

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2.302-9/08\*

IN RE: COMPANION, REFILED, AND  
TRANSFERRED CASES

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Sound principles of judicial economy require the establishment of procedures to govern the assignment of companion, refiled and transfer of cases for pretrial management purposes.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, pursuant to the authority conferred by Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, it is **ORDERED** as follows:

**A. COMPANION CASES**

1. When two or more cases concerning the same subject matter (“**companion cases**”) are filed with the court at the same time, the attorney filing the cases shall notify the Clerk of Court, in writing, that companion cases are being filed.
  - a. The clerk, utilizing the blind-assignment system, shall select one judge and assign all designated companion cases to that judge.
  - b. The clerk shall file a written notice that the cases have been assigned in compliance with this order and a copy of this notice shall be served with the summons and complaint.
2. If companion cases are **filed at different times and are** assigned to different judges, **or if cases filed pursuant to paragraph 1 above were not assigned to the same judge**, it shall be the continuing duty of counsel of record to notify, in writing, all judges involved and to file a motion to **transfer** the cases to the judge with the lowest numbered case.
3. **In the interest of judicial economy**, companion cases may be consolidated for discovery and/or trial, and the order of consolidation shall specify either or both. When such a consolidation is ordered, the case files shall remain separate and pleadings shall continue to be filed in their appropriate file. Companion cases shall not be consolidated into one pleading file.
4. **Motions and Orders must be filed separately in each case. The caption of any pleading or order shall only bear the underlying case number with no reference to the companion case number.**

5. **A transfer may be initiated by the Court on its own motion.**

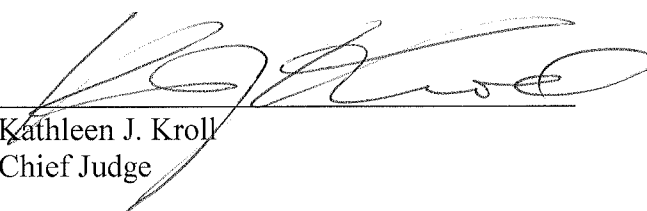
**B. REFILED CASES**

6. When a case is voluntarily dismissed and, is subsequently refiled, the newly-filed action shall be assigned to the division of court in which the original action was assigned. It is the duty of the attorney or the party refiling the action to advise the clerk of the prior voluntary dismissal.

**C. CASE MANAGEMENT IN MULTIPLE COURT DIVISIONS**

7. **Multiple Court Divisions shall consist of those court divisions as set forth in Local Rule 1 (Appellate Division, Civil Division, Criminal Division, Family Law Division, Foreclosure Division, and Probate/Guardianship Division).**
8. **When a significant number of actions are pending in more than one Court Division that involve the same or similar parties, or are substantially similar in subject matter, or arise from the same transaction or occurrence, the Chief Judge in consultation with the affected Division Judges, may appoint a managing judge to oversee case management.**
9. Each separate action that is transferred for pretrial purposes requires a separate order, to be rendered by the Chief Judge, the division judge or the managing judge to whom the case is assigned. Each suit shall maintain its independent status with respect to the rights of the parties involved. Any objections to the transfer shall be made to the managing judge.
10. The extent of the managing judge's duties shall be determined by the **Case Management Order.**
11. Motions shall be filed under the assigned case number and in the division to which the case is assigned irrespective of the managing judge's division.

**DONE and SIGNED**, in Chambers, at West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, this 29 day of September, 2008.

  
Kathleen J. Kroll  
Chief Judge

\*supersedes admin. order 2.009-6/07