

The Circuit Court for Howard County, Maryland 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit  
**Civil Differentiated Case Management Plan**  
**Updated August 2024**

# Civil Differentiated Case Management Plan

The Civil Non-Domestic DCM plan includes the following case types:

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	IPMS	Independent Proceedings - Miscellaneous
APA	Appeal - Administrative Agency	IPPD	Independent Proceedings - Production of Documents Request
APDM	Appeal - District Court Motion	IPPT	Independent Proceedings - Perpetuate Testimony/Evidence
APOC	Appeal - Orphans Court	IPST	Independent Proceedings - Sentence Transfer
APOS	Adverse Possession	IPSA	Independent Proceedings - Spec Admission - Out of State Attorney
APPO	Appeal - Peace Order	IPSI	Independent Proceedings - Subpoena Issue/Quash
ARB	Arbitration	IPST	Independent Proceedings - Sentence Transfer
ATG	Attorney Grievance	IPTS	Independent Proceedings - Trustee Substitution
BONF	Judgment - Bond Forfeiture	IPWA	Independent Proceedings - Witness App, Request to Compel
BROL	Breach of Lease	BONF	Judgment - Bond Forfeiture
CCL	Judgment - County/City Lien	CCL	Judgment - County/City Lien
CD	Condemnation/Eminent Domain	DCL	Judgment - District Court Lien
CFJ	Confessed Judgement	FX	Judgment - Federal Lien
CNAS	Contract - Asbestos	HCL	Judgment - Health Care Lien
CNBR	Contract - Breach	HX	Judgment - Hospital Lien
CNCM	Contract - Commercial	MX	Judgement - Medical Assistance Lien
CNCN	Contract - Construction	MSL	Judgment - Miscellaneous Lien
CNDB	Contract - Debt	MJ	Judgment - Monetary
CNFR	Contract - Fraud	OJ	Judgment - Other Court
CNGO	Contract - Government	REST	Judgment - Restitution
CNIN	Contract - Insurance	MSTL	Judgment - State Tax Lien
CNPR	Contract - Product Liability	PF	Petition for Compliance
CNTP	Contempt	PRR	Prisoner Rights
CONDE	Consumer Debt	PROW	Property - Ownership
CVMUMN	Municipal Infraction	PRPS	Property - Partition/Sale
CVRI	Civil Rights	PRQT	Property - Quiet Title
DCL	Judgment - District Court Lien	PRRS	Property - Return of Seized
DETN	Detinue	PIAR	Public Information Act Record
DISC	Discrimination	QUIS	Quarantine/Isolation
DIST	Distress/Distrain for Rent	RCVR	Receivership
DLLRL	Judgment - Maryland Department of Labor	RESC	Rent Escrow
EEHR	EEO/HRC	REPL	Replevin
EJET	Ejectment	RD	Right of Redemption
ELEC	Election Law	STSE	Structured Settlements
ENVI	Environmental	TNHO	Tenant Holding Over
ERCN	Error Coram Nobis	TOAS	Tort - Assault
FF	Forfeiture	TOBA	Tort - Battery
FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)	TOCM	Tort - Commercial
FMLA	Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	TOCN	Tort - Conspiracy
FOL	Judgment - Foreign	TOCV	Tort - Conversion
FRCN	Foreclosure - Commercial	TODE	Tort - Defamation
FRIR	Foreclosure - In Rem.	TOFA	Tort - False Arrest/Imprisonment
FROO	Foreclosure - Residential	TOFR	Tort - Fraud
FS	Friendly Suit	TOLP	Tort - Lead Paint
FTPM	Failure to Pay Rent - Mobile Home	TOLC	Tort - Loss of Consortium
FTPR	Failure to Pay Rent	TOMP	Tort - Malicious Prosecution
FX	Judgment - Federal Lien	MEDMAL	Tort - Malpractice Medical
GRPO	Grantor in Possession	PM	Tort - Malpractice Professional
HC	Habeas Corpus	TOMS	Tort - Misrepresentation
HCL	Judgment - Health Care Lien	MT	Tort - Motor
HG	Health General	NG	Tort - Negligence
HX	Judgment - Hospital Lien	TONU	Tort - Nuisance
IJ	Injunction	OT	Tort - Other
IPAA	Independent Proceedings - Attorney Appointment	TOPL	Tort - Premises Liability
IPBA	Independent Proceedings - Body Attachment Issuance	PDL	Tort - Product Liability
IPBC	Independent Proceedings - Birth Certificate Amendment	TT	Tort - Toxic
IPDB	Independent Proceedings - Dispose Body	TOTR	Tort - Trespass
IPDC	Independent Proceedings - Death Certificate Issuance/Correction	WC	Appeal - Administrative Agency - WCC
IPDD	Independent Proceedings - Declare Deceased	WD	Tort - Wrongful Death
IPDN	Independent Proceedings - Deposition Notice	TRST	Trustee
IPFI	Independent Proceedings - Financial	WRCE	Writ of Certiorari
IPGJ	Independent Proceedings - Grand Jury/Petit Jury	WR	Writ of Garnishment/Execution
IPIC	Independent Proceedings - Issuance of Commission	WRON	Wrongful Detainer-Grantor in Possession
IPJNC	Independent Proceedings - Juror Non-Compliance	WRTE	Wrongful Termination
IPMC	Independent Proceedings - Marriage Certificate Amendment		

