



## **CHIEF JUDGE/ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

For the 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Colorado

CLEAR CREEK COUNTY – EAGLE COUNTY – LAKE COUNTY – SUMMIT COUNTY

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### **CHIEF JUDGE ORDER STANDARDIZING THE RECUSAL POLICY OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

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**Effective:** February 1, 2026

**Expiration:** Indefinite

**Order Number:** 2026-7

Effective February 1, 2026, the 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District adopts a standardized Recusal and Request for Reassignment protocol as stated herein.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District currently has 6 District Court Judges.

Judge Karen Romeo and Judge Reed Owens will be default reassignment judges for each other and Judge Rachel Olguin Fresquez and Judge Jonathan Shamis will be default judge reassignment judges for each other.

Upon the recusal of Chief Judge Paul Dunkelman, the default reassignment will alternate between Judge Rachel Olguin Fresquez and Judge Jonathan Shamis.

Upon the recusal of Judge Catherine Cheroutes, the default reassignment will alternate between Judge Karen Romeo and Judge Reed Owens.

While the presumption is that the judges will alternate as stated above<sup>1</sup>, the Chief Judge may reassign a case to any District Court Judge<sup>2</sup> and will make the final reassignment determination giving consideration to balancing caseloads and addressing other potential recusal issues.

In cases in which the Chief Judge is the recusing judge, while the presumption is that the cases will alternate between Judge Rachel Olguin Fresquez and Judge Jonathan Shamis, Judge Karen Romeo will serve as Acting Chief Judge and make the final reassignment determination giving consideration to balancing caseloads and addressing other potential recusal issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Except for cases in the Chief Judge is the recusing judge, which is addressed below.

<sup>2</sup> This includes a County Court Judge sitting as a District Court Judge pursuant to the Chief Judge Order for the Temporary Assignment of County Court Judges to Sit as District Court Judges in Certain Designated Cases.

Further, if any case is to be reassigned to Chief Judge Dunkelman, Judge Karen Romeo will serve as Acting Chief Judge and make the final reassignment determination giving consideration to balancing caseloads and addressing other potential recusal issues.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court currently has 4 County Court Judges.

For County Court cases in Eagle County in which Judge Inga Causey recuses herself, the case will be reassigned to Judge Cynthia Jones.

For County Court cases in Summit County in which Judge Robert Gregory recuses himself, the case will be reassigned to Judge Cynthia Jones.

For County Court cases in Clear Creek County in which Judge Cynthia Jones recuses herself, the case will be reassigned to Judge Robert Gregory.

For County Court cases in Lake County in which Judge John Scott recuses himself, the case will be reassigned to Judge Inga Causey.

Effective July 1, 2026, Eagle County is scheduled to have a second County Court Judge appointed. Upon the appointment of the second Eagle County Court Judge, the recusals and reassignments will be addressed as follows:

For County Court cases in Eagle County, Judge Inga Causey and the to be named Eagle County Court will be the default reassignment judges for each other. If that Judge is not available, the case will be reassigned to Judge John Scott.

For County Court cases in Summit County in which Judge Robert Gregory recuses himself, the case will be reassigned to Judge Cynthia Jones.

For County Court cases in Clear Creek County in which Judge Cynthia Jones recuses herself, the case will be reassigned to Judge Robert Gregory.

For County Court cases in Lake County in which Judge John Scott recuses himself, Judge Causey and the to be named Eagle County Court Judge will alternate as the reassignment judges.

While the presumption is that the recusal of the County Court Judges will be addressed as stated above, the Chief Judge will make the final reassignment determination giving consideration to balancing caseloads and addressing other potential recusal issues.

The Judge requesting recusal shall contact the Judge designated to be assigned the case in advance of submitting a proposed Request and Order to the Chief Judge to ensure that the assigned Judge is available to take the case. Except as stated herein, in the event the Judge designated to provide coverage is unavailable to take the case, the Judge requesting recusal shall contact the Chief Judge who shall then make the assignment. The Chief Judge shall retain the ability to deviate from this rotation, if necessary, to balance work and caseloads.

In the event that all other judicial officers in the 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District are also subject to recusal or otherwise unavailable to take the case, the Chief Judge shall, through the Court Executive, make a request for a Senior Judge Assignment or the Chief Judge shall notify the State Court Administrator who shall obtain from the Chief Justice the assignment of a replacement judge.

**EFFECTIVE DATE AND BINDING EFFECT.** This Order shall be effective February 1, 2026, and shall remain in effect pending further Chief Judge/Administrative Order.

SO ORDERED this 1<sup>st</sup> day of February, 2026.

BY THE COURT:



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Paul R. Dunkelman  
Chief District Judge, 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District