

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
CIRCUIT COURT  
SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**RONALD A. BARCH**  
ASSOCIATE JUDGE



**Boone County Courthouse**  
601 North Main Street  
Belvidere, Illinois 61108

January 18, 2022

**NOTICE TO ALL LITIGANTS**

As of January 13, 2022, the undersigned and his wife, Sherrie Barch, are engaged active litigation with Auto-Owners Insurance Company. The lawsuit concerns a dispute over a hail damage claim. This disclosure is made pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rules 62 and 63.

Currently, there are no cases pending before the undersigned wherein Auto-Owners Insurance Company or a known subsidiary of Auto-Owners Insurance Company is a named party. If confronted with a future filing involving Auto-Owners Insurance Company or one of its subsidiaries as a named party, the court intends to alert the parties and their counsel to consider, outside the presence of the court, whether to waive disqualification. (See, Remittal of Disqualification; Rule 63(D)).

Because Illinois public policy prohibits direct actions against an insurer before judgment has been rendered against the insured, the court has no way of knowing whether Auto-Owners Insurance Company or one of its subsidiaries is an insurance carrier for one or more litigants involved in a case before the court. *Richardson v. Economy Fire and Cas. Co.*, 109 Ill.2d 41, 47 (1985); *Direct Auto Insurance Company v. Bahena*, 2019 IL App (1<sup>st</sup>) 172918, ¶ 19 (2019). The court does not believe Auto-Owners Insurance Company's involvement as a mere insurer of a party (litigant) is a basis for disqualification. (See, generally, *Barth v. State Farm Fire & Cas. Co.* 228 Ill.2d 163 (2008)). Nonetheless, if you know or should know that your client is insured by Auto-Owners Insurance Company or one of its subsidiaries, you should consider a motion for substitution. 735 ILCS 5/2-1001 (West 2021).

Dated: January 18, 2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "RAB #3".

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Judge Ronald A. Barch