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Differentiated Case Management (DCM) is a concept designed to improve the efficiency of case processing and reduce the demand for judicial intervention at every phase of litigation. DCM achieves these goals by the early differentiation of cases entering the justice system in terms of the nature and extent of judicial/justice system resources they will require. Each case is then assigned to the appropriate case track established within the court system that allows for the performance of pre-trial tasks and allocates the appropriate level of judicial and other system resources, minimizing processing delays.

This Civil DCM Plan is established in accordance with Md. Rule 16-302(b), which requires the County Administrative Judge to develop and, upon approval by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland Court, implement and monitor a case management plan for the prompt and efficient scheduling and disposition of actions in the Circuit Court.

### **Statement of Purpose**

From the commencement of litigation to its resolution, whether by trial or settlement, any elapsed time other than reasonably required for pleadings, discovery, and court events, is unacceptable and should be eliminated. To enable just and efficient resolution of cases, the court, not the lawyers or litigants, should control the pace of litigation. A strong judicial commitment is essential to reducing delay and to maintaining a current docket.

This Civil DCM Plan is designed to facilitate settlement as early in the case as possible to spare the parties the unnecessary expense of coming to court. Cases are only set for trial, when the case is in a posture to proceed with trial. This process avoids unnecessary delays. By setting a date for the Merits Hearing later in the case, the court can more accurately schedule the appropriate number of cases on a said day, and parties and counsel can be assured that their case will proceed to trial on the assigned date. Established mechanisms avoid multiple court appearances and assure the timely provision of resources for the expeditious processing and resolution of cases on each track.

### **Information Sheet**

In compliance with [Md. Rule 2-111](#), all parties must file an Information Sheet.

**Plaintiff's Civil Information Sheet:** The plaintiff shall file a [Civil Non-Domestic Information Sheet](#) together with the complaint. In compliance with [Md. Rule 2-112](#), the Clerk will issue a summons together with a Scheduling Order.

**Defendant's Civil Information Sheet:** In compliance with [Md. Rule 2-323](#), the defendant shall file with the answer a [Civil Non-Domestic Information Sheet](#) if (1) the plaintiff has failed to file the [Civil Non-Domestic Information Sheet](#) required by [Md. Rule 2-111\(a\)](#), (2) the defendant disagrees with anything contained in an information sheet filed by the plaintiff, (3) the defendant disagrees with a differentiated case management track previously selected by the court, or (4) the defendant has filed or expects to file a counterclaim, cross-claim or third-party claim. If the defendant fails to file a required information sheet with the answer, the court may continue the action on any track previously assigned.

### **Attorneys' Fees**

A party that asserts a claim for attorneys' fees pursuant to [Md. Rules 2-703](#), [2-704](#), or [2-705](#) shall include the claim in the party's initial pleading, or by amended pleading, as required by the Md. Rules. The trial judge shall determine if a Scheduling Conference and/or enhanced procedures are warranted unless otherwise ordered by the court. The determinations listed in [Md. Rule 2-703\(c\)](#) shall be made by the trial judge. Evidence regarding a party's entitlement to attorneys' fees and the amount of said fees shall be presented post-verdict in the underlying cause of action unless otherwise ordered by the court.

