

This is a summary of what is new or different in the Local Rules that became effective on December 1, 2003. The summary is not intended to provide interpretive guidance and is not a substitute for reading the Rules and considering whether and how they apply in any given situation.

Many of the changes deal with litigants proceeding *in forma pauperis* and/or prisoner litigants. These rules are significant for counsel involved in a case with a *pro se* litigant, as well as for *pro se* litigants themselves. These new rules include:

- a special venue provision for habeas actions (L.R. 3.3);
- guidance on the time limitations for service when a plaintiff proceeds *in forma pauperis* (L.R. 4.5);
- guidance on the form of papers and number of copies required of prisoners or *in forma pauperis* litigants (L.R. 10.1, 10.3);
- a special procedure for answering a *pro se* complaint that is served before the Court completes any mandatory pre-screening process (L.R. 12.1);
- special procedures upon summary judgment in certain *pro se* cases (L.R. 7.1(c) and 56.2); and
- a statement of the Court's expectations of *pro se* litigants (L.R. 83.15).

Some of the revisions apply to all litigants and attorneys:

- New L.R. 3.6 clarifies that a case is not filed until the plaintiff or petitioner presents a complaint or petition and either pays the full filing fee or submits an affidavit showing that the party is unable to pay the filing fee. All such materials must be submitted together at the same time or they will be returned without filing.
- New L.R. 3.7 implements a privacy policy to protect litigants and witnesses whose personal data may be included in public documents filed with the court.
- New L.R. 5.4 allows the Court to dismiss a case or strike an answer when a party fails to provide a current mailing address within 60 days of the return of a document as undeliverable mail.
- New L.R. 83.16 allows the Court to establish a panel of attorneys or law firms willing to accept *pro bono* appointment in certain civil cases and sets guidelines and procedures for membership on the panel, appointment, duration of appointment, and relief or discharge from appointment. The rule also provides for reimbursement of expenses and, in conjunction with an amendment to L.R. 83.5, permits an appointed attorney to be compensated for services under certain circumstances.
- Amended L.R. 5.3 provides a special form for parties consenting to electronic service of documents. Electronic filing with the Court is not yet possible but is coming.
- Amended L.R. 7 affects some routine matters, such as the presentation of exhibits within briefs, "renewed" motions, and motions for reconsideration.
- Amended L.R. 10 requires an e-mail address in the counsel identification block where parties consent to electronic service, permits parties to cite to either the ALWD Manual or to the Bluebook, and removes previous limitations on sanctions for noncompliance with the rule.