

RULE 570B. Pretrial Conference

A. Scheduling of Pretrial Conference

1. Within 6 weeks of the status conference held pursuant to Local Rule 570A, any case designated on the Status Conference Order as requiring a pretrial conference, or any case which has not been disposed of by plea, ARD or *nolle prosequi*, shall be reviewed by the court at a Pretrial conference scheduled by the District Court Administrator.
2. The District Court Administrator shall provide notice of the pretrial conference to counsel no later than seven days before the conference and shall provide notice to pro se defendants pursuant to Pa. R. Crim. P. 114.
3. The appearance of the assigned attorney for the Commonwealth, the defense attorney, and the defendant, whether *pro se* or represented by legal counsel, shall be mandatory. The pretrial conference shall take place in open court, unless agreed by the defendant to be in chambers.
4. No pretrial conference may be continued or rescheduled absent compelling reasons and with the approval of the judge before whom the case has been scheduled.

B. Information Provided at Pretrial Conference

1. The general purpose of the pretrial conference is to apply and enforce the letter and spirit of Pa. R. Crim. P. 570, and the comments thereto, and to ascertain the information contemplated thereby, in order to determine the readiness of a criminal case for trial or the likelihood of and timeframe for a non-trial disposition. Accordingly, at the time of the pretrial conference, the parties shall be prepared to provide, at a minimum, the information enumerated in Pa. R. Crim. P. 570, and the official comment thereto.
2. A Pretrial Conference Memorandum in the form approved by the President Judge shall be submitted to the court by the assigned attorney for the Commonwealth and by the defense attorney at the time of the pretrial conference. At the discretion of the court, a *pro se* defendant who intends to remain *pro se* throughout the pendency of the case may also be required to complete and submit a Pretrial Conference Memorandum.
3. A *pro se* defendant who has not yet retained legal counsel and does not intend to remain *pro se* throughout the pendency of the case shall advise the court at the Pretrial conference of the status of the defendant's efforts to secure legal representation. Absent compelling circumstances, a continuance to obtain legal representation shall not be granted more than once.

4. The approved form of Pretrial Conference Memorandum shall be published as a part of these Local Rules as Local Rule 570B-1.

C. Failure to Comply

1. If a *pro se* defendant fails to appear for a duly scheduled and noticed pretrial conference, the court may, in the discretion, issue a bench warrant and forfeit bail.

2. If an attorney for the Commonwealth or defense attorney fails to appear for a duly scheduled and noticed Pretrial conference or fails to provide the Pretrial Conference Memorandum required by this rule, the court may take such disciplinary action as it deems appropriate, including, but not limited to, disciplinary action under the Rules of Professional Conduct or instituting proceedings for contempt.

D. Order Following Pretrial Conference

1. At the conclusion of the pretrial conference, the court shall enter a Pretrial Conference Order indicating the disposition of the case as represented by the parties (*e.g.*, guilty plea, nolo contendere plea, ARD or *nolle prosequi*), or if the matter will be scheduled for an additional pretrial conference pursuant to this Local Rule, or if the matter is to be listed for trial, or if a bench warrant has been issued and bail has been forfeit.

2. If the case is to be disposed of by guilty plea, nolo contendere plea, ARD or *nolle prosequi*, the parties shall advise the court of the date of such proceeding at the pretrial conference.

3. If a case is certified as trial ready by the pretrial conference judge, the case shall be assigned to a trial judge by the District Court Administrator. The assigned trial judge shall determine the trial date and schedule, as well as the need for any pretrial case management conferences. Absent compelling circumstances, cases assigned to a trial judge for trial shall remain with that judge until final disposition.

4. Absent compelling circumstances, a definitive non-trial disposition (with dates certain) or trial certification is expected no later than the pretrial conference. Cases will not be continued to a second or subsequent pretrial conference absent good cause shown, and, if the continuance is requested by defense counsel, with the knowledge and concurrence of the individual defendant.

5. The Pretrial Conference Memoranda and the Pretrial Conference Order shall be filed with the Clerk of Courts at the conclusion of the pretrial conference.