

Conferences

A. Scheduling/Status

When a case has been referred for all pretrial proceedings or for all discovery, the Court may hold a status, scheduling, or discovery conference as needed. If counsel believes that a conference would be productive, counsel may request such a conference by calling the case manager. This conference will require the personal appearances of all counsel of record.

In a particular case, where discovery disputes appear to multiply needlessly or where many motions are filed, the Court may set the matter for a general discovery conference or direct the parties to conduct a Rule 26(f) conference prior to meeting with the magistrate judge.

B. Settlement

The Court views facilitation as a valuable part of the litigation process and encourages the parties and counsel to consider voluntary settlement conferences when and where appropriate. Settlement conferences are usually set to begin at 10:00 a.m., and the Court will be prepared to devote the entire day for the conference. Counsel are advised that their schedules and those of their clients are to be cleared for the entire day. Under no circumstances will a party be permitted to only have counsel attend the settlement conference without the Court's prior approval. After a settlement conference has been scheduled, the Court will send a Notice with additional information.

An insured party need not attend unless the settlement decision will be made in part by the insured. When the settlement decision will be made in whole or part by an insurer, the insurer must send a representative in person with full and complete authority to make settlement decisions. A corporate party must send an authorized representative with full and complete authority to make settlement decisions and to bind the company. A governmental entity must send an authorized representative with full and complete authority to make settlement decisions and to bind the governmental entity, understanding that some settlement decisions may be subject to further approval by an elected municipal board. A party appearing at the conference with authority to settle for only a limited amount will be in violation of this directive.

In cases that are referred for settlement conferences, all parties shall, no later than 5 business days before the scheduled conference, deliver to the Magistrate Judge's chambers a confidential, *ex parte* mediation summary (do not electronically file the mediation summary). In matters where the parties are represented by the same counsel, only one summary will be required to be submitted on behalf of all the parties counsel represents. The summary shall describe any settlement discussions that have taken place, including any offers of settlement that have been made. Scheduling and all other contact regarding settlement conferences will be handled by the case manager.