

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

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2.201-10/21*

IN RE: COURTHOUSE SECURITY AND SCREENING

Threats and acts of violence directed toward witnesses, jurors, litigants, lawyers, court personnel, judges and others demonstrate the need for appropriate security at the county courthouse and at all courthouse annexes as part of the necessary regulation of those facilities. Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(7), as amended in 2012, now specifies that, "The chief judge shall regulate the use of all court facilities, . . ." It is therefore appropriate, after consultation with and consideration of the recommendations of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office as well as the Palm Beach County Department of Facilities and Development Operations, that certain security measures be specified by Administrative Order.

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

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. All persons, with the exception of those specifically enumerated in section B1 below, are prohibited from carrying or possessing firearms, weapons or destructive devices, as defined in section 790.001, Florida Statutes (2018), in the county courthouse or any courthouse annex (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "courthouse") in Palm Beach County.
2. All persons are prohibited from carrying or being in possession of any other device(s) or instrument(s) that could be used or perceived to be used as a physical threat to persons, or property, in the Courthouse/annexes in Palm Beach County. Prohibitions may include but are not limited to pocket knives, ammunition, fireworks, caustic or flammable liquids. To enforce this prohibition the court, with the financial support of the Board of County Commissioners of Palm Beach County, hereby authorizes the establishment of a court security detail.
3. A security detail is empowered to stop all persons entering the courthouse, with the exception of those persons specifically enumerated in the section D1 and D2 below, and condition the right of entry upon the entrant's willingness to submit to a search of their person and/or

personal effects to include purses, pocketbooks, briefcases, containers, packages, pagers, cellular phones, electronic devices and any other item deemed necessary for inspection by the security detail. All persons refusing to submit to a search shall be denied access to the courthouse. Searches shall be conducted through the least intrusive means practicable. The purpose of the search is to insure the safety of the occupants of the courthouse. Nonetheless, discovery of illegal weapons, contraband as defined in section 932.701, Florida Statutes (2011), or other violations of criminal statutes will result in the immediate notification of law enforcement so that a seizure and an arrest may be effectuated. Sworn members of the Court Security Detail/Palm Beach County Sheriff shall be responsible for performing all law enforcement functions for the 15th Judicial Circuit at each of its court facilities.

B. FIREARM PROHIBITION EXEMPTIONS

1. The following shall be exempt from the prohibition against carrying firearms into the courthouse:
 - a. sworn members of the court security detail, including court deputies, and Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office deputies assigned as back-up to the security detail;
 - b. Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office ("**PBSO**") deputies assigned to guard prisoners in the courthouse;
 - c. judges;
 - d. law enforcement officers responding to a call for emergency assistance in the courthouse;
 - e. **PBSO warrant unit supervisors who appear at Gun Club for extradition hearings;**
 - f. effective January 1, 2019, law enforcement officers from law enforcement departments whose jurisdiction is within Palm Beach County and who are wearing Class 1 or Class 2 uniforms (standard uniform) including officers of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) not previously identified in this section, who are appearing at a Palm Beach County Courthouse while carrying out their official duties and subject to the following conditions:
 - (1) Each law enforcement officer will provide to a PBSO deputy stationed at the entrance/ screening area of the courthouse, his/her agency identification along with his/her subpoena which shall identify the deputy, the proceeding, and the date of appearance.
 - (2) Photographs of Class 1 and Class 2 uniforms from all law enforcement agencies will be maintained by PBSO. Only those uniforms deemed acceptable in the photographs will be permitted.
 - (3) Only firearms carried in a Level 3 holster may be retained.
 - (4) A daily log will be maintained as a courthouse security record by PBSO listing the name and ID number of each deputy and his/her purpose for entering the courthouse.
 - (5) All Judges and Magistrates maintain the authority to either permit or prohibit

firearm possession in their respective courtrooms. Secure gun lockers, provided for and maintained by PBSO, will be strategically placed in secure locations for use by deputies appearing as part of their official duties in courtrooms where firearm retention is prohibited.

- (6) The PBSO Policies and Procedures Manual will be updated to inform all deputies of the change in courthouse security procedures as well as the courthouse security protocols that would apply to the deputies at a Palm Beach County Courthouse while carrying out their official duties.

