

**RULES OF THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION
LORAIN COUNTY, OHIO**

**EFFECTIVE April 1, 2018
AMENDED February 9, 2026**

**Sherry L. Glass, Judge
Frank J. Janik, Judge
Lisa I. Swenski, Judge**

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1. SCOPE OF RULES

- A. The Domestic Relations Division of the Common Pleas Court for Lorain County, Ohio, adopts the following rules for the management of proceedings and other functions of the court pursuant to Rule 5 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio. The court may amend these rules from time to time as needed or as required by law.
- B. These rules are intended to supplement and complement the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, the Superintendence Rules of the Supreme Court of Ohio, and other controlling statutes.
- C. These rules shall be applied, construed and enforced so as to avoid inconsistency with other rules of court and statutes governing proceedings of this court. In their application, they shall be construed so as to provide fairness and to secure a just, expeditious and inexpensive determination of all proceedings. They shall apply to proceedings pending at the time they take effect.
- D. These rules shall be effective April 1, 2018, and supersede all previous rules promulgated by this court.

2. SECURITY FOR COSTS

- A. **Costs Deposit:** The Clerk of Courts shall not accept any action or proceeding for filing, without a deposit as security for costs in the sums set forth in the Clerk's Schedule of Costs, unless there is an exception as listed in (B) of this section. Child Support Enforcement Agency filings and Domestic Violence filings are exceptions to this requirement.
- B. **In Forma Pauperis/Indigent Litigant** The deposit for costs shall be considered to be met if a party or their attorney files an Application to Waive Security Deposit, swearing that the party is without funds or assets to pay the deposit. The court shall approve or deny the applicant's application to qualify as an indigent litigant. Applicants shall use affidavit of indigency from the Ohio Public Defenders Office or any other form as outlined in ORC 2323.311(B)(1). The court shall consider the guidelines set forth by ORC 2323.311 in making the determination of indigency. The court shall approve applications in which the applicant's gross income does not

exceed one hundred eight-seven and five-tenth percent (187.5%) of the federal poverty guidelines and the applicants monthly expenses are equal to or in excess of the applicants liquid assets. If the application is approved pursuant to this section the clerk shall waive the deposit required for filing.

If the application to qualify as an indigent litigant is denied, the court shall issue an order granting the applicant thirty (30) days to make the required deposit or their action shall be dismissed.

Nothing within this section shall be construed to prevent the court from assessing costs.

- C. **Subsequent Deposit:** If, during the course of a proceeding, the court determines that a party whose security deposit has been waived is or has become able to pay the applicable costs deposit, the Court may order that party to pay the deposit within a reasonable period of time commensurate with the circumstances.
- D. **Responsibility for Costs:** All judgment entries shall contain a provision allocating payment of costs. In the absence of any provision, after application of deposits, the balance of costs shall be paid as follows: by the Plaintiff in an uncontested divorce, legal separation or annulment proceeding; equally between the parties in a contested divorce proceeding or dissolution proceeding; by the Respondent in a domestic violence proceeding; the obligor in any proceeding relating to the enforcement, modification or termination of a support order, and by the moving party in a post decree proceeding.
- E. **Court Deposits Applied:** No sooner than (30) days after final judgment has been filed, the Clerk of Courts is directed to apply any deposit(s) to the costs in the case, regardless of the party against whom costs are assessed. The Clerk shall assess the costs against the proper party, reimbursing the deposit when appropriate. In the event there are deposits from multiple parties, the deposit of the party initiating the case/action shall be used first.
- F. Information regarding the Court Deposit for Costs for Domestic Relations Division can be found on the following website: www.loraincountyohio.gov/379/Deposit-for-Costs.

Amended 02/09/26; Effective 02/16/2026

3. REMOVAL OF PAPERS FROM CUSTODY OF THE CLERK

A. Removal

No person, except a Judge or Magistrate or representative of either, shall remove any documents or case files from the custody of the Clerk of Courts. However, attorneys may be permitted to temporarily remove a file for a limited period of time for review, upon conditions set by the Clerk and/or the Court.

B. Examination

Upon request, the Clerk shall allow any person to examine, but not remove, any original document or case file that is maintained by its office. Examination shall be allowed during the regular business hours of the Clerk.

C. Duplication.

Upon request and the payment of fees fixed by law, the Clerk shall provide copies of any original document maintained by its office. Copies shall be provided during regular business hours within a reasonable period of time as determined by the Clerk.

D. Transcripts

All transcripts of testimony that are filed with the Clerk of Courts may be examined and/or duplicated in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Removal

No filed original transcript of testimony may be removed from the Clerk's Office without an order of the Court.

2. Examination

Upon request, the Clerk shall allow any individual to examine, but not remove, any original transcript of testimony that has been filed with its office. Examination shall be allowed during the regular business hours of the Clerk.

3. Duplication

Upon request to the Official Court Reporter and the payment of fees fixed by the Court, copies of a filed transcript will be made available within a reasonable time.

4. COURT DECORUM

- A. At court hearings, all parties and witnesses shall be properly attired. If the parties are not properly attired, the Court may continue the hearing.
- B. Parents are encouraged not to bring children to any hearing, unless otherwise ordered by the Court.

5. PLEADINGS AND MOTIONS; FAX FILING

A. Form

- 1. All pleadings, motions, briefs and other papers shall be legibly typewritten or printed on letter size paper (approximately 8 ½” x 11”), without backing or cover, and printed on only one side.
- 2. The caption in every complaint or petition shall state the name, address, last four digits of the Social Security Number and date of birth, if known, of each party. In compliance with Sup.R. 45(D), a separate form shall be submitted with the complaint or petition that includes the full Social Security Number of each party.
- 3. The caption of subsequent pleadings, motions and other papers shall state the case number, the name of the Judge to whom the case is assigned, and the name of the first party Plaintiff and the first party Defendant.
- 4. All captions shall briefly describe the general nature of the action.
- 5. Every pleading, motion and other paper filed in the cause shall be identified by title and shall bear the name, address, telephone number, fax number, and business e-mail address of the attorney or the party filing the same. If the filing is made by an attorney, the Supreme Court Registration Number of the attorney and the name of the firm with which the attorney is affiliated, if any, must also be included.
- 6. In all cases, a blank space of at least three (3) inches shall be left at the top of the first page.

B. Parenting Proceeding Affidavit

All parties involved in a proceeding concerning the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities shall file a Parenting Proceeding Affidavit pursuant to O.R.C.

3109.27(A). The affidavits shall be attached to and filed with each party's initial pleading or motion regarding parenting. A party who has filed no pleading, motion or other document regarding parenting shall nonetheless file the affidavit. All Parenting Proceeding Affidavits shall be served upon each of the parties as provided under the Civil Rules.

C. FACSIMILE FILINGS

1. IN GENERAL

This rule has been instituted solely for the convenience of those filing documents with the Clerk of Courts. Neither the Clerk of Courts nor the Court assumes any new or additional responsibilities, obligations, or liabilities by virtue of this rule. This rule pertains only to the method of filing; it does not override, alter, amend, revoke or otherwise change any Local Rule or Ohio Rule of Civil Procedure.

2. FILINGS NOT ACCEPTED

Except for the following documents, this rule authorizes the filing of facsimile transmissions of pleadings, motions, and other documents that may otherwise be filed with the Clerk of Courts.

a. *Commencement of an Action*

Any filing commencing an action (e.g., a complaint, a third party complaint, a post-decree motion, a motion for injunctive relief) for which the Clerk of Courts must collect an initial case deposit against costs or a specific filing fee and/or for which the Clerk of Courts is required to effectuate service or summons;

b. *Journal Entry*

Any entry which must be signed by a Judge.

3. COVER PAGE

Any faxed document must include a cover page, an attached sample of which is provided, containing the following information:

- Case number;
- Caption of the case;
- Assigned Judge;

- Description of the documents being filed;
- Date of Transmission;
- Transmitting fax and contact number; and
- Number of pages, including cover.

If the cover page does not contain all required information, the faxed documents shall not be entered on the docket and shall be considered a nullity. The Clerk of Courts is not required to send any form of notice to the sender of a failed fax filing.

4. FACSIMILE MACHINE

The facsimile machine available for receiving fax filing for Domestic Relations Court Cases is **(440) 329-5506**. This line is available twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. Fax filings may not be sent directly to the Court for filing but may only be transmitted through the Clerk of Courts. Transmissions sent to any other location are neither covered by nor permitted under this rule. However, copies of filings otherwise properly filed with the Clerk of Courts, such as courtesy copies for the Court, may with Court approval be sent by facsimile directly to the Court. Facsimiles sent directly to the Court shall not be considered as having been filed thereby.

5. DOCUMENT RESTRICTIONS

A fax transmission may contain more than one document but may not apply to more than one case number per transmission. Motions and other filings making reference to or incorporating other documents attached to the motion or other filing as an exhibit thereof shall be considered as part of a single file. If exhibits are impossible or burdensome to send by facsimile the original exhibits may be separately filed if done so within forty-eight hours of the related transmission. If the exhibits are filed separately, then an insert page describing the exhibit must be included in the facsimile transmission. Facsimile transmissions must comply with the filing requirements as otherwise stated in this rule and may not exceed twenty pages regardless of the number of documents being sent.

6. DATE AND TIME

Subject to the other provisions of the rule, all documents filed by fax shall be considered filed with the Clerk of Courts as of the date and time that the fax transmission has been received by the Clerk of Courts. For purposes of this provision and for entering such filings into the docket system, a facsimile filing shall be deemed to have been received by the Clerk of Courts as of the date and time printed at the top of each page of the incoming fax as printed out by the Clerk of Courts' facsimile equipment. There shall be no other date and time stamp required for the filing of a fax document with the Clerk of Courts, although the Clerk may stamp the document with a stamp confirming the date and time imprinted at the top of the incoming fax page. The risks of transmitting a document by fax to the Clerk of Courts shall be borne entirely by the sender.

7. ORIGINAL FILING

A document filed by fax shall be accepted as the original filing provided all the requirements set forth in this rule are satisfied. The source document shall not be filed with the Clerk of Courts. However, until the case is closed and all opportunities for post-judgment relief are exhausted, any source documents filed via facsimile shall be retained and available for production at the Court's request.

8. SIGNATURES

Facsimile filings shall contain a signature or a /s/ notation followed by the name of the person signing the source document.

9. ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION

The Clerk of Courts is hereby authorized to reject and will not docket any facsimile transmission which fails to comply with these rules.

6. ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

- A. All cases filed on or after December 1, 1998, shall be assigned to a Judge by random generation through the computer of the Clerk of Courts.
- B. All cases filed prior to January 4, 1989, which are subsequently reopened shall be assigned as follows:
 - 1. Case Numbers ending in 1, 3, or 5 - Judge Frank J. Janik;
 - 2. Case Numbers ending in 2, 4, 6 or 0– Judge Lisa I. Swenski;
 - 3. Case Numbers ending in 7, 8, or 9 – Judge Sherry L. Glass.
- C. All cases filed between January 4, 1989, and December 7, 1998, which are subsequently reopened, shall be assigned as follows:
 - 1. Cases will re-open to the assigned Judge with the exception of case numbers ending in 7, 8, or 9, which will reopen to Judge Glass;
 - 2. Assigned Judge Zieba or Judge Lilly cases will reopen to Judge Swenski plus cases ending in -0 (except 7, 8, 9);
 - 3. Assigned Judge Basinski cases will reopen to Judge Janik (except 7, 8, 9, or 0)
- D. Any exceptions to or transfers of these assignments must be entered upon the docket and shall set forth specific reasons for the exception or transfer.
- E. Where it happens that both parties have filed complaints for divorce, legal separation or annulment, the court, on its own motion or the motion of a party, shall consolidate the cases. The matter shall proceed under the case number of the complaint upon which service was first obtained, upon the docket of the Judge first assigned, and the other complaint shall operate as a counterclaim upon service thereof. Any orders issued prior to consolidation remain in full force and effect.

Amended 01/02/2017

7. SERVICE OF COPIES AND NOTICE

- A. All service of copies and notice to parties must comply with Civil Rules 4 and 5.
- B. Waiver of service of summons by a party must be notarized.
- C. Pursuant to Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 4.4(A)(2) Residence Unknown, the following locations have been designated for the posting of notices in accordance with this Rule:
Lorain County Justice Center
Elyria Municipal Court
Lorain Municipal Court, Lorain City Hall
- D. Service of Post Decree Motions
Service must be obtained in accordance with Civil Rule 4 through 4.6 and must be made directly upon all parties.

8. SEPARATING PARENTING SEMINAR

- A. All parties filing initial actions in which there are any minor children shall attend an educational seminar for parents presented or approved by the Court. Seminar attendance may also be required by order of the court after the filing of motions concerning the modification of parental rights and responsibilities and modification or enforcement of parenting time.
- B. Initial actions include divorce, dissolution, and legal separation.
- C. Every party and/or attorney filing an initial action with minor children shall submit a completed “Seminar for Separating Parents Notice” for each parent, custodian or other interested party involved in the action. The Clerk of Courts shall not accept for filing any case that does not have the Notice. The Clerk of Courts shall provide a copy of the Notice to Court Services.
- D. Should any party fail to attend the seminar within forty-five (45) days after the commencement of the action for Dissolutions, and ninety days (90) after the commencement of the action or court order for all other actions, Court Services will issue a Notice of Non-Attendance to the Court and counsel of record or the party, if unrepresented.

1. No action shall proceed to final hearing until there has been compliance with this rule; however, non-compliance by a party who does not enter an appearance or does not contest the action shall not delay the final hearing.
 2. No person shall be designated residential parent and legal custodian of any minor child without attending the Separating Parenting Seminar, except under extraordinary circumstances.
 3. No Shared Parenting Plan shall be approved unless both parties have attended the seminar.
 4. Parenting Time Orders shall be held in abeyance until such time as the parent seeking parenting time has completed the seminar.
 5. The Court, for good cause shown, may waive this requirement.
- E. Failure by any party to comply with this rule may result in the imposition of appropriate sanctions, including, but not limited to, those contained in this rule, contempt of court, or dismissal of their pleadings.

Amended 02/09/2026; Effective 02/16/2026

9. MOTIONS TO SET ASIDE AND OBJECTIONS

A. Motion to Set Aside a Magistrate's Order

1. A Motion to Set Aside a Magistrate's Order shall be filed with the Clerk of Courts within ten (10) days of the filing of the order. The order is not stayed unless the Judge or Magistrate grants a stay. The Magistrate may continue to enter orders while a Motion to Set Aside is pending.
2. Motions to Set Aside a Magistrate's Order shall state with specificity the reasons for the motion. Unless otherwise ordered, a transcript of the proceedings is not necessary for a Motion to Set Aside a Magistrate's Order.
3. The party first filing the Motion to Set Aside shall obtain a hearing date on their motion. A copy of all motions shall be served upon all other parties.
4. Unless the Court orders otherwise, a Motion to Set Aside a Magistrate's Order will be determined by the Magistrate that issued the order. The Magistrate will issue an order that rules on the Motion to Set Aside in a timely manner.

- B. Motion to Review Magistrate's Order that ruled on a Motion to Set Aside
1. A Motion to Review Magistrate's Order that ruled upon a motion to set aside shall be filed with the Clerk of Courts within ten (10) days of the filing of the Magistrate's Order on the Motion to Set Aside.
 2. A copy of the Motion to Review Magistrate's Order that ruled upon a motion to set aside shall be provided to the respective Judge's administrative assistant or bailiff. A copy may be facsimiled, emailed, or hand delivered.
 3. The order is not stayed unless the Judge grants a stay.
 4. The Motion to Review shall state with specificity the reasons necessitating judicial review. Unless otherwise ordered, a transcript of the proceedings is not necessary for a Motion to Review Magistrate's Order that ruled on a motion to set aside.
 5. A Motion to Review a Magistrate's Order that ruled on a motion to set aside shall be determined by the Judge.
 6. Upon receipt of a Motion to Review Magistrate's Order that ruled on a motion to set aside, the Judge may issue a Judicial Order that does one of the following:
 - a. Summarily grants the motion;
 - b. Summarily denies the motion;
 - c. Sets the motion for a hearing on the Judge's docket; or
 - d. Summarily modifies the Magistrate's Order
- C. Objections to a Magistrate's Decision
1. Objections to a Magistrate's Decision shall be filed with the Clerk of Courts within fourteen (14) days of the filing of the decision. The opposing party may file an objection or response within ten (10) days of the filing of the first objection. All objections shall be in compliance with the provisions of Civil Rule 53(D).
 2. All objections shall be specific and state the grounds of objection with particularity. Any objection to a finding of fact shall be supported by a transcript of all the evidence submitted to the Magistrate or an affidavit of that evidence if a transcript is not available.

3. The party first filing objections shall obtain a hearing date on their objections. A copy of all objections or responses shall be served upon all other parties.
4. The party filing objections shall file a praecipe for preparation of the transcript and serve a copy on the Court's Official Court Reporter. If a deposit for costs of a transcript is not made within seven (7) days of the filing of the objection, the objection may be dismissed.
5. The original transcript submitted with an objection becomes part of the official record of the case. Should preparation of a transcript result in delay of the final disposition of the case, the Court may make such temporary orders as it deems necessary and just.

Amended 10/25/2022; Effective 11/01/2022

10. OHIO CIVIL RULE 75(N) TEMPORARY ORDERS

A. Temporary Order

1. During a divorce, annulment, legal separation, and related proceedings, a Court may issue a temporary order that awards temporary spousal support, temporary child support, and/or awards a temporary allocation of parental rights and responsibilities for the care of the minor child(ren).
2. Said order(s) are interlocutory and remain in effect during the pendency of the underlying cause of action.

B. Oral Hearing Request

1. Upon request, in writing, after any temporary spousal support, child support, or order allocating parental rights and responsibilities for the care of children is journalized, the court shall grant the party so requesting an oral hearing within twenty-eight days to modify the temporary order. A request for an oral hearing shall not suspend or delay the commencement of spousal support or other support payments previously ordered or change the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities until the order is modified by journal entry after the oral hearing.

2. The order is not stayed unless the Judge or Magistrate grants a stay. The Magistrate may continue to enter orders while an oral hearing request is pending.
 3. Any oral hearing request shall state with specificity the reasons for the oral hearing. Unless otherwise ordered, a transcript of the proceedings is not necessary for an oral argument hearing.
 4. The party first filing the request for an oral hearing shall obtain a hearing date on the Magistrate's docket that issued the temporary order. A copy of all oral hearing requests shall be served upon all other parties.
 5. Unless the Court orders otherwise, an oral hearing request will be determined by the Magistrate that issued the temporary order.
 6. The Magistrate shall conduct an oral hearing on the temporary order.
 7. After conclusion of the oral hearing, the Magistrate will issue an order that either continues, modifies, terminates, or vacates the original temporary order.
- C. Motion to Review a Magistrate's Order that ruled on an Oral Hearing Request
1. A Motion to Review a Magistrate's Order after the oral hearing shall be filed with the Clerk of Courts within ten (10) days of the filing of the Magistrate's Order.
 2. A copy of any Motion to Review a Magistrate's Order after the oral hearing shall be provided to the respective Judge's administrative assistant or bailiff. A copy may be facsimiled, emailed, or hand delivered.
 3. The order is not stayed unless the Judge grants a stay.
 4. A Motion to Review a Magistrate's Order after the oral hearing shall state with specificity the reasons necessitating judicial review. Unless otherwise ordered, a transcript of the proceedings is not necessary for a Motion to Review a Magistrate's Order after the oral hearing.
 5. A Motion to Review a Magistrate's Order after the oral hearing shall be determined by the Judge.

6. Upon receipt of a Motion to Review a Magistrate's Order after the oral hearing, the Judge may issue a Judicial Order that does one of the following:
 - a. Summarily grants the motion
 - b. Summarily denies the motion
 - c. Sets the motion for a hearing on the Judge's docket
 - d. Summarily modifies the Magistrate's Order.

Amended 10/25/22; Effective . 11/01/22

11. EX PARTE ORDER PRACTICE

- A. Any ex parte motion filed shall comply with the Ohio Revised Code and the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure.
- B. General Procedures
 1. Unless otherwise specified by law, all Motions for ex parte relief shall be accompanied by an affidavit. Any request for ex parte relief shall also be accompanied by a Complaint or a Motion for Allocation or Modification of Parental Rights unless such matter is currently pending before the Court. The bond for service shall be paid at the time of filing.
 2. Ex parte requests shall take preference on the docket. Upon the filing of an ex parte request, the request and accompanying affidavit will be reviewed by the Court as soon as reasonably possible on the day it is filed. Upon review, the judicial officer will determine if an immediate hearing is warranted, unless otherwise required to hold a hearing by law. No ex parte motion for a change of custody will be granted without a hearing.
 3. After the Court reviews the ex parte motion and affidavit, the Court has discretion to do any of the following:
 - a. Summarily dismiss the ex parte motion;
 - b. Hold the ex parte hearing the day the motion is filed;
 - c. Continue the ex parte hearing for another date; or
 - d. Take any other action authorized by statutes or rules.

