

THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 11.24

UPDATED CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC (COVID-19) EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

WHEREAS, this Court issued Administrative Order 11.23 (v.1) due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the resultant public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Supreme Court issued AOSC20-15, effective through March 27, 2020, directing the Chief Judge of the Circuit to cancel or postpone non-essential proceedings, unless those proceedings can effectively be conducted remotely without the necessity of in-person court appearances; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Supreme Court has issued AOSC20-17, extending previous emergency orders through April 17, 2020,

WHEREAS, the court must fulfill its responsibility to address mission critical functions while protecting the health and well being of the public, the bar, court staff, and judges; and

WHEREAS, this Order is entered pursuant to the authority vested in the Chief Judge by Article V, Section 2 of the Florida Constitution, as well as the Administrative Orders issued by the Florida Supreme Court referenced above,

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that

1. All grand jury proceedings, jury selection proceedings, and criminal and civil jury trials are suspended during the period of March 30, 2020 through April 17, 2020.
2. Weekday court events within the circuit shall be limited exclusively to the following:
 - A. **Alachua County Criminal Justice Center.**
 - i. First Appearance for Alachua County cases.

Cases in which the defendant is arrested on a warrant or capias from another jurisdiction shall be administered in accordance with AOSC20-17.

- ii. A *Criminal Emergency Docket*, immediately following First Appearance, to address “essential court proceedings” in all Alachua County criminal cases (circuit and county) and all circuit criminal cases in Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, and Union Counties. “Essential court proceedings” are defined as; bond hearings, in-custody Changes of Plea, and other matters which the Court determines to be of an urgent nature.
- iii. Placement of a matter on the *Criminal Emergency Docket* must be approved by, and coordinated with, the office of the judge assigned to that case. If the assigned judge determines the matter meets the criteria set forth in the paragraph above, the case will be set on the next *Criminal Emergency Docket* at which the assigned judge is presiding, and the judicial assistant will so advise the Clerk of the Court and Court Administration. If the assigned judge determines that the exigencies of the case require the matter to be heard at an earlier date, the case may be set on the next available *Criminal Emergency Docket*. In that event, the judicial assistant shall also notify the office of the judge assigned to preside over the Emergency Docket on the day the matter will be heard.
- iv. Wherever practicable, all proceedings shall be conducted remotely, using telephonic or other electronic means, without the necessity of in-person court appearances.
- v. If it is not practicable to conduct these proceedings with all necessary individuals appearing remotely, the necessary individuals unable to appear remotely shall appear in person, unless the appearance is waived by the presiding judge.

B. **Alachua County Family and Civil Justice Center.**

- i. Juvenile Detention Hearings.
- ii. Dependency Shelter Hearings.
- iii. A *Family/Civil Emergency Docket*, immediately following Detention Hearings and preceding Shelter Hearings, to address “essential court proceedings” in all Alachua County family and civil cases (circuit and county) and all family and circuit civil cases in Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, and Union Counties. “Essential court proceedings” are defined as; Appointment of Emergency Temporary Guardian; Vulnerable Adult Injunctions, Adult Protective Services proceedings, “Do not resuscitate” proceedings, Seizure of bodily fluid proceedings, and other matters which the Court determines to be of an urgent nature.
- iv. Placement of a matter on the *Family/Civil Emergency Docket* must be approved by, and coordinated with, the office of the judge assigned to the case. If the assigned judge determines the matter meets the criteria set forth in the paragraph above, the case will be set on the next *Family/Civil Emergency Docket* at which the assigned judge is presiding, and the judicial assistant will so advise the Clerk of the Court and Court Administration. If the assigned judge determines that the exigencies of the case require the matter to be heard at an earlier date, the case may be set on the next available *Family/Civil Emergency Docket*. In that event, the judicial assistant shall also notify the office of the judge assigned to preside over the Emergency Docket on the day the matter will be heard.

- v. Alachua County Domestic Violence Injunction Hearings (including repeat, sexual, dating violence and stalking injunction) and Risk Protection Order hearings, will be heard in a separate proceeding on Thursday mornings.
- vi. All proceedings related to the current public health emergency, such as violation of quarantine, travel limitations, closing of buildings, or curfews, will be heard by the Chief Judge or his designee at a time to be determined.
- vii. Wherever practicable, these proceedings shall be conducted remotely, using telephonic or other electronic means, without the necessity of in-person court appearances.
- viii. If it is not practicable to conduct these proceedings with all necessary individuals appearing remotely, the necessary individuals unable to appear remotely shall appear in person, unless the appearance is waived by the presiding judge.

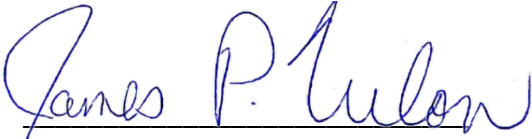
C. **Regional Counties.**

- i. One First Appearance shall be conducted for Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, and Union Counties each day, the location of which shall be rotated among the five counties each weekday. First Appearance shall include Dependency Shelter Hearings for all regional counties.
- ii. A *Regional Emergency/DV Docket*, immediately following First Appearance, to address Domestic Violence Injunction Hearings (including repeat, sexual, dating violence and stalking injunction), Risk Protection Order hearings, and other county court matters the Court determines to be urgent in that county.

- iii. Wherever practicable, these proceedings shall be conducted remotely, using telephonic or other electronic means, without the necessity of in-person court appearances.
 - iv. If it is not practicable to conduct these proceedings with all necessary individuals appearing remotely, the necessary individuals who are unable to appear remotely shall appear in person, unless the appearance is waived by the presiding judge.
- 3. Protocols for weekend and holiday First Appearance shall remain unchanged.
- 4. No proceedings, other than those set forth above, or those specifically approved by the Chief Judge, shall take place unless they are conducted entirely remotely, using telephonic or other electronic means, with no in-person appearances by parties, attorneys, clerks, court reporters, or any other individuals.
- 5. In conducting any court proceedings, all practicable methods to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure shall be employed; including permitting only those persons essential to the proceeding to enter the courtroom, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces both before and after the proceeding, using the hallways or additional courtrooms as waiting areas, and dispersing those present in the courtroom to a safe distance.
- 6. Any person, regardless of status, who is exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or any person who has been in contact with another person who has tested positive for COVID-19, shall be prohibited from entering any court facility without the express permission of the Chief Judge or the Trial Court Administrator.

7. To the extent they may be inconsistent, this Administrative Order supersedes all prior Administrative Orders and Directives entered herein.
8. This Order shall take effect on March 30, 2020 at 8:00 am and continue until April 17, 2020 at 5:00 pm.

ORDERED ON this 25 day of March, 2020.


James P. Nilon, Chief Judge