

LOCAL COURT RULES FOR THE JEFFERSON CIRCUIT & SUPERIOR COURTS INDIANA

**BLAINE S. GOODE, JUDGE
JEFFERSON SUPERIOR COURT**

**DONALD J. MOTE, JUDGE
JEFFERSON CIRCUIT COURT**

Effective January 1, 2026

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LR39-AR00-1

Conduct, Dress and Courthouse Policies

A. Professional Conduct. It is intended that the business of the Courts of Jefferson County will be conducted by the Judges in an atmosphere that is safe and secure, with a decorum that is appropriate to the fair and just resolution of the legal conflicts the Court is called upon to decide.

B. Behavior in the Courthouse. While in the courthouse within Jefferson County, the following behavior is required:

- (1) All persons within the courthouse shall refrain from loud, vulgar, disruptive, or abusive behavior;
- (2) Lawyers, litigants, and spectators shall refrain from unnecessary conversation in the courtroom that would disturb the proceedings. Any necessary conversation in the courthouse or in the courtroom shall be conducted at a sufficiently low voice level as not to interfere with the conduct of trials, hearings, or other proceedings before the court;
- (3) Litigants and spectators shall not enter the courtroom with food or beverages without prior approval of the Court;
- (4) Lawyers, litigants, or any other person within the courthouse shall not smoke or chew tobacco while in the courthouse. Chewing gum is not permitted in the courtrooms.

C. Appearance and Dress. Every person who enters a courtroom in Jefferson County should be appropriately dressed. Lawyers should appear for court proceedings in professional attire. Litigants, witnesses, and spectators to court proceedings should appear in appropriate attire.

D. Prohibited Items. To ensure compliance with state law and to promote public safety, the following rules apply to the presence or use of specific items in and around the courthouse within Jefferson County:

(1) **Weapons.** No person may possess firearms, knives, or other deadly weapons while in or around the courthouse within Jefferson County without the prior written authorization of the Judges of the Circuit or Superior Courts. However, a law enforcement officer who is not a litigant in a pending matter and who is appearing as a witness or for other official purposes, may retain possession of his or her issued firearm while in the courthouse, so long as he or she advises and receives the permission of courthouse security staff upon entering the courthouse.

(2) Cameras, Telephones, and Other Items.

To further compliance with Rule 2.17 of the Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct, the possession of any device capable of broadcasting, recording or capturing audio, video or still images is hereby prohibited in the Jefferson Circuit Court, the Jefferson Superior Court, the offices of each court and the areas immediately adjacent thereto, which encompasses the entirety of the second and third floors of the Jefferson County Courthouse. Examples of the types of devices prohibited

under this rule include, but are not limited to, cameras of any type, smart devices, such as phones, tablets, watches, and digital devices capable of broadcasting, recording or capturing audio, video or still images. This list is provided for example only and is not an exhaustive list of prohibited devices.

This prohibition does not apply to:

- (i) Employees of the Jefferson Circuit Court, Jefferson Superior Court or the office of the Clerk of Courts.
- (ii) Attorneys who are present at court for official business and who present a current Certificate of Good Standing card issued by the Indiana Supreme Court or an equivalent credential from another state.
- (iii) Other government employees who are present at court for official business and who present official identification or credentials to courthouse security at the time of entry into the courthouse.
- (iv) Social service providers, including volunteers, who present official identification or credentials to courthouse security at the time of entry into the courthouse.
- (v) Law enforcement, corrections, and security officers who are present at court for official business.
- (vi) Members of the press, with prior authorization from the sitting judge, in a manner consistent with Rule 2.17 of the Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct.

E. Enforcement. The Sheriff of Jefferson County (hereinafter “Sheriff”) and his appointed deputies are authorized to monitor and enforce compliance with these Rules. Any person violating the rules regarding weapons, cameras, cellular telephones, or other electronic devices may be subject to applicable criminal or civil penalties.

