



Informal Family Law Trials—DCR 27

Judge Gregory Gordon

Tuesday, April 15th

Changing Landscape?

- 70% of cases involve 2 self-represented litigants
- Lose confidence when the case is more about process than solution
- Cannot be expected to understand rules of procedure, evidence, and local rules
- Cases don't fit into the traditional trial model



Why Informal Trials?

We are already doing it

Litigants can now understand the rules
and leave feeling the process was fair



Already Happening?

- SRLs show up unprepared
- Not question-and-answer format for testimony
- Don't know how to admit exhibits or make objections
- Cross-examination is rarely attempted or is not effective
- Judges have to adapt the process on the fly and drive the presentation of facts/evidence

- Parties can read the rules - 2 pages
- All the rules they need to know
- Leave court feeling treated fairly
- Avoid judge appearing too active and/or not neutral

**Restore
Confidence
Process
Was Fair**

Opt – In

- Opt-in ONLY
- Never required
- Trial selection form must be signed

Only Impacts Trial Process

- Discovery is the same
- NRCP 16.2 and 16.205 not affected
- Same substantive law applies
- Same appeal rights

- Waiver can be signed any time prior to start of trial
- Waiver can be rescinded
- Court will confirm parties understand the process
- Plaintiff/moving party will speak first.
- No interruptions or questions from the other side
- Judge may ask questions
- Judge will inquire of the other party if any topics to ask about
- Process repeated

How Does It Work?

- All exhibits admitted into evidence.
- Expert reports shall be admitted and experts may testify.
Cross examination of experts possible
- Non-expert testimony not permitted absent good cause.
Affidavits may be permitted
- Brief closing statements permitted
- **Courts may modify procedure as needed**

How Does It Work? (Continued)

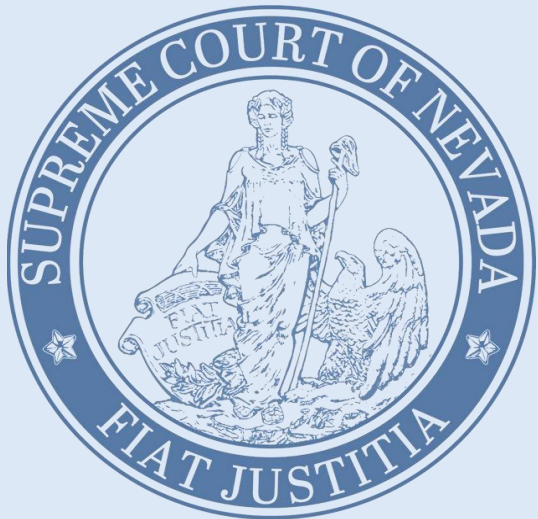
- Informal NOT Inferior
- The chance to tell your story, in your own words, without objection, and to have your evidence considered



Informal
Not Inferior

Pilot Program

- DCR 27
- Must report back to NSCT in 12 months



2025 Family Law Conference & District Court Judges Seminar

Session Evaluation

Tuesday, April 15th - Friday, April 18th

Help us ensure that these conferences meet your educational needs. . .

**Please take a moment to
evaluate this session!**

SCAN THE QR CODE!

Or check your email for the website link.