C. NONEXEMPT PERSONS

1. No one shall be permitted to carry a weapon into the courthouse unless the person is specifically exempted under section B1 above.
2. For law enforcement officers, other than those specified in paragraph B1, the long-standing policy in this county requiring law enforcement officers to check their weapons shall remain in force and effect. A gun locker shall be provided in close proximity to the front entry of the courthouse.
3. Prior to gaining entry into the courthouse, any law enforcement officer, other than those identified in paragraph B1, carrying a legally-authorized firearm or other weapon shall surrender the weapon to the security detail. The weapon shall be held under lock and shall be returned to the owner when leaving the courthouse.

D. ADMISSION SEARCHES

1. When entering the courthouse/annexes through designated judicial access points in the secured garage or secured parking areas, the following shall be exempt from the search requirement:
 - a. all circuit court judges of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit;
 - b. all county court judges of Palm Beach County;
 - c. the Clerk of the Court;
 - d. the Court Administrator;
 - e. Domestic and Juvenile Magistrates;
 - f. General Counsel.
2. When entering through the general public entrances to the courthouse/annexes during normal hours of operation all persons, with the exception of 15th Judicial Circuit Judges, Palm Beach County Court Judges, Domestic and Juvenile Magistrates showing valid courthouse identification, and firefighters and EMS technical and transport personnel responding to a call for emergency assistance in the courthouse, shall be subject to screening including those

other individuals listed in paragraph D1.

3. Other than those persons identified in paragraphs B1 and D1, any person entering the courthouse/annexes during normal hours of operation shall enter through authorized entrances and shall pass through a magnetometer (metal detector).
4. Any person who activates the metal detector must empty his or her pockets and pass through the device a second time. If, after the second pass through, the metal detector is again activated, the person shall be subject to a security search to identify all objects which activated the metal detector.
5. Prior to passing through the metal detector, any person carrying a package, briefcase, container, purse, pocketbook, pager, cellular phone or any other electronic device shall place such items on the X-ray conveyor belt and/or shall submit it to the security detail for visual inspection up to and including activation if applicable.
6. Should the X-ray machine disclose what may be a weapon, the container shall be subject to a manual search.
7. The examiner shall not read any written material disclosed during a search.
8. If illegal firearms, weapons, destructive devices or contraband, as defined above, are discovered during a search, the appropriate law enforcement authority shall be notified immediately so that an arrest and seizure might be effectuated.

E. PACKAGES AND LETTERS

1. All packages and letters entering the Palm Beach County Courthouse shall either pass through a metal detector or be inspected. In the case of boxes of materials and supplies delivered through the courthouse loading dock, the inspection shall be to ensure that the integrity of the carton has not been compromised. If a carton appears to have been opened and resealed, the carton shall be inspected to ensure that no firearms, weapons or destructive devices have been placed in the carton.
2. If illegal firearms, weapons, destructive devices or contraband, as defined above, are discovered during a search, the appropriate law enforcement authority shall be notified immediately so that an arrest and seizure may be effectuated.

F. NOTICE

The following notice shall be posted in a conspicuous place at all courthouse entrances:

"FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC, ALL PERSONS ENTERING THESE PREMISES

MUST PASS THROUGH THE MAGNETOMETER (METAL DETECTOR). IF THE DETECTOR REGISTERS, THAT PERSON WILL BE SUBJECT TO A LIMITED SEARCH. ALL PACKAGES, BRIEFCASES, POCKETBOOKS OR OTHER ITEMS CARRIED BY A PERSON MUST BE OFFERED FOR INSPECTION IF SUCH PERSON WISHES TO ENTER THE BUILDING. ALL WEAPONS, INCLUDING LEGALLY-AUTHORIZED FIREARMS, MUST BE SURRENDERED PRIOR TO GAINING ENTRY INTO THE COURTHOUSE AND MAY BE RECLAIMED UPON LEAVING THE COURTHOUSE. ILLEGAL WEAPONS OR OTHER CONTRABAND DISCOVERED IN THE COURSE OF THESE SEARCH PROCEDURES WILL BE SEIZED."

DONE and **SIGNED** in Chambers at West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, this 19th day of October, 2021.



Glenn D. Kelley,
Chief Judge

*supersedes admin. order 2.201-1/19