F. Consent to Search. All persons entering the courthouse within Jefferson County, except those previously exempted by the Judges thereof, are required to pass through a magnetometer/x-ray screening point and to comply with all reasonable requests of courthouse security personnel. The Sheriff, law enforcement officers, or court security personnel may detain any person who they have reason to believe possesses any weapon or other prohibited item in violation of this Rule for a period of time sufficient to obtain name, address, date of birth, social security number, and/or to seize any weapon or other prohibited item and to take any other action authorized by law.

LR39-AR-21

Assignment & Reassignment of Criminal Cases

- A. Except as herein set forth, all misdemeanor cases shall be filed in the Jefferson Superior Court.
- B. Any Title 35 offenses where the defendant is under the age of eighteen shall be filed in the Jefferson Circuit Court. All Level 5 and Level 6 felony non-support cases shall be filed in the Jefferson Circuit Court.
- C. All other Level 6 and Level 5 felonies shall be filed in the Jefferson Superior Court.
- D. All murder and Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 felony cases shall be filed in the Jefferson Circuit Court.
- E. Any criminal charge based upon the issuance of a protective order issued by either Court shall be filed in the Court that issued the protective order. Any criminal case against a person who has a pending petition to revoke probation case in either Court shall be filed in the Court where the probation revocation is pending, except murder and Level 1 felony charges which shall be filed in the Jefferson Circuit Court, or where such transfer would create a conflict of interest for the intended receiving judge.
- F. Any cases which may be joined by statutes shall be treated as one case for purposes of determining which Court shall be selected. The highest charge filed shall determine selection.
- G. The judges of the two courts shall retain authority to reassign cases between the courts whenever the work load of each Court, or convenience in handling the case, makes such a reassignment judicially desirable. When a disqualification or recusal of a sitting judge has occurred pursuant to Code of Judicial Conduct 2.11(A)(1) and a successor judge cannot be assigned in the same manner as the initial judge, Senior Judge Carl Taul shall be assigned to preside over those cases for purposes of the effective use of judicial resources. Should Senior Judge Taul decline appointment, be otherwise unable to serve or if a party has lodged a written objection, another Senior Judge who has elected to serve Jefferson County shall be appointed.
- H. When a change of Judge has been granted pursuant to Administrative Rule 21(A) and a successor judge cannot be assigned in the same manner as the initial judge, the Clerk shall assign a full-time judicial officer or a senior judge including but not limited to:
 - 1. Judge of the Scott Circuit Court
 - 2. Judge of the Scott Superior Court
 - 3. Magistrate of the Scott Circuit & Superior Courts
 - 4. Judge of the Switzerland Circuit Court
 - 5. Judge of the Jennings Circuit Court
 - 6. Judge of the Jennings Superior Court
 - 7. Magistrate of the Jennings Circuit & Superior Courts
 - 8. Judge of the Ripley Circuit Court
 - 9. Judge of the Ripley Superior Court

10. Judge of the Clark Circuit Court 1
11. Judge of the Clark Circuit Court 2
12. Magistrate of the Clark Circuit Court 2 and Superior Court 6
13. Judge of the Clark Circuit Court 3
14. Magistrate of the Clark Circuit Court 3
15. Judge of the Clark Circuit Court 4
16. Magistrate of the Clark Circuit Court 4
17. Judge of the Clark Superior Court 5
18. Magistrate of the Clark Superior Court 5
19. Judge of the Clark Superior Court 6
20. Judge of the Dearborn/Ohio Circuit Court
21. Magistrate of the Dearborn/Ohio Circuit Court
22. Judge of the Dearborn Superior Court 1
23. Judge of the Dearborn Superior Court 2
24. Any Senior Judge who has elected to serve in Jefferson County

RETENTION OF EVIDENCE

Retention Periods for Evidence Introduced in All Non-criminal Proceedings.

All models, diagrams, documents, or material admitted in evidence or pertaining to the case placed in the custody of the court reporter as exhibits shall be taken away by the parties offering them in evidence, except as otherwise ordered by the court, four (4) months after the case is decided unless an appeal is taken. If an appeal is taken, all such exhibits shall be retained by the court reporter for two (2) years from termination of the appeal, retrial, or subsequent appeal and termination, whichever is later.

The court reporter shall retain the mechanical or electronic records or tapes, shorthand or stenographic notes as provided in Administrative Rule 7.

