## SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 10-04

Timeline for Resolution of Motions to Review Magistrate Judges' Decisions in Neglect, Guardianship, Adoption and Termination of Parental Rights Matters

**WHEREAS,** pursuant to D.C Code § 11-906(a), the Chief Judge shall administer and superintend the business of the Superior Court; and

**WHEREAS,** Superior Court General Family Rule D provides for associate judge review of final decisions issued by magistrate judges upon written motion of any party prior to the filing of a notice of appeal with the District of Columbia Court of Appeals; and

**WHEREAS**, timely resolution of Motions for Review of magistrate judges' final decisions in neglect, guardianship, adoption and termination of parental rights matters is crucial to the permanency, safety and well-being of children, and the protection of the due process interests of parents and caretakers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mission of the Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia is "to protect and support children brought before it, strengthen families in trouble, provide permanency for children, and decide disputes involving families fairly and expeditiously while treating all parties with dignity and respect," *see* Family Court Transition Plan; and

WHEREAS, an ad hoc committee was convened to recommend a timeline for resolution of Motions for Review, following consideration of national best practice standards, initiatives and statutory time frames in other jurisdictions, data reflecting current Family Court practices, comments submitted to the Family Court Rules Advisory Committee, and relevant rules of the Superior Court; and

**WHEREAS**, the committee's recommendations balanced the priority needs of children, the significant legal rights of parents and caretaker, and the reasonable ability of associate judges to render thorough and correct rulings in light of their other responsibilities;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is by the Court,

**ORDERED,** that the timeline set forth below be adhered to in neglect, guardianship, adoption and termination of parental rights cases in which a Motion to Review the decision of a Magistrate Judge has been filed on or after March 15, 2010:

## Timeline for Resolution of Motions for Review of Magistrate Judge Decisions

**Day 1:** Motion for Review filed with the Family Court Central Intake Center.

**Day 3:** Motion forwarded to the appropriate branch for processing.

**Day 5:** Motion and case file forwarded to the Family Court Presiding Judge.

**Day 10:** Motion for Review certified by Family Court Presiding Judge to designated Associate Judge or Order Resolving Motion for Review issued by Family Court Presiding Judge.

**Day 20:** Associate Judge conducts preliminary review to identify any issues of ripeness, recusal, lack of compliance with the requirements of General Family Rule D(e), or failure of relevant party to file a responsive pleading. Associate Judge issues orders as deemed necessary.

**Days 40:** Supplemental pleadings from party requesting review are filed within 10 days of order directing such filing. Responsive pleading from prevailing and other interested parties, including the guardian *ad litem*, are filed within 10 days of order directing such filing or filing of supplemental pleadings.

**Day 60:** If a decision on the Motion for Review has not been rendered, the Family Court Clerk's Office sends notice of that fact to the assigned Associate Judge.

**Day 90:** If a decision on the Motion for Review has not been rendered, the Family Court Clerk's Office sends notice of that fact to the assigned Associate Judge, the Chief Judge and the Family Court Presiding Judge and repeats such notice every 30 days thereafter until a decision is rendered.

**Day 120:** If a decision on the Motion for Review has not been rendered, the assigned Associate Judge must provide to the Chief Judge and the Family Court Presiding Judge a written explanation as to why the motion is still pending. The Chief Judge may take any action he or she deems appropriate in order to cause the matter to be decided promptly.

It is **FURTHER ORDERED** that the effective date of this Order is March 15, 2010.

SO ORDERED.

BY THE COURT

March 9, 2010	/s/_
	Lee F. Satterfield
	Chief Judge

Judges
Senior Judges
Magistrate Judges
Executive Officer
Clerk of the Court
Division Directors
Director, Office of Strategic
Management
Library
Daily Washington Law
DC Bar Webmaster