

SUMAS MUNICIPAL COURT (SMM)
LOCAL COURT RULES

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Preface

1. PROMULGATION

These rules shall be known as the Local Rules for Municipal Court of Sumas, County of Whatcom, and State of Washington. Copies of these rules will be filed with the Office of the Administer of the Courts, and the Clerk of the Municipal Court of Sumas. Copies of these rules will be distributed to the Whatcom Law Library for public reference. To the extent possible, these rules will be placed on the Internet at the City of Sumas web page. Copies will be available from the Municipal Court Clerk for Sumas. These rules will be effective on September 1, 2015, and supersede all prior rules of this court.

2. NUMBERING

Consistent with GR 7(b) Washington Court Rules, these rules to the extent possible conform in numbering system and in format to those rules adopted by the Supreme Court of the State of Washington for courts of limited jurisdiction and facilitate the use of the same. Each rule should be considered supplemental to the Washington Court Rules applicable to Courts of Limited Jurisdiction.

3. REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS

(Reserved)

3.1
SCOPE & ADOPTION OF RULES

These rules are adopted pursuant to GR 7 and govern the procedure in the Sumas Municipal Court in Whatcom

County in the State of Washington. These rules are supplemental to the rules enacted by the Washington State Supreme Court for Courts of Limited Jurisdiction as specifically authorized by GR 7, CrRLJ 1.7, and IRLJ 1.3 of the Washington Court Rules. The Sumas Municipal Court may modify or suspend any of these local rules in any given case upon good cause being shown or upon the court's own motion in the interests of justice and/or the efficient operation of the court.

SMMGR 21
EMERGENCY CLOSURES

a.) The Judge, and/or Court Administrator may declare an emergency closure of the Court when s/he deems that severe weather conditions, natural disaster, or other emergency so requires. The Court will publicize the closure as soon as practical, file a written administrative order closing the Court, and notify the Office of the Administrator for the Courts as soon as practical, pursuant to GR21.

b.) While the emergency persists, no hearings will be held except that the Judge, or Judge Pro Tem of the Court will, if circumstances permit, determine probable cause, set release conditions, and otherwise conduct required first appearance hearings for Defendants who are in custody. Such hearings may be held by telephone or through video conference if deemed necessary due to the emergency.

c.) Following an emergency closure, the Judge, and /or Pro-Tem Judge may order the Court reopened when the severe weather conditions, natural disaster or other emergency allows. The court will publicize the re-opening as soon as practical.

d.) All parties other than the City shall contact the Clerk's Office within two (2) business days after the re-opening of the Court has been publicly announced to reschedule any hearings that were not held due to emergency closure. Failure to do so may be deemed a failure to appear.

e.) This rule shall only apply to the business of the Court, and shall not be construed to govern activities of the other branches of City government.

SMMGR 24
COURTROOM DECORUM

All attorneys and other individuals in the courtroom shall abide by the following rules of conduct:

(a) Always be prompt. Be in the courtroom ready to proceed at the appointed time.

(b) Dress Appropriately to the Serious Nature of the Matters Before the Court. Clothing advertising alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are not appropriate. Hats are not to be worn in the courtroom.

(b) Do Not Disrupt the Court Proceedings. Disruptive behavior that interferes with the functioning of the judicial system, including preventing or blocking attorneys, defendants, court officials and staff from hearing the proceedings, will be presumptively considered to be eligible for sanction as Contempt of Court under RCW 7.21, et al.

SMMGR 26
JUDGES PRO TEMPORE

Except as limited by statute, Judges Pro Tempore shall have the authority of a regular judge during regular Court sessions for which he or she is appointed.

SMMGR 30 (d)
Electronic Filing of Law Enforcement Reports

1) Pursuant to GR30(d)2(D)(ii), the Presiding Judge designates Coban software, Judicial Information System, Spillman, Crimestar and Long arm software to be "local secured system[s]."

2) Reports electronically entered by law enforcement officers pursuant to GR 30 shall be deemed submitted to and filed with the Court as set forth in GR 30. Unless otherwise specified, any such document submitted by an officer is deemed to be signed under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington and on the date and at the place set forth in the citation.

SMMGR 31
DISCLOSURE OF COURT RECORDS

(a) The following records and files are deemed confidential and are not available to the public for inspection or copying absent a court order, unless clearly authorized by statute or court rule.

