

**INDIVIDUAL PRACTICES IN CIVIL CASES**  
**SARAH NETBURN, UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

**Chambers**

Thurgood Marshall Courthouse  
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**Courtroom**

Thurgood Marshall Courthouse  
40 Foley Square, Courtroom 219  
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**Unless otherwise ordered, these Individual Practices apply in all civil matters.**

Magistrate judges preside over civil cases in two ways: (1) for one or more specific purposes, pursuant to an order of reference by the assigned district judge, or (2) for all purposes, on the consent of all parties, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(c). Once counsel has consented for all purposes, and the consent form is signed by the district judge, the magistrate judge may conduct all proceedings in a civil action and order the entry of a final judgment. The right to trial by jury is preserved, and appeals are sent directly to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

In the Southern District of New York, it is the uniform practice of magistrate judges to schedule civil trials for firm dates, rather than requiring counsel to be available on short notice. Magistrate judges often will also have greater availability to schedule trials at the parties' convenience. Should the parties wish to have Judge Netburn hear their case for all purposes, the Consent to Proceed Before U.S. Magistrate Judge form is available on the Court's website.

**I. Communications with Chambers**

- A. Letters.** Except as otherwise provided below, communications with the Court should be by letter. Unless there is a request to file a letter under seal or a letter contains sensitive or confidential information, letters should be filed electronically on the Electronic Case Filing (ECF) system, without an emailing a copy to chambers.

*Ex parte* settlement letters, proposed case management plans, or letters otherwise containing sensitive or confidential information should be emailed to Chambers as a .pdf (not .pdf/A) attachment to [Netburn\\_NYSDChambers@nysd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Netburn_NYSDChambers@nysd.uscourts.gov). E-mails shall state in the subject line: (1) the caption of the case, including the lead party names and docket number; and (2) a brief description of the contents of the letter. Parties shall not include substantive communications in the body of the e-mail; such communications shall be included only in the attached letter. Confidential information should be clearly indicated as such.

Whether filed electronically or not, letters may not exceed 5 pages in length (exclusive of exhibits). Letters solely between parties or their counsel or otherwise not addressed to the Court may not be filed on ECF or otherwise sent to the Court (except as exhibits to an otherwise properly filed document).

In *pro se* cases, letters filed on ECF or sent to Chambers by counsel shall also be sent to the *pro se* litigant's e-mail address, if permission is granted by the *pro se* litigant. If permission is withheld, or e-mail is otherwise unavailable, counsel shall mail a copy to the *pro se* litigant and indicate this in its letter to the Court.

- B. Letter-Motions.** Letter-motions may be filed via ECF if they comply with the S.D.N.Y. Local Rules and the S.D.N.Y. Electronic Case Filing Rules and Instructions. In particular, parties shall file as letter-motions all requests for adjournments, extensions, pre-motion conferences (including pre-motion conferences with respect to discovery disputes) and requests for a settlement conference.
  
- C. Hand Deliveries.** Hand-delivered mail should be left with the Court Security Officers at the Worth Street entrance of 500 Pearl Street and may not be brought directly to Chambers. If the hand-delivered letter is urgent and requires the Court's immediate attention, ask the Court Security Officers to notify Chambers that an urgent package has arrived.
  
- D. Docketing, Scheduling and Calendar Matters.** For docketing, scheduling and calendar matters, call the Courtroom Deputy at (212) 805-0286 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Other than for docketing, scheduling and calendar matters, telephone calls to Chambers are permitted only for *urgent* matters requiring immediate attention.
  
- E. Faxes.** Faxes are *not* permitted except with prior approval of Chambers, which will be granted only for good cause. If granted, the fax must not exceed five pages and must be submitted to Chambers at (212) 805-7998. All faxes must identify the person in Chambers who authorized the fax and copies must simultaneously be faxed or delivered to all parties. Do not follow with a hardcopy. Faxes sent without prior permission will not be read.
  
