Office of the District Court Executive

EDWARD A. FRIEDLAND
District Court Executive

LORETTA A. PRESKA
Chief Judge

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 4, 2011

CONTACT
Stephanie Cirkovich, (212) 805-0529

SDNY IMPLEMENTS INNOVATIVE PILOT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF JUDICIAL CASE MANAGEMENT IN COMPLEX CIVIL CASES

As a response to the federal bar's concerns about the high cost of litigating complex civil cases, the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York has implemented a pilot program designed to improve judicial case management of these disputes and reduce costs and delay. The pilot went into effect on November 1.

An advisory committee of thirty-two attorneys worked closely with Southern District judges to develop a set of procedural rules the court can follow in complex civil cases. The rules are intended to shorten the timeline for certain actions, reduce motion practice, and flag issues requiring judicial intervention at an earlier stage in the litigation process. Under the pilot program, fourteen types of civil lawsuits are designated as "complex civil cases," including stockholders' suits, patent and trademark claims, product liability disputes, multi-district litigation, and class actions. Southern District judges can remove a case from the pilot, or they can designate a case as complex if it does not fall under one of the fourteen designated categories.

The program is slated to run for eighteen months. During that time, the Southern District will work with the federal bar to measure the effects of the pilot. "The hope is to inspire courts around the country," said District Judge Shira A. Scheindlin, chair of the Southern District's Judicial Improvement Committee that sponsored the complex civil rules initiative. "Complex civil cases comprise approximately 12 to 13% of the court's caseload, and managing them efficiently and fairly is paramount. I'm proud of the work that the advisory committee and the court's Judicial Improvements Committee have accomplished; this pilot highlights the best practices of complex civil case management."

A complete copy of the complex civil case rules can be found on the court's website at http://www.nysd.uscourts.gov.

###

500 PEARL STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10007
300 QUARROPAS STREET, WHITE PLAINS, NY 10601