- (1) Affidavits for search warrants before a return of service and inventory have been filed with the court;
- (2) Mental Health, psychiatric and medical reports;
- (3) Alcohol and drug evaluations and compliance reports;

(4) Deferred prosecution evaluations and police reports and any video or audio recordings maintained by the police records; along with any probable cause statements or domestic violence victim's statements or domestic violence assessment screening forms.

(5) Certified copies of driving records, abstracts of driving records (except for a person who has a pending case before Everson-Nooksack Court for a suspended license violation or an open infraction or criminal case that has resulted in the suspension of a person's driver's license) and compiled reports of arrests and convictions;

- (6) Judge's notes and worksheets;
- (7) Witness statements;
- (8) Address of jurors;
- (9) Juror notes taken during trial.

(b) Document Requests and Fees. All requests for release of records/information shall be governed by the Judicial Information System Committee's Data Dissemination Policy, GR 31. Fees for the duplication and preparation of documents and recordings shall be maintained and made available by the Court Clerk. Payment for copies of documents and recordings must be received before copies are made, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

SMMCrR 2.2
QUASHING WARRANTS

The defendant or defendant's attorney may schedule a hearing to quash a warrant, either in person or by telephone. The warrant will not be stayed or quashed and the defendant will still be subject to arrest on the warrant until the defendant has appeared in open court and the judge has quashed the warrant, unless otherwise authorized by the Court after a telephonic hearing. Court Personnel are hereby granted authority to allow the rescheduling of time payments, to cancel arrest warrants issued for Failure to Pay fines or costs as agreed; and to rescind delinquent charges on warrants and FTA's reported to the Department of Licensing: Acting Court Administrator, Judicial & Support Services Manager.

No warrant issued for anything but failing to appear for a fine review hearing will be quashed unless the amount of bail has been posted, plus a \$100.00 bench warrant fee, unless otherwise ordered by the court at a hearing, telephonically, or electronically.

SMMCrR 4.1
CRIMES REQUIRING DEFENDANT'S APPEARANCE AT ARRAIGNMENT

A lawyer may not enter a written plea or not guilty plea on behalf of a client if the charging document states that one or more of the charges involves domestic violence, violation of a no contact order, driving under the influence of intoxicants, driving while under the age of 21 after having consumed alcohol, or physical control of a vehicle while under the influence of intoxicants. For such charges, the defendant must appear in person for arraignments and the court shall determine appropriate conditions of pretrial release. Where legislation mandates the defendant's appearance on the next judicial day following arrest, the term "next judicial day" as applied to the municipal court shall mean the next regularly scheduled court day for the Sumas Municipal Court.

SMMCrR 4.5
REQUIRED PRESENCE AT PRETRIAL HEARINGS

Unless a disposition of the case is entered into at the first appearance hearing or arraignment, a pretrial hearing shall be scheduled and held. Defendant and all counsel must be present at any pretrial hearing. Failure of the defendant to appear may result in the issuance of a bench warrant.

SMMCrR 4.8
REQUEST FOR SUBPOENA

Any request for a subpoena to be issued by the court must be filed in writing at least fourteen (14) days before the hearing, or such lesser time as the court deems proper. The request may not be combined with a Notice of Appearance or any other pleading.

SMMCrR 6.1.
TRIAL BY JURY, PRETRIAL HEARING, READINESS HEARING

In every criminal case in which the defendant pleads not guilty, the clerk shall set a date for a pretrial hearing. The purpose of said hearing is for presentation of motions, completion of plea bargaining, or to set a trial date and readiness hearing. Unless the pretrial hearing is continued to another date or the case is resolved at the hearing, a trial date shall be scheduled at the pre-trial hearing. If a jury trial date is set a readiness hearing date will be set.

If the defendant fails to appear at the pretrial hearing without good cause, forfeiture of bail may be ordered and the court may order a bench warrant for the arrest of the defendant if probable cause is established.

Prior to an assigned jury trial date, a readiness hearing shall be held. At such hearing, it shall be mandatory that the prosecuting authority, the defense counsel, and the defendant be present unless otherwise authorized by the court. At such hearing, the following matters will be concluded:

- (a) Exchange of witness lists,
- (b) Providing of any discovery not previously exchanged at the pretrial hearing, and,
- (c) Motions on legal issues arising subsequent to the pretrial hearing based on new evidence or on matters related to the trial itself.

At the readiness hearing, the parties will inform the Court of any issues related to the jury trial date and raise appropriate motions related to the conduct of the trial.

Any continuance of the trial date after the readiness hearing shall be authorized by the Judge. The clerk shall then set a new hearing date in the matter.

