

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.: 12.510 -03/2020.3*

IN RE: MITIGATING MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In response to the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Governor of Florida has declared a state of emergency exists and the Surgeon General and State Health Officer have declared that a public health emergency exists. As directed by the Florida Supreme Court in AOSC20-12 and AOSC20-13, preparing for the impact of COVID-19 on court operations is a high priority for the Florida State Courts System and all chief judges of the district and circuit courts must take any mitigating measures as may be necessary to address the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak in their respective courts.

Further, on March 17, 2020, the Florida Supreme Court issued AOSC20-15, which: (1) designates essential court proceedings required and permits the chief judge to determine additional essential proceedings; (2) requires circuits to employ all methods practicable to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure to individuals involved in essential proceedings or the general public; and (3) directs the chief judge of each circuit to cancel or postpone non-essential proceedings unless such proceedings can be effectively conducted remotely without in-person court appearances. As a result of the foregoing, it is

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority conferred by Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215 it is **ORDERED** as follows

I. ESSENTIAL COURT PROCEEDINGS

1. The following matters are deemed essential court proceedings:
 - a. First appearance hearings;
 - b. Criminal arraignments, when necessary;
 - c. Hearings on motions to set or modify monetary bail for individuals who are in custody;
 - d. Juvenile detention hearings;
 - e. Juvenile dependency shelter and arraignment hearings;
 - f. Termination of Parental Rights advisory hearings;

- g. Petitions for Judicial Waiver of Notice pursuant to section 390.01114(4), Florida Statutes;
- h. Hearings on petitions for the appointment of an emergency temporary guardian;
- i. Ex parte injunctions for dating violence, domestic violence, repeat violence, sexual violence, or stalking;
- j. Ex parte petitions for Risk Protection Orders;
- k. Issuance of warrants or authorizations for wiretaps;
- l. Baker Act and Marchman Act proceedings;
- m. Extraordinary Writs;
- n. Proceedings related to the state of emergency or public health emergency, including but not limited to proceedings related to: violation of quarantine or isolation violation of orders to limit travel; violation of orders to close public or private buildings; and enforcement of curfew orders; and
- o. Any other emergency or time sensitive matter as determined by the judge.

II. HANDLING OF ESSENTIAL COURT PROCEEDINGS

1. Essential court proceedings will be handled by the divisional judge, magistrate, hearing officer, or duty judge who would normally hear the matter.

2. When possible, essential court proceedings will be held remotely using communication equipment. If it is not possible to conduct the proceeding remotely, the presiding judicial officer shall ensure that all available social distancing methods are utilized.

3. Effective March 23, 2020 until further order of the Court, all Baker Act and Marchman Act hearings usually scheduled for Fridays will be held on Thursdays.

4. Pursuant to AOSC20-13, effective immediately until further order of the Court, all Baker Act involuntary commitment hearings will be conducted remotely using communication equipment.

5. Effective immediately, the Public Defender shall be appointed for all first appearance hearings without the necessity of an affidavit of indigency.

III. HANDLING OF OTHER MATTERS

1. All grand jury proceedings, jury selection proceedings, and criminal and civil jury trials were suspended beginning Monday March 16, 2020 and will remain suspended until further order of this Court

2. All other non-essential court proceedings will be suspended beginning March 18, 2020 until further order of the Court unless the presiding judicial officer determines that the matter may be effectively conducted remotely using communication equipment. Each judicial officer will set the procedure for remote proceedings in their respective division and will post policies, including policies for the exchange of evidence in anticipation of a hearing, on their respective divisional webpages.

3. All scheduled foreclosure sales are hereby cancelled until further order of the Court.

IV. TEMPORARY PERIODIC CLOSURE OF COURTHOUSES

1. The Judge Daniel T. K. Hurley Courthouse, the North County Courthouse, the West County Courthouse, and the South County Courthouse will be closed on the Fridays listed below. The courtrooms at the Criminal Justice Complex on Gun Club Road will remain open on Fridays:

- March 27, 2020
- April 3, 2020
- April 10, 2020 (Court Holiday)
- April 17, 2020
- April 24, 2020
- May 1, 2020

2. On the above dates, only persons whose presence is necessary for the Court to decide essential court proceedings will be granted access to the closed courthouses.

3. Essential court proceedings will be heard at the Gun Club Criminal Justice Complex on each of the Fridays listed above.

V. DEFENDANTS RELEASED ON SUPERVISED OWN RECOGNIZANCE (S.O.R.)

Effective immediately until further order from the Court, all pre-trial criminal defendants who have been released S.O.R. may report telephonically.

DONE and ORDERED in Chambers at West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida,
this 18th day of March 2020



Krista Marx, Chief Judge

*Amends the version of AO 12.510-03/2020 entered on the evening of March 13, 2020.