



THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA

CHAMBERS OF
KRISTA MARX
CHIEF JUDGE

MEDIA RELEASE

PALM BEACH COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2020

THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT ENTERS PHASE 2

WEST PALM BEACH, FL – As Chief Judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, I am pleased to announce that as of September 9, 2020, the Court has transitioned into Phase 2 of the 4 Phase pandemic response delineated by the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court. While this transition is possible because local conditions are improving, I want to assure every person who has business with the Court that the Court's entry into Phase 2 is measured and that the Court is taking all available steps to ensure that it safely advances through the Phases.

During Phase 2, the Court will continue to conduct the majority of its business remotely. However, the Court has expanded the types of cases that it *may* hear in-person if remote proceedings are not feasible. As has been the case for several months, all persons physically entering the courthouses are required to wear a mask, are subject to strict temperature and health screenings, and must social distance. The County has also implemented enhanced cleaning and sanitation measures within the courthouses.

If circumstances allow the Court to safely remain in Phase 2 for at least 30 days, the Court will convene a grand jury and will begin taking cautious steps towards resuming jury trials. While I do not anticipate fully resuming jury trials this year, I do plan on summoning a small pool of jurors to try a handful (approximately 4) of circuit cases in the fall. These cases will be selected by the presiding judges upon consideration of factors such as the anticipated length of the trial, the number of witnesses, and the ability of the attorneys/litigants to safely proceed in person. The Court will use this sampling of trials as a model for the larger resumption of jury trials at a later date to be determined based on local conditions.

As always, my goal is to keep the courts of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit open and accessible to the fullest extent possible while guarding the safety and wellbeing of our citizens, judges, court staff, and our court partners. I appreciate your continued patience and dedication as we navigate unprecedented situations.

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