Retention Periods for Evidence Introduced in Criminal Misdemeanor, Level 6 Felonies, and Attempts.

All models, diagrams, documents, or material admitted in evidence or pertaining to the case placed in the custody of the court reporter as exhibits shall be taken away by the parties offering them in evidence except as otherwise ordered by the court, three (3) years after the case is dismissed, the defendant found not guilty, or the defendant is sentenced, unless an appeal is taken. If an appeal is taken, all such exhibits shall be retained by the court reporter for three (3) years from termination of the appeal, retrial, or subsequent appeal and termination, whichever is later, unless an action challenging the conviction or sentence, or post-conviction action, is pending.

The court reporter shall retain the mechanical or electronic records or tapes, shorthand or stenographic notes as provided in Administrative Rule 7.

Retention Periods for Evidence Introduced in Level 1-5 Felonies and Attempts.

All models, diagrams, documents, or material admitted in evidence or pertaining to the case placed in the custody of the court reporter as exhibits shall be taken away by the parties offering them in evidence, except as otherwise ordered by the court, twenty (20) years after the case is dismissed, the defendant found not guilty, or the defendant is sentenced, unless an appeal is taken. If an appeal is taken, all such exhibits shall be retained by the court reporter for twenty (20) years from termination of the appeal, retrial, or subsequent appeal and termination, whichever is later, unless an action challenging the conviction or sentence, or post-conviction action, is pending.

The court reporter shall retain the mechanical or electronic records or tapes, shorthand or stenographic notes as provided in Administrative Rule 7.

Retention Periods for Evidence Introduced in Murder, Life without Parole, and Death Penalty Cases.

All models, diagrams, documents, or material admitted in evidence or pertaining to the case placed in the custody of the court reporter should be retained for the lifetime of the defendant in cases where the defendant is found guilty. All models, diagrams, documents or material admitted in evidence or pertaining to the case placed in the custody of the court reporter as exhibits shall be taken away by the parties offering them in evidence, except as otherwise ordered by the court. twenty (20) years after the case is dismissed or the defendant found not guilty, unless an appeal is taken. If an appeal is taken, all such exhibits shall be retained by the court reporter for twenty (20) years from termination of the appeal, retrial, or subsequent appeal and termination, whichever is later, unless an action challenging the conviction or sentence, or post-conviction action, is pending.

The court reporter shall retain the mechanical or electronic records or tapes, shorthand or stenographic notes as provided in Administrative Rule 7.

Non-documentary and Oversized Exhibits

Non-documentary and oversized exhibits shall not be sent to the appellate level courts but shall remain in the custody of the trial court or trial court administrative agency during the appeal. Such exhibits shall be briefly identified in the transcript where they were admitted into evidence. Photographs of any exhibit may be included in the volume of documentary exhibits.

Under no circumstances should guns, drugs, currency, or other dangerous or valuable items be included in appellate records.

Biologically Contaminated Evidence

A party who offers biologically contaminated evidence must file a pretrial notice with the trial court and serve all the parties so that the court may consider the issue and rule appropriately before trial. A party may show contaminated evidence or pass photographs of it to jurors, but no such evidence, however contained, shall be handled or passed to jurors or sent to the jury room.

Notification and Disposition

In all cases, the court shall provide actual notice, by mail (including e-mail), to all attorneys of record and to parties only if unrepresented by counsel, that the evidence will be destroyed by a date certain if not retrieved before that date. Counsel and parties have the duty to keep the court informed of their current addresses and notice to the last current address shall be sufficient. Court reporters should maintain a log of retained evidence and scheduled disposition

date, and evidence should be held in a secure area. At the time of removal, a detailed receipt shall be given to the court reporter by the party receiving and removing the evidence. The receipt will be made part of the court file.

In all cases, evidence which is not taken back after notice should be disposed of by the sheriff on the court's order. The sheriff should be ordered to destroy evidence if its possession is illegal or if it has negligible value. Evidence of some value should be auctioned by the sheriff with proceeds going to the county general fund.

