

**IN THE COURTS OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2021-22**

RE: COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS AND OPERATIONAL MEASURES

WHEREAS, in response to the public health emergency caused by the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), the Florida Supreme Court and the First Judicial Circuit have taken significant measures to limit and modify court operations so as to ensure the safe administration of justice; and

WHEREAS, reopening of the courts of the First Judicial Circuit has been in conformity with Florida Supreme Court AOSC 20-23 and AOSC 20-32, as periodically amended; and

WHEREAS, having determined that the judicial branch can now transition to operations where in-person contact is more broadly authorized, the Florida Supreme Court issued AOSC 21-17 on June 4, 2021, which provides that AOSC 20-23 and AOSC 20-32 shall terminate at 12:01 a.m. on June 21, 2021; and AOSC 21-17, Amendment 1, issued on July 29, 2021, provides that the Chief Judge of each circuit has the authority to implement health and safety protocols; and

WHEREAS, AOSC 21-17 establishes new, temporary health and safety protocols and extends and modifies previously enacted temporary emergency operational measures;

THEREFORE, in accordance with the authority vested in the Chief Judge by Article V, Section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution, Sections 40.001, 43.26, and 905.01, Florida Statutes, Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, and to promote public safety, the following adjustments to operations are hereby **ORDERED** effective 12:01 a.m. on August 4, 2021 unless otherwise provided herein:

1. All persons entering a court facility or attending an in-person court proceeding may wear a face mask if they choose. However, they are not required to wear a face mask. If a person chooses to wear a face mask and does not have one, a face mask shall be provided to that person by Court Administration in each county.

2. Although social distancing is no longer required, all persons inside the courthouse are encouraged to social distance. Participants of any in-person proceeding may request to be physically distanced. The presiding judge will address such requests as appropriate under the circumstances at the time of the request.

3. Termination of Parental Rights cases and juvenile delinquency cases may be conducted remotely if ordered by the presiding judge.

4. Hearings to determine whether an individual should be involuntarily committed under the Baker Act or Marchman Act may be conducted remotely if ordered by the presiding judge.

5. Civil jury selection and trial proceedings, and criminal jury selection and trial proceedings must be conducted in person. All other trial proceedings must be conducted remotely if requested by a party unless the chief judge or presiding judge determines that 1) the interests of justice require the proceeding to be conducted in person, or 2) the chief judge or presiding judge determines that remote conduct of the proceeding is inconsistent with the United States or Florida Constitution, a statute, a rule of court, a court order, or an opinion that has not been suspended by Administrative Order.

6. The judges of the First Judicial Circuit should consider remote technology, whenever possible and appropriate, to facilitate the efficient and expeditious processing of cases.

DONE AND ORDERED in Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida, on this 3rd day of

August, 2021.

//s// JOHN L. MILLER
JOHN L. MILLER
CHIEF JUDGE

Copies furnished to:

All Judges, First Judicial Circuit
All Clerks, First Judicial Circuit
Ginger Madden, State Attorney, First Judicial Circuit
Kasey Watson, Public Information Officer, First Judicial Circuit
Bruce Miller, Public Defender, First Judicial Circuit
Robin Wright, Trial Court Administrator
Elizabeth Miller, Child Welfare Legal Services
Bryan Carter, Guardian Ad Litem
Mark Jones, President of Family First Network
Kayshala Patterson, Chief Probation Officer for Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
Justice Administrative Commission
Candice Brower, Office of Criminal Conflict Counsel
Craig Waters, Director of Public Information, Florida Supreme Court
For Broadcast by: Escambia-Santa Rosa Bar Association
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