4. After the review, if the Court does not hold an immediate hearing, the Court will provide the moving party or attorney with an entry, which will include any future hearing date.
- C. Ex Parte Hearing
1. If the Court conducts an immediate hearing or sets the matter for a hearing in the future, the party seeking the ex parte immediate relief shall appear and testify at the hearing.
 2. After the Court conducts an ex parte hearing, the Court may do any of the following:
 - a. Deny the motion and dismiss the motion;
 - b. Deny the motion and set the matter for a review;
 - c. Grant the motion, in whole or part, and set for a review hearing.
- D. Review Hearing
1. If an ex parte order is granted, service of process of the request, affidavit and entry with notice of hearing, shall be made by the Sheriff's service or personal process server. The bond for service, paid at the time of the filing, shall not be waived, and it is non-refundable until final judgment, as outlined in Local Rules.
 2. The Court shall hold a review hearing as soon as possible, but no later than 10 court days, unless required to hold the hearing sooner by law. This requirement may be waived by the responding party.
- E. Mutual Ex Parte Restraining Orders
1. Upon request of counsel or an unrepresented party, the Court may grant mutual restraining orders in new actions for Divorce, which shall then be served upon the opposing party.
 2. The order shall be consistent with the Court's form, as set forth in Exhibit 1.
 3. The restraining orders shall take effect against the moving party upon filing, and against the responding party upon perfection of service, and shall remain in effect during the pendency of the case.
 4. No bond shall be required.

Amended 02/02/2024

12. HEARING AND SUBMISSION OF MOTIONS

- A. All motions, except motions for continuance, shall be subject to oral hearing, unless otherwise waived by Court Order. The party seeking the order shall schedule the hearing at the time of the filing. Failure to schedule the motion for hearing may result in dismissal of the motion.
- B. The first scheduled hearing upon any motion shall proceed as a pretrial and may be scheduled for a contested hearing, if necessary. The first scheduled hearing may proceed as a contested hearing with approval of the Court.
- C. The moving party shall serve and file with the motion a brief written statement of reasons in support of the motion or affidavit and citations of the authorities on which the movant relies. The motion and/or affidavit shall contain specific facts upon which the moving party relies in bringing their motion.
- D. All parties participating in a contested temporary orders hearing relating to support shall prepare and submit to the Court an exhibit of income and expenses.

13. CASE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

- A. Case Management Conferences
 - 1. Scheduling
 - a. The Case Management Conference shall be scheduled at the time of filing all initial divorce complaints and all motions to modify the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities.
 - b. The party filing the initial action in a divorce shall obtain a date from the assignment commissioner and schedule the Case Management Conference no earlier than eight (8) weeks and no later than the end of ten (10) weeks from the date of the initial filing. However, it may be scheduled or heard at an earlier date if both parties are represented by counsel and both parties agree.
 - c. The party filing the initial action in a motion to modify the allocation of parental rights shall obtain a date from the assignment commissioner and schedule the Case Management Conference within four (4) weeks from the date of the filing.

- d. The party filing the initial action shall cause the Notice of the Case Management Conference to be issued to all parties.
 - e. Failure to schedule a Case Management Conference may result in the Court dismissing the action for want of prosecution.
2. Hearing Procedure
- a. All Case Management Conferences shall be scheduled before a Magistrate.
 - b. All counsel and parties are required to attend the Case Management Conference. If a party has been excused for good cause shown, then that party must provide counsel with a phone number at which they may be reached during the Case Management Conference.
 - c. Failure to appear may subject the attorney and/or party to sanctions, including contempt, an award of expenses and/or attorney's fees to any party prejudiced by such conduct, or dismissal of their pleadings.
 - d. Failure to appear by the responding party, either personally or through counsel, shall result in the matter being scheduled for an uncontested final hearing. Should the matter not proceed to an uncontested final hearing, the Case Management Conference shall be rescheduled.
 - e. Attorneys (and unrepresented parties) shall be prepared to
 - i. Narrow the issues in controversy;
 - ii. Admit to facts not in dispute;
 - iii. Advise the Court of the need and time required for discovery and to establish a binding discovery schedule. Discovery includes, but is not limited to: depositions, appraisals, pension valuations and the exchange of tax returns or other wage information;
 - iv. Agree on a timetable for exchange of any expert reports;
 - v. Agree on a date for submission of proposed Qualified Domestic Relations Orders;
 - vi. Address issues of asset valuation;

- vii. Discuss Alternative Dispute Resolution possibilities, including mediation;
 - viii. Discuss the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, including shared parenting and the need for referral to Family Court Services;
 - ix. Schedule depositions and sign any appropriate releases;
 - x. Schedule the Status Conference and may schedule the Settlement Conference.
 - f. The Court shall file a Case Management Conference Order to become part of the record of the case.
- B. Status Conference
 - 1. To be held within fourteen (14) days of the completion of all discovery.
 - 2. Counsel and unrepresented parties are required to attend and appear before the assigned Magistrate.
 - 3. All discovery is to be completed and exchanged.
 - 4. The Court may schedule additional Status Conferences, as needed.
 - 5. The Court will issue an order for preparation and filing of the Settlement Conference Statement.
- C. Settlement Conference
 - 1. All counsel and parties are required to appear.
 - 2. Counsel and parties shall be prepared to negotiate in good faith, to stipulate to items of evidence and admissions, and to discuss the issues of their case that remain in contention.
 - 3. An additional Settlement Conference may be scheduled at the discretion of the Court.
 - 4. Should the matter remain unresolved after the Settlement Conference, it shall be scheduled for Final Pretrial and Final Contested Hearing.
 - 5. The Court will issue an order for preparation of the Final Pretrial Statement.
- D. Final Pretrial
 - 1. Counsel and unrepresented parties are required to appear.

2. All pending preliminary motions must be either heard or dismissed by the date of the Final Pretrial.
 3. Parties are to exchange the names and addresses of all prospective witnesses and a list of all documents, records and other exhibits that may be offered as evidence at trial.
 4. Parties are to exchange proposed judgment entries.
 5. Parties shall be prepared to discuss any unusual legal issues that may require a trial brief.
 6. Parties shall be prepared to agree to a witness schedule for professional and/or expert witnesses at trial.
 7. The Court will issue an order for the preparation of stipulations, trial briefs, proposed judgment entries, marking of exhibits and any other trial preparation orders.
- E. General Procedures
1. The parties must strictly adhere to the requirements of the above Case Management Schedule unless modified by the Court.
 2. No continuance of any scheduled Case Management proceeding will be granted without the approval of the Court.
- F. Pretrials may be scheduled at the discretion of counsel as may be necessary to meet the particular needs of each case. Pretrials may be scheduled at counsels' offices or any other place that may be convenient for the parties.
- G. Should either party or counsel fail to adhere to the requirements of this rule or to the discovery schedule established by the Court, the Court may impose sanctions, including, but not limited to, dismissal of that party's pending action, attorney's fees, contempt of court or any other sanction allowed by the Rules of Civil Procedure.

Amended 02/22/2019

14. DISCOVERY

All discovery shall comply with Ohio Civil Rules 26 through 37. Discovery is to be held in Lorain County unless otherwise ordered by the Court or agreed between the parties.

15. COURT SERVICES INVESTIGATIONS AND HOME INSPECTIONS

- A. There will be no home inspection or investigation conducted unless ordered by the Court. Said order may be requested by a party or be made on the Court's own motion. Said order shall be accompanied by a completed Referral Form for Mediation and Court Services.
- B. **Reports.** Court Services must complete and sign any report completed. The investigator shall be subject to examination and/or cross-examination by either party or the Court concerning the contents of the report.
 - 1. Upon completion of the report, the investigator shall file a Notice of Report with the clerk's office and serve a copy to counsel or parties if unrepresented. The investigator will also file a copy of the report, under seal.
 - 2. Reports prepared hereunder shall be made available and accessible to the parties or any counsel of record upon completion as provided in R.C. 2317.39.
 - 3. Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, counsel and unrepresented parties may examine the completed report by presenting themselves to Court Services' office on the 2nd Floor of the Justice Center and presenting proper identification when necessary. Counsel and parties may not remove the report from the Court premises or make copies of the same by any means, whether electronic or photographic.
- C. The party that is subject to the home inspection must be present at the home when the home inspection is being conducted. Failure of the party to be present will be considered a missed appointment.
- D. If a party misses an appointment and fails to reschedule it within two (2) days, it will be deemed as non-cooperation unless otherwise demonstrated. If a party misses two (2) appointments, it will be deemed as non-cooperation unless otherwise demonstrated.

- E. Failure to cooperate with Court Services may result in: (1) dismissal of action; (2) dismissal of request for custody by the noncomplying party; or (3) any other appropriate sanctions as determined by the Court.
- F. A supplemental investigation may be ordered upon timely request and where appropriate. Any supplemental investigation must comply with this rule.

Amended 02/09/2026; Effective 02/16/2026

16. GUARDIAN AD LITEM

A. Qualification

Guardians ad Litem must comply with Sup.R. 48. Training verification and other paperwork required to be submitted to the Court shall be submitted to the Court Administrator's Administrative Assistant by Dec. 31 of each calendar year, beginning with 2009.

B. Appointment

1. Upon the motion of any party or at the discretion of the Court, the Court may order a guardian ad litem when it deems it essential to protect the interests of a minor child of the parties or to represent an incompetent person. No motion for appointment of guardian ad litem shall be granted, except by leave of Court, once the matter has been set for trial.
2. The Court shall not appoint a guardian without payment of the deposit toward the guardian's fees as directed by the court. Failure to post the deposit as ordered may result in the dismissal of the motion.
3. The Court Administrator's Administrative Assistant shall maintain a list of individuals qualified and willing to serve as guardians ad litem. Counsel may agree to appoint a guardian ad litem from that list to a case. If counsel is unable to agree or their chosen guardian ad litem is unavailable, the court shall appoint a guardian ad litem from the list on a rotating basis to ensure equitable distribution of appointments.

The court shall send a courtesy copy of the journal entry appointing a GAL to the Admin. Asst.

4. It shall be the responsibility of counsel in the case to copy the guardian ad litem with all pleadings, notices of hearings and depositions, entries and any other necessary documents. Any additional expense incurred by the guardian as a result of counsel's failure to notify, including the costs of transcripts, shall be charged to the party or parties responsible for such failure.
- C. Removal
- A GAL may be removed upon motion of any party and/or at the discretion of the court only upon good cause shown.
- D. Fees
1. The party or parties requesting the guardian ad litem shall deposit sufficient funds, as determined by the court, toward the payment of the guardian's fees with the Clerk of Courts or as otherwise directed by the court prior to the appointment of any guardian ad litem.
 2. After the initial deposit, the Court may award fees to the guardian ad litem for services rendered through the completion of the guardian's employment. Fees may be taxed against any or all parties.
- E. Duties, Report
- Guardians ad Litem shall comply with Sup.R.48.
- F. The final judgment entry shall provide for the allocation of payment of fees for the guardian ad litem and discharge of the guardian.
- G. Comments, Complaints
- Comments or complaints regarding the performance of guardians ad litem shall be in writing and submitted to the Court Administrator's Administrative Assistant, who shall comply with Sup.R. 48(G)(9) in handling said comments or complaints.