- F. Service in Pro Se Cases.** In *pro se* cases, counsel must serve the *pro se party* with a paper copy of any document that is filed electronically and must separately file a proof of service with the Court.
  
- G. Requests for Adjournments or Extensions of Time.** All requests for adjournments or extensions of time must be filed on ECF as letter-motions. (If a request contains sensitive or confidential information, it may be submitted by .pdf e-mail in lieu of being filed electronically.) The letter-motion must state: (1) the original date(s); (2) the number of previous requests for adjournment or extension; (3) whether these previous requests were granted or denied; and (4) whether the adversary consents and, if not, the reasons given by the adversary for refusing to consent. If a conference must be rescheduled, counsel may propose alternative dates and the Court will try to

accommodate that request. Absent good cause, any request for extension or adjournment shall be made **at least 48 hours** before the deadline or scheduled appearance.

- H. **ECF.** In accordance with the Electronic Case Filing Rules and Instructions, counsel are required to register promptly as ECF filers and to enter an appearance in the case. The pertinent instructions are available on the Court website, at <https://nysd.uscourts.gov/electronic-case-filing>. Counsel are responsible for updating their contact information on ECF, should it change, and they are responsible for checking the docket sheet regularly, regardless of whether they receive an ECF notification of case activity. For questions about ECF rules and procedures, please contact the ECF help desk at (212) 805-0800.

## II. Pre-Trial Practice

- A. **Initial Case Management Conference.** Parties must confer and then email a joint Proposed Civil Case Management Plan and Scheduling Order to the Court one week before the conference as a .pdf attachment consistent with Paragraph I(a) above. This document is available at <https://nysd.uscourts.gov/hon-sarah-netburn>.
- B. An **incarcerated party** may not be able to attend this or other conferences but may be able to participate by telephone or video conference. If appropriate, the Court's scheduling order will outline the procedures for the telephone or video conference.
- C. **Discovery Disputes.** Parties shall follow Local Rule 37.2 with the following modifications. Any party wishing to raise a discovery dispute with the Court must first confer in good faith with the opposing party, in person or by telephone, in an effort to resolve the dispute. If this meet-and-confer process does not resolve the dispute, the party may submit an ECF letter-motion to the Court, no longer than five pages, explaining the nature of the dispute and requesting an informal conference. Such letter **must include evidence that the meet-and-confer process occurred**, including when and whether it was in person or over the telephone. noting when and whether it was in person or over the telephone. Any responsive letter should be submitted within three business days. Confidential information should be clearly indicated as such in letters.

## III. Motions

- A. **Conferences of Counsel before Filing Motions.** Excluding cases involving *pro se* parties, or in connection with motions for summary judgment, actions for judicial review of a decision by the Commissioner of Social Security, or petitions for a writ of *habeas corpus*, counsel contemplating filing a motion shall first contact opposing counsel to discuss thoroughly, in person or by telephone, the substance of the

contemplated motion and any potential resolution. If a motion pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b) or 12(c) is contemplated, the plaintiff or counterclaimant must indicate whether it wishes to amend the subject pleading before motion practice, and the parties must consider a stipulation permitting such amendment. If the parties are unable to reach a resolution, counsel for *the moving party shall include the following statement in the notice of motion*: “This motion is made following the conference of counsel, which took place on [date]. Plaintiff [or Counter Claimant] declined an opportunity to amend.”

- B. Memoranda of Law.** The typeface, margins and spacing of motion papers must conform to Local Civil Rule 11.1. Unless prior permission has been granted, memoranda of law in support of and in opposition to motions are limited to 25 pages and reply memoranda are limited to 10 pages. Memoranda of 10 pages or more shall contain a table of contents and a table of authorities, neither of which shall count against the page limit. Sur-reply memoranda will not be accepted without prior permission of the Court. The Court has a strong preference that unreported cases be cited using the Westlaw format (*i.e.* 2004 WL 2163741).

