

IN THE COURTS OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2020-07

RE: COVID-19 PANDEMIC - EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

WHEREAS, the Florida State Courts System is continuing to monitor and proactively address the effects of COVID-19, a severe acute respiratory transmission, on court operations; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of Florida has declared a state of emergency, the Surgeon General and State Health Officer have declared a public health emergency exists, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Florida Department of Health, and the Florida Department of Management Services have published after-travel health precaution information; and

WHEREAS the health, safety, and well-being of courthouse visitors, court employees, and judicial officers are a high priority for the State Courts System; and

WHEREAS, AOSC20-13 authorizes all chief judges of the circuit courts to continue ongoing efforts to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the court and court participants and to prepare to activate and implement continuity of operations (COOP) plans to address the public health emergency;

NOW THEREFORE; it is

ORDERED:

1. Access to court facilities within the First Judicial Circuit is limited. This order is effective immediately, and shall remain effective until further notice to the courts. This order encompasses all prior actions taken by the judiciary of the First

Judicial Circuit under the verbal orders of the undersigned to protect and ensure the safety of those individuals in their courtrooms commencing on March 16, 2020.

2. Only those persons with business before the court, or with any other agencies or community resources housed within the court facilities, should attempt to enter court facilities.
3. Courtroom attendance shall be limited to attorneys, parties, and necessary witnesses, as well as essential court staff. Exceptions may be made at the sole discretion of presiding judges on a case-by-case basis.
4. Court bailiffs and local Sheriff's deputies are hereby granted the authority to screen and eject persons from courtrooms in accordance with this directive.
5. Criminal proceedings for which more than 50 people are scheduled to be heard will take place at staggered intervals, in order to limit the number of people gathered in one area.
6. To the extent possible, proceedings will be held by employing video and telephonic appearances.
7. Until further notice, each person entering court facilities will be allowed to bring one small bottle of hand sanitizer for their personal use. The bottle should be no larger than two ounces.

DONE AND ORDERED in Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida this 17th day of
March, 2020.



JOHN L. MILLER
CHIEF JUDGE

Copies of Administrative Order No. 2020-07 furnished to:

All Judges, First Judicial Circuit

William Eddins, State Attorney, First Judicial Circuit

Bruce Miller, Public Defender, First Judicial Circuit

Robin Wright, Trial Court Administrator

Allison Newton, Chief Deputy Court Administrator

Kayla Blanchard, Administrative Services Manager

Justice Administrative Commission

For Broadcast by: Escambia-Santa Rosa Bar Association

For Broadcast by: Okaloosa County Bar Association

For Broadcast by: Walton County Bar Association

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