

Rule 1.03 | DOCKETING AND ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

(a) Upon the filing of the initial paper or pleading in any case the Clerk shall docket the proceeding as a civil, criminal or miscellaneous action. Each case or proceeding shall be given a six-part docket number, which includes:

- (1) the one-digit number indicating the division of the Court;
- (2) the two-digit number indicating the year in which the proceeding is initiated;
- (3) the code indicating the docket to which the case is assigned;
- (4) the sequence number of the case or proceeding;
- (5) a designation consisting of a letter or series of letters disclosing the division in which the proceeding is pending; and
- (6) the code indicating the judge to whom the case is assigned (the code shall conform to the code assigned by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts) followed by the initials of the magistrate judge to whom the case is assigned.

(b) Each case, upon the filing of the initial paper or pleading, shall be assigned by the Clerk to an individual judge of the Court who shall thereafter be the presiding judge with respect to that cause. Individual assignment of cases within each Division shall be made at random or by lot in such proportions as the judges of the Court from time to time direct. Neither the Clerk nor any member of his staff shall have any power or discretion in determining the judge to whom any case is assigned. The method of assignment shall be designed to prevent anyone from choosing the judge to whom a case is to be assigned, and all persons shall conscientiously refrain from attempting to circumvent this rule.

(c) No application for any order of court shall be made until the case or controversy in which the matter arises has been docketed and assigned by the Clerk as prescribed by subsection

(b) of this rule, and then only to the judge to whom the case has been assigned; provided, however:

(1) When no case has previously been initiated, docketed and assigned, emergency applications arising during days or hours that the Clerk's Office is closed may be submitted to any available judge resident in the appropriate Division, or, if no judge is available in the Division, to any other judge in the District, but the case shall then be docketed and assigned by the Clerk on the next business day and shall thereafter be conducted by the judge to whom it is assigned in accordance with subsection (b) of this rule.

(2) When the judge to whom a case has been assigned is temporarily unavailable due to illness, absence or prolonged engagement in other judicial business, emergency applications arising in the case may be made to the other resident judge in the Division or, if more than one, to the judge who is junior in commission in that Division. If no other judge is available in the Division such applications may be made to any other available judge in the District.

(d) The judge to whom any case is assigned may, at any time, reassign the case to any other consenting judge for any limited purpose or for all further purposes.

(e) The Clerk shall accept for filing all prisoner cases filed with or without the required filing fee or application to proceed in forma pauperis. However, a prisoner case will be subject to dismissal by the Court, sua sponte, if the filing fee is not paid or if the application is not filed within 30 days of the commencement of the action.