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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF CHATHAM COUNTY A-B.C.
EASTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA
DEP. CLK. SUPERIOR CT.
CHATHAM COUNTY, GA.

STANDING CRIMINAL PRETRIAL SCHEDULING ORDER

The Criminal Case Management process for cases indicted or accused in the Superior Court of Chatham County, Georgia and assigned to Judge Benjamin Karpf (position J1) is as follows:

Step 1. All cases in which there is no attorney of record will be assigned to Calendar Call.

The Defendant's presence is required at Calendar Call. At the Calendar Call, the Court will inquire if the Defendant requires counsel to be appointed. If the Defendant requests and qualifies for appointed counsel, the Court will appoint counsel, and the matter shall be assigned an arraignment date. If the Defendant requests to represent him/herself (and the Court approves), the matter shall be set for arraignment. If the Defendant announces that he/she intends to retain private counsel, the case will be placed on the next Calendar Call until such time as the Defendant has counsel and the case is then assigned an arraignment date. All cases in which there is an attorney of record at the time of filing in Superior Court will be immediately assigned an arraignment date.

Step 2. Cases will be set for arraignment within approximately 60 days after indictment, accusation, or the appearance of counsel, as applicable. Defendant and counsel shall attend the arraignment. At the arraignment, the Defendant shall announce Plea Track, Motion

Hearing required or Trial Track. In lieu of formal arraignment, the Defendant may file a written waiver of arraignment signed by counsel (except as noted below). Such written waiver must (1) be filed of record at least 30 days in advance of any scheduled arraignment hearing; and (2) elect Plea Track, Motion Hearing required or Trial Track. In the event the waiver is not timely filed, the Defendant and counsel shall appear for the arraignment calendar. For cases with charges that are considered serious violent felonies under O.C.G.A. § 17-10-6.1(a), the waiver of arraignment must be signed personally by the Defendant.

Step 3. All cases will be placed on a Trial Docket Call following arraignment. In order for a case to be set on a plea docket, counsel must request an in-person or video plea hearing and present **completed plea paperwork signed by the prosecutor and defense attorney** to the Criminal Case Manager at least ten (10) days in advance. Such signed paperwork shall be deemed a representation to the Court that the plea has been fully negotiated and accepted by both sides, with the defendant having accepted the plea following a conversation with his/her attorney. No case will be placed on a plea docket until such paperwork has been submitted. **Video plea hearings must be approved by the Court in advance.**

Step 4. If a motion is filed by the deadline set forth in Paragraph C, below, the case will be set down for a motion hearing. Following the motion hearing, the case will be placed on a Trial Docket Call.

Step 5 At the Trial Docket Call, the parties should be prepared to announce readiness for trial and discuss scheduling. At the Trial Docket Call, cases will be assigned trial dates. Defendants are not required to attend the Trial Docket Call. Defendants in pretrial detention will not be transported for the Trial Docket Call unless requested.

Step 6. There will be a Pretrial Hearing held prior to the week of trial. At the Pretrial Conference, the parties should be prepared to proceed with a fully negotiated plea or to argue any motions in limine or other outstanding matters for trial. At any setting for a negotiated plea, including a requested plea hearing or the pre-trial hearing, all plea paperwork must be signed and ready prior to the call of the docket. Any pleas not signed up and ready when called will not be heard and will be continued to the Trial Docket. To be clear, the Court will not recess during the Pretrial Hearing to allow parties to negotiate or sign paperwork.

Step 7. Any case on the Trial Docket may be called for trial at any point during the week-long trial period. Parties should subpoena their witness to be available for the entire trial period and the following week in the event the trial runs longer than one week. The Court will not accept negotiated pleas once a case reaches the Trial Docket. **The only resolution of those cases will be by trial or open-ended plea.**

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED as follows:


A. The Court's Standing Order Regarding Discovery In "J1" Criminal Cases is hereby incorporated into this Order by reference. Unless otherwise ordered below, the deadlines

for the production of Initial Discovery, Full Discovery and reciprocal discovery set forth in the Standing Order shall control. If the Defendant procures new counsel, it shall be the duty of the original attorney for the Defendant to provide all discovery received to the new attorney.

B. Both the State and the Defendant shall have the right to supplement discovery and shall do so at least ten days prior to the trial.

C. All special pleas, pleas-in-bar, demurrers and similar motions shall be filed no later than ten days after the date of arraignment (or, if arraignment is waived, ten (10) days after the date Full Discovery is due to the defendant). All other motions (including, but not limited to, motions to suppress, "*Daubert*" motions under O.C.G.A. § 24-7-702), except for motions in limine, shall be filed no later than 30 days after arraignment (or, if arraignment is waived, thirty (30) days after the date Full Discovery is due to the defendant), with responses to any such motions due within fifteen days after the filing of the original motion. Motions in limine shall be filed no later than one week prior to trial.

SO ORDERED, this 22 day of May, 2025.



Benjamin W. Karpf, Judge
Chatham County Superior Court
Eastern Judicial Circuit of Georgia