

Rule 22. Substitution of Judge**22.01 Before or During Trial**

If by reason of death, sickness or other disability, the judge before whom pretrial proceedings or a jury trial has commenced is unable to proceed, any other judge sitting in or assigned to the court, upon certification of familiarity with the record of the proceedings or trial, may proceed with and finish the proceedings or trial.

22.02 After Verdict or Finding of Guilt

If by reason of absence, death, sickness, or other disability, the judge before whom the child has been tried is unable to perform the duties to be performed by the court after a verdict or finding of guilt, any other judge sitting in or assigned to the court may perform those duties; but if such other judge is satisfied that those duties cannot be performed because of not presiding at the trial, such judge may grant a new trial.

22.03 Notice to Remove

Subdivision 1. Service and Filing. The child's counsel or the prosecuting attorney may serve on the other parties and file with the court administrator a notice to remove the judge assigned to a trial or hearing. The notice shall be served and filed within seven (7) days after the child's counsel or the prosecuting attorney receives written notice, or oral notice in court on the record, of which judge is to preside at the trial or hearing but, in any event, not later than the commencement of the trial or the hearing.

Subd. 2. Removal of Presiding Judge. No notice shall be effective against a judge who has already presided at the trial, probable cause hearing, or other evidentiary hearing of which the party had notice, except where a party shows cause why a judge should be removed. After a party has once disqualified a presiding judge as a matter of right, that party may disqualify the substitute judge only upon an affirmative showing of cause.

(Amended effective for all juveniles taken into custody and all juvenile delinquency actions commenced or children taken into custody after 12 o'clock midnight September 1, 2003; amended effective for all juvenile delinquency actions commenced or children taken into custody after 12 o'clock midnight July 1, 2004.)

22.04 Assignment of New Judge

Upon the removal, disqualification, disability, recusal or unavailability of a judge under this rule, the chief judge of the judicial district shall assign any other judge within the district to hear the matter. If there is no other judge of the district who is qualified to hear the matter, the chief judge of the district shall notify the chief justice. The chief justice shall then assign a judge of another district to preside over the matter.

Comment--Rule 22

This rule is modeled after Minn. R. Crim. P. 26.03 subd 14. The rule permits the child's counsel or prosecuting attorney to serve and file a notice to remove a judge as a matter of right without cause. Only one such removal as a matter of right is permitted to a party. Other removals must be for cause.

The right to a fair trial before an impartial tribunal is a fundamental due process requirement. See, e.g., Estes v. Texas, 381 U.S. 532, 85 S.Ct. 1628, 14 L.Ed.2d. 543 (1965). The Supreme Court in In re Murchison, 349 U.S. 133, 75 S.Ct. 623 (1955), explained the importance of an impartial tribunal: "Fairness of course requires an absence of actual bias in the trial of cases. But our system

of law has always endeavored to prevent even the probability of unfairness... [T]o perform its high function in the best way, 'justice must satisfy the appearance of justice.'" 349 U.S. at 136 citing Offutt v. United States, 348 U.S. 11, 14, 75 S.Ct. 11, 13 (1954). Moreover, the fact finder must make a determination based only on the evidence in the record in order to ensure effective appellate review. See, e.g., Patterson v. Colorado, 205 U.S. 454 (1907).

The appearance, if not the actuality, of neutral and unbiased fact-finding may be compromised if the judge has actual knowledge of the social history or prior court history of the child. See, e.g., In re Gladys R., 1 Cal.3d 855, 464 P.2d 127, 83 Cal. Rptr. 671 (1970) (reversible error for juvenile court to review social study report before jurisdictional hearing). The problem is especially acute in delinquency proceedings because juveniles, with the exception of extended jurisdiction juveniles, do not have the right to a jury trial. McKeiver v. Pennsylvania, 403 U.S. 528, 91 S.Ct. 1976, 29 L.Ed. 647 (1970). Whenever a judge knows information that is not admissible at trial but is prejudicial to a child, the impartiality of the tribunal is open to question. A.B.A. Juvenile Justice Standards Relating to Adjudication, Standard 4.1 at 54. The problem of impartiality is particularly troublesome in juvenile court proceedings because the same judge typically handles the same case at different stages. For example, at a detention hearing, a judge may be exposed to a youth's social history file and prior record of police contacts and delinquency adjudications, all of which bear on the issue of appropriate pretrial placement. When the same judge is subsequently called upon to determine the admissibility of evidence in a suppression hearing and the guilt of the juvenile in the same proceeding, the juvenile's basic right to a fair trial by an impartial tribunal with a determination of guilt based on admissible evidence may be compromised. E.g., In re Welfare of J.P.L., 359 N.W.2d 622 (Minn. Ct. App. 1984).

References in this rule to "child's counsel" include the child who is proceeding pro se. Minn. R. Juv. Del. P. 1.01.