All moving papers, letter-motions, and letters filed on ECF or emailed to chambers must be in *searchable PDF form*. Typically, this means that a document created using word-processing software must be converted to PDF from the original word-processing file. PDF images may not be created by scanning paper documents.

- C. Courtesy Copies.** One courtesy copy of all motion papers, marked as such, shall be submitted to Chambers *by the movant after the motion has been fully briefed*. Courtesy copies should not be submitted to Chambers on a rolling basis. All courtesy copies should be placed in *well-organized three-ring binder(s)*. For all motions, oppositions, and replies containing multiple items of documentary evidence, the evidence must be divided into exhibits, separated by tab dividers, and preceded by an exhibit list. The moving party should submit the courtesy copies to Chambers no later than *one week* after the motion became fully briefed.
- D. Oral Argument on Motions.** Parties may file a motion for oral argument when the motion has been fully briefed and courtesy copies are submitted to Chambers.
- E. Proposed Stipulations and Orders.** Except as otherwise provided in these Rules and Practices, parties should electronically file proposed stipulations and orders that they wish the Court to sign in accordance with the ECF Rules and Instructions. Courtesy copies need not be sent to Chambers.

**F. Redactions and Electronic Filing Under Seal.** All Confidential Materials filed with the Court may be redacted or filed under seal only as the Court directs upon appropriate application by either party.

To avoid the unnecessary filing of documents under seal, counsel for the Parties will discuss the need to file Confidential Materials under seal. If the parties agree in writing that a particular document that has been designated Confidential Material shall not be filed under seal, that document can be filed without redaction and such filing will not be a breach of any Stipulation of Confidentiality.

Any party wishing to file in redacted form any pleading, motion, memorandum, exhibit, or other document, or any portion thereof, must make a specific request to the Court by letter explaining the reasons for seeking to file that submission under seal and addressing the request in light of the Court of Appeals' opinion in Lugosch v. Pyramid Co. of Onondaga, 435 F.3d 110 (2d Cir. 2006). For a request for redaction, the parties shall confer and jointly submit the request for one.

Motions or Letter Motions for approval of sealed or redacted filings in civil and miscellaneous cases and the subject documents, including the proposed sealed document(s), must be filed electronically through the court's ECF system *in conformity with the Court's Standing Order, 19-mc-00583, and ECF Rules & Instructions, section 6.*

The motion must be filed in public view, must explain the reasons for seeking to file that information under seal and should not include confidential information sought to be filed under seal. Supporting papers must be separately filed electronically and may be filed under seal or redacted only to the extent necessary to safeguard information sought to be filed under seal.

The proposed sealed document must be contemporaneously filed under seal in the ECF system and electronically related to the motion. The summary docket text, but not the sealed document, will be open to public inspection and should not include confidential information sought to be filed under seal.

Where the motion seeks approval to redact information from a document that is to be publicly filed, the filing party shall: (a) publicly file the document with the proposed redactions, and (b) electronically file under seal a copy of the unredacted document with the proposed redactions highlighted. Both documents must be electronically filed through the ECF system and related to the motion.

#### IV. Pretrial Procedures

**Joint Pretrial Order.** After the close of discovery, the Court will file a Scheduling Order containing instructions for the parties' Proposed Joint Pretrial Order.

In *pro se* cases, no Joint Pretrial Order is needed. Instead, within 30 days after the completion of discovery each party shall file its own Pretrial Statement. The *pro se* party's Pretrial Statement need take no particular form, but must be concise and contain: (1) a statement of the facts the party hopes to prove at trial; (2) a list of all documents or other physical objects that the party plans to put into evidence at trial; and (3) a list of the names and addresses of all witnesses the party intends to have testify at trial. The Statement must be sworn by the party to be true and accurate based on the facts known by the party. The party must file an original Statement with the *Pro Se* Office (see I(a)) and serve a copy on all other parties or their counsel if represented. The original Statement must indicate the date a copy was mailed to the other party or that party's attorney.

*For questions about these practices, please contact the Courtroom Deputy at (212) 805-0286.*