

District Judges

ROBERT A. COONEY
(231) 922-4543

MICHAEL S. STEPKA
(231) 922-4579



STATE OF MICHIGAN
86th Judicial District Court
GRAND TRAVERSE • LEELANAU • ANTRIM COUNTIES

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY
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Traverse City, Michigan 49684
(231) 922-4580
Fax (231) 922-4454
Probation Fax (231) 922-6889

LEELANAU COUNTY
8527 E. Government Center Dr. STE. 201
Suttons Bay, Michigan 49682
(231) 256-8250
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ANTRIM COUNTY
P.O. Box 597
Bellaire, Michigan 49615
(231) 533-6441
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Probation Fax (231) 533-6822

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2022-01
Rescinds Order 2019-01

ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

The 86th District Court serves Grand Traverse, Antrim and Leelanau Counties. The Court has two (2) elected District Court judges.

COURT SCHEDULES

- Antrim County –
 - Civil and Criminal cases will be heard on Wednesdays with the judges alternating those Wednesdays
- Grand Traverse County –
 - Civil cases will be heard on Mondays with the judges alternating those Mondays
 - Criminal cases will be heard Monday through Friday
- Leelanau County –
 - Civil and Criminal cases will be heard on Fridays with the judges alternating those Fridays

All cases that are filed in the 86th District Court – Antrim, Grand Traverse, Leelanau Counties, upon receipt in the court offices are to be assigned a case number in order of their receipt in the office using the following directives:

CRIMINAL CASES

- Judge Robert A. Cooney will receive all odd numbered cases
- Judge Michael S. Stepka will receive all even numbered cases

Exceptions

- When a court action arises out of the same transaction or occurrence, the case will be assigned to the judge already assigned to the earlier action/case MCR 8.111(D). These cases shall be assigned to one judge and counsel should be appointed in the same manner.
- Cases involving co-defendants shall be assigned to the same judge. Whichever judge is assigned the first of the co-defendants cases under the normal rotation, shall be assigned all remaining co-defendant cases.
- Cases where a defendant has a pending case, new cases with the same defendant shall be assigned to the judge hearing the initial pending case.
- Grand Traverse County – All domestic violence cases and cases with similar charges that are stamped by the prosecutor with DV and all post sentencing actions related to these cases are to be assigned to Judge Robert A. Cooney.

GENERAL CIVIL / SMALL CLAIMS CASES

- Judge Robert A. Cooney will receive all odd numbered cases
- Judge Michael S. Stepka will receive all even numbered cases

LANDLORD / TENANT CASES

- Antrim and Leelanau –
 - Judge Robert A. Cooney will receive all odd numbered cases
 - Judge Michael S. Stepka will receive all even numbered cases
- Grand Traverse County – cases are to be assigned in lots of 25-30 to the next judge with the next available civil docket to ensure compliance with the State Court time guidelines

SPECIALTY COURT CASES

- All cases which are accepted into the 86th District Court Sobriety Treatment Court Program are to be assigned to Judge Michael S. Stepka.
- All cases which are accepted into the 86th District Court Drug Treatment Court Program are to be assigned to Judge Robert A. Cooney

CASE REASSIGNMENT

- When a plea is taken by a judge other than the one assigned to the case, the case is reassigned to the judge taking the plea unless it is a Treatment Court or Domestic Violence case. In those situations, the judge taking the plea must obtain a waiver of sentencing as part of the plea and the specialty court judge will sentence.
- When a Preliminary Exam is scheduled with and heard by a judge other than the one assigned to the case, upon remand, the case should be reassigned to that judge.

JURY SELECTIONS/TRIALS

- Any judge may preside over the mass selection of juries in all cases that are awaiting jury selection, regardless of which judge is assigned to the case.
- Jury selection and Trials for Domestic Violence cases will be done by Judge Robert A. Cooney. If Judge Cooney decides that there are too many DV cases for one jury panel, the excess cases can be set with Judge Michael S. Stepka for jury selection and trial.

OTHER

- When an assigned judge is unavailable, the other judge may take such action, including reviewing bail, granting adjournments, arraigning, accepting pleas, signing orders, et cetera, as is deemed necessary to avoid delay or inconvenience to the parties.
- If a Preliminary Exam was scheduled with a judge not assigned to the case, if the exam is adjourned, the case should be rescheduled with the judge assigned to the case.

Under no circumstances are case files to be assigned out of order in order to vary from random assignment. Intentional manipulation of files in order to affect the choice of judge will not be tolerated.

04/07/2022
Date

Robert A. Cooney
Robert A. Cooney, Chief District Court Judge