Amended 3/2010

17. CONTINUANCES

A. Procedure

1. All requests for continuance of any proceedings shall be by written motion.
2. Requests for continuance of any trial before the Judge shall be filed no later than thirty (30) days prior to trial. All other requests for continuance shall be filed no later than seven (7) days prior to the proceeding. This requirement may be waived by the Court for good cause shown.
3. The moving party shall first attempt to secure consent of the opposing party, set forth in the motion whether consent was obtained or denied, and shall state the number of prior continuances and who requested those continuances. The motion shall state the reason for the continuance and be signed by the party and counsel. The Court may waive this requirement for good cause shown, provided that the motion states the reason why the attorney has been unable to obtain the signature.
4. A copy of the motion shall be served upon the opposing counsel or opposing party if not represented. A copy of the motion shall also be presented to the Judge or Magistrate before whom the hearing is scheduled for a ruling.
5. If the request for continuance is approved, the party granted the continuance shall contact opposing counsel and the Assignment Commissioner to schedule a new date for the hearing.
6. The party granted the continuance shall submit an entry setting forth the new date, which shall be submitted in person or by facsimile transmission by the close of business on the day the continuance is granted.
7. Failure to comply with these rules shall result in the continuance being denied and the matter proceeding as originally scheduled.

B. Conflict of Trial Assignment Dates

When a continuance is requested for the reason that counsel is scheduled to appear in another case assigned for trial on the same date, in the same court or a different court, the case that was first set for trial shall have priority and shall be tried on the date assigned. Criminal cases assigned for trial have priority over civil cases assigned for trial. The Court will not consider any motion for continuance due to a conflict of trial

assignment dates unless a copy of the conflicting assignment is attached to the motion and the motion is filed not less than thirty days prior to trial.

C. Engaged Counsel

If a designated trial counsel has such a number of cases assigned for trial in the courts as to cause undue delay in the disposition of such cases, the Administrative Judge may summon such trial attorney, who persistently requests continuances and extensions, to warn the attorney of the possibility of sanctions and to encourage the attorney to make necessary adjustments in the management of his or her practice. Where such measures fail, restrictions may properly be imposed by the Administrative Judge on the number of cases in which the attorney may participate in at any one time.

18. BANKRUPTCY STAYS

Filing of Bankruptcy

- A. Upon the filing of any bankruptcy, the parties or their counsel shall submit to the Court proof of the filing, which may be a time-stamped copy of the initial filing.
- B. No stay of proceedings shall be granted until proof of filing is submitted to the Court.
- C. Upon filing of the notice of the bankruptcy stay, there shall be no further proceedings that may affect the bankruptcy estate.
- D. The automatic stay does not apply to the establishment, modification, or collection of spousal support or child support from property that is not property of the bankruptcy estate. 11 USC 362.
- E. Counsel or parties shall be required to periodically report the status of the bankruptcy proceedings to the Court.
- F. Upon being granted relief from the stay or final discharge of the bankruptcy, and upon submission of proof of the relief from stay or discharge, the pending matter will recommence.

19. MOTIONS TO SET ASIDE AND OBJECTIONS (renumbered to Rule 9)

20. WITHDRAWAL OR SUBSTITUTION OF COUNSEL

A. Withdrawal

After entering an appearance as counsel, no attorney shall be relieved of responsibility unless:

1. Counsel timely files a written motion stating the grounds for withdrawing from the case, together with certification that counsel has notified the client of all subsequent hearing dates and the necessity for attendance at same, and notified both the client and opposing counsel of the motion;
2. The motion is submitted to the Court along with a proposed entry containing the client's most recent mailing address and the name and address of any new counsel, if known;
3. The motion is scheduled for hearing, unless otherwise waived by the Court;
4. The Court grants the motion.

B. Permission to Withdraw

Permission to withdraw may not be granted once the matter has been scheduled for contested trial, absent compelling circumstances.

C. Substitution of Counsel of Record

Any attorney entering a case on behalf of a party who has had previous representation in the action shall do so by written notice of substitution filed with the Clerk of Courts. The notice shall contain the attorney's name, address, phone number, fax number, business e-mail address and Supreme Court Registration Number.

21. FAILURE TO APPEAR OR PROCEED

A. Failure to Appear

If a Plaintiff fails to appear as required, the Court may enter an order dismissing the action for want of prosecution. If a Defendant fails to appear as required, and the Plaintiff does appear, the Court may order the Plaintiff to proceed with the case and the Court shall decide and determine all matters ex parte.

B. Failure to Proceed

If a party or counsel appears but shows compelling reason as to why they are not prepared for trial, the Court may make such orders as it deems proper. If a party or

counsel appears, but indicates that they are not prepared for trial, absent compelling reason for their not being prepared, the Court may enter such orders as it deems appropriate.

22. DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

At the time of final hearing, the Separation Agreement shall be re-executed by the parties in open court, shall be attached to the Judgment Entry for Dissolution, and shall be subject to approval of the Court.

23. AGREED JOURNAL ENTRIES

A. Generally

In cases where a party is not represented by counsel and an agreed entry purports to deprive such party of a right or otherwise operates to the potential detriment of such party, a hearing on the merits of such matters may be conducted by the Court before such entry is accepted and journalized by the Court.

B. Reducing Support or Arrearage

1. All agreed entries to reduce or terminate child support payments or to reduce or waive arrearages shall be initiated by motion.
2. No more than one entry reducing the support arrearage due to direct payment will be accepted. Further direct payments after an entry has been accepted will be considered gifts.

Amended 03/2010

24. JUDGMENT ENTRIES

A. Divorce/Dissolution with Children Filing Requirements

1. Filing Requirements

All filings for a legal separation, divorce, dissolution or annulment that concern minor child(ren) must be supported by a Parenting Proceeding Affidavit and the filing of a IV-D Application for Child Support Services.

The Court may dismiss filings for a legal separation, divorce, dissolution or annulment with minor child(ren) filed without a IV-D Application for Child Support Services.

- a. Parenting Proceeding Affidavit, Health Insurance Affidavit, and the IV-D Application for Child Support Services forms are available on the Court's website: www.loraincounty.com/domesticrelations and may be available in the Clerk's office.
- b. A fillable IV-D Application for Child Support Services is also available here: <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS07076/pdf/>
- c. Forms and link to the Ohio Child Support Guidelines Calculator can also be found on the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services website: <https://ohiochildsupportcalculator.ohio.gov/pages/calculator.html?p=step4>

2. Post-decree

Motions for Reallocation of Parental Rights and Responsibilities must be supported by a Parenting Proceeding Affidavit and, if not previously filed in the case, the filing of a IV-D Application for Child Support Services.

B. Preparation of Entries

All proposed final judgment entries for the following matters involving minor children uncontested legal separation, divorce or annulment, dissolution, or motions for reallocation of parental rights and responsibilities - must be accompanied by a child support computation worksheet and health insurance addendum. The Court may refuse to proceed to final hearing if a child support computation worksheet and health insurance addendum are missing. All proposed entries that issue or modify a child support obligation shall be accompanied by a completed Child Support Guideline Worksheet and a completed Health Insurance Addendum.

1. When represented by counsel in dissolutions with children

- a. The proposed final judgment entry with all attachments for a dissolution with minor child(ren), or in other matters as ordered by the court, shall be submitted to one of the Domestic Support Magistrates for review of the child support and health insurance provisions. The proposed entry may be presented to the Magistrate by delivering or emailing a copy to the

Domestic Support department at Domestic.Support@lcfct.org within the following time frames:

- b. When filing a Petition for Dissolution, counsel shall schedule an approval hearing to occur within 14 calendar days of the filing date. Counsel shall submit the proposed entry and attachments prior to that date. Counsel need not appear at the approval hearing.
 - c. The Magistrate will review and notify the attorney whether it is approved or if corrections are needed.
 - i. Should corrections be needed, the Magistrate will set the matter for a review hearing within 14 calendar days following the approval hearing for counsel to submit a corrected entry. Counsel may be required to appear at the review hearing.
 - ii. The Domestic Support Department will retain a copy of the approved proposed final judgment entry and will deliver the same to the judicial officer in advance of the final hearing date. Only the approved proposed final judgment entry will be considered for adoption by the court at final hearing. The court will not accept a final judgment entry that has not been previously approved through this process.
2. When not represented by counsel
- In those cases where neither party is represented by counsel, judgment entries must be presented to the assigned Judge's Magistrate for review prior to submission to the Court. The Magistrate will review the entry to determine that all mandatory information has been provided, including child support orders, and that all exhibits are attached. Upon approval by the Magistrate, the matter will proceed to hearing before the Court. A party who does not have the proper information or exhibits shall not proceed to final hearing.
3. Divorce/dissolution without children, represented by counsel
- Copies of the Separation Agreement or proposed judgment entries shall be presented to the Court and reviewed at the time of the uncontested hearing.

C. Final hearing

Any party or their counsel shall be prepared to explain and show justification for provisions proposed in the Judgment Entry or Separation Agreement.

Amended 12/02/2019

25. QUALIFIED DOMESTIC RELATIONS ORDER/DIVISION OF PROPERTY ORDERS

A. Filing.

In cases involving Qualified Domestic Relations Orders or Division of Property Orders, both parties shall file a proposed order prior to, or no later than the time of the final hearing. If the parties are in agreement, they may submit one QDRO or DPO signed by all parties and counsel.

- B. Amended Qualified Domestic Relations Order/Division of Property Orders or Qualified Domestic Relations Order/Division of Property Orders filed post decree
- Amended QDRO's/DPO's or QDRO's/DPO's that are submitted post-decree shall be filed with a motion for approval with notice to the opposing party and/or counsel, if applicable, with the same set for hearing as otherwise provided by these rules. Notice and hearing may be waived by agreement as evidenced by signature on the QDRO/DPO. If copies are not furnished, the party filing the amended QDRO/DPO shall pay the cost of copies at the time of filing. The Clerk of Court shall not accept any amended QDRO/DPO or QDRO/DPO submitted post-decree without submission of a deposit sufficient to cover costs.

26. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CIVIL PROTECTION ORDERS

A. **Filing a Petition**

1. The petition shall consist of the form approved by the Ohio Supreme Court for issuance of Civil Protection Orders. Petitioner shall disclose any other case involving the Petitioner and Respondent, pending or decided, in this or any other court.
2. All cases will be assigned by random draw unless a history exists with the parties. If a history exists involving the same parties pending or decided when a

petition is filed, the case will be assigned to the initial Judge in any Domestic Relations filing. If no Domestic Relations filing exists, but in Juvenile Court custody case exists in which both Petitioner and Respondent are parties, the case will be assigned to the initial Judge in those proceedings.

