



BARBARA W. BRONIS
CIRCUIT JUDGE

THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA

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Procedures for Jury Trials in Cases Assigned to Judge Bronis
St. Lucie County Courthouse - Courtroom 3-D
Ellen Raynak, Judicial Assistant raynake@circuit19.org
Effective Date: May 7, 2019

Jury Trial Procedures

Jury Selection Process: After voir dire, the court will first ask each side for any cause challenges. Upon completion of challenges for cause, the court will move to peremptory challenges. The court will start with the first juror and move sequentially as they are seated in the venire, alternating between counsel, until a panel is chosen. Back striking during jury selection is permitted. The number of alternate jurors will be determined based on the type and length of the trial. Each party will have one additional peremptory challenge in the selection of each alternate juror.

Opening and Closing Statements: Only demonstrative aids or exhibits marked by the clerk, agreed to by all counsel, or approved by the court may be used in opening or closing statements.

Exhibits: All exhibits are to be marked for identification by the clerk prior to the start of trial. Exhibits which will be stipulated into evidence may be marked in evidence. Once exhibits are marked, either for identification or in evidence, they become the property of the clerk of court and may not be altered or removed from the courtroom without order of the court. No exhibits are to be published or exhibited to the jury until admitted into evidence and authorized by the court.

Demonstrative Aids: Any demonstrative aide that is to be used at trial must be marked by the clerk and exhibited to opposing counsel and the court prior to the start of trial. The court will hear argument of any counsel opposing the use of the

demonstrative aids prior to the start of trial. No aids are to be shown to the jury without prior approval of the court.

Experts: The court will not accept or qualify a witness as an expert in front of the jury. Challenges to an expert's qualifications will be handled outside the presence of the jury. Experts are to be cautioned, by the attorney who calls the expert, of "in limine" rulings, and the effect of the invocation of the rule of sequestration.

Use of Depositions: If depositions are to be used at trial in any manner (impeachment, as video testimony, etc.) make certain a hard copy is available for both the court and for the witness being questioned.

Objections: The court will not allow speaking objections in front of the jury. When counsel rises to object, only the legal basis for the objection should be stated. If elaboration is necessary, the court will call counsel to the bench for a conference out of the presence of the jury. Counsel shall not interrupt opposing counsel or witnesses with an objection unless the question or answer is patently objectionable. Once the court has ruled, no further argument shall be permitted.

Jurors: The court generally will allow jurors to take notes and to ask questions where necessary, as provided in § 40.50, Fla. Stat. (1999). If any counsel objects to these procedures such objection should be addressed to the court prior to the day of trial.

Jury Instructions and Verdict Form: Jury instructions and verdict form are to be prepared by both sides and exchanged at least 14 days prior to trial. A copy of each party's jury instructions and verdict form must be sent by email to the court, in Microsoft Word format, at least 7 days prior to trial. The court intends to provide the jury with a hard copy of the final instructions, along with the verdict form, when the jury retires to deliberate. Copies will be provided to each juror, the court, counsel and the court reporter. The final instructions should not contain any citations, jury instruction titles, or information as to who requested the instruction. In certain cases, and with the agreement of all counsel, the court may provide some substantive law instructions to the jury during preliminary instructions and/or before closing arguments.