LR39-TR-79-TR-3
Special Judge Assignment in Civil Cases

Whenever a special judge is not agreed upon by the parties within seven (7) days of the notation of an order granting a change of judge or an order of disqualification on the chronological case summary, as set out in Rule 79(D) of the Indiana Rules of Trial Procedure, and is to be selected pursuant to Trial Rule 79(H), the following method shall be used:

- A. The Jefferson County Clerk shall select a Special Judge by making a random selection from the following list, excluding the then presiding judge of the Court and the judge before whom the cases then pending:
 - 1. Judge of the Jefferson Circuit Court
 - 2. Judge of the Jefferson Superior Court
 - 3. Judge of the Dearborn and Ohio Circuit Courts
 - 4. Judge of the Dearborn Superior Court – No. 1
 - 5. Judge of the Dearborn Superior Court – No. 2
 - 6. Magistrate of the Dearborn Circuit Court
 - 7. Judge of the Switzerland Circuit Court
 - 8. Judge of the Ripley Circuit Court
 - 9. Judge of the Ripley Superior Court
 - 10. Any Senior Judge who has elected to serve in Jefferson County

- B. In the event no judge listed above is eligible to serve as a special judge or the particular circumstances of a case warrant selection of a special judge by the Indiana Supreme Court, that situation shall be certified to the Indiana Supreme Court for selection of a special judge.

LR39-DR-00-DR-5
Parenting Seminar Requirement

In any dissolution, paternity, or separation proceeding involving children under the age of eighteen, where custody or visitation is at issue, both parties shall attend and complete a four hour co-parenting seminar through The Center for Divorce Education at divorce.education.com. In any post-dissolution proceeding where custody is an issue, both parents shall attend and complete the seminar unless a parent has attended the seminar within the past two years. The parties are responsible for the payment of all fees required for attendance.

Failure to attend and complete the seminar may constitute cause for the denial of the granting of the dissolution or the custodial or visitation relief requested. Action may also be continued until attendance is accomplished. A party, with leave of Court, may attend a similar seminar or program. A party, with leave of Court, upon motion and for cause shown, may be excused from attending such seminar. The Court may, in its discretion, require parties to also attend an eight hour High Conflict Solutions Parenting Class instead of or in addition to the four hour required course.

At the time of the filing of the dissolution, paternity, or separation proceeding or a post-dissolution proceeding where custody is an issue, the moving party shall serve a notice upon the opposing party of this requirement.

**LR39-TR00-FL-1
CHILD SUPPORT
USE OF CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES**

- A. **CONTESTED HEARINGS** – In all hearings involving child support, each party shall submit to the court a Child Support Guideline Worksheet and Parenting Time Credit Worksheet in the form set forth in the Indiana Child Support Rules and Guidelines or as generated on the Indiana Child Support Calculator found on www.in.gov.
- B. **SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS** – In all settlement agreements in which child support is established, a Child Support Guideline Worksheet and a Parenting Time Credit Worksheet signed by both parties shall be attached as an exhibit.
- C. **DEVIATION FROM GUIDELINES** – If an agreement of the parties or a proposed court order regarding child requests the entry of an order for an amount that differs from the amount recommend by the Child Support Guidelines and shown on the Child Support Obligation Worksheet(s) submitted by the parties, an adequate explanation for such deviation must be set forth in the agreement or proposed order. If the explanation set forth in the agreement or proposed order is not sufficient to allow for deviation and Court approval, then the agreement or proposed order will be set for hearing as to the requested deviation only.

