

Rule 3.170. Pleas

(a) Types of Plea; Court's Discretion. A defendant may plead not guilty, guilty, or, with the consent of the court, nolo contendere. Except as otherwise provided by these rules, all pleas to a charge shall be in open court and shall be entered by the defendant. If the sworn complaint charges the commission of a misdemeanor, the defendant may plead guilty to the charge at the first appearance under rule 3.130, and the judge may thereupon enter judgment and sentence without the necessity of any further formal charges being filed. A plea of not guilty may be entered in writing by counsel. Every plea shall be entered of record, but a failure to enter it shall not affect the validity of any proceeding in the cause.

(b) Pleading to Other Charges. Having entered a plea in accordance with this rule, the defendant may, with the court's permission, enter a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to any and all charges pending against him or her in the State of Florida over which the court would have jurisdiction and, when authorized by law, to charges pending in a court of lesser jurisdiction, if the prosecutor in the other case or cases gives written consent thereto. The court accepting such a plea shall make a disposition of all such charges by judgment, sentence, or otherwise. The record of the plea and its disposition shall be filed in the court of original jurisdiction of the offense. If a defendant secures permission to plead to other pending charges and does so plead, the entry of such a plea shall constitute a waiver by the defendant of venue and all nonjurisdictional defects relating to such charges.

(c) Standing Mute or Pleading Evasively. If a defendant stands mute, or pleads evasively, a plea of not guilty shall be entered.

(d) Failure of Corporation to Appear. If the defendant is a corporation and fails to appear, a plea of not guilty shall be entered of record.

(e) Plea of Not Guilty; Operation in Denial. A plea of not guilty is a denial of every material allegation in the indictment or information on which the defendant is to be tried.

(f) Withdrawal of Plea of Guilty or No Contest. The court may in its discretion, and shall on good cause, at any time before a sentence, permit a plea of guilty or no contest to be withdrawn and, if judgment of conviction has been entered thereon, set aside the judgment and allow a plea of not guilty, or, with the consent of the prosecuting attorney, allow a plea of guilty or no contest of a lesser included offense, or of a lesser degree of the offense charged, to be substituted for the plea of guilty or no contest. The fact that a defendant may have entered a plea of guilty or no contest and later withdrawn the plea may not be used against the defendant in a trial of that cause.

(g) Vacation of Plea and Sentence Due to Defendant's Noncompliance.

(1) Whenever a plea agreement requires the defendant to comply with some specific terms, those terms shall be expressly made a part of the plea entered into in open court.

(2) Unless otherwise stated at the time the plea is entered:

(A) The state may move to vacate a plea and sentence within 60 days of the defendant's noncompliance with the specific terms of a plea agreement.

(B) When a motion is filed pursuant to subdivision (g)(2)(A) of this rule, the court shall hold an evidentiary hearing on the issue unless the defendant admits noncompliance with the specific terms of the plea agreement.

(C) No plea or sentence shall be vacated unless the court finds that there has been substantial noncompliance with the express plea agreement.

(D) When a plea and sentence is vacated pursuant to this rule, the cause shall be set for trial within 90 days of the order vacating the plea and sentence.

(h) Plea of Guilty to Lesser Included Offense or Lesser Degree. The defendant, with the consent of the court and of the prosecuting attorney, may plead guilty to any lesser offense than that charged that is included in the offense charged in the indictment or information or to any lesser degree of the offense charged.

(i) Plea of Guilty to an Offense Divided into Degrees; Determination of the Degree. When an indictment or information charges an offense that is divided into degrees without specifying the degree, if the defendant pleads guilty, generally the court shall, before accepting the plea, examine witnesses to determine the degree of the offense of which the defendant is guilty.

(j) Time and Circumstances of Plea. No defendant, whether represented by counsel or otherwise, shall be called on to plead unless and until he or she has had a reasonable time within which to deliberate thereon.

(k) Responsibility of Court on Pleas. No plea of guilty or nolo contendere shall be accepted by a court without the court first determining, in open court, with means of recording the proceedings stenographically or mechanically, that the circumstances surrounding the plea reflect a full understanding of the significance of the plea and its voluntariness and that there is a factual basis for the plea of guilty. A complete record of the proceedings at which a defendant pleads shall be kept by the court.

(l) Motion to Withdraw the Plea after Sentencing. A defendant who pleads guilty or nolo contendere without expressly reserving the right to appeal a legally dispositive issue may file a

motion to withdraw the plea within thirty days after rendition of the sentence, but only upon the grounds specified in Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.140(b)(2)(A)(ii)(a)-(e) except as provided by law.

(m) Motion to Withdraw the Plea after Drug Court Transfer. A defendant who pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a charge for the purpose of transferring the case, pursuant to section 910.035, Florida Statutes, may file a motion to withdraw the plea upon successful completion of the drug court treatment program.