

## **Rule 7. Time of Sessions, Office Hours, and Trials**

(a) SESSIONS. The Landlord and Tenant Branch must hold sessions every business day except as determined by the Chief Judge.

(b) OFFICE HOURS. The clerk's office—with a clerk or deputy on duty to assist the public—must be open during normal business hours as set by the Chief Judge. When practicable, those hours will comport with the hours of operation posted on the Superior Court's website.

(c) INITIAL HEARING.

(1) *In General*. All cases must be set for an initial hearing.

(2) *Application for Continuance*.

(A) *Application*. A party may file an application requesting that the court continue the initial hearing date. Before requesting a continuance, the applicant must make a reasonable effort to notify the other party.

(B) *Hearing*. The court may either grant the continuance without a hearing or hold a hearing on the application as soon as practicable. The court may hold the hearing without the participation of the other party. But if the other party is neither physically present at the hearing nor available by video teleconferencing or telephone conferencing, i.e., remotely, the court may continue the initial hearing only for good cause and for a reasonable period of time.

(C) *Notice of New Date*. If the court continues the hearing when the other party does not participate in person or remotely, the clerk must provide notice of the new date to that party.

(d) NON-JURY TRIALS. Cases are set for trial by the court or by consent of the parties after consultation with the clerk about available trial dates.

### COMMENT TO 2023 AMENDMENTS

Subsections (c)(2)(B) and (C) have been amended to allow the court greater flexibility in granting continuances with or without a hearing, to specify when the court may hold or continue the initial hearing without a party's participation, and to permit a party to participate by video teleconferencing.

### COMMENT TO 2019 AMENDMENTS

This rule has been amended consistent with the stylistic changes to the civil rules. The provision addressing applications for continuance has been expanded to include additional procedures for the same-day hearing.