

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE  
Office of the Clerk

MAGISTRATE JUDGE DIANE K. VESCOVO  
PRETRIAL PROCEDURES

Prior to the pretrial conference, counsel must do the following:

Complete all discovery in accordance with the scheduling order deadline.

Confer prior to the pretrial conference to exchange information as to the ultimate issues of law and fact, to eliminate unnecessary or irrelevant issues that appear in the pleadings or discovery, to arrive at all possible stipulations, and to exchange documents and exhibits which will be offered in evidence at trial.

Prepare a single proposed Joint Pretrial Order. If counsel are unable to agree completely on a joint order with respect to proposed stipulations, contested issues of fact and/or contested issues of law, they shall submit a proposed joint pre-trial order including all matters agreed upon and *separate statements therein of the disputed items*. Plaintiff's attorney is responsible for initiating the proposed pretrial order in a timely fashion. At least twenty (20) days prior to the pretrial conference plaintiff's attorney shall prepare and serve on opposing counsel all portions of the pretrial order which counsel can complete without consultation with opposing counsel and plaintiff's suggested stipulations, contested issues of fact, and the contested issues of law. At least ten days before the pretrial conference, defense counsel shall prepare and serve on plaintiff's counsel the same portions of the pretrial order form listed above. Thereafter counsel for all parties shall confer in order to prepare a draft of a joint pretrial order. All counsel are responsible for ensuring the proposed joint pretrial order is timely filed. The proposed pretrial order shall contain the following:

(1) In the caption, a complete listing of all parties , both plaintiff and defendant, who remain in the case as of the date the joint pretrial document is filed. Do not use "et al."

In the event any corporate party is legally related to any other entity, the other entity or entities shall be identified.

(2) The name, address and telephone number of all counsel for each party; a copy of the interested firms' letterheads shall

be attached.

(3) A statement of any remaining jurisdictional questions and the proper rulings thereon;

(4) A list of pending motions and the proper rulings thereon;

(5) A concise summary of the case that may be read to the venire at the beginning of voir dire;

(6) The respective contentions of the parties, including contentions with regard to the nature of the claim, the asserted liability and the nature and amount of damages.

(7) A comprehensive written statement of uncontested facts that may be stipulated and read to the jury (possible sources of these agreed facts are the pleadings, discovery, or admissions);

(8) Contested issues of fact;

A written statement of contested issues of fact that will explain the nature of the parties dispute;

(9) Contested issues of law;

A written statement of the contested issues of law. This is not to be a restatement of the disputed facts but an itemization of the legal issues such as negligence, contributory negligence, etc. This is the most important part of the joint pretrial order as these issues, not the pleadings, will govern the trial. The court wants an agreed list, not a separate list for each party. If either party insists on a triable issue, it is to be listed in the pretrial order and will be a triable issue unless the court decides otherwise at the pretrial conference.

(10) A list of all exhibits (except documents for impeachment only) to be offered in evidence by the parties, and to the extent possible, a stipulation on their admissibility. If the parties cannot stipulate, then the objections must be noted in the proposed pretrial order. To the extent possible, objections will be ruled on at the pretrial conference.

Each exhibit shall have been premarked for identification and made available to all counsel for inspection and copying prior to the submission of the proposed pretrial order. Exhibits will not be required to be introduced at trial in the

order of their identification numbers.

(11) A list of witnesses for the parties, indicating those who will be called, in the absence of reasonable notice to opposing counsel to the contrary, and those who only may be called. The listing shall include the name, address and telephone number of the witness and whether the witness will testify at to liability, damage or both issues. Any objection to a witness in general must be noted in the proposed joint pretrial order. If any Rule 702 ("expert") witnesses, including treating physicians who will give expert testimony, are listed, the witness shall be identified as such, along with the subject matter of the expert testimony. Opposing counsel shall specify any objection to the witness's expertise or testimony in the proposed joint pretrial order. To the extent possible, objections will be ruled on at the pretrial conference.

(12) Deposition testimony:

If a party desires to offer deposition testimony into evidence *at the trial*, he shall designate only those relevant portions of same which he wishes read at trial and advise opposing counsel of same. All objections to any such testimony must be noted in the proposed joint pretrial document so that the court may rule on such objection prior to trial. To the extent possible, objections will be ruled on at the pretrial conference.

(13) An estimate of the length of trial.

(14) A statement indicating whether the case is a jury trial or non-jury trial. If it is a jury case, counsel shall file with the court and serve on other counsel, not later than two business days prior to the beginning of trial, copies of all proposed jury instructions (one point per page), any special questions for voir dire examination of the jury venire, and any special interrogatories or verdict forms that counsel wish to submit to the jury. The court will conduct a general voir dire and either ask the proposed special questions of counsel at that time or allow counsel to conduct limited voir dire. All proposed jury instructions, special voir dire questions, special interrogatories, and verdict forms should be emailed to [ECF Judge Vescovo@tnwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:ECF_Judge_Vescovo@tnwd.uscourts.gov) in WordPerfect or Word format.

If the case is non-jury, the parties should submit proposed findings of fact and proposed conclusions of law *in place of the proposed jury instructions* to the ECF mailbox listed above.

(15) The amount of the ascertainable damages. The listing of the amount of damages shall not constitute an agreement as to the recoverability of same unless so stated.

(16) A list of any special equipment such as video cassette recorders, overhead projectors, easels, computers, etc. that the parties intend to bring for use at the trial. (The court provides a presentation system including VGA monitors, an evidence camera, a video cassette recorder, and a video distribution systems for these components. The court does not provide personal computers or laptops to counsel; however, at the court's discretion, counsel may access the video distribution system with their own laptops to disseminate computer generated evidence.)

Any motions in limine, not covered by the objections, must be filed **at least** two weeks before the trial date. The opposing party must file a response within five days of date of service of the motion in limine.

The attorneys who will try the case are required to attend the pretrial conference. The parties are not required to attend the conference. The attorneys will be generally familiar with pretrial procedures and come to the conference with full authority to accomplish the purpose of the conference, which is to simplify and define the triable issues, expedite the trial, and save expense. At the time of the conference, counsel will report to the court the prospects of settlement. *For a discussion of pretrial conferences, see 23 Federal Rules Decisions 129-138.*

If an attorney fails to appear at the pretrial conference or to comply with the directions set forth herein, an *ex parte* hearing may be held and judgment of dismissal or default or other appropriate sanctions entered.

After the pretrial conference, the court will enter a Pretrial Order which shall govern the conduct at trial and will constitute the final statement of the issues involved.

Please take note of the requirements of Local Rule 7.3 of this court. All parties are required to submit to the court pretrial memoranda at least 10 days prior to the date of the trial. In a non-jury case, the pretrial memoranda must include proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law.

The procedures set forth in these instructions apply to *pro se* litigants as well as attorneys.