If a party intends to assert that the case is likely to result in a substantial claim for attorneys' fees for services provided over a long period of time, the party shall provide a written statement to the court, within 30 days of receipt of the Scheduling Order. The written statement shall set forth whether the claim is pursuant to the law, a statute, or a contract. If the claim is pursuant to a contract, it shall state whether the claim is part of the damages being sought or is due to the prevailing party. It shall also identify the legal theory, statute or contract provision and whether the claim is triable by a jury. It shall also address whether the Guidelines Regarding Compensable and Non-compensable Attorneys' Fees and Related Expenses contained as an Appendix to the Rules should be applicable. Upon a finding by the court that enhanced procedures are necessary, and unless otherwise ordered by the court, the procedures shall include that the parties shall provide to the parties against whom the award is sought quarterly statements showing the total amount of time all attorneys, paralegals and other professionals have spent on the case during the quarter and the total value of that time. Evidence regarding a party's entitlement to attorneys' fees and the amount of said fees shall be presented post-verdict in the underlying cause of action unless

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otherwise ordered by the court. Any award of attorneys' fees shall be made in a judgment that is separate from any judgment entered in the underlying cause of action unless otherwise ordered by the court.

### **Amended Complaint/Third-Party Complaint**

Filing an **amended, counter, cross, or third-party complaint** will not change any of the dates currently set. A motion and order to extend or modify will need to be filed. These motions will initially be referred to the Calendar & Caseflow Management Office (CCMO) for review and then forwarded to the County Administrative Judge for ruling.

### **Compliance**

The Circuit Court for Howard County will take appropriate steps to ensure compliance with all Scheduling Orders and other orders issued in accordance with this Civil (Non-Domestic) DCM Plan. Attorneys and litigants (represented and unrepresented) are expected to adhere to the requirements set forth in all orders issued by this court.

### **Excluded Matters**

See [Administrative Order Altering Exemptions from Information Report Requirements Under Md. Rules 2-111 & 2-323](#).

### **Settlement**

If a complete settlement is reached as a result of a mediation, facilitation, or settlement conference, the CCMO shall be informed that the case has settled. To finalize the settlement and close the case, the parties **must file a stipulation of dismissal or notice of dismissal with the Court, in conformance with [Md. Rule 2-506](#) and provide a courtesy copy to the CCMO**. Payment of the Clerk's fee and any open court costs are required when filing a Joint Line of Dismissal.

### **Bifurcate**

After review of the court file, the court may, by motion or *sua sponte*, bifurcate the issues of liability and damages. The issue of liability is to be heard first and the issue of damages will be set at a later date. An accurate trial estimate shall be given to the court regarding these issues.

## Other

In compliance with [Md. Rule 1-203\(a\) \(1\)](#), if any date by which action is due under this Plan falls on a Saturday, Sunday, court holiday, or other date of court closure, the date to complete such action shall be extended to the next court day.

## Civil Tracks

The parties select a track on the Civil Non-Domestic Information Sheet. The case will be assigned by the clerk to one of five tracks when initiating a case.

Consistent with the case time standards adopted by the Judicial Council, and applicable Md. Rules, it is the goal of this Plan to ensure that the following time standards are met whenever possible.

Expected case duration is based on needed time to reach resolution, which may be less than the time standard.

- ❖ *Civil Non-Domestic Cases* – 98% should be concluded within 18 months of the filing date. Tracks define expected case processing events, the timing of events, assignment, and the expectations for case duration. For civil non-domestic case tracks, expected case durations are based on the length of time needed for trial. Expected case duration is not a time standard.
- ❖ *Foreclosure Cases* – 98% should be concluded within 24 months of the filing date. Tracks define expected case processing events, the timing of events, assignment, and the expectations for case duration.

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**Table 1.1 – Civil Tracks by Case types/Expected Case Duration and Outcomes**

