Procedures for Representing Yourself in
Small Claim and Eviction Hearings, and Traffic Trials

On the day and time of the scheduled hearing or trial the court will identify the matter to be heard and determine if the parties (plaintiff and defendant) still want to have a hearing. If both parties want a hearing the court will ask if either of the parties intend to testify at the hearing. At that time any party involved in testimony will be sworn.

General Rules of Procedure

The case of the plaintiff (or petitioner) will be presented first. The plaintiff may present testimony at this time or at any time during the plaintiff portion of the case.

> It may be helpful or even necessary for the plaintiff to support testimony with records and the testimony of other persons who have information about the issues.
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> The rules of evidence are applicable to the hearing or trial.
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> Before asking the court to consider documents, photographs and other physical evidence, it is necessary to show all evidence to the defendant (the other party) before presenting it to the court. The defendant has the right to object to evidence prepared for consideration by the court.
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> Ask short, direct and relevant questions of witnesses to bring forth the factual information the court should consider. This is not the time for a witness to make statements or offer their own explanation of the issues.
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> No one can argue with witnesses.
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> When the plaintiff is finished asking questions of a witness the defendant will have the opportunity to ask questions of the witness.
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> When the plaintiff is finished presenting the case the plaintiff will notify the court.

The case of the defendant (or respondent) will be presented second. The defendant may present testimony at this time or at any time during the defendant portion of the case.

> The courtroom procedure described above for plaintiff will be afforded to the defendant.
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> When the defendant is finished presenting the case the defendant will notify the court.

At the conclusion of the case of the defendant the court will give the plaintiff an opportunity to present closing statements to the court. At the conclusion of the closing statement of the plaintiff the court will give the defendant an opportunity to present closing statements to the court.

After the plaintiff and the defendant finish closing statements the court will make a decision in the case in the form of a general judgment. A copy of the general judgment will be given to the plaintiff and to the defendant. The original of the general judgement will be placed into the physical case file of the plaintiff, which will be available in the administrative office. Certified copies of the judgment

(or order) can be purchased from the administrative office once the judgment (or order) has been placed into the physical file.

Courtroom Conduct

1. Do not interrupt the judge.

2. Do not talk out of turn. Only one person may speak at a time. A speaker must be allowed to finish speaking before another question is asked, or before a reply is spoken.

3. Make your statements to the court, not to the other party in the case. Do not argue with the other party or any witness during the proceedings.

4. Be on time for the hearing or trial.

5. Dress appropriately for court. A court hearing is an important matter. Hats will not be worn while in the courtroom.

6. Case participants may not chew gum in the courtroom.