LR39-TR3.1-1

APPEARANCE WHEN NOT REPRESENTED BY ATTORNEY

- A. **PARTY FILING THE ACTION** - When an action is commenced by a party who is not represented by an attorney, the party shall file with the clerk of the court a completed appearance from setting forth that information required by Rule 3.1 of the Indiana Rules of Trial Procedure. Appearance Forms setting forth the information required by Rule 3.1 may be obtained from the clerk of courts or at www.indianalegalhelp.org.
- B. **PARTY AGAINST WHOM THE ACTION IS FILED** - When a responding party not represented by an attorney first appears in a case, the responding party shall file with the clerk of the court a completed appearance from setting forth that information required by Rule 3.1 of the Indiana Rules of Trial Procedure. Appearance Forms setting forth the information required by Rule 3.1 may be obtained from the clerk of courts or at www.indianalegalhelp.org.
- C. **CHANGES AND CORRECTIONS** – All parties shall promptly advise the clerk of the court in writing of any change or correction in the information previously supplied to the court on the completed appearance form. Written changes in information shall be supplied by the filing of an updated/corrected appearance from (available at www.indianalegalhelp.org) setting forth that information required by Rule 3.1 of the Indiana Rules of Trial Procedure or on any alternative form provided by the clerk of the court.
- D. **REQUIREMENT TO UPDATE** – A party’s obligation to update information required by the appearance form continues until:
 - a. All minor children have reached the age of nineteen in JP (juvenile paternity) DC (dissolution of marriage with children) and RS (reciprocal support) cases.
 - b. Until an order terminating guardianship has been entered in GU (unsupervised guardianship) and GS (supervised guardianship) cases.
- E. **THE EFFECT OF FAILURE TO KEEP APPEARANCE INFORMATION CURRENT** – Information supplied on an appearance form determines where Notices, Orders and other pleadings filled within a case are served. A party’s failure to keep the information required by Rule 3.1 of the Indiana Rules of Trial Procedure current within a case may result in the setting of a hearing, receipt of evidence or issuance of an order without the knowledge or participation of parties who have failed to keep their information current.

LR39-AR-15-AD-6
Court Reporter Services

1. Court Reporters shall be paid an annual salary for time spent working under the control, direction and direct supervision of the court during any regular hours, gap hours or overtime hours.
2. Court Reporters shall do all transcripts on their own time and using their own equipment.
3. Court Reporters may charge \$5.00 per page for indigent and non-indigent appellate and non-appellate transcripts, including table of contents pages and the volume cover pages. Court Reporters may charge \$5.00 per page for other transcripts and \$2.50 per page for copies of transcripts and exhibit volume. If the Court Reporter is requested to prepare an expedited transcript, the maximum per page fee shall be \$8.00 per page where the transcript must be prepared within 24 hours or less and \$6.50 Per page where the transcript us be prepared within 3 working days. A minimum fee of \$50.00 may be charged for transcripts of ten pages or less. An hourly rate of \$22.00 per hour may be charged for assembling the transcript and exhibit volumes.
4. Court Reporters shall submit directly to the county claims for indigent transcripts.
5. Court Reporters on a form prescribed by the state, shall on an annual basis report income for transcripts to the Indiana Supreme Court Office of Judicial Administration (IOJA), on forms prescribed by IOJA, all transcript fees (either county indigent, state indigent, or private) received by the court reporter.
6. If a court reporter elects to engage in private practice through recording of a deposition and/or preparing of a deposition transcript, said private practice shall be conducted outside of regular working hours and the court shall enter into a written agreement with the court reporter which outlines the manner in which the court reporter is to be compensated for gap and overtime hours; i.e. either monetary compensation or compensatory time off regular work hours. If the court reporter desires to utilize the court's equipment, work space and supplies, and the court agrees to the use of court equipment for such purpose, the court and the court reporter shall enter into a written agreement which must, at a minimum, designate the following:
 - (1) the reasonable market rate for the use of equipment, work space and supplies;
 - (2) the method by which records are to be kept for the use of equipment, work space and supplies;
 - (3) the method by which the court reporter is to reimburse the court for the use of the equipment, work space and supplies.
7. The Court can also contract transcript preparation to non-employees at the prices heretofore stated.