<i>Track</i>	<i>Examples of Case types</i>	<i>Expected Case Duration and Notes</i>
<b>Track 1 Administrative</b>	Administrative Agency Appeals, Orphans' Court Appeals, District Court Appeals, Friendly Suits, Forfeitures, Habeas Corpus, Injunctions, Mandamus, Mechanics Lien, Other Civil, Petition to Enforce Arbitration	1 day of trial or less. Concluded in 18 months
<b>Track 1a Foreclosure Track</b>	Foreclosures	Concluded within 24 months
<b>Track 2 Expedited</b>	Worker's Comp Appeals, Contract, Declaratory Judgment, District Court Jury Trial Prayers, Injunctions, Mechanics Liens, Motor Torts, Other Civil, Sale in Lieu of Partition	½ day to 1 day of trial. Concluded within 18 months
<b>Track 3 Standard</b>	Condemnation, Confessed Judgment, Contracts, Declaratory Judgment, Motor Tort, Other Civil, Other Tort	1-2 days of trial. Concluded within 18 months
<b>Track 4 Extended</b>	Contracts, Medical Malpractice, Motor Tort, Other Tort	3 days of trial. Concluded within 18 months
<b>Track 5</b>	Contracts, Medical Malpractice, Motor Tort, Other Tort	More than 3 days of trial. Concluded within 18 months.

**Table 1.2 Civil Non-Domestic Track Guidelines**

		Complaint Filed	Plaintiff's Expert Reports	Defendant's Expert Reports	Discovery	ADR/ Mediation Complete	Motions Filed *	Pretrial Settlement Conference	Exhibit List Filed	Trial
Track 1	Administrative	Day 1				NA				30-270
Track 1a	Foreclosure	Day 1				NA				30-270
Track 2	Expedited	Day 1	151 days	181 days	221 days	191 days	230 days	216 days	246 days	211-450 days
Track 3	Standard	Day 1	212 days	242 days	272 days	282 days	287 days	288 days	288 days	350-500 days
Track 4	Extended	Day 1	212 days	272 days	331 days	360 days	346 days	372 days	372 days	450-520 days
Track 5	Complex	Day 1	331 days	331 days	391 days	380 days	406 days	407 days	407 days	480-520 days

## Track 1 – Administrative

Track 1 is the administrative track. Track 1 cases are forwarded to the CCMO for scheduling. Cases will be set on the court's docket within 30 to 270 days, but in no event contravene the Maryland Rules of Procedure.

## **Track 1a -- Foreclosure Track**

Foreclosure cases are tracked in the same manner as Track 1 cases. If a foreclosure case has been open for more than 365 days, it will be scheduled for a status conference before the designated foreclosure judge. If a foreclosure case has been assigned to an auditor for more than four months, it will be scheduled for a status conference before the designated foreclosure judge.

## **Track 2 -- Expedited**

Track 2 is the expedited track. The length of the trial is anticipated to be ½ day to 1 day duration. If an information sheet selecting a track is not provided, the Clerk's Office will automatically place the case on Track 2.

When a Track 2 case is filed, a Scheduling Order will be generated. Deadlines will be automatically posted in the Scheduling Order. The Clerk's Office will forward the order, along with summons (if applicable), to the plaintiff's attorney. The Scheduling Order shall be served on defendant along with the summons.

Requests to reissue service will not produce a new Scheduling Order with new dates. If reissued, a copy of the original Scheduling Order will be attached to the new summons to be served. **THE DATES IN THE SCHEDULING ORDER ARE TO REMAIN THE SAME UNLESS EXPRESSLY REQUESTED, IN MOTION FORM, TO BE MODIFIED AND SO ORDERED BY THE COURT. THE DATES WILL NOT BE MODIFIED SIMPLY BECAUSE A LINE TO REISSUE WAS FILED.** Upon expiration of 120 days from any issuance of original process directed to a defendant, the Clerk shall issue Notice of Contemplated Dismissal in any action against any defendant who has not been served or over whom the court has not otherwise acquired jurisdiction pursuant to [Md. Rule 2-507\(b\)](#).

When the defendant files the Information Sheet, and the track designation is different from the plaintiff's track designation, any party may file a motion and a proposed order requesting the track to be changed. The motion will be forwarded to the CCMO. If consented to or unopposed, CCMO will change the track assignment and generate a new Scheduling Order. Contested motions will be forwarded to the County Administrative Judge for ruling. Upon granting the motion, a new Scheduling Order will be issued, and a copy will be distributed accordingly.

If a track change is done in open court, the attorneys/parties will be directed to CCMO. A new Scheduling Order will be generated based upon the track change. **DISCOVERY DEADLINES ARE TO REMAIN THE SAME UNLESS THEY ARE EXPRESSLY REQUESTED TO BE MODIFIED, IN MOTION FORM, AND SO ORDERED BY THE COURT.** Copies will be disbursed to all counsel and parties present. Copies will be mailed to any served party and counsel not present. If a defendant(s) has not been served, it will be the responsibility of the counsel filing the complaint to serve the new Scheduling Order on any unserved defendant(s) in the case.

