

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR INDIAN RIVER, MARTIN, OKEECHOBEE, AND ST. LUCIE COUNTIES  
STATE OF FLORIDA

**AMENDED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-07**

**IN RE: COVID-19 REOPENING PROCEDURES – AMENDED PROTOCOLS<sup>1</sup>**

WHEREAS, Administrative Order 2020-06 directed all judges, magistrates and hearing officers to evaluate their caseloads and implement procedures consistent with AOSC 20-23 and Executive Order 20-112 to maximize remote work and thereby ensure the occupancy of courthouses does not exceed the Governor’s extant directives relating to large capacity public facilities,

WHEREAS, reopening the courts of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit in conformity with AOSC 20-23 *Amendment 1* will result in a greater number of persons using and occupying courthouses beginning May 30, 2020, and

WHEREAS, in order to implement the objectives of AOSC 20-23 *Amendment 1* and Executive Order 20-112 and all orders and phases anticipated to follow, the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit COVID-19 Reopening Workgroup established the protocols set forth Administrative Order 2020-07;

WHEREAS, in order to remain in compliance with subsequent Administrative Orders of the Florida Supreme Court and amendments thereto, it is necessary to amend Administrative Order 2020-07;

THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority of the Chief Judge under section 43.26, Florida Statutes, and Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED as follows:

- A. Effective immediately, the following protocols shall be observed in all courthouses in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit.
  1. **Temperature Taking.** All persons entering court facilities shall have their temperature taken in a non-intrusive manner. Persons who refuse to have their

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<sup>1</sup> This Administrative Order is amended to incorporate guidelines adopted by Florida Supreme Court in Administrative Orders that pertain to health screening of visitors entering court facilities, face masks, transport of inmates and detainees, and cleaning and disinfecting of facilities.

temperatures taken or have temperatures over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be denied entry into the court facility.

2. **Signage; Persons Subject to Isolation or Quarantine.** Prominently displayed signage shall be placed at public entrances to all courthouses that will instruct individuals not to enter the courthouse if they have been advised by health officials to isolate or quarantine.

3. **Health Screening.** Each person entering a court facility shall be screened using the following questions:

a. Question 1: Do you have any of the following symptoms (excluding those due to a known medical condition other than COVID-19):

- i. Cough
- ii. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- iii. Fever or chills
- iv. Fatigue
- v. Muscle or body aches
- vi. Headache
- vii. Sore throat
- viii. New loss of taste or smell
- ix. Congestion or runny nose
- x. Nausea or vomiting
- xi. Diarrhea

b. Question 2: Are you currently awaiting the results of a test to determine if you have COVID-19 based on symptoms or suspected exposure?

c. Question 3: Are you under instructions to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19?

d. Question 4: Within the last 14 days, have you had close contact with someone with a COVID-19 diagnosis or who is awaiting test results for COVID-19 based on symptoms or suspected exposure?

4. **Social Distancing Measures.** Because the virus is thought to spread between persons who are in close contact with one another, the social distancing measures set forth below shall be followed to the maximum extent possible:

- a. Face Masks. Face masks are required for everyone entering a court facility, with no exceptions. They must completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly around the nose, chin, and sides of the face. Face masks may be single-use disposable masks, cloth masks, clear face masks, or cloth masks that have clear plastic panels. A face shield may be used in addition to a face mask, but may not be used as an alternative to a face mask. If a visitor to a court facility does not have a face mask, a disposable mask will be provided.

Face masks shall be worn at all times throughout the public areas of the courthouse facility, including inside the courtroom if two or more individuals are in the courtroom. Judges and court staff do not have to wear a mask in their private chambers or office as long as social distancing is possible. If they do not have a private office, and ample social distancing is not observed, a face mask should be worn.

- b. Six-Foot Distancing. All persons must keep at least six feet between themselves and others, even when wearing a face mask. Court personnel should monitor the number of persons allowed into an elevator at any given time to avoid violating social distancing protocols.

5. **Hand Sanitizing**. To the maximum extent feasible, hand sanitization stations shall be implemented at several locations throughout all court facilities. Persons entering and traversing court facilities will be encouraged to use them.