Failure of the defendant to be present at the readiness hearing may result in the issuance of a bench warrant for failure to appear, forfeiture of bail, and the striking of the jury trial date.

SMMCrR 6.2
WRITTEN JURY INSTRUCTIONS

Proposed jury instructions shall be submitted on plain paper with no mark identifying the attorney or party. The original, which shall be free of citations of authority, and one copy, with the citation of authority, shall be submitted to the court at the readiness hearing by each party. Copies of the original of each parties proposed jury instructions shall be emailed to the court clerk as a document that can be modified, before the trial date to facilitate changes to instructions by the Court during the jury trial.

SMMCrR 7.2
JAIL AND JAIL ALTERNATIVES

a.) Use of Jail Alternatives.

Unless otherwise ordered in writing, a sentence to jail shall permit the defendant to apply for jail alternatives and the defendant may serve the defendant's jail sentence on jail alternatives at the defendant's expense if deemed eligible by the Whatcom County Jail. The Court does not permit its sentences to be served at privately-operated jails or privately-operated jail alternative programs. The Court may consider a defendant's request to serve a jail term at another jail or jail alternative facility administered by a law enforcement agency at the defendant's expense if the defendant is deemed eligible by that law enforcement agency. The Court will not order the Whatcom County Jail to accept any inmate for any jail alternatives program who is not deemed eligible by the Whatcom County Jail.

b.) Temporary Release.

Requests for temporary release from custody will be considered by the Court in cases of urgent medical necessity as recommended by the Whatcom County Jail medical staff or, under circumstances and upon conditions deemed appropriate by the Court, for release to an in-patient treatment facility.

c.) Fit for Jail Release

Should the jail require a fit for jail prior to booking, the defendant will still be considered in custody unless further order by the judge or pro-tem judge. A temporary release order may be granted telephonically or electronically so long as probable cause is established.

d.) Jail Supervision

The Whatcom County Sheriff, not the Court, is responsible for the operation and supervision of the Whatcom County Jail and jail alternative programs. The Court will not enter any order contrary to the Sheriff's lawful policies regarding the operation of the Jail or jail alternative programs.

SMMCrR 8.2
MOTIONS - JUDICIAL COPIES

Judicial physical copies of all cases cited or relied upon, will be delivered to the Clerk of the Court at the time of the filing of the motion. Such judicial copies will be clearly marked as such, with the date and time of the hearing indicated.

To facilitate judicial preparation Judge's copies maybe sent by email so long as all parties are emailed copies at the same time.

SMM IR 2.6
SCHEDULING OF HEARINGS

(a) Mitigation. Mitigation hearings may be conducted based upon written statements or requests. Pursuant to IRLJ 2.6(c) the court is not required to notify the parties of a date for the examination of the mitigation request.

(b) Tracking with Criminal Offenses. If the respondent is also charged with a criminal offense arising out of the same incident as that which gives rise to an alleged civil infraction, the hearing on the infraction, if requested, may be scheduled at the same time as any hearing set for a criminal matter.

SMM IR 3.1
PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES

Request for Subpoena. Any request for a subpoena to be issued by the court must be filed in writing at least fourteen (14) days before the hearing, or such lesser time as the court deems proper. The request may not be combined with a Notice of Appearance or any other pleading.

SMM IR 6.6
TELEPHONIC PROCEDURE AT CONTESTED HEARINGS

When any speed measuring device expert is requested to testify in a contested infraction hearing, the expert may testify by telephone, unless otherwise ordered by the court prior to the scheduled hearing date in response to a written motion, filed, noted, and heard prior to the date set for the contested hearing.

SMM IR 7.
INFRACTION WITNESS FEE

Each party is responsible for costs incurred by that party as set forth in RCW 46.63.151. The party requesting the subpoena of a witness shall pay the witness fees and mileage expenses due that witness.

SMM IR 8
INFRACTION FINES - NO PROOF OF LIABILITY INSURANCE

If a person who has been cited with a violation of RCW 46.30.020 (failure to have proof of liability insurance) presents to the court clerk, by mail, email, or fax only, sufficient evidence that the person had in effect at the time of the citation liability insurance as required by RCW 46.30.020, then, upon payment of twenty-five (\$25.00) administrative costs, the case shall be dismissed and the court clerk shall be authorized to make appropriate notation of the dismissal in the court file. This section is applicable only if the person charged has otherwise complied with all rules and procedures that govern responding to notices of infraction.
