

**Local Rules**

**The General Sessions Court  
Of  
Jefferson County**

**Dennis “Will” Roach II  
General Sessions Judge**

**Effective  
January 1, 2015**

**Updated 1/10/22**

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## **RULE 1. AUTHORITY AND ABROGATION OF FORMER RULES**

The rules of the General Sessions Court (with civil, criminal, juvenile, and probate jurisdiction) of Jefferson County, Tennessee, are adopted under the authority of Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-15-406 and § 16-15-714. All former rules are abrogated except as readopted herein.

## **RULE 2. WAIVER/AMENDMENT OF LOCAL RULES**

If, in the interest of the administration of justice, the sitting judge of the General Sessions Court deems it necessary to waive or amend any portion of these rules, he or she shall retain authority to do so, as stated in Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-15-406.

## **RULE 3. COURT SCHEDULE**

The basic framework of the General Sessions Court schedule is attached as Appendix 1. The schedule shall be amended as needed to reflect holidays, vacations, and court closures. A precise schedule shall be released on a quarterly basis. All courts begin at 9:00 a.m., unless on special setting, and all attorneys and parties before the court are expected to appear at 9:00. If an attorney is unable to appear on-time, said attorney shall inform the court of the reason for the expected delay or absence. A lunch recess is generally taken at noon.

## **RULE 4. INTERCHANGE AND SPECIAL SETTINGS**

Fridays shall be reserved for interchange among the other judges of the Fourth Judicial District, and when necessary, other days shall be calendared for the same.

Fridays shall also be available for special settings, including, but not limited to contested civil, criminal, juvenile, and probate matters. All special setting shall be scheduled through the office of the Judge.

## **RULE 5. PROBATE COURT SETTINGS**

All probate hearings shall be heard either on the Monday civil docket, or on the Friday special settings docket. All probate hearings shall be scheduled through the office of the Judge.

## **RULE 6. CONTINUANCES**

Cases may be continued only upon written motion to the Court, or upon announcement in open court. Motions for continuance should be accompanied by an order, and served upon all parties.

## **RULE 7. EX PARTE DISCUSSIONS**

Excepting emergency removals in juvenile cases, and scheduling issues in all types of cases, there shall be no ex parte discussions with the Judge regarding any cases pending before the court. Attorneys are free at any time to schedule conferences with the Judge to discuss personal or any other matters, and are invited to do so.

## **RULE 8. PRETRIAL SETTLEMENT DISCUSSIONS**

All attorneys in contested cases are expected to discuss their cases with opposing counsel in an amicable and professional manner, with an eye to settlement, in advance of trial. Mediation shall be ordered when the Court deems it a prudent alternative to a hearing.

## **RULE 9. JUVENILE COURT MEDIATION AND ORDERS OF REFERENCE**

Private matters brought in juvenile court, shall, absent compelling argument or reason, be ordered to mediation prior to a hearing upon the merits. Attorneys are strongly advised to work toward the creation of an environment of relative stability between custodians in order to facilitate the best interests of the children involved.

Orders of reference may be made by the court upon the filing of a pro se petition, when said petition is based upon dependency and neglect, or unruly behavior.

## **RULE 10. DRESS CODE**

A dress code has been adopted and shall be attached as Appendix 2 to these rules and shall be posted in a public place.

## **RULE 11. MEDIA COVERAGE**

Pursuant to Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 30, the following procedures have been adopted by the General Sessions Court for Jefferson County in order to facilitate the media coverage contemplated by the rules.

### **1. Requests for Media Coverage**

Media requests for coverage of a particular proceeding (other than print media) shall be made in writing to the Judge and Clerk of Court not later than 3:30 PM on the third business day before the event to be covered. The Clerk shall immediately notify all counsel of record of the request for coverage. The Judge shall determine, what, if any, media coverage is allowed.

### **2. Operation of Equipment**

All equipment shall be operated in a manner suited to best afford the court to administer justice absent interruption. If media is employed which hampers the administration of justice in a meaningful way, it shall be required to be removed. All equipment requiring installation shall be

installed before the Court commences the proceeding to be covered. All photographic equipment shall be situated so as to produce the point of view of the audience. Under no circumstances, unless expressly permitted by the Presiding Judge, are any cameras, still or otherwise, to be taken beyond the Bar of the Court.

3. Courtroom Decorum

All media personnel will conduct themselves quietly and respectfully in the courtroom. In the event the Presiding Judge orders that a particular witness or other not be photographed, or that one or more cameras be turned off, said order will be followed without debate. Arguing with the Judge, as well as disobeying the Judge, will constitute grounds for terminating any or all photography of the proceeding.

4. Incorporation of Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 30

In all remaining aspects, media coverage of courtroom proceedings shall be governed by the letter and intent of Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 30.

**RULE 12. BOND HEARINGS**

Inmates who do not make bond upon arrest will be appointed an attorney at the time of their initial bond setting before the Magistrate, and will have a date for their bond hearing before the General Session Judge set at the same time by the Magistrate.

Bond hearings will be set on Monday mornings at 10 a.m., and on Thursdays at either 9 a.m. - if there is no General Sessions Criminal Court set for that day, or at 1 p.m. - if General Sessions Criminal Court is set for that day. Bond hearings will also be available at 1 p.m. every Tuesday upon which General Sessions Criminal Court is in session.

**ORDERED** this the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2022, effective immediately.

S/   
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JUDGE DENNIS "WILL" ROACH II

## APPENDIX 1 – COURT SCHEDULE

### **IN THE GENERAL SESSIONS, JUVENILE, AND PROBATE COURTS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

(ALL COURTS BEGIN AT 9 A.M. UNLESS UPON SPECIAL SETTING.)

<u>MONDAY:</u>	CIVIL/PROBATE, TRAFFIC*
<u>TUESDAY:</u>	CRIMINAL
<u>WEDNESDAY:</u>	JUVENILE
<u>THURSDAY:</u>	CRIMINAL
<u>FRIDAY:</u>	INTERCHANGE/SPECIAL SETTINGS**

\*Civil/probate and traffic will alternate each Monday: see calendar for specific dates.

\*\*All interchange and special settings must be calendared through the office of the Judge.

## APPENDIX 2 - DRESS CODE

### **IN THE GENERAL SESSIONS, JUVENILE, AND PROBATE COURTS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

#### ORDER

Effective January 1, 2015, anyone appearing in the General Sessions, Juvenile and/or Probate Courts of Jefferson County, Tennessee must comply with the following dress code.

- 1) No tank tops or halter tops are permitted.
- 2) No shorts. All dresses, skirts, and like clothing must be of an appropriate length.
- 3) Tee shirts or other types of clothing displaying profane language, illegal substances or offensive logos shall not be worn.
- 4) Footwear shall be worn at all times.
- 5) Hats, caps, etc., shall not be worn in the courtroom.

### **APPENDIX 3 - MARRIAGE CEREMONIES**

As of May 5, 2015, and it lying firmly within the discretion of the General Sessions Judge whether to officiate marriage ceremonies, Judge Dennis “Will” Roach, II has chosen not to officiate marriage ceremonies.