6. **Cleaning and Disinfecting**. Counties shall continue to conduct enhanced nightly cleaning and disinfecting of court facilities. High traffic areas and frequently touched surfaces such as elevator buttons and access key pads should be cleaned multiple times per day. Bailiffs or other court personnel should also undertake responsibility to frequently and routinely wipe and disinfect surfaces in personal and courtroom areas, such as door handles, counsel tables, podiums, and other frequently touched surfaces.

Employees should frequently use hand sanitizer with at least a 60 percent alcohol content and/or wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using an access keypad or elevator, using a restroom, before eating, and before and after using a copier or other shared office equipment. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be available throughout court facilities, and staff is encouraged to keep hand sanitizer in their office. Employees should not share pens, pencils, headsets, keyboards, and other desktop accessories. Employees and/or facility staff should clean or disinfect shared surfaces, such as conference tables, podiums, and lunch room tables after each use.

7. **Physical Handling of Documents.** To the maximum extent possible, physical handling of documents is to be avoided.

B. **Notices of Hearing.** Until further order of this Court, all notices of court hearings issued by counsel or the court should contain the following statements:

**If you are a person seeking to enter the courthouse please be aware of the following requirements:**

**Upon entry to the courthouse your temperature will be taken in a non-intrusive manner. Persons with temperatures over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be denied entry into the courthouse. All persons entering the courthouse will be further screened by a questionnaire:**

a. **Question 1: Do you have any of the following symptoms (excluding those due to a known medical condition other than COVID-19):**

- i. **Cough**
- ii. **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- iii. **Fever or chills**
- iv. **Fatigue**
- v. **Muscle or body aches**
- vi. **Headache**
- vii. **Sore throat**
- viii. **New loss of taste or smell**
- ix. **Congestion or runny nose**
- x. **Nausea or vomiting**
- xi. **Diarrhea**

b. **Question 2: Are you currently awaiting the results of a test to determine if you have COVID-19 based on symptoms or suspected exposure?**

c. **Question 3: Are you under instructions to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19?**

d. **Question 4: Within the last 14 days, have you had close contact with someone with a COVID-19 diagnosis or who is awaiting test results for COVID-19 based on symptoms or suspected exposure?**

**Face masks are required for everyone entering a court facility, with no exceptions. Please bring your own face mask if you have one. If you do not possess one, a disposable mask will be provided to you. Face masks must completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly around the nose, chin, and sides of the face. They may be single-use disposable masks, cloth masks, clear face masks, or cloth masks with clear plastic panels. A face shield may be used in addition to a face mask, but may not be used as an alternative to a face mask.**

**All individuals shall observe social distancing within courthouses by maintaining the recommended minimum six-foot distance from other individuals even when wearing a face mask and while in elevators. Frequently sanitize your hands while you are in the courthouse.**

- C. **Transport of Inmates and Juvenile Detainees.** Because of risks associated with virus transmission among inmates and juvenile detainees, judges are strongly discouraged from ordering their transport to court. However, if deemed necessary for a court proceeding, judges may bring inmates and detainees to the courtroom from the county jail or detention center. Inmates and detainees must wear face masks as provided in this Administrative Order. If inmates and detainees do not undergo a health screening and temperature check prior to being transported to a court facility, they are subject to the health screening and temperature check requirements that are applicable to members of the public for entry into a court facility.
- D. **Courtroom Decorum and Social Distancing Measures.** In order to conduct proceedings appropriately, judges shall maintain traditional individual control of courtroom proceedings. Keeping in mind the goal is reduction of disease transmission, judges should regulate the number and location of persons in their courtrooms at any time so as to facilitate the protection of individuals from COVID-19.
- E. **Remote Hearings/Proceedings.** Judges are directed to continue to maximize remote work by Zoom or other electronic means to limit the number of in-person court appearances and thereby reduce the risks of COVID-19 exposure to all persons involved in court proceedings after May 30, 2020.

This Administrative Order shall remain in effect until further notice or until superseded by further order of this Court or the Florida Supreme Court.

**DONE AND ORDERED** at Stuart, Florida this 10<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2021.

*Lawrence Mirman*

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LAWRENCE MIRMAN  
CHIEF JUDGE