3. Domestic Violence Civil Protection Orders are governed by R.C. 3113.31.
4. Pursuant to R.C. 3113.31(M), a victim advocate may accompany a Petitioner in all stages of proceedings under this rule. No victim advocate may be called as a witness, nor be required to disclose a surname in any proceeding in this Court without written leave of the Court.
5. Should the Respondent in any pending Civil Protection Order file a petition against the Petitioner of that Order, Respondent's petition shall be filed as a counterpetition. The Petitioner must be notified of Respondent's counterpetition at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to any hearing.

B. Ex Parte Hearing

1. The Court shall hear the Petitioner's statement of the facts under oath.
2. If the Court issues an ex parte order, it shall schedule a full hearing within ten (10) court days. If the Court orders Respondent to vacate the residence, the full hearing shall be scheduled within seven (7) court days.
3. If an ex parte hearing is not requested or if the Court does not grant the ex parte order, the Court shall proceed as in a normal civil action and grant a full hearing on the matter, unless the Petitioner declines a full hearing on the matter. If Petitioner declines a full hearing, the Petition shall be dismissed.

C. Full Hearing

1. Petitioner and Respondent are both afforded the opportunity to testify, present evidence, and request appropriate relief.
2. Failure of the Petitioner to appear at any hearing may result in the petition and/or ex parte order being dismissed

D. Subsequent Proceedings

1. A Civil Protection Order is valid to a date certain, but no longer than five (5) years. A Civil Protection Order may be renewed in the same manner as the

original, so long as the protection order has not expired. Once a Civil Protection Order expires, all orders contained within that protection order also expire.

2. Either party may file any appropriate motion after the issuance of a Civil Protection Order.

Amended 02/09/2026; Effective 02/16/2026

27. REGISTRATION OF FOREIGN DECREES

A. Procedure

1. A certified copy of the parenting decree shall be attached to the Petition to Register a Foreign Decree, and filed. The decree shall be filed along with a UCCJEA affidavit, per O.R.C. 3127.23.
2. The party seeking enforcement or modification of an appropriately filed parenting decree shall cause notice to be delivered to the responding party in accordance with O.R.C. Section 3127.19 and 3127.07.
3. Any request for modification or enforcement shall set forth sufficient facts, sworn to by the moving party, to establish the Court's jurisdiction in accordance with O.R.C. Section 3127.15(A)(1-4).
4. The initial hearing shall be to resolve the jurisdictional issue and shall serve as a pretrial conference on the issues presented to the Court.

B. Motions

1. A motion requesting relief shall be filed at the same time as the Petition to Register the Foreign Decree.

28. MEDIATION

- A. **Introduction** – The Lorain County Court of Common Pleas, Domestic Relations and Juvenile Divisions, incorporates by reference the R.C. 2710 “Uniform Mediation Act” (UMA), R.C. 3109.052 Mediation of Differences as to Allocation of Parental Rights and Responsibilities and Rule 16 of the Supreme Court of Ohio Rules of Superintendence.
- B. **Definitions** – All definitions found in the “Uniform Mediation Act” (UMA) R.C. 2710.01 are adopted by this court including, but not limited to, the following:

1. “Mediation” means any process in which a mediator facilitates communication and negotiation between the parties to assist them in reaching a voluntary agreement regarding their dispute;
2. “Mediator” means an individual who conducts mediation.

C. Areas of Mediation and Procedures

1. Open Court Cases

- a. The Court, on its own motion, or the motion of any of the parties, may refer disputed parenting time issues to mediation by Journal Entry and the Referral Form for Mediation and Court Services.
- b. Court Services will notify the parties of the mediator assigned to the case, or the parties may schedule an appointment at the time of referral.
- c. If an agreement is reached, the agreement shall be reduced to writing, signed by the parties, and placed on the record by Magistrate. A journal entry with the attached mediated agreement shall be submitted to the designated Judge for signature.

2. Self-Represented Mediation.

- a. Any party may request mediation by completing the Self-Represented Mediation Request Form, for the following:
 - i. Return, exchange or transfer of property as previously ordered by the Court;
 - ii. Providing, exchanging, or modifying medical insurance information, including responsibility for coverage, as previously ordered by the Court;
 - iii. Payment of uninsured medical bills as previously ordered by the Court;
 - iv. Compliance with a court-ordered parenting time schedule;
 - v. Establishment of a parenting time agreement where there is an existing administrative or court-ordered determination of paternity;
 - vi. Any other matters that the Court deems appropriate
- b. Court Services will determine the eligibility and appropriateness of each referral.

- c. Upon acceptance for mediation, all parties shall be notified by Court Services of the date, time and nature of the mediation.
 - d. If an agreement is reached, the agreement shall be reduced to writing, signed by the parties, and placed on the record by the Magistrate. A journal entry with the attached mediated agreement shall be submitted to the designated Judge for signature.
- D. **Mediator Selection and Assignment** –Court Services shall randomly assign a mediator to the case from the trained mediator staff.
- E. **Procedures**-- Court Services shall utilize procedures for all cases that will:
 - 1. Ensure that parties are allowed to participate in mediation, and any other party ordered by the Court to participate in mediation.
 - 2. Screen for domestic violence both before and during mediation. The mediator may decline to mediate the case or terminate mediation if the mediator has a reasonable belief that there is or has been threats of domestic violence or coercion between the parties.
 - 3. Encourage appropriate referrals to legal counsel and other support services for all parties, including victims of and suspected victims of domestic violence.
- F. **Termination** – If the assigned mediator determines that further mediation efforts would be of no benefit to the parties, the mediator shall inform all interested parties and the Court that the mediation is terminated.
- G. **Continuances** – If a party or parties fail to appear for any scheduled mediation without good cause shown, the mediator shall determine whether to reschedule the mediation.
- H. **Mediation Memorandum of Agreement** – If the parties reach an agreement during mediation, that agreement shall be reduced to writing and signed by the parties. A hearing in front of the Magistrate shall follow, and the agreement shall be read into the record. A journal entry shall be signed by all parties at the time of the hearing. The signed Memorandum of Agreement and the Journal Entry shall be given to the respective Judge for signature.

- I. **General Qualifications and Training** - A mediator employed by the division or to whom the division makes referrals for mediation of allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, the care of, or visitation with, minor children, shall satisfy all of the following:
1. Possess a bachelor's degree or equivalent education or experience as is satisfactory to the division, and professional experience with families. "Professional experience with families" may include mediation, counseling, casework, legal representation in family law matters, or such other equivalent experience satisfactory to the division.
 2. Complete at least twelve hours of basic mediation training or equivalent experience as a mediator that is satisfactory to the division.
 3. After completing the above training, complete at least forty hours of specialized family or divorce mediation training which has been approved by the Dispute Resolution Section of the Supreme Court.
- J. **Exceptions**— Cases in which any of the following indicators are present are not suitable for mediation:
1. Chronic or severe domestic violence, where one party has been convicted of or pled guilty to a violation of R.C. 2919.22, or where one party is genuinely in fear of the other;
 2. Severe alcohol and/or drug abuse exists;
 3. Significant concerns regarding competency or mental illness of one of the parties;
 4. One of the parties has been determined to be the perpetrator of an act which resulted in an adjudication that a child was abused or neglected;
Excessive levels of conflict and hostility between the parties.
- K. **Cost**— No fee shall be charged for the court's mediation service.
- L. **Confidentiality**—Statements made during the course of mediation shall not be admissible as evidence in any subsequent proceeding in this Court. This Rule does not require the exclusion of any evidence, which is otherwise discoverable, merely because it is presented during the course of mediation. Further, this rule shall not

preclude the mediator from testifying as to a crime committed in their presence or from their statutory duty to report child abuse pursuant to R.C. 2151.421.

Amended 02/09/2026; Effective 02/16/2026

29. GUIDELINES FOR PARENTING TIME

These guidelines are designed to provide assistance to parents in the resolution of issues relating to parenting time and to provide assistance to the Court in formulating parenting time orders when the parents are unable to reach an agreement. The underlying purpose of any such agreement or order is to provide for the best interest of each child after giving full consideration to the facts and issues that are relevant to each family.

These guidelines are based on the premise that:

- A. Both parents are suitable;
- B. Both parents desire to have an ongoing relationship with each child;
- C. Both parents are able to carry out the childcare plan;
- D. Any negotiated solution between parents is preferred to a court imposed solution;
- E. It is usually in the children's best interest for each parent to have frequent, meaningful and continuing access to the children;
- F. That children need reliability, predictability and consistency on the part of each parent.

A number of common sense guidelines should be followed in every case. Except as otherwise ordered by the court:

- A. Both parents are entitled to access to records and information on the medical care of the children directly from the health care provider as well as from the other parent. Each parent should notify the other promptly of any significant medical treatment;
- B. Both parents are entitled to access to all school records of the children directly from the school as well as from the other parent. School reports should be photocopied promptly after receipt and supplied to the other parent. Both parents should be notified promptly of all child-related activities which encourage or allow parental participation;
- C. Both parents are reminded that parenting time and child support, while they may be emotionally connected, are separate legal issues. Parental access may not be denied

due to failure to pay child support and child support may not be withheld due to failure of a parent to allow access to the children;

- D. Parents should share with each other their residence and work addresses and phone numbers;
- E. Each parent should encourage the children to initiate telephone, email, and/or mail contact with the other parent on a regular basis, and allow the other parent reasonable contact with the children while in their care;
- F. Parents should not discuss their problems with the other parent with the children, nor should they speak ill of the other parent in the presence of the children;
- G. Parents should not attempt to buy the favor of the children with presents, special treatment or privileges, or promises;
- H. Parents should not make their children choose between the two parents;
- I. Parents should not question their children regarding the activities of the other parent;
- J. Parents should be prompt with appointments with their children. Children should not be kept waiting, nor should they suffer the disappointment of a parent failing to show up. When unforeseen circumstances prevent arrival within approximately 30 minutes of the scheduled time of exchange, immediate notification should be given, if possible, and appropriate alternative arrangements should be made;
- K. Parents should coordinate plans regarding bedtime, discipline, homework schedule and other household rules;
- L. Any clothing accompanying the child should be returned in the same condition as it was sent;
- M. The parent exercising parenting time is responsible for transporting their children to and from the other parent's residence. If the parent is unavailable for the pick-up or return of their children, an alternate driver may be used, provided that driver has a valid driver's license and is known to the children. Any person transporting children must adhere to all child restraint laws. Both parents are expected to have their own child restraint devices. No person transporting children may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol;

- N. When either parent's plans include travel out of the area, a travel schedule including destination and emergency phone numbers (if available) should be forwarded to the other parent prior to departure, with one week notification being preferred.

