

Superior Court of the State of Washington for Snohomish County

JUDGES

ANITA L. FARRIS
BRUCE I. WEISS
GEORGE F.B. APPEL
JOSEPH P. WILSON
RICHARD T. OKRENT
JANICE E. ELLIS
MARYBETH DINGLEDY
MILLIE M. JUDGE
CINDY A. LARSEN
JENNIFER R. LANGBEHN
PAUL W. THOMPSON
ANNA G. ALEXANDER
EDIRIN O. OKOLOKO
CASSANDRA LOPEZ-SHAW

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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PRESIDING JUDGE BRUCE I. WEISS

COURT COMMISSIONERS

TRACY G. WAGGONER
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SUSAN E. HARNESS
PATRICIA J. NELSON
LISA M. MICHELI

SUPERIOR COURT ADMINISTRATOR ANDREW G. SOMERS

Re: Judge Pro Tems for Civil Trials

Date: June 22, 2021

The following is general information related to judge pro tems for civil trials. A more complete process will be created and disseminated at later date. Snohomish County Superior Court is in the process of creating a judge pro tem list for civil trials. Due to covid and the substantial criminal case backlog it is anticipated a significant portion of judicial resources will be used for criminal jury trials. To allow civil trials to proceed a civil judge pro tem list and assignment process is being created.

Here is some of the procedure likely to be adopted:

1. On the date assigned for trial if there are no judges available to hear the matter the parties may agree on a pro tem judge;
2. There will be a maximum number of two (2) pro tem trials proceeding at a time;
3. The parties can contact and agree on any pro tem from the court approved pro tem list;
4. Use of a pro tem not on the court list will not be approved;
5. While the trial need not start on the exact day set for trial it must be able to start the week it is scheduled for trial;
6. While the pro tem judge does not need to be approved, any use of a pro tem judge must be approved by the Presiding Judge;
7. These trials will likely be digitally recorded, and a court reporter will not be available;
8. Based on issues regarding courtroom and/or staff availability even though the parties may have agreed on a pro tem and the pro tem is available the request for use of a pro tem judge may be denied.
9. It is quite possible no courtrooms will be available to try these cases so parties using a pro tem will have to agree that the matter can be live-streamed on YouTube to comply with the open courts requirement.

This proposal is very preliminary, and the details of which are still being negotiated. This notification is intended to alert the legal community of the court's intentions to address its backlog. Firm information, instructions and opportunities for questions will be provided shortly.