LR39-AR-1-AD-7
Caseload Allocation

Pursuant to AR1, the Courts of Jefferson County, Indiana, adopt the following local rules as to caseload allocation:

1. All Child in Need of Services (CHINS), juvenile, mental health, probate, paternity and cases for which the Prosecuting Attorney's IV-D office has entered an appearance shall be filed in Circuit Court.
2. Any DR, DC, or RS case, in which the Prosecuting Attorney's IV-D office enters an appearance subsequent to the initial filing, shall be transferred to the Jefferson Circuit Court upon the entry of appearance by the Prosecuting Attorney's IV-D office.
3. Any DC, DN or PO case initiated as an original action after December 31, 2025, shall be filed in Circuit Court.
4. Any CC, CT, MF or MI case initiated as an original action after December 31, 2025, shall be filed in Superior Court.
5. All small claims cases and evictions where the damages alleged are less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) shall be filed in the Jefferson Superior Court.
6. All criminal cases shall be filed pursuant to LR39-AR-21.
7. All other cases may be filed in either Court.
8. The Judges of the Circuit and Superior Courts retain authority to reassign individual cases between the courts whenever the workload of each court or convenience in the handling of the case makes such a reassignment judicially desirable.

LR39-CR-2-8

Jefferson County Problem-Solving Court

1. A “Problem-Solving Court” is established to provide specialized services, including: clinical assessment, education, referral for treatment, and service coordination in case management for eligible defendants as determined by its written policy and procedures.
2. The day-to-day operation and management of the Problem-Solving Court shall be assigned to the Jefferson Superior Court.
3. All criminal charges shall be filed as otherwise provided in this rule. However, after a charge has been filed, a judge may refer the defendant to Problem-Solving Court, and if accepted by the Problem-Solving Court Team, transfer the defendant’s case to the Problem-Solving Court for services in accordance with the Problem-Solving Court Policy and Procedures Manual.

LR39-CR-2-9

Jefferson County Problem-Solving Court Fees

Pursuant to Ind. Code §33-23-16-23, participants in the Jefferson County Problem-Solving Court Program shall pay program fee of \$50 per month, as well as any additional costs associated with the recommended treatment. The clerk of the court shall collect and transmit the program fee within thirty (30) days after the fees are collected, for deposit by the auditor or fiscal officer in the appropriate user fee fund established for that purpose.

LR39-AR-00-10

District 22 Southeastern Indiana Veterans Treatment Court

The Dearborn Superior Court No. 1 Veterans Treatment Court, hereinafter named the Southeastern Indiana Veterans Treatment Court, shall be available for all other courts in District 22 to refer cases to. If any referring district court identifies a potential United States Veteran with a pending felony or misdemeanor criminal charge, and the referring judge, prosecuting attorney, and defense attorney agree to the referral for potential placement in Veterans Court, then the referring judge, prosecuting attorney, or defense attorney shall contact the Veterans Court Coordinator to arrange assessments to determine eligibility and appropriateness.

If a participant is accepted into the Veterans Treatment Court, the referring court shall maintain jurisdiction of the case, and hold a guilty plea and potential sentencing hearing. All court costs, fines, restitution, and probation fees shall be collected and received by the referring court. If a participant is accepted into the Southeastern Indiana Veterans Treatment Court, the Judge of the Dearborn Superior Court No. 1 shall oversee all the participant's Veterans Treatment Court proceedings, hearings, incentives, sanctions, potential termination hearing and potential graduation hearing.

The Judge of the Dearborn Superior Court No. 1 shall have authority to issue arrest warrants when necessary for a sanction or termination. Sanctions involving incarceration shall be served inside the Dearborn County Law Enforcement Center. The schedule of fees set forth under Indiana Code 33-23-16-23 shall be applicable in the Southeastern Indiana Veterans Treatment Court and procedures of assessment and collection of fees pursuant to Problem Solving Court Rules Section 16 shall be followed and received by the Southeastern Indiana Veterans Treatment Court.

All guilty plea and sentencing hearings shall be held in the courtroom of the referring court. All other Veterans Treatment Court hearings shall be held in the Dearborn Superior Court No. 1 courtroom. If a participant is terminated from Veterans Treatment Court, then the referring court shall maintain jurisdiction over the case and shall be responsible for sentencing. If the participant graduates from Veterans Treatment Court, then the referring court shall ensure that any appropriate dismissal of charges or imposition of the appropriate plea agreement terms of the sentence are imposed.

LR39-JR-4-JR-5

Jury Pool Selection Summoning Procedures

In accordance with Jury Rule 4, the Jefferson Circuit and Superior Courts will use a two- tier procedure for summoning jurors and obtaining juror qualification forms as set forth in Jury Rule 4(b).