Motions to extend or modify the Scheduling Orders will initially be referred to the CCMO for review and then forwarded to the County Administrative Judge for ruling. Discovery and motions dates will be strictly enforced. Any motion requesting a modification of these dates should be supported by good cause shown.

It is the policy of the court to encourage the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in accordance with Title 17 of the Maryland Rules of Procedure. The CCMO will review all cases assigned to Track 2 cases. Suitable cases will be referred to facilitation OR settlement conference within approximately 230-250 days following the filing of complaint. The Order for Facilitation OR Order for Settlement Conference will be mailed to attorneys/parties. Pursuant to [Md. Rule 17-202](#), the court may not require an objecting party or the attorney of an objecting party to participate in an alternative dispute resolution proceeding other than a non-fee-for-service settlement conference if an objection is timely raised. The Settlement Conference Order will direct parties to exchange draft pretrial statement 239 days following the filing of the complaint and to file a final joint pretrial statement, witness lists and a list of exhibits 246 days following the filing of the complaint. **At the facilitation conference or the settlement conference, all parties (whether represented by counsel or self-represented), trial counsel, and insurance representatives are to be present.** Pursuant to [Md. Rule 2-504.2](#), a joint pretrial statement must be prepared by the parties stating the nature of the case, set forth claims and defenses, stipulations, and the number of witnesses and list of exhibits. If parties are not ordered to attend facilitation or settlement conference, the case will be forwarded to CCMO for scheduling of a trial date. If settlement is not reached in facilitation or settlement conference, attorneys/parties will be directed to the CCMO to obtain trial date. The trial date shall be scheduled for 30 to 120 days thereafter, (approximately 211 -450 days from filing of the complaint), or as calendars permit. The trial date will be firm and may only be moved if a



motion for postponement is granted by the County Administrative Judge. See [Howard County Circuit Court Postponement Policy](#) currently in effect.

### **Track 3 -- Standard**

Track 3 is the standard track. The length of the trial is anticipated to be 1 - 2 days duration. When a Track 3 case is filed, a Scheduling Order will be generated. Deadlines will be automatically posted in the Scheduling Order. The Clerk's Office will forward the order, along with summons (if applicable), to the plaintiff's attorney. The Scheduling Order shall be served on Defendant along with the underlying pleadings.

Requests to reissue service will not produce a new Scheduling Order with new dates. If reissued, a copy of the original Scheduling Order will be attached to the new summons to be served. **THE DATES IN THE SCHEDULING ORDER WILL NOT BE MODIFIED SIMPLY BECAUSE A LINE TO REISSUE WAS FILED.** Upon expiration of 120 days from any issuance of original process directed to a defendant, the Clerk shall issue Notice of Contemplated Dismissal in any action against any defendant who has not been served or over whom the court has not otherwise acquired jurisdiction pursuant to [Md. Rule 2-507\(b\)](#).

When the defendant files the Information Form, and the track designation is different from plaintiffs, any party may file a motion and proposed order requesting the track to be changed. The motion will be forwarded to the CCMO. If consented to or unopposed, CCMO will change the track assignment and generate a new Scheduling Order. Contested motions will be forwarded to the County Administrative Judge for ruling. Upon granting the motion, a new Scheduling Order will be issued, and a copy will be distributed accordingly.

If a track change is done in open court, the attorneys/parties will be directed to CCMO. A new Scheduling Order will be generated based upon the track change. Copies will be disbursed to all counsel and parties present. Copies will be either e-served or mailed to any served party and counsel not present. If a defendant(s) has not been served, it will be the responsibility of the counsel filing the complaint to serve the new Scheduling Order on any unserved defendant(s) in the case.

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Motions to extend or modify the Scheduling Orders will initially be referred to the CCMO for review and then forwarded to the County Administrative Judge for ruling. Discovery and motions dates will be strictly enforced. Any motion requesting a modification of these dates should be supported by good cause shown.

Civil cases may be referred to a court-appointed mediator upon agreement of the parties. See [Md. Rule 17-202](#). Early use of mediation is encouraged in all appropriate cases. The mediation deadline is 282 days following the filing of the complaint. If the parties wish, they can continue mediation on their own.

