

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
CENTRAL DIVISION**

IN THE MATTER OF)
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GUILTY PLEAS BEFORE)
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CHIEF UNITED STATES)
MAGISTRATE JUDGE)
WILLIE J. EPPS, JR.)
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STANDING ORDER
(Revised April 4, 2025)

For cause, it is

ORDERED that the following procedures shall apply to guilty plea proceedings before Chief United States Magistrate Judge Willie J. Epps, Jr.:

1. The Court will not schedule a change of plea hearing before Chief Magistrate Judge Epps unless the party seeking to schedule the hearing represents that the Defendant has consented to having a Magistrate Judge preside over the hearing.

2. A lawyer representing a Defendant at a guilty plea proceeding will not be permitted to use the time scheduled for the taking of the guilty plea to prepare the Defendant for the taking of the guilty plea. The preparations for a guilty plea hearing are to be completed prior to the commencement of the scheduled change of plea hearing.

3. Counsel must notify the Courtroom Deputy of the Defendant’s intent to enter a plea of guilty before Judge Epps at least three (3) business days prior to the pretrial conference.

4. Absent extraordinary circumstances, the date of the pretrial conference or, for Springfield cases, the last day Judge Epps is scheduled to be in Springfield prior to the Joint Accelerated Criminal Jury Trial Docket, is the last day that Judge Epps will hold

a change of plea hearing. After that time, a Defendant who wishes to enter a plea of guilty may be directed to schedule the hearing before the District Judge to whom the case is assigned.

5. Prior to the start of the change of plea hearing, the charging document, a waiver of indictment (if applicable), the signed final plea agreement (where there is one), and a signed written consent to proceed before a Magistrate Judge are to be provided to Judge Epps' Courtroom Deputy. The written consent form can be located on Judge Epps' webpage on the Court's website: <https://www.mow.uscourts.gov/judges/epps>. After the hearing, the signed final plea agreement is to be filed by the Government, and the signed written consent form is to be filed by counsel for the Defendant.
6. If the documents are not completed prior to the change of plea hearing, the hearing may be rescheduled before the District Judge to whom the case is assigned. Neither a change of plea setting nor the filing of a pretrial motion will remove a case from the Court's trial docket.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 1st day of April, 2025.

/s/ Willie J. Epps, Jr.

WILLIE J. EPPS, JR.

Chief United States Magistrate Judge