30. SUGGESTED PARENTING TIME PLAN

- A. Alternating weekends from Friday at 6:00 p.m. to Sunday at 6:00 p.m., commencing the first weekend after the date of filing the journal entry.
- B. One midweek day from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. If the parties cannot agree upon a day for the midweek parenting time it shall be Wednesday.
- C. For the purpose of parenting time, there are ten (10) holidays as follows:
 - 1. New Year's Day
 - 2. Martin Luther King Day
 - 3. President's Day
 - 4. Easter
 - 5. Memorial Day
 - 6. Fourth of July (Noon 7/4 until noon 7/5)
 - 7. Labor Day
 - 8. Thanksgiving
 - 9. Christmas Eve
 - 10. Christmas

In the odd-numbered years, the mother/father shall have the children on odd-numbered holidays; and the father/mother shall have the children on the even-numbered holidays. In the even-numbered years, the father/mother shall have the odd-numbered holidays; and the mother/father shall have the even-numbered holidays. Holiday parenting time shall supersede regularly scheduled parenting time and is from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted above.

- D. The alternating weekend parenting time sequence shall not be interrupted as a consequence of the holiday schedule. If the weekend immediately preceding a Monday holiday and the holiday parenting time are both scheduled with the same parent, holiday parenting time shall commence Friday at 6:00 p.m. and end Monday at 8:00 p.m. Should the parent having the Thanksgiving holiday also have the

weekend immediately following the holiday, holiday parenting time shall commence Thursday at 9:00 a.m. and end Sunday at 6:00 p.m.

- E. On Mother's Day and Father's Day, no matter whose weekend for parenting time, children will be with the appropriate parent.
- F. For children of school age, the parents shall split the Winter vacation from school in the following manner: The parent designated to have the Christmas Eve holiday shall have the children for the first half of the winter vacation, beginning 9:00 a.m. the day immediately following the last day of school until December 24th at 8:00 p.m. The parent designated to have the Christmas Day holiday shall have the second half of the winter vacation, beginning 8:00 p.m. December 24th until 8:00 p.m. December 31st.
- G. For children of school age, the parents shall alternate the Spring vacation from school in the following manner: The parent designated to have the Easter holiday shall have the children from 9:00 a.m. the day immediately following the last day of school until 8:00 p.m. the day prior to reconvening of school. Spring vacation parenting time will supersede any regular weekend visitation.
- H. Four (4) weeks of parenting time each summer. Notice shall be given to the other parent of the dates of intended parenting time thirty (30) days in advance of such parenting time. The parent exercising extended summer parenting time has priority in scheduling over the other parent's choice provided the thirty (30) days notice is given, unless the other parent's vacation choice is an annual mandatory shutdown of their place of employment. If either parent chooses to exercise extended summer parenting time for three or more consecutive weeks, the other parent is entitled to exercise their alternating weekend parenting time schedule during that time period, unless the extended summer parenting time involves travel out of the local area.
 - 1. Children are to be in the residential home for school purposes one week before commencement of the school year. No extended summer parenting time is to be scheduled by either parent for the week prior to commencement of school.
 - 2. Children not of school age may go for extended parenting time throughout the year, provided the parents comply with the thirty (30) day notice requirement.
- I. Children shall celebrate their birthday in the home of the residential parent for school purposes, unless it falls on a day when the other parent is exercising parenting time.

The other parent may make up for the birthday with a separate birthday party if desired.

- J. Such additional times as may be agreed between the parties.
- K. Absent reasonable notice and good cause for delay, children and/or the other parent have no duty to wait for the other parent for more than thirty (30) minutes of a scheduled parenting time. A parent who is later than thirty (30) minutes without reasonable notice and good cause for delay shall forfeit that scheduled parenting time.
- L. If either parent intends to move from their current residence, that parent shall file a notice of intent to relocate with the court pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 3109.051(G)(1).

31. JURY USE AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

(THE FOLLOWING IS PROPOSED PURSUANT TO THE RULE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO REQUIRING A PLAN UTILIZING THE OHIO TRIAL COURT JURY USE AND MANAGEMENT STANDARDS AS A GUIDELINE.)

STANDARD 1. Opportunity for Service

- A. The opportunity for jury service should not be denied or limited on the basis of race, national origin, gender, age, religious belief, income, occupation, disability, or any other factor that discriminates against a cognizable group in the jurisdiction.
- B. Jury service is an obligation of all qualified citizens of Lorain County.

STANDARD 2. Jury Source List

- A. The names of potential jurors should be drawn from a jury source list compiled from one of more regularly maintained lists of persons residing in the court jurisdiction.
- B. The jury source list should be representative and should be as inclusive of the adult population in the jurisdiction as is feasible.
- C. The court should periodically review the jury source list for its representativeness and inclusiveness of the adult population in the jurisdiction as is feasible.
- D. Should the court determine that improvement is needed in the representativeness or inclusiveness of the jury source list, appropriate corrective action should be taken.

STANDARD 3. Random Selection Procedures

- A. The jury source list from Board of Elections shall be printed out on address labels, which shall be cut into individual names and addresses. Random selection procedures should be used throughout the juror selection process. Any method may be used, manual or automated, that provides each eligible and available person with an equal probability of selection. These methods should be documented.
- B. Random selection procedures should be employed in:
 - 1. Selecting persons to be summoned for jury service;
 - 2. Assigning prospective jurors to panels; and
 - 3. Calling prospective jurors for voir dire.
- C. Departures from the principle of random selections are appropriate only to comply with lawful exceptions.
 - 1. To exclude persons ineligible for service in accordance with Standard 4;
 - 2. To excuse or defer prospective jurors in accordance with Standard 6;
 - 3. To remove prospective jurors for cause or if challenged peremptorily in accordance with Standards 8 and 9; and
 - 4. To provide all prospective jurors with an opportunity to be called for jury service and to be assigned to a panel in accordance with Standard 13.

STANDARD 4. Eligibility for Jury Service

All persons should be eligible for jury service except those who:

- A. Are less than eighteen years of age;
- B. Are not citizens of the United States;
- C. Are not residents of the jurisdiction in which they have been summoned to serve;
- D. Are not able to communicate in the English Language; or
- E. Have been convicted of felony and have not had civil rights restored.

STANDARD 5. Term of and Availability for Jury Service

- A. The time that persons are called upon to perform jury service and to be available should be the shortest period consistent with the needs of justice.
- B. A term of service of three weeks.

- C. Persons should not be required to maintain a status of availability for jury service longer than three weeks except in jurisdictions where it may be appropriate for persons to be available for service over a longer period of time.

STANDARD 6. Exemption, Excuse, and Deferral

- A. All automatic excuses or exemptions, with the exception of statutory exemptions, from jury service should be eliminated.
- B. Eligible persons who are summoned may be excused from jury service if:
 - 1. Their ability to receive and evaluate information is so impaired that they are unable to perform their duties as jurors and they are excused for this reason by a judge; or
 - 2. They request to be excused because their service would be a continuing hardship to them or to members of the public and they are excused by a judge or specifically authorized court official.
- C. Deferrals for jury service for reasonably short periods of time may be permitted by a judge or a specifically authorized court official.
- D. Requests for excuses and deferrals and their disposition should be written or otherwise made or recorded. Specific uniform guidelines for determining such requests should be adopted by the court.

STANDARD 7. Voir Dire

- A. Voir dire examination should be limited to matters relevant to determining whether to remove a juror for cause and determine the juror's fairness and impartiality.
- B. To reduce the time required for voir dire, basic background information regarding panel members should be made available to counsel in writing for each party on the day on which jury selection is to begin.
- C. The trial judge should conduct a preliminary voir dire examination. Counsel shall then be permitted to question panel members for a reasonable period of time.
- D. The judge should ensure that the privacy of prospective jurors is reasonably protected, and the questioning is consistent with the purposes of the voir dire process.
- E. In criminal cases, the voir dire process shall be held on the record. In civil cases, the voir dire process shall be held on the record unless waived by the parties.

F. Rules on Voir Dire

1. The case may not be argued in any way while questioning the jurors.
2. Counsel may not engage in efforts to indoctrinate jurors.
3. Jurors may not be questioned concerning anticipated instructions or theories of law. This does not prevent general questions concerning the validity and philosophy of reasonable doubt or the presumption of innocence.
4. Jurors may not be asked what kind of verdict they might return under any circumstances.
5. Questions are to be asked collectively of the entire panel whenever possible.

STANDARD 8. Removal from Jury Panel for Cause

If the judge determines during the voir dire process that any individual is unable or unwilling to hear particular case at issue fairly and impartially, that individual should be removed from the panel. Such determination may be made on motion of counsel or by the judge.

STANDARD 9. Peremptory Challenges

- A. Rules determining procedure for exercising peremptory challenges should be uniform throughout the state.
- B. Peremptory challenges should be limited to a number no larger than necessary to provide reasonable assurance of obtaining an unbiased jury.
- C. In civil cases, the number of peremptory challenges should not exceed three for each side. If the court finds that there is a conflict of interest between the parties on the same side, the court may allow each conflicting party up to three peremptory challenges.
- D. In criminal cases, the number of peremptory challenges should not exceed:
 1. Six for each side when a death sentence may be imposed upon conviction;
 2. Four each side when a sentence of imprisonment (state institution) may imposed upon conviction; or
 3. Three for each side in all other prosecutions. On additional peremptory challenge should be allowed for each defendant in a multi-defendant criminal proceeding.
- E. In criminal and civil proceedings each side should be allowed one peremptory challenge if one or two alternate jurors are impaneled, two peremptory challenges if

three or found alternates are impaneled, and three peremptory challenges if five or six alternates are impaneled. These additional peremptory challenges shall be used against an alternate juror only, and the other peremptory challenges allowed by law shall not be used against an alternate juror.

- F. At all times rules determining procedure for exercising peremptory challenges shall be in accordance with the Ohio Civil Rules and the Ohio Criminal Rules that are presently adopted or adopted in the future by The Supreme Court of Ohio and applicable statutory authority.

STANDARD 10. Administration of the Jury System

- A. The responsibility for administration of the jury system should be vested exclusively in the judicial branch of government.
- B. All procedures concerning jury selection and service and should be governed by Ohio Rules of Court.

STANDARD 11. Notification and Summoning Procedures

- A. The notice summoning a person to jury service and questionnaire eliciting essential information regarding that person should be:
 - 1. Combined in a single document;
 - 2. Phrased so as to be readily understood by a individual unfamiliar with the legal and jury systems; and
 - 3. Delivered by ordinary mail.
- B. A summons should clearly explain how and when the recipient must respond and the consequences of a failure to respond.
- C. The questionnaire should be phrased and organized so as to facilitate quick and accurate screening and should request only that information essential for:
 - 1. Determining whether a person meets the criteria for eligibility;
 - 2. Providing basic background information ordinarily sought during voir dire examination; and
 - 3. Efficiently managing the jury system.
- D. Policies and procedures should be established for monitoring failures to respond to a summons and for enforcing a summons to report for jury service.

