

RULE 215.4

COMPLEX LITIGATION DESIGNATION: APPOINTMENT OF A SINGLE JUDGE

At anytime after the service of the complaint, any party to a case may file a pleading designated as an Administrative Application for Complex Case Designation. The Application shall be set forth in paragraph form. An original and one copy of the Application shall be filed with the Prothonotary. The Application shall set forth the parties, the causes of action, the nature of cross or counter claims, and a brief statement of the perceived complexities of the case. The Application shall further aver that all other parties have been contacted and shall state whether or not they concur in the Application. Where concurrence has not been obtained, a Rule to Show Cause, returnable within ten days of service, shall be attached to the Application. The Prothonotary shall forward the original Application to the Court Administrator's Office for further processing and shall retain the copy in the file. The Court Administrator's Office shall thereafter refer the matter to the Civil Calendar Judge who, upon review of the Application and any answer thereto, shall determine whether complex litigation designation is appropriate. If such status is granted, the Civil Calendar Judge shall by order assign the case to a member of the Court. This assignment shall be considered permanent for all pre-trial, trial, and post-trial matters.

A denial by the Civil Calendar Judge of complex litigation designation shall be without prejudice to refile another Application after the pleadings are closed.

COMMENT: The Court is seeing an increased number of cases that will benefit from the early involvement of a judge, such as complicated commercial and medical malpractice cases, multiple motor vehicle/fatality cases, and novel product liability cases. This rule allows counsel to bring to the attention of the Court those cases that may require early judicial attention. The assigned judge can provide sustained and consistent pretrial management and preside at trial with a thorough understanding of the case, presumably expediting its conclusion through mediation or trial.