

MOTIONS DOCKET: HOW TO NAVIGATE IT SUCCESSFULLY

One of the rotations in the Civil Court for Baltimore City is that of "chambers" or "motions". All civil, non-domestic motions are assigned during that rotation to a specific judge. Those motions in which parties have made a timely request for hearing, are set three days a week before the judge. The chambers judge also decides all "non-hearing" motions, as well as presides over hearings pertaining to ex parte injunctions. The following list is a guide for the attorney who wants to successfully navigate a motion in the Baltimore City Courthouse

1. *Orders.* **All motions should have attached proposed orders.** The attorney who does not attach an order runs the risk of having the motion returned or denied.
2. *Responses.* It is essential that parties file a **timely response** to all motions. If a **timely response** is not filed and there is no **court approved stipulation to file a late response**, the motion may be sent to the non-hearing judge and be granted without consideration of a response. **Counsel are reminded that agreement of counsel are not binding on the Court.**
3. *Motions to Shorten or Extend Time Requirements.* All motions to shorten or extend time requirements with the exception of those pertaining to discovery are forwarded to the Judge in Charge of Civil Docket. Discovery Motions are directed to the discovery judge. Any extension of time requirements must be made according to MD. Rule 1-204.
4. *Hearings.* Only those motions in which a party has made a timely request for a hearing will be set on the hearing docket. Parties are reminded that under Maryland Rule 2-311(f), a hearing request in a motion or response must be under the heading "Request for Hearing."
5. *Walk-In Motions.* **Walk-in motions will not be honored by the court.** All motions must be filed in the Clerk's office. If there is a need for prompt action, the Clerk will direct the party as to how to proceed. However, parties should not take motions and proposed orders directly to a judge's chambers..
6. *Postponements.* Any request for changes to the scheduling of a hearing on a motion must be made at 1:45 p.m. in Room 231 Courthouse East.
7. *Courtesy Copies.* The chambers judge will usually have the file approximately eight business days before the scheduled hearing. A courtesy copy of any memoranda filed after that date should be delivered to the Motions judge.

Allocated Time for Hearings. Absent special requests, thirty minutes is set aside for each motion. Counsel are advised to keep this time allocation in mind when preparing for argument.