A settlement conference shall be held approximately 302 days following the filing of the complaint. The Settlement Conference Order will direct parties to exchange draft pretrial statements 281 days following the filing of the complaint and to file a final joint pretrial statement, witness lists and a list of exhibits 288 days following the filing of the complaint. **At the settlement conference, all parties (whether represented by counsel or self-represented), trial counsel, and insurance representatives are to be present.** Pursuant to Md. Rule [2-504.2](#), a joint pretrial statement must be prepared by all parties stating the nature of the case, set forth claims and defenses, stipulations, and the number of witnesses and list of exhibits. If a settlement is not reached at this time, attorneys/parties will be directed to the CCMO to obtain a trial date. The trial date shall be scheduled for 30 to 90 days thereafter, (approximately 350-500 days from filing of the complaint), or as calendars permit. The trial date will be firm and may only be moved if a motion for postponement is granted by the County Administrative Judge. See [Circuit Court for Howard County Postponement Policy](#) currently in effect.

## **Track 4 - Extended**

Track 4 is the extended track. The length of the trial is anticipated to be 3 days.

When a Track 4 case is filed, a Scheduling Order will be generated. Deadlines will be automatically posted in the computer-generated Scheduling Order. The Clerk's Office will forward the order, along with summons (if applicable), to the plaintiff's attorney. The Scheduling Order should be served on the defendant along with the summons.

Requests to reissue service will not produce a new Scheduling Order with new dates. If reissued, a

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copy of the original Scheduling Order will be attached to the new summons to be served. **THE DATES IN THE SCHEDULING ORDER WILL NOT BE MODIFIED SIMPLY BECAUSE A LINE TO REISSUE WAS FILED.** Upon expiration of 120 days from any issuance of original process directed to a defendant, the Clerk shall issue Notice of Contemplated Dismissal in any action against any defendant who has not been served or over whom the court has not otherwise acquired jurisdiction pursuant to [Md. Rule 2-507\(b\)](#).

When the defendant files the Information Sheet, and the track designation is different from plaintiffs, any party may file a motion and proposed order requesting the track to be changed. The motion will be forwarded to the CCMO. If consented to or unopposed, CCMO will change the track assignment and generate a new Scheduling Order. Contested motions will be forwarded to the County Administrative Judge for ruling. Upon granting the motion, a new Scheduling Order will be issued, and a copy will be distributed accordingly.

If a track change is done in open court, the attorneys/parties will be directed to CCMO. A new Scheduling Order will be generated based upon the track change. Copies will be disbursed to all counsel and parties present. Copies will be either be e-served or mailed to any served party and counsel not present. If a defendant(s) has not been served, it will be the responsibility of the counsel filing the complaint to serve the new Scheduling Order on any unserved defendant(s) in the case.

Motions to extend or modify the Scheduling Orders will initially be referred to the CCMO for review and then forwarded to the County Administrative Judge for ruling. Discovery and motions dates will be strictly enforced. Any motion requesting a modification of these dates should be supported by good cause shown.

A telephone scheduling/status conference is held 90 days after the filing of the complaint. Scheduling conferences should not be reset unless there are exceptional circumstances. See the [Circuit Court for Howard County Postponement Policy](#) currently in effect. A postponement does not automatically generate a new Scheduling Order. Even if the defendant has not been served, the plaintiff must participate in the scheduling conference. If the plaintiff participates and the defendant has not been served, **the court may keep the Scheduling Order in effect.** Should the plaintiff fail to participate in the scheduling conference, and the defendant has not been served, the

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court may dismiss the case. All counsel and unrepresented parties are required to participate. **All counsel and parties are to have their calendars in hand.** At the scheduling conference, Scheduling Order dates are confirmed; mediation is determined to be appropriate or not; the settlement conference is scheduled; and the pre-trial conference may be scheduled. CCMO will prepare the Mediation Order and Settlement Conference Order. Track changes requested at the scheduling conference will be made by CCMO and copies will be distributed accordingly. Civil cases may be referred to a court-appointed mediator upon agreement of the parties. See [Md. Rule 17-202](#). Early use of mediation is encouraged in all appropriate cases. The mediation deadline is 360 days following the filing of the complaint. If the parties wish, they can continue mediation on their own.

