the presentation will be by transcript or video).

For each witness, provide a very concise (2 or 3 sentences) description of the witness and 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.”

5. **Exhibit Lists:**

A list by each side of all exhibits the party will definitely use at trial (including demonstratives, summaries of other specially prepared exhibits), which includes the following:

- (a) the exhibit number for each document;
- (b) the date of the document;
- (c) a brief description of the document and a concise statement of the exhibit's relevance;
- (d) whether there is an objection to admission of the document and, if so, a concise statement of the basis for the objection (e.g., Rule 402—relevance; Rule 403—undue prejudice or confusion); and
- (e) a concise statement of the asserted basis of admissibility, if there is an objection.

At least one week before the pretrial conference, the parties must provide the court with two sets of exhibit binders containing copies of the objected-to representative exhibits. If the representative exhibits require more than a single binder, the parties must contact the Court's courtroom deputy to explain why additional binders are required. After the pretrial conference and rulings on exhibits, two binders of the final exhibits will be required.

Note: 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 earlier produced to the opposing side during discovery.

6. **Damage Itemization:**

An itemization of damages and other relief sought.

7. **Motions in Limine:**

Unless otherwise ordered, all motions *in limine* must be filed three weeks before the filing of the pretrial order. Responses are due one week before the filing of the pretrial order. No replies will be filed unless ordered by the Court. The parties are directed to meet and confer on all motions *in limine* before filing them.

Parties filing motions *in limine* should submit their initial motions and the supporting exhibits in one document for the Court. Responses to motions *in limine* should also be submitted in one document.

8. **Trial Briefs:**

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

9. **Proposed Findings and Conclusions:**

No later than the first day of trial, each party shall file its proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. Parties are asked to submit a hard copy and e-mail a Microsoft Word version to the Court's proposed orders e-mail address: Proposed\_Orders\_Ellis@ilnd.uscourts.gov.

10. **Evidence Projection Systems:**

The Court has a limited number of evidence projection systems, which may or may not be available. Parties who would like access to evidence projection systems are advised to make a request as early as possible (four weeks prior to trial is suggested) to Alexander Zeier, the Courtroom Technology Administrator. He may be reached at (312) 435-6045. Parties will be permitted to use their own evidence projection systems, upon reasonable terms, if a request is made in advance of trial.

11. **Final Pretrial Conference:**

The Court will determine whether a Final Pretrial Conference is warranted. A Final Pretrial Conference may be held approximately one to three weeks before trial. The purpose of this conference will be to avoid surprises and to simplify the trial. At the conference, the Court will address any pending motions *in limine*, objections to witnesses and exhibits, trial procedures, and scheduling matters. Lead trial counsel fully prepared and with authority to discuss all aspects of the case must attend.

Dated: December 2, 2015

ENTER:

SARA L. ELLIS  
United States District Judge