STANDARD 12. Monitoring the Jury System

Courts should collect and analyze information regarding the performance of the jury system on a regular basis in order to evaluate:

- A. The representativeness and inclusiveness of the jury source list;
- B. The effectiveness of qualification and summoning procedures;
- C. The responsiveness of individual citizens to jury duty summonses;
- D. The efficient use of jurors; and
- E. The costs-effectiveness of the jury management system.

STANDARD 13. Juror Use

- A. Courts should employ the services of prospective jurors so as to achieve optimum use with minimum of inconvenience to jurors.
- B. Courts should determine the minimally sufficient number of jurors needed to accommodate trial activity. This information and appropriate management techniques should be used to adjust both.
- C. Courts should coordinate jury management and calendar management to make effective use of jurors.

STANDARD 14. Jury Facilities

- A. Courts should provide an adequate and suitable environment for jurors.
- B. The entrance and registration area should be clearly identified and appropriately designed to accommodate the daily flow of prospective jurors to the courthouse.
- C. Jurors should be accommodated in a pleasant waiting facilities furnished with suitable amenities.
- D. Jury deliberation rooms should include space, furnishings, and facilities conducive to reaching a fair verdict. The safety and security of the deliberation rooms should be ensued.
- E. To extent feasible, juror facilities should be arranged to minimize contact between jurors, parties, counsel, and the public.

STANDARD 15. Juror Compensation

- A. Persons called for jury service should receive a reasonable fee for their service and expenses.

- B. Such fees should be paid promptly.
- C. Employers shall be prohibited from discharging, laying-off, denying advancement opportunities to, or otherwise penalizing employees who miss work because of jury service.

STANDARD 16. Juror Orientation and Instruction

- A. Orientation programs should be:
 - 1. Designed to increase prospective jurors' understanding of the judicial system and prepare them to serve competently as jurors; and
 - 2. Presented in a uniform and efficient manner using a combination of written, oral and audio-visual materials as determined by the Court to which the juror is assigned.
- B. Courts should provide some form of orientation or instructions to persons called for jury service:
 - 1. Upon initial contact prior to service;
 - 2. Upon first appearance at the court; and
 - 3. Upon reporting to a courtroom for voir dire.
- C. The trial judge should:
 - 1. Give preliminary instructions to all prospective jurors.
 - 2. Give instructions directly following empanelment of the jury to explain the jury's role, the trial procedures including note taking and questioning by jurors, the nature of evidence and its evaluation, the issues to be addressed, and the basic relevant legal principles;
 - 3. Prior to commencement of deliberations, instruct the jury on the law, on the appropriate procedures to be followed during deliberations, and on the appropriate method for reporting the results of its deliberations. Such instructions should be made available to the jurors during deliberations;
 - 4. Prepare and deliver instructions which are readily understood by individuals unfamiliar with the legal system; and
 - 5. Recognize utilization of written instructions is preferable.
 - 6. Before dismissing a jury at the conclusion of a case:
 - a. Release the jurors from their duty of confidentiality;

- b. Explain their rights regarding inquiries from counsel or the press;
- c. Either advise them that they are discharged from service or specify where they must report; and
- d. Express appreciation to the jurors for their service, but not express approval or disapproval of the result of the deliberation.

D. All communications between the judge and members of the jury panel from the time of reporting to the courtroom for voir dire until dismissal shall be in writing or on the record in open court. Counsel for each party shall be informed of such communication and give the opportunity to be heard.

STANDARD 17. Jury Size and Unanimity of Verdict

Jury size and unanimity in civil and criminal cases shall conform to existing Ohio laws and as may be amended in the future.

STANDARD 18. Jury Deliberations

- A. Jury deliberations should take place under conditions and pursuant to procedures that are designed to ensure impartiality and to enhance rational decision-making.
- B. The judge should instruct the jury concerning appropriate procedures to be followed during the deliberations in accordance with Standard 16C.
- C. The deliberation room should conform to the recommendations set forth in Standard 14C.
- D. The jury should not be sequestered except under the circumstances and procedures set forth in Standard 19.

STANDARD 19. Sequestration of Jurors.

- A. A jury should be sequestered only for good cause, including but not limited to insulating its members from improper information or influences.
- B. During deliberations in the guilt phase and penalty phase, the jury shall be sequestered in a capital case.
- C. The trial judge shall have the discretion to sequester a jury on the motion of counsel or on the judge's initiative and shall have the responsibility to oversee the conditions of sequestration.
- D. Standard procedures should be promulgated to:
- E. Achieve the purposes of sequestration; and

- F. Minimize the inconvenience and discomfort of the sequestered juror.
- G. Training shall be provided to personnel who escort and assist jurors during sequestration.

32. PARENTING COORDINATION

A. Definitions

1. Domestic Abuse – a pattern of abusive and controlling behavior that may include physical violence; coercion; threats; intimidation; isolation; or emotional, sexual, or economic abuse.
2. Domestic Violence – has the same meaning as in R.C. 3113.31(A)(1).
3. Parenting Coordination – means a child-focused dispute resolution process ordered by the Court to assist parties in implementing a parental rights and responsibilities or companionship time order using assessment, education, case management, conflict management, coaching, or decision-making. “Parenting Coordination” is not mediation subject to R.C. Chapter 2710, R.C. 3109.052, or Sup.R. 16, nor arbitration subject to R.C. Chapter 2711 or Sup.R. 15.
4. Parenting Coordinator – means an individual appointed by the Court to conduct parenting coordination.

B. Purpose

This rule allows for the resolution of disputes related to parental rights and responsibilities or companionship time orders outside of Court.

C. Scope

The Court may appoint a parenting coordinator upon the filing of a parental rights and responsibilities or companionship time order.

D. Limitations of Parenting Coordinator

A parenting coordinator may not determine the following:

1. Whether to grant, modify, or terminate a protection order;
2. The terms and conditions of a protection order;
3. The penalty for violation of a protection order
4. Changes in the designation of the primary residential parent or legal guardian;
5. Changes in the primary placement of a child.

E. Parenting Coordinator Qualifications, Continuing Education, Reporting

1. The Court may appoint an individual as a parenting coordinator who has all of the following qualifications:
 - a. A master's degree or higher, a law degree, or education and experience satisfactory to the Court;
 - b. At least two years of professional experience with situations involving children, which includes parenting coordination, counseling, casework, legal representation in family law matters, serving as a guardian ad litem or mediator, or such other equivalent experience satisfactory to the Court;
 - c. Has completed the following training approved by the Dispute Resolution Section of the Supreme Court of Ohio:
 - i. At least twelve hours of basic mediation training;
 - ii. At least forty hours of specialized family or divorce mediation training;
 - iii. At least fourteen hours of specialized training in domestic abuse and dispute resolution;
 - iv. At least twelve hours of specialized training in parenting coordination.
2. Continuing Education
 - a. To maintain eligibility for appointment, a parenting coordinator shall complete at least six hours per calendar year of continuing education relating to children that has been approved by the Dispute Resolution Section of the Supreme Court of Ohio.
 - b. On or before January 1st of each year, a parenting coordinator shall report to the Court a list of all continuing education training completed during the previous year, including the sponsor, title, date, and location of each training. A parenting coordinator shall not be eligible for appointment until this requirement is satisfied. The parenting coordinator shall complete three hours of continuing education for each calendar year of deficiency.

3. Reporting

A parenting coordinator shall submit to the Court Administrator's office:

- a. A resume documenting compliance with continuing education requirements; and
- b. An updated resume in the event of any substantive changes; and
- c. Notification of any changes to name, address, and telephone number and, if available, electronic mail address.

F. Appointment

1. The Court may order parenting coordination, sua sponte or upon written or oral motion by one or both of the parties, when one or more of the following factors are present:
 - a. The parties have ongoing disagreements about the implementation of a parental rights and responsibilities or companionship time order and need assistance;
 - b. There is a history of extreme or ongoing parental conflict that has been unresolved by previous litigation or other interventions and from which a child of the parties is adversely affected;
 - c. The parties have a child whose parenting time schedule requires frequent adjustments, specified in an Order of the Court, to maintain age-appropriate contact with both parties, and the parties have been previously unable to reach agreements on their parenting time schedule without intervention by the Court;
 - d. The parties have a child with a medical or psychological condition or disability that requires frequent decisions regarding treatment or frequent adjustments in the parenting time schedule, specified in an Order of the Court, and the parties have been previously unable to reach agreements on their parenting time schedule without intervention by the Court;
 - e. One or both of the parties suffer from a medical or psychological condition or disability that results in an inability to reach agreements on, or to make adjustments in their parenting time schedule without assistance, even when minor in nature;

f. Any other factor as determined by the Court.

2. Parenting Coordinator Appointment Order

The appointment order shall set forth all of the following:

- a. The name, business address and business telephone number of the parenting coordinator;
- b. The specific powers and duties of the parenting coordinator;
- c. The term of the appointment;
- d. The scope of confidentiality;
- e. The fees and expenses to be charged for the services of the parenting coordinator;
- f. The parties' responsibility for the payment of fees and expenses for services rendered by the parenting coordinator;
- g. The parenting coordinator has the right to suspend all services until payment of any unpaid balances;
- h. The terms and conditions of parenting coordination;
- i. Any other provisions specifically agreed to by the parties not in conflict with the definition of parenting coordination as set forth in this rule.

3. Selection of Parenting Coordinator for Appointment

The parenting coordinator may be selected using one of the following methods:

- a. By the Court randomly, from the Court's roster of parenting coordinators;
or
- b. By the Court based on the type of case, and the qualifications and caseload of the parenting coordinator; or
- c. By agreement of the parties, from the Court's roster of parenting coordinators; or
- d. By any other method approved by the Court.

4. Prohibited Parenting Coordinator Appointments

The Court shall not appoint a parenting coordinator who does not possess the qualifications required by this rule, or who has served or is serving in a role that creates a professional conflict including, but not limited to, a child's attorney or child advocate, guardian ad litem, custody evaluator, therapist, consultant,

coach, or other mental health provider to any family member, or attorney of either party. Parties may not waive this prohibition.

5. Appointment of Mediator as Parenting Coordinator

With written consent of the parties, the individual who served as a mediator for the parties may be appointed as the parenting coordinator.

6. Termination or Modification of Parenting Coordinator Appointment

Upon motion of a party, for good cause shown, or sua sponte, the Court may terminate or modify the parenting coordinator appointment.