A settlement conference shall be held approximately 380 days following the filing of the complaint. The Settlement Conference Order will direct parties to exchange draft pretrial statement 365 days following the filing of the complaint and to file a final joint pretrial statement, witness lists, and a list of exhibits 372 days following the filing of the complaint.

**At the settlement conference, all parties (whether represented by counsel or self-represented), trial counsel, and insurance representatives are to be present.** Pursuant to [Md. Rule 2-504.2](#), a joint pretrial statement must be prepared by all parties stating the nature of the case, set forth claims and defenses, stipulations, and the number of witnesses and list of exhibits. If a settlement is not reached at this time attorneys/parties will be directed to the CCMO to either obtain or confirm a trial date. Scheduling of the trial date shall be 30 – 90 days thereafter (approximately 450-520 days from filing of the complaint), or as calendars permit. The trial date will be firm and may only be moved if a motion for postponement is granted by the County Administrative Judge. See [The Circuit Court for Howard County Postponement Policy](#).

## **Track 5 – Complex**

Track 5 is the complex track. The length of the trial is anticipated to be more than 3 days. When a Track 5 case is filed, a Scheduling Order will be generated. Deadlines will be automatically posted in the computer-generated Scheduling Order. The Clerk’s Office will forward the order, along with summons (if applicable), to the plaintiff’s attorney. The Scheduling Order shall be served on defendant along with the summons.

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Requests to reissue service will not produce a new Scheduling Order with new dates. If reissued, a copy of the original Scheduling Order will be attached to the new summons to be served. **THE DATES IN THE SCHEDULING ORDER WILL NOT BE MODIFIED SIMPLY BECAUSE A LINE TO REISSUE WAS FILED.** Upon expiration of 120 days from any issuance of original process directed to a defendant, the Clerk shall issue Notice of Contemplated Dismissal in any action against any defendant who has not been served or over whom the court has not otherwise acquired jurisdiction pursuant to [Md. Rule 2-507\(b\)](#).

When the defendant files the Information Sheet, and the track designation is different from plaintiff's, any party may file a motion and proposed order requesting the track to be changed. The motion will be forwarded to the CCMO. If consented to or unopposed, CCMO will change the track assignment and generate a new scheduling order. Contested motions will be forwarded to the Administrative Judge for ruling. Upon granting the motion, a new Scheduling Order will be issued, and a copy will be distributed accordingly.

If a track change is done in open court, the attorneys/parties will be directed to CCMO. A new Scheduling Order will be generated based upon the track change. Copies will be disbursed to all counsel and parties present. Copies will either be e-served or mailed to any served party and counsel not present. If a defendant(s) has not been served, it will be the responsibility of the counsel filing the complaint to serve the new Scheduling Order on any unserved defendant(s) in the case.

Motions to extend or modify the Scheduling Orders will initially be referred to the CCMO for review and then forwarded to the County Administrative Judge for ruling. Discovery and motions dates will be strictly enforced. Any motion requesting a modification of these dates should be supported by good cause shown.

A telephone scheduling/status conference is held 90 days after the filing of the complaint. Scheduling conferences should not be reset unless there are exceptional circumstances. See [The Circuit Court for Howard County Postponement Policy](#) currently in effect. A postponement does not automatically generate a new Scheduling Order. Even if the defendant has not been served, the plaintiff must participate in the scheduling conference. Failure to serve defendant(s) should not be a basis for continuing a scheduling conference. If the plaintiff participates and the defendant has

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not been served, **the court may keep the Scheduling Order in effect or issue a new Scheduling Order.** Should the plaintiff fail to participate in the Scheduling Conference, and the defendant has not been served, the court may dismiss the case. All counsel, with their clients or their clients availability, and unrepresented parties are required to participate. **All counsel and parties are to have their calendars in hand.**

The purpose of the scheduling conference is to refer the case to ADR and to schedule a settlement conference date. Cases exceeding five days of trial time will be scheduled for trial. Cases requiring less than five days will be scheduled for trial after a settlement conference is held. Cases exceeding five days of trial time will be scheduled for a pre-trial Conference, which will occur approximately two weeks before the scheduled trial date. It will also be determined whether the case is on the appropriate track. Track changes requested at the Scheduling Conference will be made by CCMO and copies will be distributed accordingly. Other matters regarding trial preparation, discovery, motions hearings, etc. may also be discussed. The case will then be forwarded to CCMO for preparation of Mediation Order and a Settlement Conference Order.

