

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2020 - 02**

**IN RE: EMERGENCY TEMPORARY PROCEDURES REGARDING COURTHOUSE  
OPERATIONS AND MISSION-ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS**

**WHEREAS**, the Florida State Courts System continues to monitor and proactively address the effects on court operations of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), a severe acute respiratory transmission; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor of Florida has declared a state emergency exists, the Surgeon General and State Health Officer have declared a public health emergency exists, and the World Health Organization has declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, the Florida Supreme Court has issued Administrative Order SC20-15, "COVID-19 Essential and Critical Trial Court Proceedings," which directs the chief judge of each circuit court to cancel or postpone court proceedings other than essential proceedings and proceedings critical to the state of emergency and public health emergency, unless the chief judge determines that other proceedings or events can be effectively conducted remotely without the necessity of in-person court appearances; and

**WHEREAS**, the health, safety, and well-being of courthouse visitors, court employees, and judicial officers are a high priority, and we must continue to take steps to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the courts, its participants, and the general public; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the Florida Supreme Court's directive in AOSC20-13 and AOSC20-15, and by the authority vested in me as the Chief Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit;

It is therefore **ORDERED AND ADJUDGED**:

1. Court proceedings are limited to those deemed "mission essential" as defined below:
  - a. First Appearances;
  - b. Bond hearings;
  - c. Criminal Arraignments; as necessary;
  - d. Juvenile Detention hearings;
  - e. Juvenile Shelter hearings;

- f. Domestic Violence, repeat violence, sexual violence, dating violence and stalking injunctions, as well as all chapter 39 injunctions;
  - g. Risk Protection orders;
  - h. Marchman Acts;
  - i. Baker Acts;
  - j. Family law (including juvenile) cases where the imminent safety of children is an issue;
  - k. Vulnerable adult injunctions;
  - l. Emergency incapacity petitions and appointment of guardians;
  - m. Proceedings involving requests for "do not resuscitate" orders;
  - n. Adult Protective Service Act proceedings;
  - o. Requests for search warrants and arrest warrants;
  - p. Violations of quarantine or isolation orders;
  - q. Violations of orders to limit travel;
  - r. Violations of orders to close public or private buildings;
  - s. Seizure of bodily fluids;
  - t. Mandatory vaccinations proceedings;
  - u. Enforcement of curfew orders;
  - v. Extraordinary writs;
  - w. Any other "emergency" proceedings or hearings authorized by the Chief Judge, which includes jail pleas and admissions by incarcerated defendants via electronic communication.
2. Wherever possible, proceedings in mission-essential matters shall be conducted using electronic technology such as videoconferencing and telephonic appearances in order to minimize risk of COVID-19 exposure to individuals involved in the proceedings or the general public.
  3. Judges may hold necessary in-custody criminal proceedings as long as the hearings are conducted electronically, there are no in-person participants, and the judge finds that the custody status of the defendant will be affected by the hearing.

4. All transport orders to and from the courthouses of the Third Judicial Circuit are rescinded through March 27, 2020, or until further order of this court.
5. Requests for Juvenile Shelter Hearings and Juvenile Detention Hearings shall be made with the presiding judge.
6. Requests for temporary injunctions shall be made with the presiding judge during normal working hours and on nights and weekends pursuant to the Third Judicial Circuit Administrative Order 2018-021.
7. Injunction hearings relating to the safety of an individual shall take place in person or by telephonic means at dates and times designated by the presiding judges.
8. All Risk Protection Orders hearings shall take place in person or by telephonic means at dates and times designated by the presiding judges.
9. Requests for Baker Act and Marchman Act hearings shall be made with the presiding judges.
10. Family and Dependency emergencies where imminent harm to a child is an issue shall be presented to the presiding judge and will be considered/heard as determined by the presiding judge.
11. Requests for search and arrest warrants will be considered during normal working hours by the judge(s) at each courthouse location and on nights and weekends pursuant to the Third Judicial Circuit Administrative Order 2018-021.
12. Any judge, who in his or her judgment feels the need to conduct a hearing outside the parameters of this Order shall request permission to do so from the Chief Judge.
13. No inmate housed in any jail facility is to be transported to any court facility in the Third Judicial Circuit absent a written order from the Chief Judge.
14. Except as otherwise provided herein, where available, technological means of communication such as telephone, conference call, or videoconference should be used to minimize face-to-face contact among judges, attorneys, and litigants.
15. All collateral uses of the courthouse facilities for depositions, mediations, meetings, etc. are hereby canceled.
16. All court mediations are cancelled unless conducted remotely using videoconferencing, telephonic, or other electronic means without the necessity of in-person court appearances.

17. As per AOSC20-15, all judges and magistrates are directed to reschedule, postpone, or cancel all non mission-essential proceedings unless they can be effectively conducted remotely using telephonic or other electronic means.
18. This order is effective immediately and extends until the close of business on March 27, 2020, or as provided by subsequent order. If the timeframes set forth in AOSC20-13 and AOSC20-15 are extended by the Supreme Court of Florida, the timeframes in this order will extend without the necessity of further order from this court.

**ORDERED** in Columbia County, Florida, on March 18, 2020.



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MARK E. FEAGLE, Chief Judge

*Copies:*

All Third Judicial Circuit Judges and Judicial Assistants  
Third Circuit Staff  
All Third Circuit Sheriffs  
All Third Judicial Circuit Clerks of Court  
Office of State Attorney, Third Judicial Circuit  
Office of Public Defender, Third Judicial Circuit  
Third Circuit Bar Association (for distribution among membership)