7. Parenting Coordinator Responsibilities

a. Ability to Perform Duties

A parenting coordinator shall report in writing to the Court Administrator any factor that would adversely affect the parenting coordinator's ability to perform the functions of a parenting coordinator.

b. Compliance with Appointment Order

A parenting coordinator shall comply with the requirements of, and act in accordance with the appointment order issued by the Court.

c. Independence, Objectivity, and Impartiality

A parenting coordinator shall maintain independence, objectivity, and impartiality, including avoiding the appearance of partiality, in dealings with parties and professionals, both in and out of the courtroom.

d. Conflicts of Interest

i. A parenting coordinator shall avoid any clear conflicts of interest arising from any relationship activity, including but not limited to those of employment or business or from professional or personal contacts with parties or others involved in the case. A parenting coordinator shall avoid self-dealing or associations from which the parenting coordinator may benefit, directly or indirectly, except from services as a parenting coordinator.

ii. Upon becoming aware of a clear conflict of interest, a parenting coordinator shall advise the Court Administrator and the parties in

writing of the action taken to resolve the conflict and, if unable to do so, seek the direction of the Court through the Court Administrator.

e. Ex parte Communications

A parenting coordinator shall not have ex parte communications with the Court regarding substantive matters or issues on the merits of the case.

f. Legal Advice

A parenting coordinator shall not offer legal advice.

g. Parenting Coordination Agreements, Reports, and Decisions

i. Parties shall sign and abide by agreements reached during a parenting coordination session, which shall be maintained in the parenting coordination file. The parenting coordinator shall provide a copy to each party and their attorneys, if any.

ii. The parenting coordinator shall first attempt to assist the parties in reaching an agreement that resolves the dispute. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement, the parenting coordinator shall issue a written decision that is effective immediately. The parenting coordinator shall provide copies to the parties and their attorneys, if any. The decision shall be promptly filed with the Court and include all of the following:

- (1) Case caption, including the case number;
- (2) Date of the decision;
- (3) The decision of the parenting coordinator;
- (4) Facts of the dispute and facts upon which the decision is based;
- (5) Reasons supporting the decision;
- (6) The manner in which the decision was provided to the parties;
- (7) Any other necessary information.

iii. A party may file written objections to a parenting coordinator's decision with the Court and serve all other parties to the action within fourteen days of the filing date of the decision. If any party timely files objections, any other party may also file objections with the Court and serve all other parties to the action, not later than ten

days after the first objections are filed. The party filing the initial objections shall obtain a hearing date and a ruling shall be issued by a Judge or Magistrate within thirty days of the last objection filed.

- iv. Upon request of the Court, the parenting coordinator shall prepare a written report including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - (1) Dates of parenting coordination sessions;
 - (2) Whether the parenting coordination sessions occurred or were terminated;
 - (3) Requests to reschedule a parenting coordination session, including the name of the requestor and whether the request was approved;
 - (4) Whether an agreement was reached on some, all, or none of the issues;
 - (5) Who was in attendance at each session;
 - (6) The date and time of future parenting coordination sessions;
 - (7) Whether any decisions were written, and if so, the dates.

8. Parenting Coordination Procedures

- a. Screening for and Disclosure of Domestic Abuse and Domestic Violence
 - ii. All cases shall be screened for domestic abuse and domestic violence by the parenting coordinator before the commencement of the parenting coordination process and by the parenting coordinator during the parenting coordination process.
 - ii. All parties and counsel shall immediately advise the parenting coordinator of any domestic violence convictions and/or allegations known to them or which become known to them during the parenting coordination process.
 - iii. When domestic abuse or domestic violence is alleged, suspected, or present, before proceeding, a parenting coordinator shall do each of the following:

- (1) Fully inform the person who is, or may be the victim of domestic violence about the parenting coordination process and the option to have a support person present at parenting coordination sessions;
- (2) Have procedures in place to provide for the safety of all persons involved in the parenting coordination process;
- (3) Have procedures in place to terminate the parenting coordination session/process if there is a continued threat of domestic abuse, domestic violence, or coercion between the parties.

b. Disclosure of Abuse, Neglect, and Harm

A parenting coordinator shall inform the parties that the parenting coordinator shall report any suspected child abuse or neglect and any apparent serious risk of harm to a family member's self, another family member, or a third party to child protective services, law enforcement, or other appropriate authority. A parenting coordinator shall report child abuse or neglect pursuant to the procedures set forth in R.C. 2151.421.

c. Attendance and Participation

i. The parties shall contact and meet with the parenting coordinator within thirty days of the appointment order. Parties shall attend parenting coordination sessions as requested by the parenting coordinator. Requests to reschedule parenting coordination sessions shall be approved by the parenting coordinator.

ii. A parenting coordinator shall allow attendance and participation of the parties and, if the parties wish, their attorneys and any other individuals designated by the parties.

d. Referrals to Support Services

A parenting coordinator shall provide information regarding referrals to other resources as appropriate.

e. Parenting Coordinator Evaluations

i. A parenting coordinator shall provide parties with the parenting coordinator evaluation form, provided by the Court, prior to the first parenting coordination session and at the end of the term of the

appointment. The evaluation form shall be completed by the parties and submitted to the Court Administrator.

ii. The Court Administrator shall complete a review of the parenting coordinators on the Court's roster in January of each year.

f. Complaint of Parenting Coordinator Misconduct

i. A party to a case in which a parenting coordinator has been appointed may file a complaint regarding misconduct of the parenting coordinator within one year from the termination of the appointment. Dissatisfaction with the decisions of the parenting coordinator does not constitute misconduct.

ii. The complaint shall be submitted to the office of the Court Administrator, and include all of the following:

(1) The case caption and case number;

(2) The name of the parenting coordinator;

(3) The name and contact information for the person making the complaint;

(4) The nature of any alleged misconduct or violation;

(5) The date the alleged misconduct or violation occurred.

iii. The Court Administrator shall provide a copy of the complaint to the parenting coordinator;

iv. The parenting coordinator has fourteen days from the date of receipt of the complaint to respond in writing to the office of the Court Administrator.

v. The Court designee shall conduct an investigation into the allegations and shall issue a response.

g. Fees

A parenting coordinator shall be paid an hourly rate, as agreed to by the parties and the parenting coordinator. If the Court determines that the parties are indigent, some of the fees associated with the parenting coordinator may be waived. The parenting coordinator has the right to suspend all services until payment of any unpaid balances.

9. Confidentiality and Privilege

Except as provided by law, communications made as part of parenting coordination, including communications between the parties and their children and the parenting coordinator, communications between the parenting coordinator and other relevant parties, and communications with the Court, shall not be confidential. Except as provided by law, parenting coordination shall not be privileged.

10. Public Access

The files maintained by the parenting coordinator but not filed with the Clerk of Court or submitted to the Court shall not be available for public access pursuant to Rules 44 through 47 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio.

11. Model Standards

The Court and a parenting coordinator shall comply with the “Guidelines for Parenting Coordination” developed by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Task Force on Parenting Coordination. Wherever a conflict exists between the “Guidelines for Parenting Coordination” and this rule, this rule shall control.

12. Court Reporting Requirements

On or before February 1st of each year, the Court shall file with the Dispute Resolution Section of the Supreme Court of Ohio all of the following:

- a. A copy of this rule;
- b. A copy of the Court’s current roster of parenting coordinators;
- c. A copy of each new or updated resume received by the Court from a parenting coordinator during the previous year;
- d. A copy of each list of continuing education training received by the Court from each parenting coordinator.

13. Sanctions

The Court may impose sanctions for any violation of this rule which may include, but is not limited to, attorney’s fees and other costs, contempt, or other appropriate sanctions at the discretion of the Court.

Effective 04/01/2017, Amended 02/09/26

33. REQUESTS FOR INTERPRETER

- A. When interpretive services are needed, the attorney or party requesting an interpreter shall complete the REQUEST FOR INTERPRETER form, available from the Domestic Relations Clerks, Juvenile Clerks or from the Assignment Commissioners, and submit it to the hearing officer to whom the case is assigned, no later than ten days prior to the scheduled hearing.
- B. The Court will arrange for an appropriate interpreter to be present at the hearing.
- C. It is the responsibility of the requesting party to immediately notify the hearing officer if there is any change in the date or time of the hearing. Failure to do so may result in the requesting party being held responsible for payment of the interpreter's fee for time spent attempting to attend the hearing.

Effective 02/02/2024

Approved as of February 9, 2026.



Sherry L. Glass, Judge



Frank J. Janik, Judge



Lisa I. Swenski, Judge

APPENDIX

**IN THE COMMON PLEAS COURT
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION
LORAIN COUNTY, OHIO**

Plaintiff	CASE NO. _____
vs.	JUDGE
Defendant	MUTUAL RESTRAINING ORDERS

The Court, having taken judicial notice of the Complaint and motion filed, and of the fact that a domestic dispute has arisen between the parties, issues the following orders:

1. Each party is restrained from threatening, annoying, harassing, abusing or otherwise interfering with the other, or causing others to do so.
2. Each party is restrained from concealing, selling, transferring, encumbering or otherwise disposing, dissipating or diminishing the value of the assets of the parties without prior Court order.
3. Each party is restrained from incurring further charges upon the credit of the other or incurring debt in the name of the other.
4. Each party is restrained from canceling, changing or failing to renew any health, dental, optical, life, home, automobile or other insurance that may be in place for any family member.

5. Each party is restrained from removing the other party as an insured or beneficiary from any life or retirement benefits.

All until further order of Court.

DATE

JUDGE/MAGISTRATE

**LORAIN COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
DOMESTIC AND JUVENILE DIVISIONS
SEMINAR FOR SEPARATING PARENTS NOTICE**

_____ Date _____
_____ Case _____
_____ Judge _____

You are required by the Court to attend the Seminar for Separating Parents. There are three options to fulfill this requirement, as explained below. You must register no later than 3 days prior to the seminar date. Space is limited for the in-person seminar, so you are encouraged to register as soon as possible.

**To register for the FREE In-Person Seminar or On-Line Webinar,
you can scan the QR code or visit <https://www.lcdrc.org/>:**



Option 1: Free In-Person Seminar

Where: Lorain County Justice Center, 225 Court Street, Elyria Ohio

When: Once every other month on a Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

Instructions: Please arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled seminar time. No late entry, and doors lock at 9:00 a.m. Only those registered will be admitted. Children, relatives, or any person other than those registered will NOT be permitted to enter the building or attend the seminar.

Option 2: Free On-Line Webinar

Where: Online through Zoom

When: Once every other month on a Monday from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

Instructions: After you register, you will receive a link for the webinar that will grant you access to the webinar. You will be asked polling questions throughout the webinar to ensure participation.

**Option 3: On-Line Class through Center for Divorce Education
(Minimum of \$25.00, but costs may fluctuate)**

You can also complete a 4-hour class online through the Center for Divorce Education. **This is the ONLY online course the Court has approved to fulfill the requirement to attend the Seminar for Separating Parents.** You must provide proof of completing this course to the Court by emailing the certificate to parenting.seminar@lcfct.org, and you can complete this course by going to the following website: <https://divorce-education.com/oh/lorain/>.

If you have questions or need assistance registering for the seminar, please contact Court Services at (440)326-4846 or parenting.seminar@lcfct.org, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Si necesita un intérprete, por favor llaman al 440-329-5471 y deje su nombre, número de caso y su número de telefono,