Civil cases may be referred to a court-appointed mediator upon agreement of the parties. See [Md. Rule 17-202](#). Early use of mediation is encouraged in all appropriate cases. The mediation deadline is 380 days following the filing of the complaint. If the parties wish, they can continue mediation on their own.

A settlement conference shall be held approximately 421 days following the filing of the complaint. The Settlement Conference Order will direct parties to exchange draft pretrial statement 400 days following the filing of the complaint and to file a final joint pretrial statement, witness lists and a list of exhibits 407 days following the filing of the complaint. **At the settlement conference, all parties (whether represented by counsel or self-represented), trial counsel, and insurance representatives are to be present.** Pursuant to [Md. Rule 2-504.2](#), a Pretrial Statement must be prepared by all parties stating the nature of the case, set forth claims and defenses, stipulations, and the number of witnesses and list of exhibits. If a settlement is not reached at this time attorneys/parties will be directed to the CCMO to either obtain or confirm a trial date. The trial date shall be scheduled for 30 to 120 days thereafter, (approximately 480-520 days from filing of the complaint), or as calendars permit. The trial date will be firm and may only be moved if a motion for postponement is granted by the County Administrative Judge. See [Circuit Court for](#)

[Howard County Postponement Policy.](#)

## **Postponement Requests:**

See [The Circuit Court for Howard County Postponement Policy](#) currently in effect.

## **Remote Hearings**

The availability of a remote hearing or remote appearance is subject to the current applicable Maryland Rules, Maryland Judiciary Administrative Order(s), and the County Administrative Judge. If a party wishes to request to appear remotely or convert an in-person hearing to a remote proceeding, a [Motion for Remote Proceeding or to Appear Remotely](#) must be filed.

## **Interpreters**

If any party becomes aware of the need for an interpreter for any party or witness, the party shall promptly notify the court by using the [Request for Spoken Language Interpreter form](#). A delay in notifying the court of the need for an interpreter may result in the inability to handle a case on the scheduled date. Requests for interpreters must be specific as to the language and, if appropriate, the particular dialect that may be needed. The request must also specify for whom the interpreter is needed.

The party requesting an interpreter shall confirm with the Interpreter Coordinator that the request for an interpreter has been received by the Interpreter Coordinator. The requesting party shall notify the court immediately if the need for the interpreter changes. If a request for interpreter is not cancelled at least 24 hours in advance of the trial or hearing, the court will be billed for the interpreter's services. If the court is billed for an interpreter needlessly as a result of counsel's failure to advise the court that the interpreter will not be needed, or because counsel or a litigant does not appear in court in a timely fashion, the court may assess the interpreter costs against the party or counsel causing the unnecessary expense.

## Scheduling Deadlines

Event	Administrative Track 1	Foreclosure Track 1A	Expedited Track 2	Standard Track 3	Extended Track 4	Complex Track 5
Filing Date	1		1	1	1	1
Scheduling Conference					90	90
Plaintiff Expert ID			151	212	212	331
Defendant Expert ID			181	242	272	361
Rebuttal Expert ID			195	250	285	375
Deadline for Filing Amended Pleadings			188	219	278	338
Service of Written Discovery			120	220	240	260
Interrogatories and Requests			176	237	296	356
Discovery Deadline			221	272	331	391
Motions Filing Deadline			236	287	346	406
Court Ordered Mediation			230	282	360	380
Draft Pre-Trial Statement			239	281	365	400
Final Pre-Trial Statement			246	288	372	407
Settlement Conference Date			250	302	380	421
Witness Exhibit List			246	288	372	407
Proposed Voir Dire/Jury Instruction			2 weeks prior to trial	2 weeks prior to trial	2 weeks prior to trial	2 weeks prior to trial
Computer Evidence			30 days prior to trial	30 days prior to trial	30 days prior to trial	30 days prior to trial
Objections to Videotape Testimony (including de bene esse depositions)			30 days prior to trial	30 days prior to trial	30 days prior to trial	30 days prior to trial
Opposition to objections (including de bene esse)			10 days thereafter	10 days thereafter	10 days thereafter	10 days thereafter
Motions in Limine			1 week prior to trial	1 week prior to trial	1 week prior to trial	1 week prior to trial
Trial Date	30-270	30-270	211-450	350-500	450-520	480-520